

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

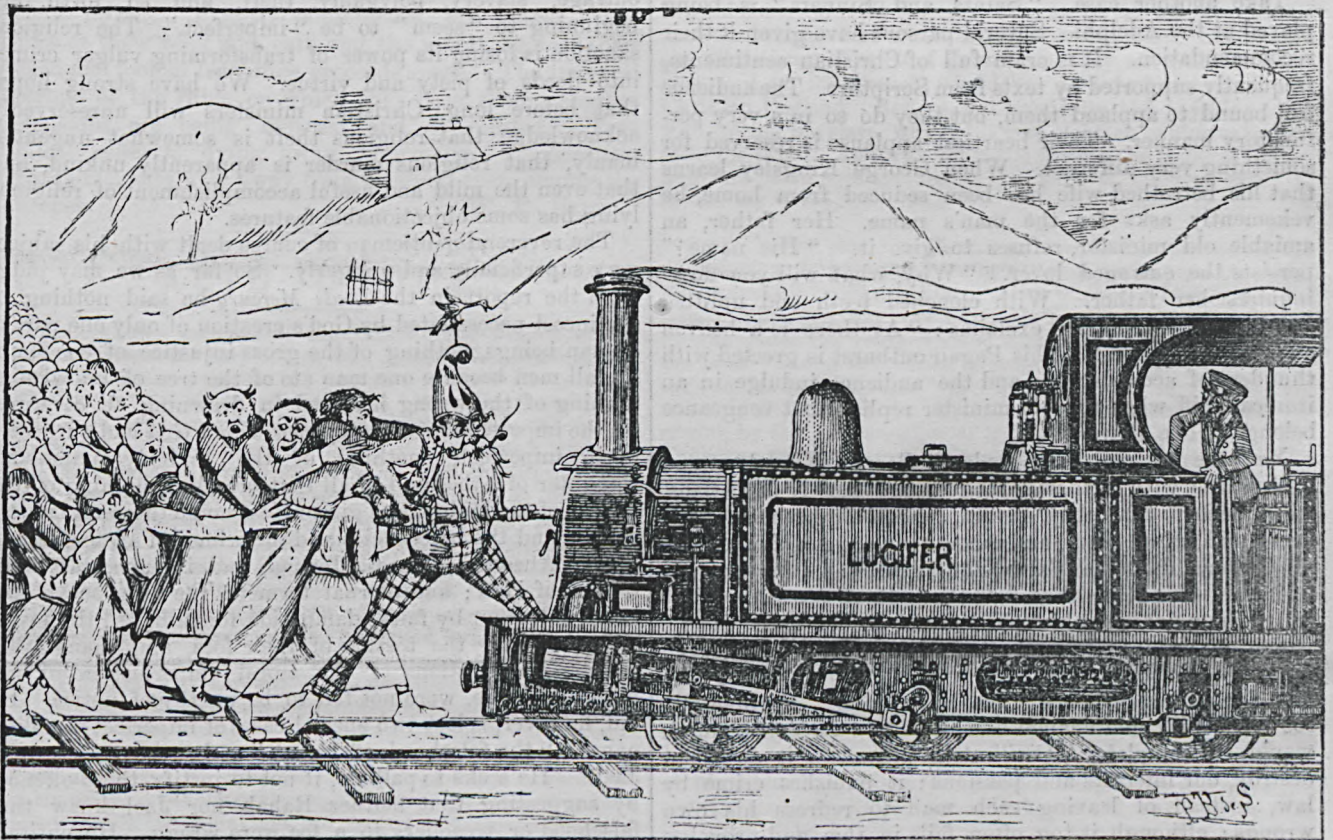
Sub Editor--J. M. Wheeler.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 97.



GOD DEFEATED.

"And the Lord was with Judah; and he drave out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron."—JUDGES i., 19.

CHRISTIANITY SKIN-DEEP.

In a very interesting little volume just published, Professor Newman remarks that "Among barbarians religious ideas are only skin-deep. If their Chief adopts a new religion, the whole tribe easily follow him." A remarkable illustration of this truth is furnished by the conversion of the first Christian king of the Franks, from whom the sovereigns of France were proud to trace their descent. Gibbon has described this event in his inimitable style:

"In the distress of the battle of Tolbiac, Clovis loudly invoked the God of Clotilda, and the Christians; and victory disposed him to hear, with respectful gratitude, the eloquent Remegius, Bishop of Rheims, who forcibly displayed the temporal and spiritual advantages of his conversion. The king declared himself satisfied of the truth of the Catholic faith; and the political reasons which might have suspended his public profession were removed by the devout or loyal acclamations of the Franks, who showed themselves alike prepared to follow their heroic leader to the field of battle, or the baptismal font. The important ceremony was performed in the cathedral of Rheims, with every circumstance of magnificence and solemnity that could impress an awful sense of religion on its rude proselytes. The new Constantine was immediately baptised, with three thousand of his warlike subjects; and their example was imitated by the remainder of the *gentle barbarians*, who, in obedience to the victorious prelate, adored the cross which they had burnt, and burnt the idols which they had formerly adored."

Professor Newman has a more extensive knowledge of history than we possess, but we doubt whether he could find an apter example. Clovis changed his religion and his warriors followed suit. Being naturally superstitious, they required some religion, but they were indifferent as to what it was, and they obeyed their leader's choice in that

as in other matters. It was for him to decide whom they should fight and whom they should worship. The religious ideas of these barbarians could not be more than skin-deep; and it is not surprising to learn that the reign of Clovis was "a constant violation of moral and Christian duties," and that immediately after dismissing a synod of the Gallican Church "he calmly assassinated *all* the princes of the Merovingian race."

We are unable, however, to agree so cordially with Professor Newman in his next remark. "But," he continues, "when time has consolidated institutions, the public religion, with all its barbarian error, is, as it were, burnt in and consecrated." The barbarian errors of an old religion are certainly consecrated by it, and endowed with a preposterous longevity; and the same may be said of its theology. But its morality is not so fortunate. Ceremonialism, conformity, and intolerance of dissent, are almost all that can be exacted from the masses of mankind. Only a few enthusiasts attempt to practise the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. Ordinary Christians, in all the common affairs of life, are actuated by carnal motives. They are Christian by profession, but Pagan in practice. They give their Savior plenty of lip homage, but, as Mill observed, "Whenever conduct is concerned, they look round for Mr. A. and B. to direct them how far to go in obeying Christ." His precepts have no power over their minds. They obey the promptings of their human instincts. The same is true of the professors of every creed under the sun. And thus it is, despite the various mandates of divers creeds, that "the heart of man everywhere answers to the heart of man," and that "a touch of nature makes the whole world kin."

A very good instance is the latest sensation from Paris. Madame Hugues shot a scoundrel who grossly libelled her without the slightest provocation. Two years ago he was sentenced to imprisonment for the offence, but owing to the law's delay he remained at large, and employed a great deal of his leisure in systematically defaming the lady's character by means of postcards containing the vilest slanders. Stung at last beyond all endurance by this persecution, Madame Hugues shot him with a revolver, inflicting three wounds, each of which is supposed to be mortal. The unanimous verdict of Paris is "serve him right!" and the lady is pretty sure to be acquitted by a French jury. Here in England, too, public sentiment runs in her favor. There is scarcely a note of disapproval in the letters of the Paris correspondents of our London dailies.

