

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub Editor--J. M. Wheeler.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 94.



A SHINING PROPHET.

“And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him.”—EXODUS xxxiv., 30.

BRUMMAGEM LIBERALISM.

MANY years ago, in his “Literature and Dogma,” Mr. Matthew Arnold bantered the Liberalism of Birmingham, which he treated as a kind of new religion, Mr. Chamberlain being its high priest, and Mr. Jesse Collings and Mr. George Dixon a kind of dancing dervishes before the ark of the faith. There was, of course, something far-fetched in this satirical description; but many of Mr. Arnold’s readers, who went even further than he did in the direction of Radical Free-thought, shared his doubts as to Birmingham Liberalism being really the great faith of the future, destined to save the world from its degradation and misery, and to elevate mankind into the seventh heaven of progress.

Since then Mr. Chamberlain has, by means of wealth, energy, and great if not the highest ability, worked his way to the front of our national politics, and after Mr. Gladstone he is now perhaps the most powerful politician in the House of Commons and the country. Meanwhile Birmingham has produced Mr. Schnadhorst and the Caucus, without, however, losing Mr. Chamberlain, who represents it in Parliament; and Birmingham Liberalism has really become the working creed of the Liberal party throughout the kingdom. No doubt it has a great future in English politics. It will probably achieve many practical reforms,

and set its mark on this century’s history. Yet we cannot quite regard Mr. Chamberlain as the Messiah, nor can we follow him in accepting Birmingham Liberalism as the religion of humanity.

What, after all, is this new gospel? We may describe it briefly as the politics of middle-class Dissent. What Dissenters aim at, Birmingham Liberalism will fight for. It would disestablish the State Church; reform the land laws so as to let the middle classes obtain a large share of the soil; abolish the House of Lords so as to make the middle classes supreme; extend the franchise, while taking care that the working classes never exercise any direct power; and give complete religious liberty to all Christians, while practically denying it to all Freethinkers. In politics it would go as far as Mr. Chamberlain, in religion as far as Mr. R. W. Dale, and in culture as far as Mason’s college; with damnatory clauses in its creed against all who go farther. Its ideal of daily life is the smoky atmosphere and unlovely streets of Birmingham proper, and its paradise lies along the Hagley Road.

Freethinkers especially have little to gain from Birmingham Liberalism. Mr. Chamberlain has never spoken a word in the House of Commons on behalf of Mr. Bradlaugh. He has voted straight enough, but in that he has done no more than the rank and file of

the Liberal party. Mr. Schnadorst also, we are assured, has done his best to burke every attempt to befriend Mr. Bradlaugh, and he has been loyally assisted in this undertaking by his friends on the Caucus. When, a few months ago, the Atheist member for Northampton lectured in the Birmingham Town Hall, he was greeted with immense enthusiasm by an extraordinary crowd; but the Caucus officials kept in the background, and eminent local men, who pretend to great liberality, one after another declined to take the chair.

We presume it is needless to say that Birmingham Liberalism has passed no resolution against the Blasphemy Laws. It remained silent while honest Freethinkers were lying with felons in a Christian gaol. It never even made a grimace of dissatisfaction. Nothing could exceed its serene indifference to our fate. We were only Freethinkers. Had we been Dissenters, it would have made England ring with protests against such an outrage on religious liberty. Last Sunday evening a Birmingham town-councillor lectured in the town-hall, Mr. Jesse Collings presiding, on "Prisoners for Conscience." Of course no Freethinkers figured in that list. The lecturer went back to olden days, and told threadbare tales of Dissenters' sufferings, forgetting that their legacy of freedom induces their descendants to "rest and be thankful" instead of inspiring them to increase it for the benefit of posterity.

The Birmingham Town Hall, we may observe, is let on Sundays for free lectures, at which the working classes obtain just that mental pabulum which the middle classes feel interested in giving them. It has also been let to Dissenting preachers. But when the Secularists applied for its use for one occasion, they were blandly told that "they were not strong enough." In other words, Birmingham Liberalism would show them fair-play when it paid to do so, and recognise their claim to the rights of citizenship when they could enforce it. A Tory local government might be guilty of a similar act of injustice, but it would probably have the frankness to avow its object, instead of hiding it with a cloak of hypocrisy.

Secularists experience the greatest difficulty in getting a hearing in Birmingham. Large public halls have been constantly denied them, because the lessees feared to lose their licenses, or to invite ruin by offending the intolerant champions of religious liberty. Baskerville Hall was only established, we believe, by Mr. Baker's hoodwinking the bigoted Liberals; and the National Secular Society's Branch has been chased from pillar to post, until it has at length found a convenient resting-place.

We seriously ask Freethinkers whether it would not be well to reconsider our attitude towards orthodox Liberalism. We are expected to give the Liberals our undivided support and they in return are to give us—nothing! Whenever we ask for an instalment of our rights they tell us that the moment is not opportune, and that we must wait. Well, let them wait—for our support; and perhaps they will find it worth their while to offer us something for it. When the present struggle is ended, when we have helped to carry the Franchise Bill and cripple the Lords, we might inform the Liberal party that henceforth we intend to place our rights before their interest, and that we will not vote for their candidates unless they promise to accord us equal rights of citizenship with every Christian sect.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIAN INCONSISTENCY.

CHRISTIANS commonly taunt Freethinkers with disunion. They say we are only united in the work of destruction, and that when we seek to construct a system or to renovate society we are "hopelessly divided." We are told that when we assail the Bible we must first agree among ourselves. Spencer, Harrison and Stephen are described as having "mutually demolished their respective systems." The argument really put forward is this—Because Freethinkers differ, therefore the principles of Freethought are unsound and Christianity is true. We are quite content for our present purposes to accept the doctrine that want of unanimity in methods or doctrines proves falsity of fundamental principles, in order that we may show Christians how effectually such an argument demolishes Christianity. And as the *Christian Commonwealth* frequently employs this kind of logic against "Infidels" in general and ourselves in particular, we will turn to one of its

numbers only, that for Nov. 6, and show from its own words that "hopeless confusion" and division of opinion exists among Christians, and that therefore, if pious logic be sauce for the goose as well as for the gander, Christianity is false, and that Christians, far more than Freethinkers, must be told to first agree among themselves.

In the first place we find the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth* (Editorial Notes, p. 49) complaining bitterly of the *Church Times* for "placing Protestantism in the category of scourges such as the flood" and for regarding Queen Mary as a blessing, whereas the more infallible Christian editor of the two regards her "as a curse to Christianity." The editor of the *C. C.* declares that it almost freezes his blood to read such words, and he concludes that "those who can so view the sanguinary persecutor of faithful Christians would probably not hesitate to use the sword themselves, if an opportunity presented itself." We believe that this Christian editor's opinion of the murderous inclinations of his fellow-Christians is perfectly correct. We will only point out to him that Herbert Spencer, Frederic Harrison and Judge Stephen have not had the slightest occasion to pass any such remarks on each other's writings or actions.

