

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub Editor—J. M. Wheeler.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 96.



NOAH'S MENAGERIE, OR HOW WILL HE PACK THEM?

"Of clean beasts, and of beasts that are not clean, and of fowls, and of every thing that creepeth upon the earth, there went in two and two unto Noah into the ark, the male and the female, as God had commanded Noah."—GENESIS vii., 8-9.

POOR JESUS.

"THE position of our Society was never more critical." This is the first line of a private circular issued by the Secretaries of the Christian Evidence Society, in order to raise the wind. Their income last year was £1,400, but during this autumn "£120 less than usual have been received," and as the circular says, "this deficiency is very serious." But the worst of it is that the Society has to "enter upon the more expensive winter campaign with an empty exchequer." Poor Jesus!

But why Poor Jesus? Well, the Christian Evidence Society is the only organisation whose business it is to defend him against the assaults of infidelity, and if nothing can be done for him during the winter through lack of funds, he will be left forlorn and defenceless through his worst season. Infidels are especially active in the winter, lecturing, writing and discussing. Their papers circulate widely and their halls are full. They storm the kingdom of heaven and overwhelm its guards. And the din of conflict reaches the blessed Trinity, who sit shivering with fear, and wondering what it will all come to. Jahveh and the Ghost have long been effete; even Jesus has little fight left in him. He depends on mercenaries, and they threaten to lay down their arms for want of pay. "They do not," say the C. E. S. Secretaries, "spend beyond their income." In other words, they demand their wages in advance; and no pay, no fight. Poor Jesus!

Alack! Jesus himself can pay them nothing. His exchequer has been empty since Judas threw up the bag,

and he has lost the art of working miracles. He has to depend on the subscriptions of his friends. They subscribe heavily for their religion, so far as they enjoy it themselves. They keep up the weekly service, repair the church, and pay the preacher his stipend. All this ministers to their comfort and respectability. But to save their Savior from his worst enemies they will scarcely subscribe a farthing. The Christian Evidence Society can only raise £1,400 a year with great difficulty, the major portion of which seems to be mortgaged in advance for salaries. Poor Jesus!

More than half the £1,400 appears to come from a few wealthy subscribers. These, alas, are gradually falling off, from death or other causes, and fresh subscribers do not arise to take their places. Poor Jesus!

Messrs. Engstrom and Waterman do not show much "fruit." They cannot boast of a great return for last year's income. "During the summer," they say, "the open-air lectures have been as numerous as last year." They might have added, and as silly and as malignant. Instead of this, however, they say that "Testimony to their usefulness has been very frequently given." By the lecturers, no doubt. Surely by no one else. The C. E. S. cannot, we believe, point to a single Freethinker who has been converted or shaken by its lecturers last year. Expenditure in the Lord's defence, £1,400—result *nil*. Poor Jesus!

With half that income any Freethought organisation would keep London alive, make incursions into the provinces, carry "infidelity" to thousands, and make hundreds of converts. With small incomes, and often burdened with debt, we struggle against tremendous odds,

and every year brings us greater success. But the Lord's friends, with many advantages, cannot get on at all. Poor Jesus!

We are filled with compassion; and seeing that Mr. Engstrom does not succeed as he might in raising the wind, we venture to give him a suggestion. Let him reprint our two articles, in last week's *Freethinker* and in this, as specimens of what he has to suffer. If that does not excite pity and evoke subscriptions, nothing will. It is worth a trial. Yet we fear that Mr. Engstrom is too modest to act on our proposal. In that case the Christian Evidence Society will grow poorer and poorer. Its officials will sing "We've got no work to do," and what is worse "We've got no cash to spend." Poor Jesus!

G. W. FOOTE.

GOD AND THE CANAANITES.

IN that first fable-book of childhood, the book of Genesis, we read how the patriarch Noah, being tired of overmuch water, got so drunk that he shamelessly exposed himself in his tent. Ham saw his father and told his brethren. When the old man awoke from his wine he cursed not Ham but Ham's fourth son Canaan saying "Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." To visit the sins of the fathers on the children was a way they had in those times.

Jahveh made himself a party to this curse by telling his chosen people, when wandering in the wilderness, to go into the land of Canaan and dispossess and destroy its inhabitants. More sanguinary laws never disgraced the code of any barbarous nation than those in which the Jews are told how to deal with their enemies (see Deut. xx). In the seventh chapter of Deuteronomy Jahveh promises his people the country of seven nations greater and mightier than themselves, accompanied with the usual merciless order of extermination. "And when Jahveh, thy God, shall deliver them before thee; thou shalt smite them and utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them." Nevertheless, Jahveh was only to put them out little by little "lest the beasts of the field increase upon thee." But according to Jahveh's orders, putting them out little by little was to be accomplished by saving alive "nothing that breatheth," (chapter xx., 16).

After the death of Moses, the Israelites crossed the Jordan under General Joshua, and proceeded to carry out the injunctions of the Almighty maker of heaven and earth. They took Jericho, its walls tumbling at the sound of their rams' horns, and "utterly destroyed all that was in the city, both man and woman, young and old, and ox, and sheep, and ass, with the edge of the sword." No mercy was shown even to the poor dumb animals. They murdered all the inhabitants of Ai, male and female, and burnt their city. Jahveh pelted the Amorites with hailstones, and stayed the sun in his course in order to deliver them into the hands of Joshua. This favorite of God mercilessly destroyed "all that breathed" in all the cities of the country he invaded. The book that goes under his name is from beginning to end a record of the most sickening and sanguinary details of carnage commanded by Jahveh.

For this forcible invasion of Canaan, the violent dispossession of its inhabitants, the unscrupulous appropriation of their property and the avowed purpose of utter extermination, numerous attempts at justification have been made by Christians. A frequent plea is that the Canaanites were wicked idolators, worshippers of Baal and Astarte, and their slaughter was necessary that the Jews might not fall into idolatry. Of course it was impossible for God to turn the hearts of these wicked people to the true religion with one God, which he was going afterwards to supersede by a new revelation with three. And yet the Jews not only did fall into idolatry, but it was their normal state. Baal and Astarte represented the lord and queen of heaven. We wonder whose emblems were those that the Jews carried about in their ark of testimony?

Of the "wickedness" of the Canaanites there is no other evidence than that they fought for their own country. The Jews were usurpers and marauders, and unless patriotism be a crime and plundering be a virtue, it is the Canaanites and not the Jews who deserve our admiration. We read of no such atrocities committed on their side as by

their enemies. When Sisera was defeated by the Jewish general, Barak, he fled, weary and faint, toward the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, whom, being an ally of the Canaanites, he thought he could trust for protection and hospitality. "And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, unto me: fear not" (Judges, iv., 18). And when he turned in and slept, this treacherous saint illustrated her *faith*, and became immortalised in both Testaments by taking a tent-pin in one hand and a hammer in the other, and smiting the nail through the temples of her sleeping guest. No womanly deed of kindness is praised in the Bible, but this atrocious act of perfidy and murder is extolled to the skies. "Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, be; blessed shall she be above women in the tent," sang Deborah the prophetess.