Take another case. "Saints and Sinners" is being played at the Adelphi. Several parsons have given it their recommendation. It is cram full of Christian sentiments, frequently supported by texts from Scripture. The audience feel bound to applaud them, but they do so in a very perfunctory manner. Their heartiest applause is reserved for something very different. When George Kingsley learns that his betrothed wife has been seduced from home, he vehemently asks for the man's name. Her father, an amiable old minister, refuses to give it. "His name?" persists the outraged lover. "Why, what will you do?" inquires her father. With clenched teeth and uplifted hand, George Kingsley exclaims: "As there is a heaven above, I'll kill him!" This Pagan outburst is greeted with thunders of acclamation; and the audience indulge in an ironical sniff when the old minister replies that vengeance belongs to one above.

Yet the people who applaud George Kingsley, and sympathise with Madame Hugues, are mostly Christians. They believe that they should love their enemies, bless those who injure them, and when they are smitten on one cheek, turn the other for a similar blow. They are not insincere, says Mill; they do believe these doctrines "just up to the point at which it is usual to act upon them," which is an infinitesimal step above zero. Eighteen centuries of Christianity have, in all but profession, only laid a thin veneer over "the old Adam." Fortunately, too; for if it could change human nature its evil triumph would be complete. Civilisation organises, it does not destroy, our interests and passions; it punishes crime by law, instead of leaving each man to redress his own wrongs; although it too often fails in this, and provokes such tragedies as that of Madame Hugues' assassination of Morin. Even Bacon, who so strongly condemned revenge, allowed that it "is a kind of wild justice." Bishop Butler, also, in his sermon on Resentment, was obliged to admit that "the good influence which this passion has, in fact, upon the affairs of the world, is obvious to every one's notice," and that with the masses of mankind it is the only guarantee for the security and peace of society. Yes, "Resist not evil" is a precept, which, after eighteen centuries of preaching, happily stands no chance against our instinctive Paganism. Christianity is only skin-deep.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHILI henceforth will aid Protestant as well as Catholic churches, the Chamber of Deputies having passed a measure for freedom of worship. By-and-bye Freethinkers may hope for toleration, but at present any measure in that direction would receive a very chilly reception.

A PIOUS contemporary calmly and confidently assures its readers that "modern science" is "far from casting a shadow of doubt on any truth of revelation." The bland pertinacity and idiotic complacency and credulity with which Christians can go on asserting that black is white and white is black, is something miraculous. It is the old miracle of sheer stupidity against which the pagan gods were powerless, but which the modern triune God of the Christian finds his best and strongest ally. Geology with its millions of years throw no shadow of a doubt on the six-days' Creation story! Geography, ethnology, biology, zoology, do not discredit in the slightest degree the story of Noah's Ark and the universal deluge! Science thoroughly accepts the Christian miracles! Astronomy and optics prove that Christ's bodily descent will be seen from all sides of our globe at once! Medical science believes in casting out devils! History, research, scholarly criticism, Strauss's and Colenso's to wit, strongly confirm the absolute truth of the revealed word of God! Bah! Is there no capacious asylum where the hopeless imbeciles of Christian unreason can be taken care of by their friends, and left in peace to blink away their days in congenial darkness?

BIBLE IMMORALITY.

At the Huddersfield Conference of the Craven Evangelical Union—and we think the term *craven* by no means unsuitable for the Christianity that answers argument with outlawry and ridicule with a prison cell—the Rev. F. A. C. Lillingston read a paper on the "Moral Difficulties of the Bible." He said that the very mention of such a subject was to many Christians a source of pain and surprise, but it was their duty to face the fact that there were these moral difficulties. He was forced to acknowledge that some of the divine permissions and commands of the Old Testament "seemed to be imperfect."

We venture to congratulate Christians on the advance that is taking place in their notions of morality. Massacre, outrage, slavery, polygamy, theft, and so forth, are beginning to "seem" to be "imperfect." The religious sanction is losing its power of transforming vulgar crimes into deeds of piety and virtue. We have strong hopes that before long Christian ministers will unreservedly acknowledge that religious theft is somewhat ungentlemanly, that religious murder is apparently unkind, and that even the mild and useful accomplishment of religious lying has some objectionable features.

The reverend gentleman of course dealt with his subject very superficially and gingerly. So far as we may judge from the report in the *Leeds Mercury* he said nothing of the incest necessitated by God's creation of only one pair of human beings, nothing of the gross injustice of condemning all men because one man ate of the tree of knowledge, nothing of the wrong involved in drowning all creatures for the imperfection of one species which God had purposely made imperfect, nothing of the divinely-commanded slaughter of babes and of all that breathed, nothing of the seizure of the Midianitish girls. He ignored the sexual immoralities and the indecencies and the crimes of Hosea, David, Isaiah, Abraham, Moses, Joshua, and innumerable other friends of God; and eternal torment, the vicarious atonement, salvation by faith, damnation for unbelief, the joy of the saints over the torture of their foes, and many other striking illustrations of the moral imperfection of the biblical scheme, were not felt to be worthy of notice. He did, however, select two special cases of imperfect morality, namely "the falsehood of Rahab" and "the treachery of Jael." He seeks to palliate, if not to justify, these offences by suggesting that neither Rahab nor Jael knew that falsehood or treachery to a foe were wrong. He entirely forgets that Rahab's treachery was towards *friends* whom she betrayed to slaughter, and not towards foes whose spies she sheltered and assisted. And in pleading that God winked at or commanded the horrible outrages of the Old Testament because he was thereby conducting men to something better, he forgets how needless so atrocious a policy would be to an omnipotent being, and he of course fails to notice that the New Testament confirms, in word at least, the full authority of the Old Testament and invariably honors the pious criminals, Rahab for instance being included in St. Paul's list of saints, and Jesus being proud of being descended from a royal adulterer and adulteress.

Having glanced at the dark side of Bible morality we may now turn to its brighter aspects, as set forth at the same conference by the Rev. Canon Bardsley (Vicar of Bradford) in dealing with the doctrine of Justification by Faith. Believers will be charmed to hear for the thousandth time that seeming imperfections such as theft, slander, swindling, seduction, poisoning, and all other peccadilloes of unpleasant repute, can be swept away from their consciences by faith in the all-atoning sacrifice of Christ. No guilt, no sin, no reproach, no responsibility then remains. The "justification" it appears is "perfect." The Vicar referred to the eleventh article of the Church of England in proof of this exquisite assurance. "It was not being more or less justified," but being thoroughly justified, completely justified, perfectly justified. Believers "were innocent because their sins were imputed to Christ. They were righteous because Christ's righteousness was imputed to them. (Hear, hear)."

