

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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## COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 98.



ELIJAH'S TRIP TO HEAVEN.

"Behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven."—2 KINGS ii., 11.

## HOLY BIBLE.

EARL CAIRNS has just opened a new Branch of the Young Men's Christian Association at Newcastle. He took for the subject of his address the temptations of young men in great cities. The choice was singularly unfortunate, and his lordship's pious advice to the adolescent Christians of Tyneside was a still greater mistake. Considering the achievements of his own young hopeful, he might have selected a happier theme. A public man blessed with less humility than the late Lord Chancellor would have shrunk from lecturing young men on their duties and opportunities when his own son had so recently "gone wrong." But true piety is not easily cast down. No matter what its own misfortunes and failures may be, it is always ready to preach moral lessons to mankind. An extreme illustration of this truth was furnished a week or two ago by a Church dignitary. He was committed for trial one day on a charge of public indecency, and the next day he preached to a large congregation, no doubt with "great acceptance."

The Young Men's Christian Association does not comprise many artisans. Its members are almost exclusively clerks and shopmen. They do not work at trades—they are "in business." Earl Cairns therefore adapted his remarks to this circumstance. He congratulated the Newcastle Society on its possession of a gymnasium, and other means of exercise and recreation suitable to young men occupied in sedentary employments. We wonder what Peter and Paul, or Jesus himself, would have thought of these frivolous amusements. Surely they would have con-

demned them, with the observation that Christianity concerns itself with immortal souls and not with perishable bodies. The Christianity of Earl Cairns and the young Englishmen he addressed bears very little resemblance to that of the primitive Church. It is Christian only in name. Practically, it is a compromise with the world, the flesh and the devil. Fancy Jesus Christ playing a game of billiards, Peter taking a hand at whist, Paul playing chess, John flying on the trapeze, Jude twirling on the horizontal bar, James using the dumb-bells, Matthew swinging the clubs, and the other disciples climbing ropes or swarming up poles! The idea is utterly absurd.

Earl Cairns did not, however, confine his remarks to this topic. He told young Newcastle how to get on in business by studying shorthand, book-keeping, and similar subjects. Obviously, all this has nothing to do with the kingdom of heaven, unless the members of the Young Men's Christian Association aspire to fill the post of private secretary or recording angel in the New Jerusalem. His lordship, therefore, thought it necessary to say a few words on their religious duties. All their physical, mental and moral improvement, he told them, would be quite worthless unless they laid the great truths of Christianity to heart, and diligently studied God's holy word. Let us see the meaning of this verbiage.

Earl Cairns has indeed laid the great truths of present-day Christianity to heart. He has devoted all his capacity to "getting on," which is the ultimate gospel of orthodoxy. He went into the profitable profession of law, although the New Testament emphatically warns Christians against it. He joined the Conservative party, which, being naturally stupid, is always ready to pay a high price for brains. He lent his eloquence in Parliament as he did in the Law Courts. He steadily opposed every measure of popular justice. When Beaconsfield came into power, he reaped his final reward by becoming Lord Chancellor. This involved a peerage and a pension. He took ten thousand a year while he sat on the woolsack, which is remarkably good pay for such a soft seat; and for having sat on the woolsack he continues to take five thousand a year for the rest of his natural life. Every penny of this prodigal sum has, of course, to come from the people's pocket. That is the way Earl Cairns has loved meekness and poverty, lost the world to gain his own soul, and sacrificed this life for the next. Such an encouraging example will probably stimulate Christian young men to persevere in the path of piety. Get on, dear boys, get on; £. s. d. in this world, and golden harps and crowns in the world to come.

As for studying God's Word, we may say that Earl Cairns has done it to some purpose. He has deeply pondered some of the business maxims in the Book of Proverbs, and committed to memory a few Scripture phrases that can be used in support of Jingoism; but when we come to the New Testament, it is difficult to say whether the chief object of his emulation has been Jesus Christ or Judas Iscariot.

Holy Bible! What a fine piece of hypocrisy! The "holy" is stamped on the cover lest it should not be found inside. Christians go on calling it "holy," although they know it contains some of the silliest and filthiest stories that were ever penned. Many years ago, in Richard Carlile's time, a Freethinker who refused his name was tried for Blasphemy. He had published the statement that the Bible is an immoral book, and the judge gave him three years' imprisonment for that atrocious crime. Yet when he began to read from God's word in justification of his statement, the judge ordered all females to leave the Court. Holy Bible!