Our Christian editor also begins to "tremble" at the influence of the erroneous teaching of a religious contemporary, and says: "It is precisely this amazing audacity, in dealing with the word of God, which makes more infidels than almost anything else." Does this illustrate the beautiful harmony and unity of opinion among Christians which Freethinkers are to envy and imitate? Or are we to accept as our examples of Christian solidarity "the numberless and yet multiplying sects in the Christian world which," according to "Rambler's" article on page 51, "spend one-tenth of their time in serving God, and the remaining nine-tenths in maligning one another."

Perhaps it is the article by "Clericus" (p. 44), on "Things which are not most surely believed among us," which Freethinkers are to take to heart as a lesson in sincerity, truthfulness and genuine unity. "Clericus" says truly enough that though the "form of sound words" bequeathed by our ancestors still remains, yet "the living belief in much of their teaching is gone." "But," as he continues, "few ministers or church members will admit such to be the case. Preachers get over the difficulty by a deceptive use of Scripture phraseology, by which the sound of the old belief still is heard from the pulpit; but it is without soul or real sense." We agree with "Clericus" that an explanation should be "honestly attempted." We, too, want to know "What is the real state of belief in the churches?" and we, too, hold that Christians "deceive themselves" and others, and make "the pulpit a lie and preaching a sham," when they "use the old words" and "phrases of a past theology" in which they have no longer a genuine belief.

Are Freethinkers also to imitate the "appalling tendency" to "apathy" with which our zealous contemporary declares "the churches are cursed" ? (p. 49). W. P. BALL.

(To be concluded.)

RELIGION has recently had a big lift out in Georgia. One hundred and three niggers were baptized all at once in a pond that had been dammed for the occasion. It appears to have been thought that by damming the pond a lot of damning would be saved in other ways, and the Georgia niggers, therefore, plunged in freely. The water did not wash those niggers "whiter than snow." The bottom of the pond was muddy, and after the water had been stirred up a bit it presented the appearance of a well-regulated sewer's produce; the consequence being that converts who plunged in robed in spotless white, came out looking as black as if they had been naked, and one of the last converts seeing the condition of the mud-hole, hinted that he would be damned before he would enter the dammed pond; but the other members of the church, having a wholesome regard for the salvation of that recalcitrant nigger, chucked him into the water, and thus saved his soul by main force. The moral of this big baptising is that godliness comes before cleanliness, and that it don't much matter what sort of filth a nigger is saved in anyhow, as the natural duskiness of his skin will bear a goodly amount of dirtying.—*Sporting Chronicle*.

TOO PROFANE FOR THE LAD.—An elder of the kirk having found a little boy and his sister playing marbles on Sunday, said: "Boy, do you know where children go to who play marbles on the Sabbath day?" "Ay," said the boy, "they gang down to the field by the water below the brig." "No!" roared out the elder; "they go to hell and are burned!" The little fellow, really shocked, called to his sister: "Come awa', Jeannie; here's a man swearing awfully."

ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. Canon Carus presided over a meeting for promoting the return of the Jews to Palestine. Prophecy is thus to be fulfilled, and the world is to "have a central government, not from London, Paris or St. Petersburg, but from Zion." £31 were subscribed for this ridiculous scheme.

"ONE who speaks feelingly" writes to the *Hampshire Observer* on "Church Bells and Invalids." He objects especially to the bells of St. Peter's Church being rung at a quarter to six o'clock in the morning for early communion. He says: "To invalids, and other persons who suffer from sleeplessness, it is a very serious matter to be awakened from a refreshing sleep by that which I cannot help regarding as an unnecessary annoyance." Muffin bells were put down by law. Neither law nor good sense are yet strong enough to tackle church bells.

THE Rev. Archibald Brown, of the East London Tabernacle, says it is "a shameful thing to see Britain receiving all its material from other countries—even the very material for post-cards." These blind leaders of the blind naturally pander to prejudice and selfishness and call them by fine names, such as patriotism. Is Britain to cease importing from other countries, and other countries from us, at the bidding of a conceited parson?

CHRISTIANITY and insanity are increasing among the negroes of the United States.

At the Cheshire Petty Sessions Edward Lewin and William Blindell, members of the Salvation Army, were charged with an offence under the Metropolitan Police Act, in continuing to sing in the streets after being requested by Robert Rosendale, a householder, to depart from the neighborhood. It was maintained by the defendants that they were within their legal rights. The magistrates, however, fined Lewin 3s. The case against Blindell was dismissed.

AMONG religious statistics a contemporary states that there are 100,000 Drunkards in America. Of course this is a misprint for Dunkers or rather Tunkers (from *tunken* to dip) a sect of German Baptists who are also known as Tumblers because they adopt triune immersion, the candidate kneeling and being plunged by a forward movement under water—once for the Father, once for the Son and once for the Holy Ghost.

It is often said that the sky-pilots never think of practising what they preach. This is a mistake. A large number practise over other peoples' sermons until they are able to deliver them as their own.

THE Rev. R. Carter has won the 105L Challenge Cup at the recent exhibition of dogs in London. What a change since the days of Jesus! Parsons keep dogs now, and feed them on the best of everything; but the only man in the Gospels who certainly went to heaven could regale them with nothing but his sores. When he told the story of Lazarus, Jesus never contemplated one of his disciples winning the prize at a dog show.

THE Rev. G. S. Reaney, who advocates Christian Socialism, says that "Christian principle has proved profitable in trade" and that "the one and only Christian rule must be that of obedience in all things unto the Master." But what trade can possibly be carried on if the trader gives to all that ask him, and sells everything to give alms to the poor? But it would be absurd to expect reason of people whose trade is the very essence of unreason. As Mr. Reaney holds that "the law of gravitation can be stayed," so doubtless he supposes that the laws of logic remain in abeyance wherever Christian theories come to the front.

TALMAGE quotes the text, "Howl, all ye drinkers of wine," and in his sermons he endeavors to obey it.

AMONG the subjects dealt with by the *Prophetic News and Israel's Watchman* are the "Marriage of the Lamb and the Judgment of Nations," and the "Grouping of the Church in Resurrection Glory." These would be interesting subjects for an artist of the realistic kind. But who, or what, is the ram to whom a lamb might expect to be married? The old ram, for the father of a lamb ought to be of the same species as his offspring, we learn from Exodus xv, 3, is a man-of-war. Is he a great steam ram floating abroad on the briny?

AND how will the Church be grouped in Resurrection Glory? Will the great ram, standing on his hind legs as principal performer or acrobat, support on his shoulder the little lamb and the great ewe or pigeon (whichever form the holy ghost may assume), while this pair in their turn support on their shoulders Peter and Paul and James and John, who in their turn uphold the minor apostles, who bear the weight of bishops and saints and a host of believers reaching up to the clouds? We should like to see this Resurrection Grouping business. Oh, what must it be to be there, and see the great performing ram taking his walks abroad and staggering along under the weight of his inverted pyramid of Resurrection Glory! Amen. So be it.

LORD MAYORS no longer keep a fool, but they retain a chaplain. Dr. Forrest is to fill the post during the next year. His duties are to preach an occasional charity sermon and to say grace at City banquets in order to gild over the public robbery and give a celestial flavor to the turtle soup.