These children of light base their hopes of happiness on a most miserable and contemptible perversion of words and of sense. Would any jury be religious enough to accept their outrageous doctrine and acquit a Christian murderer as "innocent" because his sins were washed

away by the blood of Christ? Does any sane man regard a felon as perfectly righteous because he happens to be converted to the Christian superstition? Were the Inquisitors perfectly justified in their horrible misdeeds by their great and unswerving faith in Christ? Are criminals or sinners perfectly righteous, perfectly good, perfectly honest and noble and brave and true because somebody who is supposed to have been perfectly righteous was put to death by priests some eighteen hundred years ago? The whole theory is a ghastly sham. It is a mockery of all true morality. It is real blasphemy against all that is good and just and fair and honest. Happily mankind at large have never believed it at heart and never can. Happily the fanatics, the criminal lunatics, who terrorised mankind into submission to their will have lost their ancient power. Priestly conferences no longer have armies at their beck and call, and the revolt against their wicked and foolish teachings proceeds apace. The immoral doctrines of the Bible on which they base their arrogant pretensions are being exposed and discredited. True Biblical belief is dying away, improving, ameliorating towards morality and away from religion, even among the Churches.

W. P. BALL.

ACID DROPS.

A WELL-KNOWN member of the Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. expresses his surprise at Mr. Baker's indignation, and agrees with every sentence of our article on "Brummagem Liberalism." We would gladly insert his letter if the *Freethinker* were large enough for such correspondence. We see no reason for retracting a single statement in our article. The fact, which Mr. Bradlaugh draws attention to, that the Birmingham Liberal Association have passed several resolutions in his favor, is really of very small value. They were bound to say *something*, for as a Radical organisation they could not let the Northampton question pass unnoticed. But that something has been as little as possible. Their resolutions have averaged one a year, and they have only been represented at a solitary one of all the demonstrations Mr. Bradlaugh has convened in London.

MR. J. PARTRIDGE, secretary of the Birmingham branch of the N. S. S., also writes that his committee, after reading Mr. Baker's letter, so far from asking us to retract anything in our "admirable article," "fully endorse all those parts that have reference to the attitude of the Birmingham Liberal Association towards the Secular party." Mr. Partridge significantly adds that they have applied for all the halls that are central and commodious for Mrs. Besant's lectures on December 14, and in each case they have met with an absolute refusal. We wonder whether Mr. Baker regards this as another illustration of the beautiful love of liberty and fair play which Birmingham Liberalism has infused into his fellow townsmen.

MR. HERBERT CARD, one of the Liberal eight hundred, likewise writes that we "deserve the thanks of all true Radicals" for our article, "everything in which can be substantiated by members of the Caucus." He states that the Liberal Association has never convened a single meeting in favor of the Affirmation Bill, or in support of Mr. Bradlaugh's claim to his seat. Mr. Card himself moved that Mr. Bradlaugh should be invited to speak at the Franchise Demonstration, but the chairman burked the resolution by getting some one to move that they should proceed to the next business. Another motion in favor of the resolution on the Northampton question was also defeated in the same way. With respect to the Town Hall, Mr. Card states that what we said was perfectly accurate and well known to be true by every Freethinker in Birmingham.

In a later letter Mr. Partridge informs us that a Town Hall meeting in favor of Mr. Bradlaugh's taking his seat was arranged for by the N. S. S. branch in July, 1881. Four leading Liberals, including Mr. Schnadhorst, subscribed £1 each, but neither they nor any other leaders of the Liberal Association could be induced to attend the meeting. As to our imprisonment, Mr. Partridge states that although some branches of the Liberal Association passed resolutions in condemnation of our sentence, the parent society never moved a step in the matter. The *Daily Mail*, however, uninfluenced by this fact, spoke out plainly and condemned our imprisonment as an outrage on religious liberty.

WE trust that Mr. Daniel Baker and other new friends of the Birmingham Caucus have had enough. If not, we have no doubt that we can oblige them further next week.

THE anti-clerical manifestations at Madrid have been aggravated into serious conflicts by the injudicious and tyrannical action of the authorities. The streets have been almost a battlefield in which armed police have daily attacked and dispersed crowds of students and others. Over three hundred people have been arrested; forty private persons and ten policemen have been

seriously wounded; and a much greater number have received slight sword-cuts and other injuries in the frequent charges. The University and the School of Medicine were occupied by the military. The Government has replaced the Rector of the University and the principals of the Law and Pharmacy with well-known Ultramontanes. Many newspapers have been seized and prosecuted, and telegrams from Madrid are suppressed wholesale. Fifty-three of the professors have handed in a petition in which they demand that the Council of the University shall take proceedings against the civil authorities.

MR. FREDERIC HARRISON'S Manchester lecture on Positivism and Christianity has called forth a reply from the Rev. Alexander Thomson, D.D. According to this orthodox champion, Christianity has achieved every reform. The men who abolished the Corn Laws were Christians.—Not *all* of them. The Chartists largely helped to drive Peel along, and very many of them were Freethinkers. But all the men who supported the Corn Laws were Christians.—The men who abolished the Slave Trade were also Christians. Not *all* of them. But they were all Christians who upheld it.—French "infidels" abolished slavery before Christian England. Besides, if Christianity had anything to do with freeing the slave, why did it take eighteen centuries to perform the task? And why did it not destroy the traffic in human flesh and blood ages ago, before the spirit of freedom began to agitate the world?

CHRISTIANITY, says Mr. Thomson, "has broken the rod of the oppressor, and made the bondman stand upright as his equal before the law," and it has done this "without a bloody revolution." Very fine, but very false. It cost a hundred thousand lives to scotch the divine right of kings as displayed by Charles the First. It cost the wildest Revolution in history to "break the rod of the oppressor" in France. And American slavery was only abolished in the throes of the bloodiest civil war on record, by the proclamation of a Freethinking President. Mr. Thomson runs a history of his own, or he presumes on the ignorance of his readers.

THE police are complaining of open cesspools at Richmond, and the sky-pilots have been praying against "the pestilence." Cleanliness is next to godliness, but heaps of Christians never step from one to the other.

A PIOUS young man at Sheffield has gone to glory and left his girl behind him. Sooner than marry her, he committed suicide by putting his stupid head on a rail and letting a train run over it. He protested that his sweetheart was not fit to become his wife, but he was not above making her his mistress. On his refusing to marry her, she threatened to tell the leading members of his Bible class, and as his Christian resignation was not equal to the emergency, he decided to go home and be for ever with the Lord. The jury found him insane, but there was a deal of bad method in his madness. Anyhow, the Lord ought to make him send on a regular remittance for the baby.

IN the British colony of Trinidad the annual religious procession of the Mohammedan coolies has been fired upon by the authorities. Sixteen persons were killed and a very large number wounded. A searching investigation is needed, and it is said that Sir George Campbell will bring the matter before Parliament.

CAMBRIDGE has been favored with a "Salvation Army Riot," in which the undergraduates of the University were the aggressors, drowning the hymns with popular songs and the kneeling salvationists with pails of water.

IN Scotland Dr. Cossan Ewatts is being widely denounced for having told the students of the university that the idea of design has been exploded, and that the theory of evolution has deprived of all force the argument from nature for the existence of God. The denunciations will only give more effect to the statements of the professor.

FOR courteous language commend us to the religious journals. The Church Association is spoken of by the *Church Times* as the Persecution Society, and by the *Church Review* as the Church Association Rump.