The cruelties practised towards the Canaanites have been justified on the ground that Noah had given Palestine to Shem, and only Africa to Ham and his descendants. That such a pretended arrangement could be held to justify Joshua in his atrocities sufficiently shows how Bible belief will warp the hearts and minds of its votaries. Again, it has been contended that the Canaanites deserved their fate as they were the aggressors. This justification at any rate would apply only to the territory on the other side of the Jordan, and we must remember that we only have the statements of one side as to the alleged aggression. Many other ingenious reasons have been assigned for the wholesale slaughter of the Canaanites, none of which are even hinted at in the Bible. There it rested simply on Jahveh's commands. He is made the responsible party; and his orders are sufficient evidence of his barbarity.

The example of God's holy word has frequently been pleaded in excuse for shameless outrages committed by Christian nations upon their enemies. It was cited by the Spanish priests in upholding the savage campaigns against the peaceful and highly cultivated Mexicans and Peruvians. It has been held to justify the extermination of heathen idolators in all quarters of the globe. Nor, can it be doubted that the relentless spirit evinced in the sanguinary history of the Jews has been largely reflected in the history of Christendom. We see it alike in the stern and martial zeal of the Puritans and in the fanatical cruelty of the Crusaders. What is called the cause of God has always been distinguished by peculiar enormities. When the Christians took Jerusalem in 1099 every person within it, Christians excepted, was put to the sword, without distinction of age or sex. When Saladin the infidel retook the city in 1187, he granted Lusignan's Queen a capitulation that exceeded her hopes. He massacred none, but even set prisoners at liberty with a generosity which had been without example in Christian warfare.

J. M. WHEELER.

INGERSOLL SAVED BY A JOKE.

IN one of the battles of the late war Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll was ordered to advance with his regiment upon a squad of Confederates that were hidden in a grove on the right of the line. After a short contest his command broke and fled in disorder, so that when the smoke lifted he found himself surrounded by fifteen or twenty grey-coats, with muskets at their shoulders in attitudes ready to fire. Taking in his peril at a glance, he waved his hand to them to desist, and said: "I have been thinking over the condition of affairs for the past second and a half very seriously, and, gentlemen, I have come to the conclusion that I shall acknowledge the Southern Confederacy." He beamed upon them with his sunniest smile, and while they stood dumbfounded at his cool presence of mind, he adroitly wheeled around, and putting spurs to his horse was out of gun-shot before they recovered from their amazement. Ever after this he was known as the Yankee Colonel who saved his life by a joke.—*Globe* (Toronto.)

A BOY of eleven, on entering a middle-class school, was told to write out the Lord's Prayer. He began, "Our Father which art in even, Harold be thy name," and, turning to the master, who was looking over his shoulder, remarked, with a self-satisfied air, "That's my name, too!"

A CLERGYMAN had just entered a tramcar in the North when the conductor asked him, "Where do you want to go to, sir?" "To Markham:" "You'll have to get into the car on the other side." The clergyman grumbled, clattered quickly out, went around the car and entered—not the car on the other side of the street, but the same car on its other side.

ARGUMENT AND RIDICULE.

(FROM A CHRISTIAN POINT OF VIEW).

Christianity should not be assailed by ridicule, but by legitimate argument.—*Popular Cant.*

If all in the Bible with Nature accorded,
A commonplace volume the Bible would be.
If Jahveh submission to Nature afforded,
Such a weak-minded "Godhead" would never suit me.

You may argue until you are withered and grey,
And prove that "such things" cannot possibly be.
Right blandly I'll listen to all that you say,
But you only make dearer the Bible to me.

For the greater and plainer the impossibility,
The greater the glory of God is, you see.
Such performances show a transcendent ability,
And only endear my own Jahveh to me.

But when scoffers make blasphemous jokes and abuse,
I really can't stand it; and so, to be free,
Vain argument's powers I demand that they use,
And not hurt my feelings by laughing at me.

A STAUNCH BELIEVER.

ACID DROPS.

THE Salvation Army at Brooklyn are quarrelling as to who shall have the handling of the funds.

AN American paper gives an account of Chinese Idolatry in San Francisco. The Celestials march along the principal streets with "some kind of deity or other" and a great red dragon, amid the noise of crackers, trumpets and cymbals. The *Christian Statesman* sees the ridiculousness of this form of religion and advocates legal repression. The *Liberal* observes that eating the body and drinking the blood of Christ seems far more sickening than the Chinese religious rites, and a more hideous monster than God as described in the Bible cannot be conceived of.

THE Rev. M. W. Christopher, it is announced, "is suffering from an illness of such a character that he is unable to do anything after seven in the evening." Rather a peculiar illness.

ACCORDING to Miss Emma Booth, who ought to know, the Salvation Army is very considerably in debt. The organisation which—or rather the "General," who—has so dexterously united the worship of God and Mammon, owns two newspapers with enormous circulations, possesses in every large town trading depôts in which a brisk business is done in clothing, publications and other articles on which a handsome profit is realised. It confesses to having received from the public enormous sums of money. "General" Booth gives no account of his stewardship, but, acknowledging he is in debt, instead of showing a balance-sheet, only asks for more.

THE Rev. F. W. Bardsley, vicar of Huddersfield, should talk of what he knows. He says there is no history in the sacred books of the East. One of the Chinese Classics is devoted entirely to the early history of China. The legends of the Koran are at least as historical as those of the Bible.

THE *East End News* has a paragraph on "Salvation from Sin," followed by a very similar paragraph on Holloway's Pills. In each case we are to believe, dismiss all our doubts and come and be healed. Of the two panaceas, we are quite sure that the pills are the more genuine and efficacious.

THE *Christian* reports a speech of Dr. Murray Mitchell at the Copenhagen Conference, in which he says, "A thousand thousand of the human race are still ignorant of the work of Christ!" Dr. Mitchell went on to inform his auditors that he lately saw in London a placard headed—"The Dying Creed." He wondered which of the heathen creeds was meant, but discovered that it was Christianity.

LAST week Mr. Barnard, one of the representatives of the Christian Evidence Society, lectured at Hollington, near Hastings. He referred with great glee to our imprisonment, and said that, considering who were inside the prison van which took us to Holloway, the letters "V.R." on its side meant "Vagabonds Removed." This is another specimen of the courteous and kindly language which Mr. Engstrom says is used by his society when dealing with Freethinkers. Of course Mr. Barnard will deny having said so, just as the other man did whose language we exposed a short time ago.

THE London Mission has not pleased all the Christians. Some say it was made the cover for introducing private confession; others object to giving up their seats to outsiders. The *Record* cites a long-established official at the East End, who said: "We used to have a clean church, but our rector has made it a den of thieves."