MR. W. McCULLAGH TORRENS, M.P., says that Spa Fields was the place in which he "learned to love the things that concern eternal peace." Well, it is a great pity he did not go somewhere to learn what concerns his temporal peace. Had he done so, he would have spoken and acted more sensibly on the Bradlaugh question. As it is, the lore he acquired at Spa Fields won't save him from the trouble he has prepared for himself at the next elections.

MR. GLADSTONE is entitled to a little relaxation now and then in his busy life. It would otherwise be difficult to excuse his going to Spiritist séances to see Mr. Eglinton palm off the slate trick as a message from the unseen world. Of course Mr. Eglinton takes the opportunity to give himself a good advertisement. The newspapers report the pleasure he took in assisting Mr. Gladstone to a knowledge of spiritual things, and they do not forget to mention that this happy medium had less satisfaction in initiating "princes and princesses," notwithstanding the "kind and condescending" manner they always exhibited. Shade of Mr. Pecksniff! hear this man.

HERE is a pertinent question. If the spirits have any messages for Mr. Gladstone, why cannot they impart them direct to him without the intervention of Mr. Eglinton and his wonderful slate? Is there any other reason than that the poor medium must get a living somehow?

MR. TRUESDELL, in his "Bottom Facts about Spiritualism," has thoroughly exposed the slate fraud. One slate with messages already written upon is always prepared by the "mejum."

MARRYING a bishop is a risky business. Six bishops are widowed, six have married a second time, and one (the Bishop of Liverpool) has a third wife. Ladies should beware of these fatal sky-pilots, but as they are very wealthy there is probably a great deal of truth in Mr. Labouchere's statement that they are still a valuable article in the matrimonial market.

WHAT a fortunate thing for Bishop Ryle that there is no marriage in heaven! Otherwise he would spend a bad quarter of an hour on meeting those three wives in the New Jerusalem, and perhaps a good many wretched days afterwards. He Ryled them on earth, and they would probably rile him in heaven.

A BISHOP should be, according to Scripture, the "husband of one wife." The mitred sky-pilots add the convenient proviso "at a time," and no doubt we shall find it in the text in some future Revised Version.

"BRIGHTNESS and beauty are all around us," writes one of the *Christian World* gushers. Of course they are, especially about this time of the year, when their charms are heightened by magnificent fogs. The sun is a fine illuminator, but in this part of the world the boss of the great show has put too much shade on, and his big burner often looks like the bottom of a copper kettle, or the face of a tipsy true believer trying to find his way home on Christmas night after celebrating the birthday of the boss's son and heir.

MOODY is telling some pretty tall stories out in America about his English friends. One of them is about a titled young man acquainted with the royal family, who gathers hundreds of other young men from the poorest parts of London and tries to bring them to Christ. He appears to keep them while this little process is going on, and so long as he does that he will find plenty of candidates for glory. This young missionary's father protests against it all, but the titled prig says he "wants to gain a crown." It is a fair illustration of Christian morality that Moody evidently regards this selfishness as a sublime virtue.

A PRAYER CURE HOSPITAL has been opened in America. The first patient admitted was a blind lady. She can now feel her way about. The next was a consumptive clergyman, who, having already found prayers no good, determined to try larger doses of the same physic. There is no news of him, so we suppose he has proved the value of the recipe and is now advertising it in heaven.

THE Rev. J. Baker, Manchester, recommends a local doctor's cure for fits. No doubt its efficacy has been proved on the reverend gentleman's congregation.

"EVERY man without God is a total failure," so Moody assures us, and so it has been for 6,000 years. But he has to confess that "it is so hard to get men to believe that they are a failure." Nevertheless man *is* a failure, a "miserable failure," an "utter failure," only he don't know it. Christianity tries to make him miserable with fears of hell in order to claim credit for removing the misery she has caused. She invents a hell to save us fro

and a fall of man into a total depravity which she can convert into the beauty of holiness by a contemptible credulity.

MOODY says we must "take God into our hearts, and have God in us." How much of him is necessary? Is an ounce sufficient? Or is a pound of him required? If this is proved irrelevant by the Holloway Gaol Euclid, on what system will God be subdivided among the whole of us? The Roman Catholics put a few grains of him into their stomachs in the form of a wafer. Is he not as beneficial there as he would be in the heart? Is he as good as Cackle's pills and quack medicines generally? And why should this particular quack medicine receive such special privileges? Why should we be forced to pay for it whether we want it or not?

THE Glossop aldermen should make themselves acquainted with the Evidence Amendment Act of 1869. In a recent case, upon Mr. George Lee, a witness, stating that he was an Atheist, he was catechised in the following way:—Alderman Stafford: "What motives have you to tell the truth?" Lee: "My conscience tells me to tell the truth, and I have come here to tell the truth and nothing but the truth." The Clerk then requested Lee to repeat the following words: "I do solemnly and sincerely and truly affirm and declare that the taking of any oath is, according to my religious belief—" Alderman Stafford: "Your religious belief is no belief at all." Here Lee very properly said he had not come to debate on theology. Eventually he was allowed to affirm, though in an incorrect form.

AFTER his statement that he was an Atheist, Mr. Lee should have refused to answer further questions until he had made the statutory declaration, "I solemnly promise and declare that the evidence given by me to the court shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

THE Rev. James Dann, of New Road Chapel, Oxford, tells us that "when a man's heart is closed to God he ceases to be a living man, and his name must be struck out." Mr. Dann had better send this information to the Registrar-General so that he can correct the mortality bills accordingly.

APROPPOS of cheap funerals, we read in the *Rock* that "The day of a man's death is the first day of real life. No one can be said truly to live until he dies." We suppose that a religious writer must hardly be held responsible for what he says. If we were to express a wish that he might at once begin to "truly live" in this sense he would not consider it a mark of good-will on our part.

THE Rev. J. C. Robinson said "amid the plaudits of the meeting" that he should like to horsewhip Lord Randolph Churchill for his abuse of Gladstone. We sympathise with this reverend gentleman, but we hardly see how he reconciles his ideas with the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. Perhaps impudent Randolph is the better Christian. As soon as his "cheek" is smitten by his betters he at once presents another piece of "cheek" still more amazing. Can this be the true meaning of the passage? Many Christians act as if it were.

WE notice a Christmas card bearing an extract from Spurgeon, in which it is stated that when Christ entered into our (true believers') hearts "the steamers of our joy floated in the fragrant air." Mr. Spurgeon is before his time. Steamers float on water at present, and aerial navigation is as yet only a possibility, at least so far as heavy tonnage is concerned. Perhaps Mr. Spurgeon meant "the steam of our joy," alluding to the copious perspiration which Swift long ago remarked as a symptom of the operation of the Spirit.