CANON WILBERFORCE has been fiercely lecturing against Free-thought in Swansea. He said that Voltaire's writings should "be spat upon," and that all who speak against Christianity ought to be tried for high treason—and, we presume, hung, drawn and quartered when sentenced. The *Cambria Daily Leader* inserts a very good reply, signed "Freedom."

AN Irish orator recounts among the many misfortunes of his country that it has been frequently "visited by Providence." We believe that improvidence and the priests are more to blame than the nebulous abstraction complained of.

ACCORDING to a report from Lima, Don Jesus Elios has been captured at Trujillo after a desperate hand-to-hand fight in which nearly 200,000 cartridges were burnt. Great execution was effected from behind the street-barricades and from the church

towers, which were converted into fortresses and filled with riflemen. Perhaps Don Jesus remembered the words of his namesake, who announced that he came into the world to bring fire and sword. We doubt whether the original Jesus had the courage to wield the sword himself.

THE International Arbitration and Peace Association have passed a resolution in which they declare that the prayer issued on behalf of our soldiers and sailors in Egypt and elsewhere "is at variance with those principles of justice, peace and humanity which"—in the opinion of the Association—"form the basis of true religion." But surely the views of a merely secular association as to what constitutes religion are of little weight when pitted against the decision of the head of religion in this country.

COMMENTING on this protest, the *Echo* says: "Why should the Association expect action in support of peace from the Established Church? Few Christian Churches have ever protested against war. Such protests have usually come from Atheists, Positivists, Secularists, Freethinkers and the heterodox generally."

THE *Rock* has a poem by D.D. on "the modern Demonism miscalled Spiritualism." We believe we do the *Rock* no injustice in inferring from its various utterances on the subject that this is its *bond fide* method of explaining the phenomena of modern Spiritualism. It is the veritable ancient demons, such as those cast out by Jesus and the apostles, who return among us to work the dark *séances* by playing concertinas, throwing tambourines about the room, and rapping on tables. Who would not be a true believer and have all these mysterious tricks so nicely and comfortably explained?

DR. PARKER says that in the Bible there is not one law for the rich and another for the poor. But rich masters were allowed to beat poor slaves to death, while a slave who had beaten his master to death would have been instantly executed. When the New Testament commands slaves to obey their masters, does it equally mean that masters are to obey their slaves? It does not even order Christian slave-owners to set their human cattle free. Yet Christians claim that their Bible treats rich and poor alike!

ACCORDING to the *Christian Commonwealth*, the Basuto ponies eat fish, smear their bodies with a reddish grease, ride oxen and train them to run races. Christian mistakes, however, about the unknown world are much more absurd and much more serious in their consequences than such amusing instances of faulty composition as this.

TALMAGE says there are "great manufactories of lies" in America, and he ought to be an authority. They turn out "large lies and small lies—lies private and lies public and lies prurient"—"lies that some people believe, and lies that all the people believe, and lies that nobody believes"—"lies with humps like camels and scales like crocodiles and necks as long as storks and feet as swift as an antelope's and stings like adders"—"crawling lies and jumping lies and soaring lies"—and so forth. He is *not* speaking of the pulpit, as one might naturally suppose. He refers to the political parties in America, and forgets that those who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

TALMAGE expects "to live to see a political party which will have a platform of two planks—the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount." If the Canadians seize Chicago this party, we suppose, will give them New York also. If England hates Yankees and robs them of their commerce, Talmage's lunatics will send us the product of their richest bonanzas. If we sue them for the restitution of the Alabama award they will pay off our national debt *gratis*. The Christian lunatics have had their day, and they proved themselves wholesale criminals also. Mankind will never trust them with supreme power again.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* speaks of a "delightful specimen" of the "enlightened Christian public," who says: "I love to sit under the Rev. Lackingmore Frownedown. He preaches Christ, sir. Why, I have heard the Rev. L. F. preach Christ forty-eight times in one sermon. That's what I call preaching the gospel, that is. Oh, I know the number's right, for I kept careful count of the *name*!"

A NICE clerical scandal has cropped up at Rampton, North Notts. The vicar, the Rev. A. Hardy, had left his parish in charge of his curate. The bishop (Dr. Reddy), however, refused to let the curate (the Rev. Mr. Marriner) preach, and directed the vicar to return. This he did, but the curate would not give up the vicarage, and had to be forcibly ejected. He also kept the keys of the church, which had to be broken open, and even then the surplices could not be found. Mr. Marriner is going to bring an action against the bishop.

PROF. MOORE has been writing in the *Andover Review* on "The Future Life in the Old Testament." While adducing the belief in necromancy and the story of Saul's visit to the Witch of Endor as proof that the Jews did believe in life after death, Prof. Moore says they had no conception of the existence of the soul apart from the body. Sheol, the common place of the dead, awaited all alike,

and in it man's destiny ended. The doctrine of future rewards and punishments did not, therefore, enter into their religion. Germs of a doctrine of retribution may be detected in the later prophets, as in Ezekiel xxxii. and Isaiah xiv., but they were not developed till the time of Daniel (see xii., 2)—that is to say not till after the return of the Jews from Babylon.

AMONG news of the New Church, the *Christian World* mentions the reading of a paper on "The Objective and the Subjective in the Other Life." Our Swedenborgian friends evidently mean coming to the front in practical matters.

FROM the statement made by Sir Wm. Harcourt in Parliament, the Rev. J. Mirehouse, of Colsterworth, comes even worse out of the ghastly joke of sending a child's body to the Home Office than at the investigation before the magistrate. It appears he would only allow Nonconformists to be buried in an old quarry, and as the inspector of cemeteries refused to endorse this proceeding, he sent the still-born child as an act of revenge. This worthy was patted on the back by some of the clerical journals.

THE "Honorable and Very Reverend" Dean of Hereford, aged fifty-nine, has been committed to trial for an offence to decency with a young man in Hyde Park. The young man was sent to prison for want of bail, but the Dean preached in Salford on the following day. We of course refrain from comment while the question is *sub judice*, but the attempt to prevent publicity being given to the matter has an ugly look, and should be severely reprobated. The case came before the police-court on Thursday, but only got into the Sunday papers.

TWO more sky-pilots charged with committing unnatural offences, one at Salford hailing from South Shields, and the other at Bury. The Bury prisoner, like the Chinese in Australia, "no savvy English." A lady in court was ready to testify to his knowledge of our language; whereupon his counsel asked him, in what we suppose is South Lancashire French, "Comprehendez vous?" And the prisoner, who could not speak English, at once replied, "I do not."

THE *Lancet* has been writing on Morbid Religious Affection, and has spoken pretty plainly among other matters of the inadvisability of putting before excitable females a naked figure on a crucifix. In its issue for November 29 it says, "We believe, and cannot therefore hesitate to say, that the ecstatic reverie of worship or adoration into which women are wont to throw themselves before the crucifix is 'vicious' and demoralising." . . . "It is as difficult for a woman, abandoning herself to this ecstasy to prevent her thoughts from drifting into impure channels as it would be for a man, entering upon a drunken tirade, to determine that he would be coherent and reasonable." If the effect of contemplating the crucifix on ordinary emotional women is, on medical authority, "vicious and demoralising," what must it be to brides of Christ, who spend much of their time in this contemplation?