THE Rev. Henry Ward Beecher hasn't a very high opinion of his fellow ministers. Addressing a large audience on the Presidential election, he said: "There went to see Mr. Blaine yesterday 600 ministers, it was said. Good heavens! What's he done that there should be such a visitation? When an average man is on his deathbed he don't want but one clergyman, but this political sinner—bigger than any other sinner—wants hundreds of ministers about him. (Applause.) These ministers were owls and bats, devoid of moral vision. They are good enough men in their way and in their own parishes, but they know nothing of the outside world. I would not have a son of mine under the ministrations of one of these clergymen and for him to rear in the way of truth and honesty for all the world!" (Sensation and applause).

A RESPECTABLY-DRESSED woman has applied to the Stratford magistrates for the "gold she had in store—a great quantity of it—in the kingdom of heaven." She gave her name and address, and went away much pleased with the assurance given her by the clerk that the matter should be seen to. We hope the clerk will keep his promise and that the relieving officer who is deputed to make inquiries will give us the result. But how will he manage to reach heaven and return with his report on the bullion kept in the celestial safes and cellars?

No one is "compelled" to attend church in this free and enlightened country; yet this sort of conversation is not altogether unheard of:—

Mr. Pecksniff: "Why were you not at church this morning, Sarah?"

Sarah: "Well, sir, I didn't go because for one thing I wanted to write to my mother."

Mr. P.: "The Sabbath is not the proper day to write letters either to your parents or to anyone else. Such worldly matters should be relegated to the six profane days; the Sabbath should be reserved for religious duties and for communion with your Maker, who was himself so gracious as to rest upon that day from his arduous labor of creating the universe."

S.: "Besides, sir, I find that two miles to church and two miles back is a long way to walk each Sunday, and —"

Mr. P.: A long way to walk to the house of God, Sarah! a long way to walk to worship and thank the God who has so graciously spared and protected you during the past week from murder, pestilence and sudden death! Oh, Sarah, Sarah, what an ungrateful and rebellious spirit you display!"

S.: "And I can't afford to buy boots very frequently, sir; and my boots not being thick, and having to go across so many fields and through so much damp grass, gives me cold."

Mr. P.: "Better far, Sarah, that you should suffer in your feet than that your never-dying soul should be endangered. Sarah, I entreat you, fly from the wrath to come! Choose between your feet and your soul. As the blessed Scripture says, If your foot offend you, amputate it! Better to lose four feet than one soul. Go now, see that dinner is ready betimes, and put the best wine on the table. Cultivate a less rebellious spirit; remember that to mortify the flesh is to serve God."

A CORRESPONDENT in the *Echo* complains of the difficulty experienced by the London Society of Compositors in dealing with the printers of Christian and teetotal publications. While these journals profess a great desire to improve the position of the working-man, they stedfastly set their face against paying fair wages. The writer points out that Mr. Bradlaugh has always stipulated that his workmen should receive the full wages fixed by the Society, and he continues, "Whilst ministers of religion are professing their desire to benefit the working man, the much despised Atheist sets them the example of how to do it. To starve a man in this world to fit him for the world to come is a process hardly likely to meet with much favor among working men."

THE Archbishop of Canterbury has issued a prayer for the soldiers and sailors engaged in the Nile Expedition. He beseeches "Almighty Lord God" to take them into his "own hands" and to be their tower of strength, so that they may be protected against all dangers. The Lord is to make them bullet-proof and help them in their slaughterings to the advancement of his kingdom. What is the difference between these incantations and those of savages?

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* having been anxious to know what the *Rock* would make of Ruskin's lecture on Protestantism, the latter periodical replies frankly that it can make nothing of it; and really hasn't the "smallest notion" of what he understands by Protestantism and what by Catholicism. It also doubts whether the professor himself knows what he means.

A NOVEL by Mr. E. W. Howe ("The History of a Country Town.") describing life among the sparsely-settled tracts of the Far West, shows how the lives of men and women may be made utterly miserable by a narrow, fanatical creed. The people of the country town which is taken as an example are mostly Calvinists, and do what Christians in this country have long ceased to do—they carry their religion into every-day life, with the result that life to them is merely the gloomy portal to the charnel-house

These people are hardworking, thrifty, and in comparative comfort, so far as that means plenty to eat and drink and the wherewithal to clothe themselves. But their creed forbids them all amusement, all recreation, everything that would break the monotony of their lives. Sunday finds them gloomily wending their way to church, "where the business of serving the Lord" is despatched as soon as possible to allow the people to return home and nurse their misery. Debarred from any mental culture save the soul-cramping study of the Bible, cut off from contact with anything but their narrow, hopeless, deadening creed, what wonder that "the pale unhappy women spoke in low and trembling tones of heavy crosses to bear, and sat down crying as though their hearts would break?" Cannot Mr. Spurgeon be persuaded to spend the winter in the Far West instead of on the shores of the Mediterranean, and there witness the grinding tyranny which is the logical outcome of his gloomy Calvinistic creed.

THE statement of the *Nonconformist*, that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners own over forty million of property, having been challenged by the *Church Times*, it now gives the following figures from Parliamentary returns:—

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| Value of the episcopal estates (exclusive of St. David's)... | £14,185,558 |
| Value of the capitular estates (omitting St. Paul's) | 18,573,325 |
| Value of property in London, not included in above | 6,698,730 |

£39,457,613

THERE are signs of life and progress even in the land of the Inquisition and the *auto da fe*. Anti-clerical demonstrations have taken place at Madrid among the students. The authorities have had to employ force to disperse them. Many arrests were made and several students and Guards were injured. The disturbances were caused by the action of the bishops in prohibiting the reading of certain recent speeches by a popular professor who advocated religious freedom for teachers.

THE Rev. E. H. Hawkins says that £50,000,000 have been spent in the erection of church buildings since 1840.

THE author of "My Comforter and other Religious Poems" is engaged on some more immortal verse to be called "My Trousers Suspenders and other poems."

THE *Christian Commonwealth* says that "The Glories of Mary" by St. Ligouri has received the commendation of an Archbishop. The book distinctly declares:—1. That Mary co-operated in the original work of human redemption. 2. That she herself conquered hell and crushed the head of the serpent. 3. That she is now the only Savior of sinners. 4. That she is Omnipotent. 5. That she is Queen of the Universe. 6. That God Himself is under obligation, and is indebted to her. 7. That while she is represented as obtaining favors for mankind by prayer, her petitions are really commands to God. All who refuse to believe in this book are blasphemers of Mary.

WE never advertise. Our kind religious friends do it sufficiently for us. "A Scotchman" and "Fidei Defensor," in two successive numbers of that lugubrious journal the *Record*, calls attention to our existence with many lamentations that it is not cut off. The latter says: "That such a paper is permitted to exist is scandalous and humiliating in the extreme. Impious presumption could proceed no further, and, being conducted by educated and able writers, renders its effects more insidious and fatal." He pleads that "efforts be immediately made to stem this torrent of impious pollution, if the judgment of an offended God is to be averted from this land." Why won't these gentlemen let "an offended God" look after his own dignity. How they would like a censorship of the press under control of the clergy.