MR. KENT, a Baptist of Sheffield, has challenged his minister by public advertisement to prove from Scripture that "lie of the pulpit" that "man has an immortal soul which does not die at death." This challenge not having been responded to, Mr. Kent rose in the chapel during the communion service and protested and argued against the pulpit lie until the deacons removed him. We suppose he relies on such passages as these:—"The soul that sinneth it shall die" (Ezek. xviii, 4). "God only hath immortality" (1 Tim. vi, 15). "A man hath no pre-eminence above a beast" (Eccles. iii, 19). The Bible is the most convenient book in the world for proving anything. You can always find texts in it that prove infallibly the truth of both sides of almost every religious argument.

A DEACON in Beecher's church is said to have made more than 1,000*l.* by successful betting on Presidential matters.

THE Bishop of London, in his charge at St. Paul's, last week, reviewed the state of church work in London, and concluded that it "justified the belief that God had not withheld his blessing." Notwithstanding all their labors, however, there were "hundreds of thousands to all appearance godless; churches in districts as populous as cities with congregations only as large as those of a village; infidelity, the religion of multitudes, with its propaganda, its preachers, and its literature, sometimes able and acute, sometimes obscene and blasphemous, and a large section satisfied to live without perplexing them-

selves about a problematical hereafter." After this discouraging confession we should recommend his lordship to induce his heavenly father to withhold such a disastrous blessing and let the Church try a spell without his divine assistance.

THE Vicar of Stratford-on-Avon besought his congregation to vote in the South Warwickshire election so as "to promote the interests of the Lord and preserve the Church," regardless of whether they were Conservative or Liberal in politics. This hypocritical sky-pilot had previously publicly proclaimed his intention to vote Tory. It was ever thus. The Liberal looks after the interests of men and the Tory looks after the interests of God.

A WRITER in the *Catholic Weekly Register*, under the title of "Killing no Murder," professes to be very much scandalised at the "cannibals at sea" not being punished as murderers, and he shows that this view is at variance with Catholic doctrine. But "killing no murder" was always considered sound doctrine in the Catholic Church if the parties killed were heretics.

THE *Nonconformist* estimates the total property of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners as being worth, if capitalised, over forty millions of money. The great bulk of this property belongs of right to the nation. Yet these plunderers of the people wish to build on Highgate Woods, and rob Londoners of an open space in the suburbs in order to enrich the fat livings of the Church.

CAPTAIN J. SMITH, of Booth's Blood and Fire Army in Manchester, reports the case of a "sister" who was healed of internal tumors by the prayer of faith after all the doctors had given her up. He adds that some sceptics have been convinced by this miraculous cure. No doubt we shall be able to publish next week a long list of secessions from the Manchester Branch of the N. S. S. A few more such miracles would close their lecture hall, especially if they could be worked on the platform.

THE Rev. Father Burke of Manchester, preaching at St Bede's Church, South Shields, declaimed against the scientists of the day as being "divided among themselves and only united in their common denial of the alphabet of Christian truth." Father Burke says it all comes of the denial of the authority of the church and reliance on human reason. As Diderot said, the priests would have us blow out the one little light we have.

THE Rev. R. Scott, Baptist minister of Ulveston, has to drop 400*l.* damages for breach of promise of marriage.

THE Rev. S. G. Cotton, who manages an orphanage at Carogh County, Kildare, is a nice person to have charge of children. He recently admitted in open court having compelled a little girl to wear a log tied to her leg day and night to prevent her running away. He now prosecutes a boy for playing marbles on Sunday. The magistrates very properly dismissed the case, and on appeal Chief Justice Morris concurred in their decision.

GEORGE TOWNEND, a local methodist preacher of Heywood, who is also a rate collector, has been discovered to have embezzled the town funds to a considerable extent.

THE Rev. R. H. Falconer, of Lewes, says that "a man who does not give a tenth of his income to God is a thief and could hardly be called a Christian." How about the Duke of Westminster with half-a-million a year? His tithe would be 50,000*l.* a year, otherwise "he is a thief and no Christian." Does his own Archbishop give 1,500*l.* a year? If not "he is a thief and no Christian?"

DAGONET, speaking of the fifth of November celebrations at Eastbourne, notices how Protestants enjoy burning the Pope in their bonfires amidst jeers and execrations. He says there would be "a perfect howl of indignation" throughout the country "if the Freethinkers had a fifth of November of their own and carried an effigy of the head of the English Church." Those who "would scream the loudest at a public insult offered by Free-thought to Protestantism, laugh the heartiest at the insult offered by Protestantism to Roman Catholicism." This is perfectly natural. Bigotry always delights in persecuting and reviling those outside its narrow circle in any direction.

THE Rev. Dr. Thomson, preaching at Manchester on "Positivism and Christianity," said: "Christianity it was that had broken the rod of the oppressor, and made the bondman stand upright, his equal before the law." If so, it took a good while about it, for slaves were held and slavery defended from the Bible by Christians within the memory of living men. It was "infidel France" that first declared the equality of men, and the leading abolitionists of America, Wendell Phillips, Emerson, Lloyd Garrison, Elizur Wright and Parker Pillsbury, were all stigmatised as "infidels."

HOW'S THAT FOR HIGH?—Youthful Sabbath-breaker (just interrupted by the new curate): "Yah! Call yerself broad church, don't yer? I calls yer high. If I was only as high as you, I'd turn head-over-heels, and then I should be 'ome."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Nov. 16, Alexandra Rink, Talbot Street, Nottingham:—At 11, "Judas Iscariot;" at 3, "Sky-Pilots;" at 7, "Will Christ Save Us?"

Monday, 17, Secular Hall, Leicester, at 8 o'clock.

Tuesday, 18, Freethought Institute, York Street, Walworth Road, at 8.30, "Messrs. Moses and Aaron."

November 23, Hall of Science, London; 25, Claremont Hall, London; 27, Hall of Science, London; 30, Hall of Science.

December 2, Claremont Hall; 4, Hall of Science, London; 6, Cramlington; 7, South Shields; 8, Houghton-le-Spring; 9, Claremont Hall, London; 11, Hall of Science, London; 14, Oldham; 16, Claremont Hall, London; 18, Hall of Science, London; 21, Hall of Science; 28, Milton Hall, Rochdale.

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

February 1, Claremont Hall, London; 8, Hall of Science, London; 22, Liverpool.

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.

H. WOOTTON.—Scarcely up to the mark.

UT PROSIM.—"Turtle Doves" is a very good name for the London aldermen. But you are in error as to the plank-bed being illegally inflicted on misdemeanants. Except with respect to an occasional turn on the treadmill during the first month, felons and misdemeanants are, by the prison rules, subject to precisely the same treatment.

J. H. ROGERS.—The nominal Freethinkers who dabble in Spiritism are mostly found in America. We know of no prominent Freethinker in England who favors it.

J. PARSONS.—Such pious escapades are not uncommon, but we cannot notice them unless they get into the papers.

E. SHELTON.—Of course not. How could you expect little Churchill to talk about Perpetual Pensions? Men whose fathers were hung don't talk about ropes.

OUR readers render us a great service when they send us any papers containing a notice of the *Freethinker* or *Progress*. We are also glad to receive any newspaper cuttings referring to matters of interest to Freethinkers.