AT Hartlepool the Salvationists started "Knee-drill" with a "determination to get more of God," and, bless his name, they "rose from their knees filled with God." In the afternoon they had "a glorious Free-and-Easy," but the "night meeting was the crowning time; God was felt all over the building." We presume God was not a "felt" roof, though one is never sure what these free-and-easy blasphemers may intend by their wild assertions and their vulgar familiarities with a deity whom they professedly regard with unspeakable awe and reverence.

THE Rev. Henry Williamson, of Trenton, U.S., has committed suicide. Another endorsement for Talmage!

DEAN PLUMPTRE has written a big book on the subject of life after death. He is very chary about committing himself to the doctrine of everlasting punishment. At the same time "the flames of Hades in which the rich man was tormented are the symbols of a dread reality." But what is that dread reality? If it means all that has been preached as hell, calling it Hades will not make it cooler.

THE *Christian World* says that without the ideas of God and immortality "the heavens are shrouded in gloom and the earth becomes a real prison-house of crime and mystery." We beg to differ. More than half the gloom in the world springs from religion, and crime and mystery have attended it through all the ages. As Atheists we do not feel the world a vast prison-house. We did once, but that was when the believers in God and immortality locked us up in Holloway Gaol.

ACCORDING to the New York *Truthseeker*, all the members of a family at Fishkill Landing have become insane through joining the Salvation Army. The family was one of the most respected in the place. First one daughter was converted to the Army, and then the remainder followed. The parents kept a large boarding-house, but there was so much Salvation Army heard in the house that the boarders all left. Then one of the daughters said she had been inspired to marry the captain, but the latter did not know of it, and the ceremony did not come off.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Saturday, Dec. 6, Co-operative Hall, Cramlington, at 7.30, "Twelve Months in a Christian Gaol."

Sunday, Dec. 7, Free Library Hall, South Shields:—At 11, "Sky Pilots;" at 3, "Evolution versus the Bible;" at 7, "Will Christ Save Us?"

Monday, Dec. 8, Town Hall, Houghton-le-Spring.

Tuesday, Dec. 9, Claremont Hall, London:—At 8.30, "Lives of Christ. III.—Mark and Luke."

Thursday, 11, Hall of Science, London:—At 8.30, "The History of Priestcraft."—III.

5, Moss

December 14, Oldham; 15, Huddersfield; 16, Claremont Hall, London; 18, Hall of Science, London; 19, Hackney; 21, Hall of Science; 28, Milton Hall, London.

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.

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

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—E. Drain, J. Davidson, S. W., D. Levy.

JOHN HENDERSON.—Mr. Symes's *Liberator* is published at 120 Swanston Street, Melbourne.

ELEVE AND LYCISTE.—We only insert verse written to order, or under special circumstances.

A. MACKENZIE.—"Hocus pocus" is taken from the words of the priest "Hoc est corpus meum"—this is my body.

DEVIL'S HOOE.—Surely it is hardly worth while to trouble about a true believer who talks about seeing the odor of a rose. Sheer nonsense is absolutely unanswerable. We regret we have not space for the longer communication.

G. PAYNE.—Thanks.

H. A. KEMP wants the following numbers of the *Freethinker*. Vol. I, Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Vol. IV., Nos. 1 and 8. Can any of our readers supply them? State price.

F. PASCOE.—We cannot entertain the proposal. We are not Christians, and if we promised £1 commission for selling 500 we should have to pay it, and not relieve our consciences by washing in the blood of Christ.

D. EARLY, complimenting us on last week's sketch, says "Never before was I so struck with the usefulness of these sketches."

H. T. BAILEY.—The back numbers of the *Freethinker* may be seen at the British Museum. The ticket should be headed "Newspaper," and the date of the year given. Thanks for cuttings.

A BECOMING FREETHINKER.—The tract "What becomes of the Infidel Leaders?" was examined in No. 112 of the *Freethinker*. The majority were not in any sense "leaders."

WM. KNIGHT.—Mr. Symes must have referred to the Septuagint version, according to which Methuselah lived until after the deluge.

J. ROGERS.—It is impossible to please everybody, and especially impossible to please Christians. At the same time we take your criticism in the spirit that prompts you to offer it.

J. ROBERTS.—Such cuttings are always welcome.

J. BARNES.—You will do good work by distributing our tracts.

W. NELSON.—We have dealt with the subject in "Acid Drops," and as your letter only corroborates all we have written you will pardon us for not inserting it. We printed Mr. Baker's letter in full because he thought himself aggrieved.

J. WIDDICOMBE.—Glad to find you approve our article on Brummagem Liberalism, but our space is too limited for a long correspondence on the subject.

STUART ROBINSON.—Thanks. We shall be very glad to hear from you again.

A FREETHINKER.—Renan is a Frenchman of Frenchmen, being a Celt born in Brittany. The sky-pilot's statement that he is a German may furnish evidence of his authority on the other matter. We know of no doctor of the name.

R. SCHEURMAN.—Lottie Wilmot lectured at Melbourne on the orthodox side (see *Freethinker*, Oct. 5 and 26, pp. 318, 339). It is a falsehood to describe her as a noted Freethought lecturer, as Christian papers do. Freethinkers are no more responsible for her poverty and distress than are Christians.

J. BRICKWOOD.—Shall appear.

J. MORRIS.—We cannot answer vague generalities. Contradict a single specific statement in our article and we will furnish the proof. Your remark that the Freethinkers were never refused a hall in Birmingham comes at an unlucky moment—see "Acid Drops."

W. H. SALTER.—Active Freethinkers and the sale of Freethought literature have increased many hundreds per cent. during the last ten years. We have no other means of estimating, nor have we reliable statistics of the Christian churches. The motto of the Inquisition was "Compel them to come in," Luke xiv., 23; see also Luke xix., 23; 1 Cor. xvi., 22; 2 John, 10. We have no ledger account of the Creation, but it is estimated there are over half a million different species of insects, over 1,600 species of mammalia, and over 6,000 species of birds.

ADMIRER OF FREETHOUGHT.—Literature sent. Thanks for cutting.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Lucifer—Cambria Leader—Glasgow Evening Citizen—Kent Standard—War Cry—Truthseeker (N. Y.)—Devon Evening Express—Boston Investigator—Herts Observer—Liverpool Echo—Liberator—Woman's Suffrage Journal.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OUR Christmas Number is now on sale. It certainly equals, if it does not excel, any special number we have yet issued; and we feel confident it will give thousands of Freethinkers many good quarters of an hour. One irate Christian has already called at our office to inform us that we are sure to be prosecuted, and serve us right. If this charitable disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus had his own way, he would give us our share of hell on this side of the grave. Why the deuce can't these Christians let the Lord do his work in his own way? For our part, we have no fear of him in the next world if they will only leave us alone in this.