Christians say the Bible is holy, but they don't believe it.

Belief is not to be tested by words, but by actions. Their conduct proves their insincerity. What they sent us to gaol for saying, they prove by their daily practice. They no more believe the Bible to be God's word than we do. If they did, they would obey its commands. They protest that the Bible is a divine book, and they will lock you up in a felon's cell for deriding it; but they laugh at it by their conduct, and treat it with scorn by their practical neglect. It is God's word, it contains all the rules of morality and salvation, but it must never be quoted on any matter of importance. Yet in Mohammedan countries all public proceedings are sanctioned by texts from the Koran, and all questions of right and wrong are decided by appeal to the same authority. Why? Because Mohammedans really believe that the Koran is God's word. The old Puritans quoted the Bible in the same way, because they really believed what Christians now only profess. They still say "Holy Bible," but they never consult it. They never quote Scripture at a town-council meeting, on a School Board, at a vestry-meeting, or on any committee; and even if Mr. Newdegate objected to a Bill because a certain text was dead against it, his pious Tory friends, instead of applauding him, would only regard it as a positive proof that the poor man was gone at last. Holy Bible! Nobody regards what it says, nobody obeys it, nobody consults it. The Christians worship it as intelligently as an African worships his fetish. They only use it as a table ornament, as a public sign of respectability on Sundays, or as a missile to fling at the head of any Freethinker who asks them to square their practice with their profession, or to admit on Sunday the principles on which they act every other day in the week.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### PEREGRINUS AND ALEXANDER OF ABONOTICHUS.

ONE of the charges brought by Celsus, the earliest Pagan opponent of Christianity, was that the Christians, instead of appealing to reason, inculcated a blind belief, and so attracted the dregs of the populace. The original Salvation Army he compared to mountebanks who gather crowds in the market-places by their disreputable tricks. This opinion was shared by his friend Lucian, the great Freethinking wit and satirist, whom Froude justly calls "the cleverest man who was alive on this planet in the second century." In his account of the death of Peregrinus, Lucian speaks of the Christians as a foolish sect, whose fanaticism made them the easy dupes of all charlatans. He says: "If any cunning impostor came among them he soon grew rich by imposing on the credulity of these weak and foolish men."

This Peregrinus was a notable instance of what persons will do from a thirst for glory. He commenced his career by strangling his father, and then joined the Christians to wash out his sins in the blood of the lamb. Having learning he soon became a renowned interpreter of the Scriptures, and Lucian tells us he revised the Christian sacred books and wrote others himself. One cannot help wondering for what parts of Scripture we are indebted to this worthy who was made a bishop and was even looked upon as a prophet. In one of the persecutions of the Christians he was imprisoned, but was soon released by the governor of Syria.

According to Lucian, he made a pretty revenue of his martyrdom, for the Christians ministered unto him. But the renown of martyrdom—which we know from the epistles of Ignatius, was considered the crowning grace of a Christian—was too much for his vanity. He gave out that he was so far above the usual fear of death that he would throw himself voluntarily into the flames. This boast spread so far that he was unable to recede. Kind disciples prepared the pile, expecting to see some miracle for his salvation; and, whether actuated by ambition or fanaticism, Peregrinus actually threw himself into the flames. Lucian was present, and, being questioned by one of the martyr's disciples as to what marvel happened, answered the fool according to his folly, and told him that an eagle had risen out of the flames and soared to the skies. The story he had invented passed into popular belief, and he afterwards heard some one declare he had seen the prodigy with his own eyes. A similar story is told in the epistle of the Christian Church at Smyrna, giving the account of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, out of whose

side arose a pigeon, a sign of his having the Holy Ghost. Polycarp and Peregrinus lived at the same time, and Le Moyné considers that Lucian, in his account of the latter, satirised the career of "the angel of the Church at Smyrna" (Rev. ii., 8).

It was at the request of his friend Celsus, whom he highly extols for his love of truth, his sweetness of disposition and his justice, that Lucian wrote the account of a more lucky rascal, Alexander, the false prophet of Abonotichus. Apollonius of Tyana, like his contemporary, Jesus, is known to us only through the writings of admirers; but Alexander we are able to see with the eyes of the clearest-sighted man of his time. Although he did not address himself to Christians, the career of this rogue strikingly exhibits the credulity of the age when Christianity first spread abroad.