W. S. GRAYSON.—Always pleased to hear from you.

F. PUNCHEE.—Differences of opinion will occur in these matters, and we must act on our own judgment.

"ANE" points out that in his article last week, p. 354, second column, line 12, the word "patriotic" should have been "patristic."—The joke is a little too broad. We shall be glad to hear from you again.

W. H. MORRISH.—See Reviews. Thanks.

J. RAWLINSON.—It was certainly an impertinence to send you one of the cadging circulars, and if the Farnham missionary wants a testimonial his pious friends should apply for subscriptions nearer home than Lancashire. One way to aid him, according to the circular, is "by your prayers." Give him plenty.

W. E. B.—The highest court of law is the House of Lords. Appeals cannot be carried further, except to God Almighty, and he hasn't been known to give a decision for many centuries.

J. SAUNDERS.—We cannot answer medical questions. Consult a doctor or write to *Health*.

G. COCKMAN.—The joke may do for *Fun*, but it is not quite good enough for this paper. Besides there is nothing profane in it, and that is our speciality.

J. W. B.—You don't read your *Freethinker* too attentively. You ask us to open a subscription for Mr. Goulding. We did it last week. See "Sugar Plums" this week for the result.

J. BARNES.—There are two Jewish books called *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu* (Book of the History of Jesus), one published by Wagenseil, 1681, the other by Huldreich, 1705. Voltaire, in his "Letters on the Jews," says: "The Toldoth Jeshu is the most ancient Jewish writing transmitted to us against our religion. It is a life of Jesus Christ altogether different from that in our gospels. It appears to be of the first ages and even written before the gospels." He seems to have identified the work with that mentioned by Justin Martyr in his Dialogue with Trypho, xvii., 108. Celsus referred to the same story of Jesus being the son of Panthera, a Roman soldier.

J. WIDDICOMBE.—Your praise of S. Britton's protest in *Progress* against Professor Morley's mutilation of great writers will be echoed by all honest readers. We have conveyed your thanks to Mr. Ball for his article. Omitting your praise of ourselves, we thank you for your good wishes.

W. J. COWLIN.—We never heard that silly story about Ingersoll before, and if Talmage is the authority you may depend on its being a lie. Why not write to "pagan Bob" himself? Colonel Ingersoll, Washington, U.S., will find him.

OAKENSHAW COLLIERY.—Sorry to hear that the bigots have by a narrow majority excluded the *Freethinker* from the reading-room, although, as you say, there is some consolation in knowing that their action excites general curiosity about this obnoxious journal. We quite understand your position; we must all work for the Cause according to our opportunities.

T. SKINNER asks us to announce that a special general meeting of the Hartlepool Secular Society will be held, Sunday 16th, at 6.30, in the Citizen Club

W. WRIGHT.—Thanks for cuttings. We don't expect you or anybody else to agree with *everything* in the *Freethinker*. We don't ourselves, if it comes to that.

S. LEESON.—You omitted to enclose the cutting.

H. M. RIDGWAY is glad to hear that some good is done by leaving the *Freethinker* in railway carriages, as he often does it himself.

H. CHECKLEY.—Your sentiments are admirable.

CRISPIN.—No doubt, as you say, Mr. Foote would obtain many votes if he stood for Hackney, but at present he is overworked, and this is hardly the time to give the Tories any chance of winning a seat.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—Mr. Spurgeon is not the most truthful of men when speaking of Freethought. He once described the London Hall of Science as a cow-shed, and his present statement that we have no charitable institution is equally accurate. As a matter of fact the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund committee has been in existence for a great many years. It investigates and relieves cases of distress, and its income is always in excess of its expenditure. You might persuade your Christian friend to ask Mr. Spurgeon whether he will publish this correction in the next number of his magazine.

L. WOODWARD.—Mr. Foote's two essays on Atheism and Morality and on Prayer, are reprinted in their entirety in the new penny edition, with the addition of a fresh Preface in each, as long as an ordinary *Freethinker* article.

E. HALEY.—Cannot deal with letters that reach us after Tuesday.

T. LACEY (Darlington).—B. V.'s articles on Heine in the *Secularist* have not been republished. There is a volume of translated selections from Heine by Snodgrass and another translation by the same editor of large portions of the *De l'Allemagne*. Mr. Ramsey could get them for you.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Huddersfield Examiner—Leytonstone Express—Manchester Examiner (4)—Shields Daily Gazette—South Bank Advertiser—Essex Daily News—East London Press—Referee—Liberty—Perthshire Courier—Glossop Herald—Daylight—Sheffield Independent—Liberal (Sydney)—Heywood Advertiser—Liverpool Post.

SUGAR PLUMS.

FOR the second time since his release from prison, Birmingham gave Mr. Foote a hearty greeting last Sunday. His lectures were largely attended, especially in the evening, when the utmost enthusiasm prevailed. An hour's discussion after the lecture enabled Mr. Foote to deal with several arguments against Freethought, and to silence one insulting opponent by a prompt retort, which set the audience in a great roar of laughter. That ended the proceedings.

THE Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. is fighting hard against great difficulties, and we hope it will be firmly supported by all Freethinkers in the town and district. Its meetings are held every Sunday in the Alexandra Hall, Hope Street.

God's agents defeated again! At the election for School Board for the parish of Humberstone, near Leicester, placards were published for the intended injury of Mr. Gimson, the Secularist candidate, with the words, "Do not vote for the infidel." The result was that Mr. Gimson was returned by a good majority.

THE *Liberal*, New South Wales, is transferring Mr. Foote's "Prisoner for Blasphemy" from the columns of *Progress* to its own paper for the interest of Australian Freethinkers.

THE controversy on the exclusion of *Progress* and *Our Corner* from the Free Library Reading Rooms still continues in the columns of the *Examiner*, which has in this case shown a remarkable spirit of fair play. Mr. George Payne bears the principal brunt of war on our side with great vigor and ability.

OUR new Christmas Number will be ready by the end of the month. Those who are acquainted with our previous special numbers will be able to form a fair idea of its character. It will certainly be equal to, if it does not surpass, anything we have ever published. Some of the illustrations will be of a novel type; one in particular representing the multifold Christian Deity, and occupying a whole page, will be worth framing. Freethinkers might hang it over their beds as a warning to ghosts. It would also serve to scare off any intrusive sky-pilot in time of sickness.

IN his little tract, "A Cambridge Graduate" quotes the passage from Tertullian's treatise (*De Spectaculis*, chap. 30), where that worthy Christian Father declares he shall exult and laugh while witnessing the tortures of the Pagans when they are damned. He does not however, mention that Dr. Pusey in editing the Rev. C. Dodgson's translation of Tertullian, says: "A truth lies at the basis of the following painful description since Scripture says 'The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance,'" (p. 218). Such barbarism might be expected from the savage palamist and is not so strange in the third century when we find a learned Oxford theologian thus writing in the nineteenth.