MR. H. HISCOCK, the Financial Secretary, sends us a good report from Claremont Hall. Since the starting of the Company three months ago, two hundred members have been enrolled in the Club and Institute, and sixty new members have joined the Finsbury Branch of the National Secular Society. A Local Parliament is being organised to meet on Thursday evenings, Freethought lectures are delivered every Sunday, besides such Tuesday evening lectures as Mr. Foote is now giving. There is also a musical entertainment on Saturday evenings, and on Sunday evenings after the lecture and discussion. All this is very encouraging. We understand that there are a good many shares still unallotted, but we hope they will soon be taken up. Freethinkers in the neighborhood should rally round the energetic Committee, and see that they are not crippled by lack of funds.

CARDINAL MANNING complains that the spirit of Rationalism reigns supreme in the higher forms of modern journalism and literature. We are glad to hear him say so. When Cardinals grumble it is time for all honest men to rejoice.

MR. CLODD has concluded his papers on "Dreams" in *Knowledge*, and they will shortly be republished with other essays under the title "Myths and Dreams." In his last instalment he instances the dream-interpreting of Joseph and Daniel, and says, "Indeed, we need not travel beyond the cover of the Old and New Testament for abundant evidence of the importance attached to dreams and visions." He might have added that the fundamental doctrine of Christianity, that of the Incarnation, is based on Joseph's dream.

WE have received the following further subscriptions for Mr. Goulding:—Mr. Guthrie, 1s.; G. Dosset, 6d.

A MEETING will be held at Mr. Reaver's, Brook Street, Silverdale, on Sunday evening, Dec. 7, at 6.30, with the view of forming a branch of the N. S. S.; and also at Hassells Street, Newcastle-under-Lyne, in the afternoon, at 3.30, for the same object. Mr. Frederick Rayner, 80A Piccadilly, Hanley, is acting as secretary *pro tem*.

A RECENT letter from Sydney mentions that Mr. Symes is stirring up the Christian bile in that quarter. One of the comic papers represents Mr. Symes, Mr. Walker and Mr. Bright as the three witches in Macbeth stirring up the cauldron of hell-broth. Our friends in Australia do not mind caricature. Their views become better known the more they are thus advertised. Mr. Symes himself says the caricature represents the Holy Trinity, for they are the sole manufacturers of hell-broth. "To escape prosecution and avoid shocking the 'unco' guid,' the father is labelled Bright, a contraction for brightness; the second person is labelled Symes, which is their way of spelling son; and the Holy Ghost is appropriately called Walker."

APOLLONIUS OF TYANA.

WHEN in 1680 the unfortunate Charles Blount, author of "The Oracles of Reason," published his translation of the two first books of the life of Apollonius, the work was suppressed as "an affront to revealed religion." This circumstance alone might interest Freethinkers in the Pagan savior who was contemporary with Jesus, and the story of whose career strikingly illustrates the superstition of the time when Christianity took its rise.

Apollonius was born about the commencement of the Christian era, at Tyana, the capital of Cappadocia, in Asia Minor. According to his biographer, Philostratus (who wrote his life at the command of the Empress Julia, wife of Alexander Severus, who gave him for this purpose a narrative written by Damis, a follower of the sage), the birth of Apollonius had been foretold to his mother by the Egyptian god Proteus, the changeful and prophetic deity who became incarnate in his person. A flock of swans sang at his birth, as at that of the god Apollo, and a thunderbolt rose aloft and disappeared. He was sent to study at Tarsus, where Saul, *alias* Paul, was about that time learning the tent-making business. In youth Apollonius embraced the philosophy of Pythagoras and abjured the ordinary

pleasures of life. He strictly observed the Pythagorean discipline of five years' silence, suffering often the most painful trials of his patience without a murmur. He then set out on his travels in the East. At Nineveh he was joined by Damis, afterwards his biographer. From Babylon, where he learned the wisdom of the Magi, he wandered to India, there learning the secrets of the Brahmans, who, we are told, "thought themselves gods because they were good men." He here had long discourses with the Brahman Iarchus, and became an accomplished sage himself, able to foretell earthquakes and eclipses, to summons spirits from the vasty deep, and even to restore the dead to life. The truth probably is that he had studied medicine at the temples of Æsculapius and learned something of what is called "animal magnetism" from the Indian yogis.

On his return to Asia Minor, his fame was noised abroad before him. The common people heard him gladly, for he spoke as one having authority. We are told he cured Ephesus of the plague and converted the Ephesians to philosophy and virtue; not meeting St. John or any other Christian there. In Corinth he opened the eyes of an enamoured youth to the fact that his bride was an evil spirit, and caused the marriage feast, with its gold and silver vessels, cup-bearers and cooks, to vanish into air, like deacon Philip in the Acts of the Apostles. This story is the foundation of Keats's "Lamia."

At Athens, a youth irreverently laughing at Apollonius's instructions, the sage pronounced him possessed by a demon, whom he expelled forthwith, the demon proving his presence, not by jumping into pigs, but by overthrowing a statue. Numerous other miracles are placed to his account. More credibly, and to his own honor, he censured the gladiatorial combats of the Athenians. "He refused going to their assembly when invited, saying the place was impure and polluted with blood." With the Pythagoreans generally, he offered only bloodless sacrifices, and abstained from animal food and from clothing in the production of which animals had been slain.

In the time of Nero he went to Rome, "to see what sort of an animal a tyrant was." Simon Magus, Simon Kephas and Paul are supposed to have been in Rome at the same time, though their presence is problematical. Here Apollonius met the funeral of a young maiden of high birth, and, commanding the attendants to set down the bier, he pronounced a few words over her, and awakened her from her seeming death. Her relatives presented him with one hundred and fifty thousand drachmas, which he settled on her as a marriage portion. Nero expelled Apollonius as a magician, but Vespasian, who had himself been once persuaded to work a miracle, consulted him as an oracle. Domitian again persecuted and imprisoned him, and he was charged with blasphemy for having pretended to be a god. Among other indignities, Domitian ordered his hair and beard to be cut off, which occasioned the retort from the sage that he did not know what harm his hair had done. After a long rhetorical defence he vanished from the tribunal, appearing to his disciples the same day at Puteoli, three days' journey from Rome. Thence he went back to Ephesus, where one day, while disputing before a large audience, he suddenly became silent, as if he had lost the thread of his discourse. Then, fixing his eyes steadfastly on the earth and advancing three or four steps, he cried: "Strike the tyrant! Strike!" The audience, being astonished and thinking him mad, he added: "Keep up your spirits, O Ephesians! for this day the tyrant is killed at Rome." And so he was. Dion Cassius, who probably had the story from Philostratus, makes Apollonius mention the very name of the regicide: "Courage, Stephanus; strike the murderer! Thou hast struck, hast wounded, hast slain him!" In these days such exclamations would lead to the belief that the speaker was privy to the plot of the assassin.

Apollonius, however, was not a mere vulgar deceiver like Alexander of Abonotichus, who shortly afterwards gained fame as a prophet and miracle-monger. His discourses show him to have had elevated thoughts and to have taught a lofty morality. For instance, he insists that the wise will abstain from vicious actions, even though they may never come to light. In one of his letters, after a complaint almost identical with that of Jesus that "a prophet hath no honor in his own country," he adds:—

"I know well indeed how good it is for one to hold the whole earth for his country, and all men for his brothers and friends; since we are all of divine lineage, and come from one father, and

since there is a universal community of nature, by which everyone, wherever and however he may be situated, whether barbarian or Grecian, is still always a man."