THE Rev. T. Moore, of Maidstone, says he wishes that Secularists would observe the same respect for the opinions of those who differ from them as the Christians do. Does he mean that we should prevent Christians from sitting in Parliament, and send them to gaol if unable to crush the expression of their views?

WE have seldom read a more stupid or mendacious lecture than one by Mr. F. Sessions of Gloucester, reported in the *Weston-Super-Mare Gazette* and entitled, "What the Bible has done for the World." This person says, "It was only where the Bible was fettered the evil of slavery existed, and war has been the usual condition of heathen, not Christian nations." The contrary is the truth. The Bible-supported slavery for centuries in every Bible-believing land, and the Christian nations have been and are in an almost constant state of warfare.

THE last number of the *School Board Chronicle* gives an account of the different systems of religious teaching in various Board Schools. In the greater number, as in London, there is Bible reading with slight explanation. At Manchester oral instruction is given and passages of Scripture committed to memory. At Liverpool prayers and hymns are used, and the Bible read with explanation and instruction. At Birmingham the Bible is read without note or comment. At Leicester only portions of the

Bible selected by the Board are used. Middlesborough has a rule that the Bible shall not be used as a class-book. Middleston, Hawes, Heckmondwicke and Liversedge make no provision for religious instruction.

SPEAKING at the Walsall Quarter Session, the Recorder, Mr. J. W. Wheale, advocated the restoration to indictments of the phrase attributing to the prisoner that, not having the fear of God before his eyes and being moved and seduced by the Devil, he committed the offence charged. Why not? When one of the Peculiar People stands charged with having followed the directions given in the epistle of James, and called in the elders of the church instead of a doctor to minister to a dying child, his indictment should read that, "not having the fear of God before his eyes and being seduced by the Devil (with a big, big D.), he did"—follow the injunctions of the brother of the Lord.

THE Rev. Father Greene, 68 Hazlewood Crescent, Kentish Town, London, advertises that in his church, prayers are said daily "for the suffering souls in Purgatory. Names are placed on the yearly list for one shilling, on the permanent list for ten shillings." No doubt this brings in the stamps.

A U S T R A L I A N I T E M S .

(FROM THE *Sydney Bulletin*.)

THE Salvation Army appear to be getting rather unpopular in Adelaide. On the whole—and after mature consideration—we are sorry for this. For the only difference between the Army and the Horthodox clergy is this: One tells you you will go to hell with a brass band accompaniment; and the other tells you you will go hell without it.

AN organist is wanted for a Memorial Church in Melbourne and candidates are requested to send their applications to the "Australasian Sawmills." That's good. Church music and saw-mill work are at last recognising that they are twins.

THE Revs. Yarrington and Stead, of Maitland, have told the brethren that "no Christian could attend a theatre."

Just so, ye holy men of God;
And while your pious hearers nod,
As o'er your drowsy theme you throw
Your drowsier drone, in ceaseless flow,
And nourish souls with ancient rot
Of Baalam's ass and Mrs. Lot,
And flout us all with reasons stale
For Jonah's antics in the whale:
O, yes, within our cushioned pew,
By all means, let us list to you—
Learn all about the future state,
And plank our silver in the plate;
Away with Shakespeare's feeble plays—
Give us instead Awmens and Yeas;
Let music flee, and glittering shows
Give way to psalms sung through the nose.
Let Yarringtons and Steads increase,
And for grand opera give us geese.
Away, ye Hamlets, Juliets, all,
That Yarrington and Stead may bawl
How nine of every ten must go
From life to dwell in hopeless woe;
And let us learn, ere 'tis too late,
That stals and pits are but hell's gate.
And when ye hear the prompter's bell,
Ah, learn, dear friends, it rings for hell!

MR. FRANK HUSSEY gave a burnt-cork entertainment in Jerusalem, and the graves opened and several old worthies attended and conducted themselves riotously. It appears that Methuselah insisted on having a box set apart for him on account of his age (949), and Hussey objected. He argued that 949 was his age last time he attended, but, that as he was only now born again, he could not be admitted except as a baby in arms. Solomon argued that on account of his notorious wisdom he was entitled to free passes for his household, and stood outside the door with 300 of his wives and 700 concubines, all with their hair banged and with opera shawls on their arms. Lot's wife was allowed a position as a lay figure at the back of the stage, and the applause of the forty-two larrikins who had been torn up by the bears was deafening. Shadrach, Meschach and Abednego offered to appear in their great fire scene, and Nebuchadnezzar proposed to come on and eat a truss of hay. The illustrious Jonah brought around a small whale, and tried to run an opposition show opposite, and to crawl down the whale's throat and out again without putting out his cigar; but the authorities interfered after his first entry, and the Mayor placed a padlock with the city seals on its mouth, and locked him inside. His language, it was said, was awful when they turned the whale into the Jordan, and that animal, on finding it was too shallow, vomited him out in the old style before he had secured some specimens from the hangings of his old apartments. A stand-up fight took place between Samson and Goliath, who, on being requested to leave, challenged the house to a glorious "mill," if Hussey and the other corner-man would only lend them a jaw each and point out the Philistines.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Nov. 30, Hall of Science, Old Street, London:—At 11, "Christian Socialism;" at 7, "Christianity in its Coffin."
 Tuesday, Dec. 2, Claremont Hall, London:—At 8.30, "Lives of Christ. II.—Matthew."
 Thursday, 4, Hall of Science, London:—At 8.30, "The History of Priestcraft."—II.

December 6, Cramlington; 7, South Shields; 8, Houghton-le-Spring; 9, Claremont Hall, London; 11, Hall of Science, London; 14, Oldham; 15, Mossley; 16, Claremont Hall, London; 18, Hall of Science, London; 21, Hall of Science; 28, Milton Hall, London.

January 4, Rochdale; 11, Buddersfield; 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.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—Ernest Dare, J. McNally, F. Weddell, A. Young Freethinker, H. T. Bailey, Constant Reader, Medicus.

W. JACKSON.—We wish you all success in your encounter with the Wesleyan minister.

W. LEAMAN (Kimberley).—We send you all the numbers of the present volume that are in print.

H. POULTON.—We are sorry to hear that Mr. Goulding has gone to prison. We know what prison is, and understand the peril he runs. We honor his motive; but unless he is quite sure of not harming his wife and children, he might have paid the fine. Still, he is entitled to judge for himself.

W. C. SAVILLE.—Shall appear.

W. G. EDEN.—The Churchman who told you that some of the original writings of John are preserved in Cambridge University told you a falsehood. None of the originals of any of the books of the Bible are in existence. At Cambridge they have what is called the Codex Beza. It is probably of the sixth century, and differs materially from the received Greek text of the New Testament. No known MS. of the New Testament dates earlier than the end of the fourth century.