"I do not believe," said Bacon, "that any man fears to be dead, but only the stroke of death." Priestcraft has clothed death with fictitious terrors, and owing to the false prejudices learnt in youth most people believe that it is a painful convulsion. According to the *Pall Mall Gazette* such was Mr. Fawcett's

opinion before the serious illness he suffered about two years prior to his decease. But "as he lay for days in the last stage of prostration awaiting death, he felt entirely free from any physical fear. The heart would simply cease to beat as a watch that has run out ceases to tick, and all would be over. Death would be no wrench, but simply the cessation of life. Such, at least, was the conviction which Mr. Fawcett brought back with him from the shadowy confines of the grave."

WE are glad to see that a Hackney jury has had the courage to bring in a verdict of death from vaccination. Of course the coroner and the public vaccinator first brow-beat and then poo-h-pooed the "twelve men and true." That almost goes without saying. Orthodox medicine (which is as bad as orthodox theology when it forces itself on us by law) says that children do not die of vaccination because it is an axiom that they cannot. Common-sense, however, judges by the evidence. If a child is perfectly healthy before vaccination, if it breaks out in putrid sores immediately after, and finally dies in convulsions, ordinary people don't want a medical oracle to tell them the cause of death. "Killed by vaccination" says the Hackney jury. Yet men are fined, have their homes broken up, and are sent to prison like common thieves for refusing to submit to this legalised Thuggery. Such a thing is a scandal to civilisation. But happily the Democracy is waking up on this question. People are rebelling against the tyranny of "experts." They object to be forcibly dosed with nostrums they detest and made to pay for them into the bargain; and it makes no difference whether the priest or the doctor is the would-be despot.

WE have received several subscriptions for Mr. F. Goulding, the "Atheist blacksmith," whose case we referred to last week. A friend of his informs us that he intends to go to prison rather than pay the "iniquitous fine." If so he will probably do the cause of freedom more good than by yielding; but he ought to be very sure that he can stand the prison treatment. The subscriptions will in that case be devoted to the maintenance of his wife and family during his enforced absence. Subscriptions:—Miss Howell, £1; Ut prosim, 1s.; J. Worster, 2s. 6d.; J. M. Wheeler, 2s. 6d.; G. W. Foote, 10s. 6d.; Hall of Science, 6d.; S. Leeson, 1s.; H. M. Ridgway, 2s.; E. H. (Chelsea), 5s.; J. Fitzgerald, 2s.; R. T. Fowler, 1s.; J. Bates, 1s.; O. K., 2s. 6d.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, the greatest and best of American presidents, was a Freethinker. Blaine, the defeated Republican candidate, who ran Cleveland close for the presidency, and who may yet occupy the White House, is delared to be the incarnation of political corruption. Of course he is a Christian, and, we understand, a Congregationalist.

THE deity of Christ is out of danger. The Young Men's Christian Association at Southampton took one of its members to task for going to a Unitarian church. He replied that there was no reference to Christ's deity in the Association's rules, and on investigation this was found to be true. The remedy was promptly applied, and the doctrine is to be incorporated in the rules at once. Henceforth every member will have the route to heaven printed on his ticket.

THE authorities of the British Museum Library have recently placed the American edition of Voltaire's "Philosophical Dictionary" on the shelves of the reference library in the large reading room.

A GOOD report of Dr. Hardwicke's lecture on "Man: Whence and Whither," delivered under the auspices of the Sheffield Psychological Society, is given in the local press. Since the publication of Dr. Hardwicke's "Popular Faith Unveiled" he has been the subject of several attacks from Sheffield pulpits. Fortunately these will not hurt his practice. Sensible people inquire about the skill and not about the creed of a physician.

"AN English traveller" calls attention in the columns of the *Rock* to the energetic propaganda of Freethought now being carried on in Italy. He finds large quantities of Freethought tracts on the tables of hotels, and says: "I have seen not only the scholarly, though dangerous pamphlets published by the late Thomas Scott, but also the more blasphemous tracts of the National Secular Society and journals like the *National Reformer* and *Freethinker* selling openly in the streets of Florence. Let it not be supposed that these soul-endangering publications are all printed in the English tongue, and therefore unintelligible for the mass of Italian readers; many are translations of the works above mentioned, or original works, written in Italian by the same person—apparently an Englishman—who is occupied in a translation of this infidel literature, and who, it must be owned, displays a zeal and intelligence in the prosecution of his unholy task worthy of a better cause." We dare say our good friend Captain Dyas could account for some of this good work.

THEY tell all sorts of queer stories about Ingersoll. Here is one from a Cleveland paper:—A reporter called on Col. Ingersoll the other morning, and had a short conversation with him. "Is it true," asked the reporter, "that you wrote the 'Thirty-Nine Articles'?" "It is not true. I only wrote thirty of them. Mr. Theodore Tilton wrote the rest." "And the Westminster

catechism?" "I aided on that. I looked up the history of Adam and Eve, discovered where Cain got his wife, painted the ark red, and read the proof." "Did you aid in the preparation of the Revised Edition?" "I am aiding all I can, in my feeble way. I am revising both books, after my own fashion." "Is it true, Colonel, that Mr. Beecher, Mr. Talmage, and yourself are partners in a sheep ranch?" "Not exactly partners, sir," said the colonel, as he moved away, "but we are talking of writing a series of theological books in company. Good-day."

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES.

THE agreement of the Bible with what is absurdly called "profane" history (the records of Jewish barbarities being alone sacred) is a favorite topic with some theologians. Ancient inscriptions, which say that the Jews were defeated where the Bible says they were victorious, are claimed as marvellous proofs of the truth of holy writ. Quite recently the theological journals made a fuss because some nation mentioned in an ancient record has been identified with the Hittites mentioned in the Bible; as though sceptics were in the habit of disputing the existence of Hittites, Perizzites, Amorites or Cushites, or as if the worth of the Jew books was affected by the discovery.

The Bishop of Bath and Wells has just come out in the same direction by lecturing at Weston-super-Mare on "Points of Contact and Agreement between the Acts of the Apostles and Greek and Latin Historians." The lecture, which is given in full in the *Weston-super-Mare Gazette* for Nov. 1, is worth some little attention as a specimen of learned episcopal argument.

He says: "Let us take the first statement in the Acts of the prevailing influence of the Sadducees at that time (Acts iv., 1, 2; v., 17; xxiii., 6). We turn then to Josephus, and there we learn incidentally that the son of Annias the high priest was of the 'sect of the Sadducees.'" Wondrous coincidence! The stories of Simon bewitching the people of Samaria with his sorceries (Acts viii., 11) and of Paul's handkerchiefs casting out evil spirits (Acts xix., 12) must be true when the writer of Acts is so thoroughly endorsed by Josephus! The Bishop of Bath and Wells does not mention that in the time of King Jannæus (B.C. 106-79) the Sadducees were in the ascendant, and indeed drove the Pharisees from Jerusalem; so that even for the date of the events recorded in Acts no confirmation is thus given.