He is supposed to have died at Ephesus, like the Apostle John, at a very great age. His tomb, like that of Moses, was not known. One account represents him as having disappeared in the temple of Diana, while virgin voices were heard singing, "Leave the earth; ascend to heaven!" The words of Flavius Philostratus are: "Here ends the history of Apollonius the Tyanean, as written by Damis. Concerning the manner of his death, if he did die, the accounts are various."

After his exit Apollonius was worshipped with divine honors for a period of four centuries. Statues and temples were erected to him, and his birth-place, Tyana, obtained from the Romans the immunities of a sacred city. Hierocles and other Pagans placed the life and miracles of Apollonius in rivalry with those of Jesus, and even some moderns have had the audacity to make the same comparison. It is not every reader of history who can be as discriminating even as Gibbon, who in one of his insidious foot-notes says: "Apollonius of Tyana was born about the same time as Jesus Christ. His life (that of the former) is related in so fabulous a manner by his fanatic disciples that we are at a loss to discover whether he was a sage or an impostor." This sneer was very wicked of Gibbon, for the life of Apollonius was not written by "fanatic disciples," but by a person of distinction, at the instigation of a Roman Empress, whom Gibbon himself calls "the patroness of every art and the friend of every man of genius." This history was written within a century after the death of Apollonius, from memoirs written by a companion and disciple. In about a century afterwards, Sotericus, the poet and historian, whose works are now lost, wrote another biography of Apollonius. Some letters attributed to him are embodied in Philostratus's account of his life, and several more are preserved in the works of Cujacius. A collection of them was made by the Emperor Adrian. Caracalla honored Apollonius and built a temple to him as a hero. He was in such estimation with Alexander Severus that he had his statue in his private study. The prodigies of Apollonius are mentioned by Lucian (born about 120) and also by his contemporary Apuleius.

When Hierocles alleged against the Christians that Apollonius had done more public miracles than Jesus, these were not denied by the Christian fathers. They contented themselves with alleging the Pagan miracles to be the work of demons. Modern Christians, however, believe that of these two persons—who lived at the same time, and who each claimed a mission to teach a pure and reformed religion, and who, in attestation of their authority, went about healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils and prophesying future events which afterwards came to pass—the history of the one is entirely mythical, if not consciously false, while that of the other is entirely divine. For our part, while finding something of value both in the sayings of Jesus and of Apollonius, we reject equally the account of their supernatural doings as the legends of a credulous and superstitious age.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE REPEAL OF THE BLASPHEMY LAWS.—The General Committee of the Association met on Tuesday, Nov. 25. Present: The Rev. Stewart D. Headlam (in the chair), Clair J. Grece, LL.D., R. Forder, J. Forster, W. Marven, F. Verinder, W. A. Hunter and Rev. W. Sharman. The names of Dr. Pankhurst and John S. Stuart Glennie, Esq., M.A., were added to the list of Vice-Presidents. The Short Statement of the Existing Law of Blasphemy, prepared by Dr. Odgers for the Council of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, was referred to, and it was resolved to request that Association to receive a deputation on the subject. Copies of Dr. Hunter's pamphlet were ordered to be sent to the members of the Council. It was unanimously resolved that arrangements should be completed for the introduction of Mr. Justice Stephen's Bill in the first session of the reformed Parliament, and for its support by public meetings and petitions. The draft of the annual report was discussed and ordered to be printed. The Treasurer was requested to prepare an appeal for funds to accompany the report which will be circulated in January.—W. SHARMAN.

The Divine Interpretation of Scripture. A Reply to Cardinal Manning by SALADIN. London: W. Stewart and Co., 41 Farringdon Street, E.C.—This trenchant and incisive impeachment of the pretensions of our greatest enemy, the Romish Church, was well worth reprinting, and we hope it will have a large circulation.

THE TEMPTATION IN THE WILDERNESS.

GREAT men need not disdain to sport and play,
 For God and Satan sometimes had their joke—
 If all be "gospel" that the Gospels say—
 Upon my word, the notion makes me choke!
 Just think! the *creature* his *Creator* tries
 To tempt and bribe with *things already his!*
 Why, Nick must be—unless the Bible lies—
 The biggest fool that ever was, or is!
 Or else, as said before, the whole affair
 Was but a joke between the two, I ween;
 If so, 'twas wasted on the desert air;
 A blasted waste—a *desert* waste, I mean.
 If Satan knew that Christ was Lord of all,
 He knew that Christ did know that *he* did know,
 And each did know that God could never fall:
 In *short*, ev'n like the *fast*, 'twas *long* and *slow*.
 But Jesus never seemed to like a spree,
 And Satan's schemes on strictest business ran;
 So we must think that Nick took him to be
 His *father's* son, like any other man.
 There is another view I would suggest—
 And 'tis the one most sensible, say I—
 That is, may I be—well, may I be blest
 If I don't think the story all a lie! G. L. MAC.

THE HOLY GHOST IN A FIX.

THE fraction of Holy Ghost, which for the past ten years has found its dwelling-place in the Right Reverend Father in God, the Lord Bishop of Manchester, has had a rather uncomfortable time of it lately. Worse still, from what the Bishop tells us, it appears that the trouble is by no means at an end, but it is, in fact, only just beginning. Vulgarly speaking, this piece of Holy Ghost is in a horrible fix. Those wicked teetotallers are at the bottom of it all, and if we only knew the truth, doubtless we should find that the soul of the late Joseph Livesey is just now getting it hot, in retaliation for the awful dilemma which his teaching has caused.

But it is time to explain. The Bishop of Manchester has just been holding his fourth quadrennial visitation of his clergy and has found it necessary to comment upon such disagreeable, and, to him, disheartening subjects as Liberationist attacks, Ritualism, clerical scandals, and most perplexing of all, temperance. It appears that some churchmen in the diocese, who are also rigid total abstinents, have had the audacity to decline to taste the sacramental wine when professing to participate in the Holy Communion. Others "will only receive in unfermented wine," which his lordship, with evident appreciation of the genuine article says "properly speaking, is no wine at all." Here is a frightful state of things. These obstinate teetotallers actually refuse to obey the positive directions of their dying Savior. The poor Bishop is at his wit's end, and the Holy Ghost, with which he was "endued" at his consecration, does not seem able to help him. The two of them together cannot even find a decent and appropriate curse for this new and unheard-of crime. The teetotallers have "floored" them both, and the Ghost-filled Bishop is compelled to make the humiliating confession, "I really am at a loss to know how to deal with them."