H. STANLEY.—To search out all the clerical convictions of the last half century would be too laborious a task, even if there were any complete record. There is an American publication, "The Crimes of Preachers."

R. BRICKWOOD.—Amberley's "Analysis of Religious Belief," Professor Newman's "Christianity in its Cradle," Dr. S. Davidson's "Introduction to the New Testament," Mill's and Clifford's Essays; also the works of Hume and Darwin.

F. B.—Thomas Scott, of Ramsgate, author of "The English Life of Jesus," is a very different person from the Bible commentary man. Shall appear.

G. BATES.—The pamphlet in which a pretended Atheist is made to say "Marriage is altogether a mistake, and such an institution would never have lasted till now but for the notions got from the Bible," is, on the face of it, a Christian concoction, and hardly deserves serious answer.

EVERTON TOFFEE.—"Freethought Gleanings" will appear from time to time. A number are published in pamphlet form at one penny. Thanks.

A. BARKER.—Has already appeared.

OSCAR HERMANN.—Clifford's Essays, 32s. Glad to hear the *Freethinker* is just the thing you wanted.

J. PRITCHARD.—The paper is not worth troubling about. If the Liverpool Branch wants "rousing," why don't you help to rouse it?

HOMO.—The number is out of print.

W. SPOKES.—The correction is not essential, but as it is as well to be perfectly accurate, the matter shall be seen to in the next edition.

O. STOCKER.—Thanks for the suggestion.

E. LOWE (Mossley).—You will see it has been entered in the list.

J. MORRISON.—Deut. xxiii, 1.

PRUDENTIAL.—The joke has already appeared in our columns, and Herman Merivale's letter is too long for insertion; besides, it has already appeared in many papers.

H. CHECKLY.—Hardly up to the mark.

W. C. SCRIVENER.—As this is a free country, the Rev. J. Chadburn is quite at liberty to believe that John Stuart Mill would have become a Christian if he had lived a few years longer. But as a matter of fact he did not live a few years longer. It is only silly people who talk about might-have-beens.

L. S.—The work of emancipating the human mind from superstition is a considerable service. Among the great emancipators may be mentioned Hume, Diderot and Strauss. There is a *Freethinker's* Text Book published at 63 Fleet Street.

T. E.—Do you mean Bastian's "Beginnings of Life," or Dr. Aveling's "Origin of Man"?

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Toronto Globe—Echo—Women's Suffrage Report—Hull Times—Chicago Radical Review—Liberal (Barton Co.)—Sydney Liberal (two numbers)—N. Y. Truthseeker—Manchester Examiners—Hastings Times—East End News—Liberty—Colonist (New Zealand)—Kent Messenger—Weston-super-Mare Gazette—Oldham Chronicle.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A LARGE audience assembled at the London Hall of Science last Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on Christianity in its Cradle. This evening (November 30) Mr. Foote will lecture again in the same hall on Christianity in its Coffin, a novel subject capable of various treatment and calculated to excite much curiosity and discussion. The morning lecture will be on Christian Socialism.

This week's *Freethinker* will be in the hands of its London readers before Mr. Foote begins his new course of lectures on the History of Priestcraft. We are not aware that this subject has ever before been treated in this complete manner on the platform. Our chief wish is that all the pious people in London could hear the whole course.

OUR readers will be glad to know that the Rev. W. Sharman contributes a short article to the December number of *Progress* entitled, "An Intellectual 'Blasphemer,'" dealing with a new work by Mr. P. G. Hammerton.

A WARM treat for the cold weather will be ready for our readers in a few days in the shape of our Christmas Number. Full of fun and profanity, it will equal if not surpass all previous efforts. Among the contents will be a full-page illustration of the Christian God, from a photograph, an illustration of how the birth of Jesus came about, a missing chapter of the Bible on Joseph's coat, with full-page illustration, and a series of illustrations showing how Abraham didn't sacrifice Isaac. All the well-known writers on the *Freethinker* have contributions, which would be too numerous to mention. See advertisement next week for list.

We hear that a munificent friend of Freethought in Manchester has promised £500 as a gift to the new Secular Hall Company, on condition that four per cent. interest is paid on the amount during the lifetime of himself and his wife, and that the work is completed in three years. Now then, Manchester Freethinkers, here is a capital start for you. Throw yourselves at once into the scheme with all the earnestness you show in applauding the Sunday lectures. You have a good chance now, and you would be simpletons to miss it. Especially let the wealthier among you remember *their* duty; and if you all pull together with a strong hard pull you will secure for Freethought a splendid position in your noble city.

THE Rev. R. Lovett at the annual meeting of the Tract Society said that there were "thousands and thousands" of Hindoos who cheerfully received the doctrines of Atheism and "eagerly read the writings of Bradlaugh, Foote and Mrs. Beant." These writings, he said, were having an "enormous influence" in India, which was being "flooded" with them.

MR. F. RAYNER, of the Freethought Depot, Hanley, reports having caused some commotion by opening a Freethought stall in the market at Crewe. The sale of literature was very encouraging.

WE have received the following further subscriptions for Mr. F. Goulding. Grays (Essex) per W. D. Munroe, R. B. Montgomery, 6d.; E. Powell, 6d.; F. Thornett, 1s.; W. Smith, 6d.; W. D. Munroe, 6d.; W. Breward, 6d.; J. Linn, 6d.; G. Taylor, 6d.; G. Snell, 6d.; R. Wright, 1s.; J. Morison, 2s. 6d.; J. Fitzgerald, 1s.; L. Breeze, 5s.; J. Stone, 6d.

RIDICULING GOD.

"VERAX" has contributed to the *Manchester Weekly Times* an article whose title, "The Bow at a Venture," gives no clue to its real subject, which is the unfairness or invisibility, as he would argue, of employing ridicule in the theistic controversy, as is done by writers "of whom" he says "Colonel Ingersoll is perhaps the most prominent example."

As we are about to differ from "Verax" we will commence by thanking him for the liberal tone of most of his remarks, for his excellent intentions, and above all for the invaluable admissions he makes in philosophically and historically tracing back the evolution of the modern Christian deity from the "tribal God" whose "barbarous" and "grotesque" actions are recorded in the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. The service he renders in bringing the "theistic controversy" before the notice of a far too uninquiring and stagnant-minded public in an honest and argumentative spirit seems to us so important that we more than condone the fact that his practical demolition of the orthodox Christian God of the Old Testament is put forward in the guise of, and even as a reason for, the condemnation of a policy of ridicule and caricature which we regard as perfectly justifiable, and even where effectively and incisively carried out, as useful and commendable in the highest degree.

"Verax," argues on the supposition that the Christian God really exists—a tremendous assumption which begs the main question at issue, and shows that "Verax," if he honestly accepts

it, is an interested partisan, and not the impartial umpire he would figure as.