The next example, if a little more complex, is also more important. In Acts ix., 23, 25, we have a statement concerning Saul's escape from Damascus, which Paul himself narrates thus in 2 Cor. xi., 32-33: "In Damascus the governor under Aretas the king kept the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desirous to apprehend me: And through a window in a basket was I let down by the wall, and escaped his hands." Now the bishop contends that the Aretas here referred to was the king of Arabia Petra mentioned by Josephus (Ant. xviii., 5, 7) as fighting with Herod. But Josephus gives no indication that the army of this Aretas ever got to Damascus, and indeed the idea that such a petty king could have marched his army two hundred and fifty miles, and taken the strong city of Damascus out of the hands of the Romans, is simply posterous. How much more likely that the Aretas is the former king of that name referred to by Josephus (Ant. xiv., 2) as marching into Syria before Damascus was taken by Pompey and Syria made part of the Roman Empire, B.C. 62. The only objection to this theory is that it would make Paul live before the Christian era. But that will not astonish those who remember that the Jewish account of Jesus, as found in the Talmud and Sopher Toldoth Jeshu, makes the prophet of Nazareth to have been born in the time of King Jannæus, and to have been stoned and hanged about B.C. 75.*

Still worse for the orthodox cause is the next point of contact cited by the right reverend father in God. I refer to the history of Theudas. In Acts v., 36, the writer (who was a dabster at putting speeches into the mouths of his characters which they could never have delivered, as any one will see who will critically compare those attributed to Peter with those attributed to Paul) makes Gamaliel say: "For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves; who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nought." Now Josephus (Ant. xx., 5) mentions a Theudas

* See "The Jewish Account of Jesus," *Freethinker*, Sept. 14; p. 290.

who, in the words of the bishop, "exactly corresponds" to this account. He was an impostor, calling himself a prophet. He persuaded a number to follow him, but the Roman procurator Fadus sent a troop of horsemen against them, who killed many and took the rest prisoners. The head of Theudas was cut off and sent to Jerusalem. Such a nice correspondence might even suggest that the writer of Acts was acquainted with Josephus. Unfortunately, however, Josephus places this Theudas over thirty years after the time referred to by Gamaliel. What is to be done with a point of contact and disagreement of this kind? The bishop boldly takes the bull by the horns. "Luke," he says—he assumes the writer was Luke, although a recent writer, the Rev. H. H. Evans, B.A., contends that Paul himself wrote the Acts of the Apostles—"Luke is as likely to be right as Josephus." We are much relieved to find his lordship speaks of it only as a matter of likelihood, and we venture to hope that the salvation of immortal souls will not be imperilled if we express our opinion that Josephus is as likely to be right as the anonymous author of the Acts of the Apostles, a book written we know not when nor where, and which was rejected by the Marcionites and other early Christians. Josephus had been himself a governor in Galilee, and could hardly make a mistake of thirty years in regard to an outbreak taking place within his own lifetime.

The bishop's fourth example is one in which he displays considerable ingenuity. Acts xiii. tells of Paul, in a truly Christian spirit, smiting with blindness a sorcerer called Elymas, or Barjesus, "which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man who called for Barnabas and Saul and desired to hear the word of God." Now Pliny the Elder mentions, among the authorities cited in his natural History, the name of Sergius Paulus, and because among other things that book deals with comets, portents, prognostications and earthquakes (by the way, Pliny forgot to mention the earthquake at the crucifixion of Jesus), our bishop contends that Sergius Paulus wrote on these subjects, and for this reason this prudent man had Elymas the sorcerer with him. If we concede so much it is of course but a small jump to allow that as soon as Paul called Elymas a "child of the Devil" blindness came upon him!

The last example offered is the fact that Gallio is called deputy of Achaia (Acts xviii., 12). Now, we know from profane history that Seneca had a brother of that name, and as he had been a consul, it is very likely he was also deputy of Achaia. This is almost as satisfactory as the Rev. T. S. Millington, who, in his "Testimony of the Heathen to the Truth of Holy Writ," cites Acts xvi., 12: "Phillippi, which is a chief city of that part of Macedonia and a colony," and then proves this divinely-important statement by quoting Pliny: "The colony of Phillippi is distant from Dyrrhachium three hundred and twenty miles." After this, who can doubt that the apostles spoke languages they had never learnt? The bishop, of course, does not mention that Josephus knew nothing either of Paul or Jesus, and that there is not a particle of historical proof that Herod, Felix, Festus or Agrippa knew Paul, as related in the Acts of the Apostles. The question of the general credibility of the writer of that romantic history is a very tempting one, but I forbear further comment, as the subject will form one of Mr. Foote's "Bible Romances."

J. M. WHEELER.

THE *Sussex Daily News* reports a lecture on the Bible and Freethought, by the Rev. A. T. Waugh, Vicar of St. Mary's, Brighton, in which that gentleman is made to say "The Bible was, after all, not a single book, but a library of revelations written under the most adverse circumstances." We had always been taught the Bible was inspired by the Holy Ghost. It is a pity his ghostship did not choose more propitious circumstances.

A PARSON who left his change behind at the refreshment room of the Carlisle railway station, has written a letter of complaint to the young lady in charge, whom he addresses as his "Sister for Christ's sake," in which he says: "I intended at first, in unwise anger, to write elsewhere about it, but a spirit, which I believe to be that of God revealed in Christ Jesus, the Savior, has shown me a more excellent way. Give the lawful change due to me to the first poor person you meet, for Christ's sake, out of your own wages. Have faith in him—the only way to God our Father—and there will follow in your life truth and honesty—and every blessing for the passing life that now is, and for the never-ending life to come. Amen.—Your loving brother in Christ, ———." Evidently Stiggins isn't dead yet.

"UNITARIAN COWARDICE."

DEAR MR. FOOTE,—I can make no complaint of your article under the above title, published in the last issue of the *Freethinker*, in so far as it affects the "Short Statement of the Existing Law of Blasphemy," prepared by Dr. Blake Odgers. But I do complain that you should treat Dr. Odgers as "a typical Unitarian." His "Statement" has not yet been acted upon by the Council of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, the discussion of it having been courteously adjourned to give me an opportunity of being present. There are Unitarians and Unitarians. Some doubtless deserve your reproaches, but others are true to the best traditions of an honorable past and to the new demands of duty to-day. While you were enjoying (!) Judge North's hospitality in Holloway Gaol, many Unitarians worked hard to obtain your liberation, and the Unitarian Association at its annual meeting adopted a memorial to the Home Secretary, asking for your release. Your just censure requires just limitations.—Truly yours,
WILLIAM SHARMAN.
Preston, 7th Nov., 1884.

THE "GOLDEN RULE" (HALF BRASS).

"Do unto others what you would have others do to you"
Is said by many folks to be a precept just and true;
But listen for a moment, and I'll prove the man a fool
Who regulates his conduct by this lauded "golden rule."

A jump from off the parapet! A plunge into the sea!
A suicide! By Jove, I'll try if saved she cannot be—
Yet stay; I'm wrong! If I sought death by jumping off a pier
I should not like another one with me to interfere.

"Hullo, you thief! I've got you now— What! think you I'm
a fool?"