There are so many Alexanders that this prince of impostors is known by the name of his native place, Abonotichus, a town on the coast of Paphlagonia, in the north of Asia Minor. The youth of Alexander was spent in shameless debauchery. He was of pleasing appearance, and was taken up by a quack doctor, a disciple of Apollonius of Tyana. Here he acquired some skill in medicine and in compounding spells and love-charms, and revealing the secrets of the future. Afterwards he travelled about with another charlatan, "shaving the fat-heads," as they called their way of life. It is needless to say they found a perennial fool crop, anxious to know the secrets of futurity.

In Macedonia they met some snakes of a prodigious size, but quite tame and gentle, so that they lived in houses and sucked milk. From this local peculiarity possibly arose the fable of a serpent being concerned in the birth of Alexander the Great. One of the most beautiful of these snakes they purchased for a few oboli. It was so tame it would coil round the body of Alexander and take any position he desired. They then returned homewards, and by the temple of Apollo, at Chalcedon, the bold adventurers, buried some brass plates bearing an inscription that Asculapius, the god of medicine, would appear at Abonotichus in bodily form. Joe Smith may have read of this story in Lucian, and taken a hint from it in his concoction of the Mormon revelations. The plates were conveniently discovered, and became the talk of the bazaars. The story spread. The Epicureans had discredited the belief in the gods, and the promised actual appearance of a god on earth excited believers so much, that at Abonotichus they at once set to work to build a temple for his reception.

Matters being thus prepared, Alexander next procured a goose's egg, which he opened, cleared out the contents, and placed inside a small embryo snake. This done, he filled the cracks and smoothed them with wax and white lead. The egg was deposited in one of the muddy pools cleared at the foundation of the temple. Alexander now appeared with long flowing hair, clad in a fine purple robe with white stripes and a priestly surplice. He foamed at the mouth, by the help of soap-wort, as if possessed. In his hand he bore a falchion like that with which Perseus had slain the Gorgon. He found the egg, opened it, and proclaimed it the new god Glycon, "the light of the world." He retired to his house for a few days, till crowds came beseeching to see the divinity. They were shown into a dark room, where Alexander lay with the snake folded round him, the mask of a human head being substituted for the serpent's own. They had to pass from door to door, being only permitted a glimpse of the divinity. This show the rogue exhibited often, especially when rich strangers visited the city. In a short time all Asia Minor thronged to the spectacle. The temple was finished, and Alexander announced that the god would, for a consideration, answer any questions which were put to him. The charge was only one drachma and two oboli, or about a shilling per question; but the number of customers, and of the questions they asked, made ample amends for the smallness of the present. Sealed questions were answered in a few days, the seals being opened by a burnt needle and other methods. Many inquired about their health, and Alexander knew enough to be able to read in their faces what was the matter with them. He had a famous panacea for many complaints, compounded of bears' grease. The answers, like those of the Pagan oracles, were usually mysterious and ambiguous, and sometimes totally unintelligible. Definite questions about marriage or estates would be answered that the fates were undecided, depending on the pleasure of the god and the prayers of his prophet. The money

poured in and he was able to have a large following of underlings and spies. He made friends of the rival oracles by sending some of his questioners to them. The Epicureans who ridiculed and exposed him he declared must be stoned and turned out of the city if the inhabitants wished the god to be propitious. To be a sceptic was to be in disrepute and danger. At the command of the oracle the works of Epicurus were burnt, and Epicurus himself was declared to be in hell lying in mud and in chains of lead. Rid of the Atheists, Alexander gave out that he was miraculously born, and began to establish a kind of worship. Before the scenes he posed as the high priest of a renovated religion. Behind them he had the paradise of a Sybarite. Husbands thought it an honor if he would condescend to kiss their wives and even boasted of their having children by him. His fame spread abroad, and one of the Roman Senators became his patron. Lucian visited and exposed him, but nearly paid for his temerity with his life. He had spies in all parts, and in a time of pestilence many were executed at his instigation as the authors of this calamity. He prophesied that he should live for one hundred and fifty years and then be struck dead by lightning, but he died through mortification of the foot before he was seventy, with his fame undimmed and the belief in him unabated. What became of the snake Lucian does not mention. Medals are in existence to this day with the head of Alexander on one side and the serpent Glycon on the other, attesting the truth of this strange story, which at once illustrates the credulity of the first ages of Christianity and reminds us of other modern impostures. J. M. WHEELER.