"Verax" contends that "the conception of God which is now common to Christendom" (including of course the hell-fire business and other atrocious doctrines which "Verax" quietly ignores throughout?) "has been historically developed out of more rudimentary ideas, and that consequently the sayings and representations concerning God which were natural to an earlier and ruder age cannot fairly be cited either in disparagement of the literary records in which they are found or as throwing discredit upon the theistic ideas of to-day." But the theistic ideas of to-day include these old barbarous ideas. "Verax," amidst the literary luxury of his library and refined companionship, loses touch of the real living world outside. He comfortably and conveniently forgets the immoral, mischievous and horrible doctrines put forth in connection with them by almost every preacher in the land. "Verax" must persuade Christians that their God is not the Jewish God, and not the God of hell, before he has the right to charge with unfairness and injustice those who ridicule the notions actually held by Christians, and who, while respecting ancient literature as such, nevertheless "disparage" and denounce and expose, by every legitimate means in their power, the wretched myths and degraded barbarisms which are still thrust upon children and men as the noblest ideals of goodness, and are supported as such by the prestige of the ages and by the laws and by the taxes and by the customs of a grossly-deceived and defrauded community.

"Verax" declares that "to mock at and deride those old Jewish notions is as utterly absurd as it would be to mock at our ancestors because they wore skins and painted themselves blue." But if civilised people should now wear savage costumes and dye themselves blue—or if they should spend millions in teaching the history and meaning of tattooing as they now do in teaching untrue stories of the Creation, of Jonah and the Whale, of the Jewish Sabbath, of divinely-commanded massacres, of indecent prophets, and of pretended miracles—would not every comic journal shoot folly as it flies and lash this revival or survival of savagery with all its might? Would not *Punch* caricature the tattooed idiots in forcible cartoons and vigorous verse? Would "Verax" contend that it would be wrong to satirise such absurd reverence for the past, such monstrous survival of the unfittest costumes or customs or beliefs? Let Christians abandon the ancient barbarisms, and ridicule of the dead past will fall flat. No one will scourge a dead ass, or trouble about a buried monster of the past.

When "Verax" tells us that "Nobody holds those old Jewish notions now" we ask ourselves whether Henry Dunckley has taken leave of his senses in making so false and so sweeping a statement, or whether he thinks that Christians are all rank hypocrites who disbelieve their own solemn assertions that these old Jewish notions are the very word of God. That such is the ordinary Christian doctrine taught to almost all children and to almost all grown persons who are simple enough to believe it, is a fact that "Verax" will not look in the face. He shows more sympathy for the organised hypocrisy called Christianity than with those who attack that monstrous swindle. His whole article shows that Christian pretensions are false, but he thinks the great lies whereby the people are deceived should be treated with "reverence" because they were once believed in good faith. For our part we hope we may never sink so low as to reverence belief in crime or criminals, even if the criminal be represented as almighty. We detest cruelty and crime, and we utterly and for ever refuse to bow down and worship in the house of a Rimmon who is both a fraud and a monster. With time-serving respectability we declare war to the knife. We think that the spirit of indignant honesty which revolts against the enthroned shams and frauds and hypocrisies of the day is the very life-blood of the nation and the hope of mankind. And this honesty, this truthfulness, this all-powerful and uncompromising hatred of evil and of fraud must be of the people and for the people, and must appeal direct to the hearts and tastes and intelligence of the people such as they are. Moral revolutions are not made with rose-water any more than physical revolutions are. And the people who revolutionise the religious thought of the people are not high-class literary gentlemen in fine libraries, who occasionally dip into religious matters, but men who feel strongly, speak plainly and act boldly; men who mean war and the very opposite of "reverence" for the living lies they would demolish. Is it wrong to ridicule a lie, wicked to caricature a pernicious delusion, unjust and unfair to deride and expose a successful fraud? Ridicule is a powerful weapon, and in many instances the only effectual weapon against superstition. When "Verax" has reprimanded the numerous and powerful politicians of the land for the vulgarity and injustice and utter absurdity and so forth of employing ridicule and caricature in the political "discussion"—when he has persuaded *Punch* and *Fun* and *Judy* and *Funny Folks* to go into mourning for their past sins, and to replace their political caricatures with prosy articles which no one will read—and when, also, he has converted the Christians in power to the doctrine that outlawry, prison, social ostracism, expulsion from Parliament, legalised child-stealing, and similar outrages, are not sound arguments in the theistic "discussion"—then it will be time, then it may perhaps be manly and seasonable and courageous to lecture a no longer persecuted and outlawed minority on the surprising unfairness and injustice and absurdity and vulgarity of employing ridicule and caricature against ideas

which have caused the pious majority to hate and slander and persecute and slay the best and truest friends of humanity.

"Verax" however, it is but fair to add, explains that by "nobody" he means "no enlightened Christian," and he declares that it is only against the "best and most accredited views" that "antagonists think it worth while to take up arms." This latter as a statement is distinctly untrue, and as a policy or advice it is absurd and mischievous in the highest degree. The notions held by Christians in general, the notions advocated by ordinary Christian teachers and preachers, the notions furnishing the real motive power of the actual Christianity of actual Christians, are to be left to flourish in all their deformity! Beliefs that are sapping the moral and intellectual stamina of the whole nation with insidious poison, are not to be attacked! Only refined, cultured, doctored, emasculated, apologetic, and practically lying explanations of the real Scriptural doctrines, are to be the objects of our assault. Only advanced or "enlightened" Christians, only Christians who are heretics to the immense majority of Christians, are to be dealt with. We reject such insidious advice. We repudiate such an absurd policy. We speak to the people in ways that they understand. We fight with the arms employed in all great public controversies. Those who say that religion demands exceptional reverence beg the whole question at issue. We might just as well say that religion demands exceptional contempt and therefore severer and more ignominious treatment than any other subject. What we do claim is that it shall be placed on a level with every other matter agitating the public mind. When ridicule is abandoned by others we too may abandon it.

But "Verax" himself describes the Scriptural ideas of God as "grotesque notions" of "tribal barbarism." Is he at liberty to prove his words, and show the grotesqueness and barbarism of the Hebrew deity whom Christians worship? May he not do so by pungent anecdote such as Ingersoll employs? May he not enforce his views by the denunciation and the ridicule and the caricature commonly employed by orators and writers? If he may, what will be the difference between him and the outspoken Freethinkers whom he condemns? If he may not, then we ask why those who deal with religion must submit to restrictions not imposed on those who deal with other subjects of a popular and emotional nature?

W. P. BALL.

VICTIMS OF CHRISTIANITY.

The following is taken from the "Religious Intelligence" in the *Evangelical Magazine*, 1820:—

SPAIN.