You wish to be let off, indeed! You quote the 'Golden rule.'
By Jove, you're right! I quite agree; if I stood in your shoes,
And you in mine, I'd ask the same; so go! I won't refuse."

You must not think of what you would have others do to you,
Because the things that you might like, and what you'd wish to do,
Might not be for the common good; in which case, Duty's call
Would be to do what you, from others, wouldn't like at all.

This "Golden rule," like Dead Sea fruit, is rotten at the core;
Its wisdom is half foolishness—mere scholastic lore.
Don't judge another by yourself—all tastes do not agree—
But do your best for "common good," whate'er your best may be.

G. L. MAC.

REVIEWS.

Plain Truth about the Land Question. By S. EADON, M.A. Morrish: Bristol.—Deserves attention. It is well written, and it treats the whole question with knowledge and ability; although, perhaps, the author too implicitly accepts some of the economics with which Mr. George has rather embarrassed than assisted the great principle of nationalisation.

What Christianity has done for the World. By E. C. GIEVE. Morrish: Bristol.—An excellent little summary of the crimes of Christianity against liberty and progress from Constantine to Judge North.

Socialism a Curse. By "HUMANITAS." Freethought Publishing Co.—This is a reply to Dr. Aveling's "Curse of Capital." It is a keen criticism of the weak points of Socialism by a man who thinks for himself and expresses his ideas in a clear and honest manner. There is a special value in contributions to the discussion of this subject by unprofessional writers without any of the passion or prejudice of special leaders.

The Liberal Cabinet Photographic Almanack. Abel Heywood.—A wonderful pennyworth, containing portraits of all the Liberal Ministry and a large quantity of Radical facts, figures, and arguments.

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.—Of all the difficulties which obstruct religious faith, in its popular form at least, the existence of EVIL is undoubtedly the most insurmountable. The Epicurean dilemma is, and remains, unanswerable. If we accept a CREATOR, we must impute to him limited powers or indifference. There is no other course. If harmony and adjustment prove a designer, what does unfitness, and all the misery it entails, prove? Admit creation, and we shackle belief with the imperfection of the work. If there were but one *vibrato* in existence, that one would gnaw the vitals out of the design argument.—Henry Coke, "Creeds of the Day," vol. i., p. 237; 1883.

THE ATONEMENT.—Equinoctial Christology adopted and sanctified the savage doctrine of blood sacrifice and vicarious expiation, which is a complete reversal of the common law of civilisation, that all sane persons shall be held responsible for their deeds and not acquitted because the innocent may have suffered for the guilty. A doctrine so cowardly and immoral must have rotted the backbone out of all manhood if men were no better than their professed beliefs, and had not been fed from other and healthier fountains of life.—Gerald Massey, "Natural Genesis," vol. ii., p. 501; 1883.

PROFANE JOKES.

EARLIEST INSTANCE OF VEGETABLE CANNIBALISM.—The first pair devoured the first apple.

A **BANTERING** acquaintance of the other sex remarked to a woman, "I never heard of seven devils being cast out of a man. "No," was the reply, "they've got 'em yet!"

A **MINISTER** was endeavoring to convince his hearers of the fallacies of Darwinism, when he observed that they were not paying proper attention. "Brethren," said he, "when I am trying to explain the distinguishing peculiarities of the monkey, if you wish to understand them you should look directly at me."

A **CLERGYMAN** recently told his congregation, in describing heaven, that "it will always be Sunday there." The small boy who is obliged to accompany his parents to church twice a day, and attend Sabbath-school in the afternoon, will be apt to go into training for some other place, where Sunday doesn't come quite so often.

LITTLE NELL: "Ma, are those ladies going up to heaven. Ma: "Oh,

no, pet. The balloon is tied, and will be pulled down again in a few moments." Little Nell: "Well, wouldn't they get to heaven if they'd kept right on?" Ma: "I suppose so." Little Nell: "But they wouldn't be 'lowed to go in, I know." Ma: "Why not?" Little Nell: "'Tause they dot too much clothes on."

A **NUMBER** of women at Saratoga pray every afternoon for the reform and conversion of their frivolous sisters "who live for dress only." Once a parson reminded his hired man at the breakfast-table that he had eaten eleven buckwheats. "Well, you count and I'll eat," said the hired man, harpooning the twelfth cake with his fork. The "frivolous sisters" at Saratoga say to the exhorting women, "You pray and we'll dress."

A **CLERGYMAN** preached a sermon, which one of his audience commended. "Yes," said the gentleman to whom it was commended, "it was a good sermon, but he stole it." This was told to the preacher. He resented it, and asked the gentleman to retract what he had said. "I am not," replied the aggressor, "very apt to retract my words, but in this instance I will. I said you had stolen the sermon. I find I was wrong, for, on returning home and referring to the book whence I thought it was taken, I found it there."

New Pamphlets Just Out.

The Great Mistake. By COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL. Price 1d.

Life and Death. An Examination of the Question—"Does Man Survive Death?" By W. W. COLLINS. Price 2d.

Twenty-four Reasons why the Bible is Not the Word of God. By a CAMBRIDGE GRADUATE. Price 1d.

By G. W. FOOTE.

The Folly of Prayer. New Edition; with fresh Introduction. Reduced to 1d.

Atheism and Morality. New Edition; fresh Introduction. Reduced to 1d.

Proposed Manchester Secular Hall Company. THE above Company will have for its object the gradual accumulation of funds for the erection or purchase of premises suitable for the requirements of the Manchester Branch, N. S. S. The Shares will be of £1 each, and of two classes, A and B. The "A" Shares will be payable in full on application; the "B" Shares will be payable by monthly subscriptions of One Shilling per Share. Applications may be made to the undersigned, and it is hoped that all friends in the district will assist.—A. HEMINGWAY, Cor. Sec., 25 High Street, Chatham Road.

JUST OUT

No. 3. PROFANE JOKES. 1d.

JUST PUBLISHED.

WHAT CHRISTIANITY HAS DONE FOR THE WORLD. A Lecture by Edward Gieve member of the Bristol branch of the N. S. S.—An historical *resumé*. 16 pages. One Penny; post free, 1d. Six copies or more sent post free. New list and splendid quotation from "Ecco Homo" with every book packet. Also just out, **THE LAND QUESTION**, by Dr. Eadon. A bold and vigorous onslaught, showing clearly that the people are the rightful owners of the land, and that it must be restored to them by the aristocracy who have usurped possession of it. Price Twopence.—W. H. MORRISH Bookseller, 18 Narrow Wine Street, Bristol.

JUST OUT.

SOCIALISM A CURSE. A Reply to a Lecture delivered by Edward B. Aveling, D.Sc., entitled "The Curse of Capital." By "Humanitas." Price 3d. Also by same Author: "Is God the First Cause?" 4d.; bound in cloth with other Essays, 1s. 6d.; "Thoughts upon Heaven and kindred matters," 6d.; "The Follies of the Lord's Prayer Exposed," 2d.; "How Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., was treated by the House of Commons," "Mr. Bradlaugh and the Oath Question," 2d.—Freethought Publishing Company, 63 Fleet Street, London, E.C.

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