To the lay mind this would seem to end the matter and to make further speech upon the subject useless and absurd. But bishops are not as other men, and cannot give us a grain of wheat without burying it in a bushel of chaff. Probably the latter is the Ghost's own contribution. However this may be, it is certain that in the case before us the Bishop of Manchester has no sooner confessed that he does not know what to do than he immediately, with true Christian consistency, begins advising his clergy how to act. As a specimen of inane and contradictory nonsense, his further remarks can scarcely be equalled. He first chides the teetotallers for their "lack of faith" in not believing that "Christ will give us strength to resist temptation when we are simply doing his will," and then he refers to "well-authenticated" instances in which Christ certainly did *not* give strength to resist temptation, and where the intoxicant used at "the Lord's table" caused "sad relapses into sin." This is the sort of logic which the Bishop thinks suited to the intelligence of the age; the kind of silly twaddle which is good enough for his clergy! The teetotallers lack faith because they have not quite parted company with common sense. The Bishop may revile them to his heart's content for their "lack of faith" and their "fanaticism," but he will never persuade them to discard the evidence of their senses. At other times the Bishop is very severe upon Darwinism, which he does not understand, and therefore delights to describe as "an unproved theory." But now he does not hesitate to urge both the clergy and the laity of his immense diocese to shut their eyes, open their mouths, and swallow a theory of his own, which is not only not proved to be true, but is admitted by himself to be contradicted by facts. It is much to be feared that a wicked and unregenerate world will treat the theory that "Christ will give us strength to resist temptation when we are simply doing his will" as a piece of clerical buncombe, addressed to earthly sinners, but really intended for the private ear of the Lord of heaven, and designed to help the pious Bishop to secure his "never-fading crown of glory."

To do him justice, the Bishop appears to be pretty well satisfied that his ghostly rubbish will not go far in the way of overcoming the scruples of the teetotallers. He has therefore to face one of the worst troubles which can afflict the clerical mind—the reconciliation of the dictates of religion with the teachings of experience and common sense. According to the Prayer-book, every parishioner is expected to communicate "at the least three times in the year," and the poor Bishop is in the terrible fix of having continually to tempt reformed drunkards with the sight, smell and taste of the liquor which may ruin them, body and soul! Here is a pretty dilemma for the Bishop and the Holy Ghost with which he is inspired! Evidently the devil is the instigator of the teetotal movement and the Holy Ghost is only just beginning to find it out! The Devil has got a fifty years' start of the Ghost! He has positively convinced the bulk of the better educated classes that total abstinence is a good thing both for morals and religion before the third person in the Holy Trinity has discovered that Christianity compels the sipping of intoxicants at least three times a year. The wily old serpent! Well does the Bible describe him as "more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made." Why "the Lord God" should have made him at all must ever remain a mystery. However the Bible tells us that he *was* made, and it is plain that he is at least as active and mischievous now as when he inhabited the garden of Eden. In fact he seems just as present more likely than ever to circumvent his creator and to destroy utterly his elaborate scheme for the salvation of mankind.

But to return to the Bishop of Manchester. The only way he can see of meeting the difficulty of the teetotallers is "to adopt the principle of spiritual communion." That is the clergy must wink hard when they see the cup approaching teetotal communicants. "If those who approach the Lord's Table choose to deny themselves the cup" the clergy are "to allow them to do so on their own responsibility." What noble advice! How admirably the Bishop obeys the charge which he received at his ordination to feed his flock and hold up the weak! How ready he is to connive at a mockery of his omniscient God and how careful to provide that the responsibility shall not fall upon "the Lord's anointed." How beautifully he trims between his desire to maintain inviolate the ceremony of the Church and his fear of refusing a concession lest he drive many from her ranks; either it is right for teetotallers to refuse the cup, or it is wrong, but not for worlds would the Bishop express a definite opinion on the point. His flock must e'en judge for themselves and run the risk of eternal damnation without a word of guidance from their well-paid but cowardly shepherd.

The Bishop and his clergy are entering upon a perilous path. They are abdicating their position as the teachers of the way of salvation. To throw believers upon their own responsibility in such a matter as the taking of the sacramental wine will inevitably lead them to think for themselves upon matters of belief as well as of ritual. What the incident makes plain to outsiders is that the clerical bubble has been pricked again. Its pretentiousness and humbug are once more made manifest. Plain common sense and "carnal reason" have secured another victory over ecclesiastical presumption and audacity. The Holy Ghost evidently does not understand the difficulties of civilised life, and considering the mess into which he has led the Bishop of Manchester, it is about time that he betook himself to "fresh fields and pastures new." Here in England his game is played out and the longer he stays the worse it will be for the Church which he is supposed to inspire and enlighten. MARTIN MARPRELATE.

COMFORT.—Old Scotch Minister (to young ditto, who has come to see him during an illness): "Ah! Mr. Thomson, ye'll be wearying for ma deeing?"—Young Minister: "No, my dear sir, not so. I'm most anxious, indeed I am—for your living."

THE Vicar: "The ignorance of some of the people is most terrible! Just now I told Muggins, the sailor, that the subject of my sermon next Sunday would be 'Election.' He hoped I would say something about the Franchise too!"

ONE of the newest and latest things from "the cloth" is told by a leading Hartford divine. A parishioner, as the story goes, was nearing the end, and his friends thought he ought to see a minister. The clergyman was sent for, and promptly responded to the summons. As soon as the sick man saw him he commenced telling him of his sufferings, and the hopelessness of his getting well. "I'm all broke up," he said. "Everything's gone back on me, and I don't think I'll live long." "But you must call on the Lord," replied the spiritual adviser. "Oh," persisted the sick man, "I'm old and feeble, and used up—all broke up, sir, and don't get out to call on anybody."

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.—How many men not warped by prejudice, or perverted by error, can believe that a finite creature—sinful, erring, weak, laden with infirmity—can, by a few words, change a piece of bread into God, it is wholly beyond one's power to comprehend, unless, on the principle stated by St. Paul, that "because they received not the love of the truth, God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie." Since the creation of the world there never was such "a lie" as that which Roman theologians have invented in the so-called sacrifice of the Mass, and which the Romanisers in our Church are so feebly imitating.—*Rock*.

PROFANE JOKES.

A CLERGYMAN removing from one city to another marked a large box containing his sermons, "Keep dry." They did.

A PREACHER called upon his congregation to admire the wisdom of Providence which ordained that the largest rivers should always flow near the most important towns.

"EVER had a cyclone here?" inquired a Kansas man who was visiting a country aunt in the East. "A cyclone? Oh yes," said his aunt, "Deacon Brown's son brought one from Boston a spell ago; but law! he couldn't ride it Tumbled off every time he tried."

A RELIGIOUS CEREMONY.—Mother of bride (to young parson who has just performed "the rite," and has been induced to stay and assist in drinking the young couple's health): "Will ye please, sir, tae officiate at the port wine?"

THE Rev. Doctor Roberts, of Brooklyn, once preached to certain lunatics, and introduced the story of the Hindu mother who threw her child into the Ganges. As he left, one of them shouted after him: "Roberts, I say, what a pity your mother did not throw you into the Ganges!"

"EAT your bread, Charles—do not fling it away," said a clergyman to one of his family the other day, adding, "for who knows, in the vicissitudes of this life, if you may not some day want it?" The sky-pilot had to cough, looked learned, and go away when his youngest answered, more logically than his parent, "If I eat it, how can I have it when I want it?"

A BAND of empty-headed divinity students paid a visit to the house of a country clergyman; a flock of turkeys followed them to the door. "Sir," says one of the probationers, "do you allow the turkeys to come into your house?" "Sometimes," replied the minister; "but I will not admit them on this occasion, for I never suffer turkeys and geese to enter at the same time."

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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?" 1d.; 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.

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