Victims of the Spanish Inquisition from the "Diario Constitucional" of Barcelona, published since the late destruction of the Inquisition.

| Epochs. | Grand Inquisitors and Sovereigns. | 1st Class. Burnt alive. | 2nd Class. Burnt in Effigy. | 3rd Class. Imprisoned, with confiscation of Property. |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| 1 from 1481 to 1498 | Torquemada | 10,220 | 6,860 | 97,321 |
| 2 — 1498 — 1507 | Archbishop Diaz | 2,592 | 896 | 34,952 |
| 3 — 1507 — 1517 | Cardinal Ximenez | 3,564 | 1,232 | 48,059 |
| 4 — 1517 — 1522 | Card. Adrian, aft. Pope | 1,520 | 560 | 21,845 |
| 5 — 1525 — 1528 | Interregnum | 324 | 112 | 4,369 |
| 6 — 1528 — 1538 | Cardinal Manrique | 250 | 1,125 | 11,250 |
| 7 — 1538 — 1545 | Cardinal Tavera... .. | 840 | 420 | 5,460 |
| 8 — 1546 — — | Cardinal Loaisa... .. | 120 | 60 | 600 |
| 9 — — — 1556 | Charles V. | 1,200 | 600 | 6,000 |
| 10 — 1556 — 1597 | Philip II. | 3,690 | 1,845 | 18,450 |
| 11 — 1597 — 1621 | Philip III. | 1,840 | 920 | 13,848 |
| 12 — 1621 — 1665 | Philip IV. | 2,816 | 1,408 | 10,386 |
| 13 — 1665 — 1700 | Charles II. | 1,728 | 864 | 6,912 |
| 14 — 1700 — 1746 | Philip V. | 1,564 | 782 | 11,730 |
| 15 — 1746 — 1754 | Ferdinand VI. ... | 10 | 5 | 170 |
| 16 — 1759 — 1783 | Charles III. | 4 | — | 56 |
| 17 — 1788 — 1808 | Charles IV. | — | 1 | 42 |
| Total... | | 32,382 | 17,690 | 291,450 |

"FIRST come the missionaries, then the consuls, and after them the armies," said King Theodore of Abyssinia some years ago to a French traveller, explaining his abhorrence of explorers and missionaries.

THE TWELVE COMMANDMENTS.—In a lecture delivered by Mr. Riddell Carr, of Cavers, a few years ago, an account was given of a class examination with respect to the number of the commandments, when in answer to a catechist the reply was twelve—ten being linked "in one another's bosoms" in Exodus xx., the eleventh being Usher's "Love one another" and the twelfth "The Solemn League and Covenant." "Tut!" said the catechist, "that's no a commandment." "Maybe," said the examinee, "but there's mair din about it than a' the rest."

SOULS.

"One thinks the soul is air; another, fire;
Another, blood diffus'd about the heart;
Another saith the elements conspire
And to her essence each doth give a part."

This is a fishy subject, but instructive and interesting; it is laden with an astonishing amount of solid information, for which those benefactors of mankind, the clergy, are to be cordially thanked. Still considerable enlightenment respecting many matters in connection with the science of "souls" will be very acceptable to us. Giving to "airy nothing" a local habitation and a name we plunge deeply into the intricate mazes of soulology. We will christen the "airy nothing" "soul," and will consider it fairly installed in the undesirable corpus of a "Young Men's Christian Association" young man, where it has neither rent nor taxes to pay, but being socially considerably below the "lower ten" it is not entitled to vote. In one of our happy hours (in which we are wont to read Freethought literature) we digested some remarks on the correct time a "soul" should depart from this "vale of tears" in order to reach that parochial asylum yeleft "Heaven." Of course if Mr. Soul leaves this earth at an angle of 90° at 12 a.m. the direction taken will be exactly opposite to the one taken if the traveller started at 12 p.m. However, there may be a trade-wind floating around somewhere in space, and sooner or later all "souls" fall in with it, which wafts them gently towards the desired haven (no pun).

Granting that the liberated "soul" has overcome this earth's attraction of gravitation, and is clearing the "illimitable ether" at a respectable rate, say 1000 miles an hour, how will it fare if the lunar attraction proves too much for it? Will it gyrate round the moon and become a moon's moon, the velocity causing the unfortunate "soul" to be clothed in a white garment of heat, and therefore suffer hell's torments, simply through an oversight on the part of Almighty God? Suppose a *body* of Wesleyan Methodist "souls" (a paradox) collide with a *body* of Roman Catholic "souls," what will the result be? Will they combine, with the generation of intense heat, and become a comet? Or do they (happy thought) get swept into the sun, the enormous importation causing the appearance of dark clouds (sun spots)? It is our intention to forward this grand theory to the Royal Astronomical Society, which will doubtless confer upon us the honorable position of F.R.A.S. We say this *sub rosa*.

Suppose the good folks in heaven have retired for the night and a few million "souls" arrive, after having experienced the most frightful dangers (such as colliding with planets, the omnipotent and omnipresent God, the Holy Ghost, other "souls," members of Satan's "Hell-fire and Blazes Universal Troupe," etc., etc.) will they be admitted, or told to go to Hades and be condemned? Before concluding our remarks we would respectfully beg to direct the attention of the "black-coated gentry" to the following questions. Candidates will be required to attempt at least eight of the questions set. Any candidate using bad language will be expelled. Time allowed: One eternity and a half. Those who answer eight or more of the questions satisfactorily will be allowed to have a front seat near the white throne in heaven, and will also be allowed to shout "Hallelujah" three times a second, whilst their less favored fellows can do so only twice. 1. Can a "soul" be sold? 2. What is the mean density of a "soul"? Can two "souls" occupy the same space at the same time? Are the soles of the feet or of boots in any way related to Y. M. C. A. "souls"? 5. Do "souls" agree in gender, number, and case? 6. Does the "soul" belong solely to one person? 7. Describe briefly the changes that take place in the innermost "soul" of a "soul" at the following times: (a) Whilst raving "Hallelujah"; (b) whilst tuning a harp; (c) whilst supplying the "beasts" with hay and the dove or ghost with corn? 8. What is the weight of a "soul"? 9. Are "souls" injured when profane persons swear upon them? 10. What is the difference between a spirit and a soul? 11. Can a Blue Ribbon Armyite partake of the "spirit of God"? 12. What is the color and chemical composition of a "soul."

Space will not allow us to continue our observations on the soulological science; so respectfully suggesting to the editor the advisability of enlarging the editorial letter-box, as we expect a tremendous number of answers to our queries, we beg to subscribe ourselves

FRANCISCO PUNCHER.

A PAIR TURN-OUT FOR KIRKINTILLOCH.—One Sunday afternoon the minister of Kirkintilloch preached from the text, "At the last day the trumpet shall sound, and the righteous shall rise." After the sermon the sexton had a grave to dig, and as he, like a good many other sextons, was fond of a drappie he took a small bottle of whiskey with him, just to help him through with his work. As the grave progressed the contents of the bottle diminished. At length the sexton succumbed, and fell fast asleep in the grave. This was in the days of stage coaches, when they carried the mails; and, as was customary, the guard, on the arrival of the coach, sounded the bugle to announce the fact, which partly aroused the sexton from his slumbers. Half unconscious, and peering over the head of the newly-made grave, he was fully convinced that it was the last trumpet that was sounding, and thus soliloquised to himself:—"Hech me, no' a single sowl but mysel! This is a pair turn-out for Kirkintilloch!" Seeing no one, he assumed that he was the only righteous person in the whole place!

CORRESPONDENCE.

"BRUMMAGEM LIBERALISM."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My attention has been called to an article in your paper dated 16th inst., entitled "Brummagem Liberalism," in which I find my name introduced in a most offensive manner.

With the tone and tendency of said article it is not my intention now to deal further, than to say it has never fallen to my lot to read anything so well calculated to add immensely to whatever *real* difficulty has hitherto stood in the way of Secularism and Freethought propaganda in Birmingham.

I am concerned chiefly to learn what you mean when you state that "Baskerville Hall was only established by my hoodwinking the bigoted Liberals." I am not aware of ever having deceived Liberals at all, whether "bigoted" or otherwise. There has been no occasion for anything so disreputable. Several of the leading men you now stigmatise wholesale have on many occasions occupied the platform with pleasure and profit to the Institution, but I fear it will never again be possible now to look forward with hope in that direction.

You go on to say that the "National Secular Society's Branch has been chased from pillar to post," and by inference would attribute this to the Liberal party as such. I venture to say this is altogether false. That obstacles have been in their way may be true, but these have been the acts of individuals, and to my certain knowledge generally the offending parties have been Tories.

I shall feel obliged if you will retract the expression affecting myself, but whether you will withdraw at same time the wholesale aspersions on the Liberal party here I must leave you to decide.—I am, Sir, yours respectfully,

DANIEL BAKER.

[We have great respect for Mr. Baker, but his indignation will amuse a good many Birmingham Freethinkers. With respect to the N. S. S. Branch, we will justify or retract what we said of it when its members ask us to do so, and Mr. Baker is not one of them. What we meant by hood-winking was that the old Birmingham Secular Society had the greatest difficulty in obtaining a hall, and that Mr. Baker had to purchase a dwelling-house privately and make everything secure before he could dare disclose the fact that it was going to be turned into a Secular meeting place. Mr. Baker asks us to withdraw our charges against Birmingham Liberalism; we will when he can contradict our definite statements. It is easy to bandy generalities.—ED.]

DAY BREAK.

The blackest night that ever fled
Soon, soon shall speed its way;
For anxious watchers dimly view
The radiant break of day.

Priestcraft! For eighteen centuries
Mankind you have oppressed;
Opposed you Science, but in vain,
In vain you Art suppressed.

Great men who strove the truth to find,
You burnt them at the stake;
The living maiden's flesh you tore,
For God and Mammon's sake.

You shadow childhood's sunny hours
With fables dark and foul;
And o'er the cradle and the grave
Your sacred nonsense howl.

But though the night is steeped in gloom,
Yet through the clouds of scorn—
Through misty veils of calumny—
We mark approaching morn.

F. Bn.

IN a Western paper we find the statement that an agent for a new force-pump went to a town out there and asked the editor where he could find the "superintendent of the water-works." The editor sent him to the pastor of the Baptist church.

IRISH CAB-DRIVER: "Shure that's St. George's Cathedral, sorr. But it's only the rare av it you'll be seeing this side, sorr. The front's behind."

CLERICAL MAGISTRATE: "What sort of man, now, was it whom you saw commit the assault?" Constable: "Shure, yer honor, he was a small, insignificant crathur—about yer own size, yer honor!"

At a church-school in Ipswich lately, the boys were told to learn any verse they chose from the Bible. One chose "Jesus wept." He followed the example of Jesus.

PROFANE JOKES.

"GID" MANDEVILLE was washing some beer-glasses behind the bar of the "Hotel Lindenwald," one Saturday evening, when Pete Cole, a colored gentleman with a singular protuberance resembling a tumor in the vicinity of the breast-pocket, came shuffling in. Pete leaned up against the counter, and reduced the swelling by pulling a bottle out of his pocket by a sort of eel-skinning process, as the lining came with it. It was a close fit. "What do you want, Pete?" asked "Gid," wiping the bar. "Some 'freshments fo' Sunday, boss. I ain't got de 'brads' now, but I'll pay you Monday mornin' shuah." "Gid" reflected a moment, looked at the bottle, set it down on the bar, took a chew of tobacco, and then glared at the colored man with a fiery eye. "See here, Pete, do you pass the plate in church to-morrow?" "Ideas, boss; ebory Sunday. I've been deacon dar since las' fall." "All right, then," said "Gid," tilting a demijohn, and pouring out the whiskey, "I'll trust you this time."

Two Irish boys were sleeping together; one was a Catholic the other a Protestant. When they woke in the morning the latter thought to get a rise out of the former. "Oh," said the one, "I had a horrid drame last night." "Well, tell it to us," said the other. "Well, I will," said the Protestant boy. "Ye see, I dramed I saw Purgatory opened, and all the Papists fell down into hell." "Och, murder!" exclaimed the Catholic boy, "the poor, poor Protestants—won't they be crushed!"

A BAD boy broke up a meeting down in Pennsylvania the other day by stirring up a hornet's nest which hung above the congregation. It was remarked afterwards by a thoughtful deacon, that if the saints and sinners had showed half the anxiety to escape perdition and reach heaven that they did to get away from the hornets and reach that boy there would soon be no further use for revival meetings.

DR. CUSHIONBEATER, the venerable pastor of an uptown church, was pleased to observe a young man retain his seat after the congregation was dismissed last Sunday. The good man approached the lingerer, who wore a very melancholy and distressed countenance, and said: "Do you wish to consult me on spiritual matters, my friend?" "Well, no," stammered the sitter; "the cold fact is that I've bust me trousers and am waiting till the people are all gone so I can stand up."

At a church in Essex, the clerk feeling unwell asked his friend the railway porter to take his place for the next Sunday. He did so, but being worn out with night work he fell asleep. When the hymn was announced a neighbor gave him a nudge upon which he started up, rubbing his eyes, and calling out "Change here for Elmswell, Thurston, and Bury."

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?" 6d.; bound in cloth with other Essays, 1s. 6d.; "Thoughts upon Heaven and kindred matters," 1d. "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.

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-r Chatham Street, Stretford Road

Worth a Thousand Pounds.

EVERY MAN HIS OWN DOCTOR.—Twelve valuable Recipes for the cure of the following complaints: Gravel, bowel complaint, coughs, toothache, corns, leucorrhoea, headache, composing draughts, neuralgia or tic, sore throats, piles and rheumatism. With these you can arrange a most valuable medicine chest at a trifling cost. Post free twelve stamps.—T. G. Jones, Providence Cottage, Smethwick, Birmingham.

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