## ACID DROPS.

THE "Moral Committee" of the Aberdeen Free Presbytery have resolved to put down dancing. They forget that the Bible says there is "a time to mourn and a time to dance" (Eccles. iii., 4) and that David danced before the Lord. "Miriam the prophetess," the sister of Moses, accompanied by "all the women," also went forth "with timbrels and with dances." Ps. cl., 4, says: "Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs" (see also Ps. cxlix., 3). If the bigots reply that these are only religious dances, then surely it behoves them to follow biblical teaching and introduce dances and fiddles and organs into their churches. Fancy the sour-faced Calvinist elders waltzing before the Lord, or doing an indecent *can-can à la David* before the Communion Table, or, if they wish to follow the royal saint's example more closely, in the streets of Aberdeen, to the accompaniment of sacred hurdy-gurdies and holy bag-pipes!

At a meeting called by the Christian Evidence Society at the Mildmay Conference Hall, Mr. Samuel Morley, M.P., in the chair, the Rev. H. Sinclair-Paterson, M.D., dealt with "Unbelief, and how to meet it." The approved method of meeting unbelief it appears is to be the reckless and persistent use of brazen lying and wholesale slander and insult. The speaker, for instance, declared that "if a man did not believe in God, he had no morality, and a man who had no morality was not to be trusted." Atheists are to be converted by being told that they have no honesty, no veracity, no courage, no honor, no decency, no virtue whatsoever. Truly there is no insolence, no arrogance, like religious arrogance and Christian insolence. The reverend gentleman also said that the Atheism of the present day aimed at overthrowing society; but as no sensible person expects truth from a Christian Evidence Society, we need not comment any further on the shameless misrepresentations employed against Unbelievers by these prominent defenders of a Christianity whose better features are beyond them, but whose baser teachings of hatred, prejudice and bigotry prove only too congenial.

A TRUE believer at Clifton betrays anxiety about the soul of Mr. Gicve, the author of a Freethought pamphlet we recently noticed, and manifests this sentiment by dropping badly-scrawled warnings to flee from the wrath to come in his letter-box. A penny Testament was also deposited in the same place. Some people have more money than sense, and more impudence than either.

THE Rev. F. D. Eyre, M.A., has been severely censured by a coroner's jury for neglecting his dying housekeeper, who, according to the doctor's evidence, might have lived if she had had proper medical attendance, the urgent request for which was pooh-poohed by the reverend gentleman as "all nonsense." When told by a Mrs. Giffard that the deceased was sinking fast and required nourishment, the pious professor of religion replied, "It's an infernal lie; you don't know anything about it." The sanitary inspector of the district informed the coroner that the deceased would have to be buried by the parish, as the Rev. Mr. Eyre declined to order a funeral.

A NUMBER of the French Protestants are altogether too Liberal for M. E. de Pressensé, who writes to the *Christian World* complaining that at the Mismes Conference and in an address to the churches from the leaders of the Liberal Church party nothing more is asked than a belief in Theism, and that all confessions of faith are rejected as infringing Protestant liberty. It is evident that after all M. de Pressensé's true place is in the Romish Church, which he is so constantly abusing.

THE Rev. R. R. Suffield, once a Catholic priest, who has advanced to Rationalism, points out that Dean Plumtre is wrong in entertaining the notion that Catholic divines may deny the doctrine of eternal damnation as laid down in the Fourth Lateran Council, the Athanasian Creed and in Cardinal Bellarmine's Catechism, approved by Pope Clement VIII. and Pope Benedict XII. Mr. Suffield states that "Any Roman Catholic who should now persist in teaching the finality of the sufferings of those in hell would be refused the Sacraments." Amid the general "rattling" upon the subject of brimstone and blazes, it is consoling to know the Mother Church cannot budge from her dogmas.

FEELING runs high in Portsmouth between the Evangelical Protestants and the Ritualists. At a meeting held for the purpose of inviting the Church Congress in 1885, an amendment, moved by the Rev. J. Young and seconded by the Rev. J. C. Martin, was carried, declining to invite the Congress on account of its Romanising tendencies. Mr. W. Brooks, representative of the Naval Church Society, declared "the Church Congress was nothing less than the shape of the Devil in a sandwich." Much disorder characterised the meeting. The Rev. E. P. Grant declared that the Church Congress would come, notwithstanding the adverse vote. The Town Council had sent the invitation before the meeting. Their argument is that the town will benefit financially by the visit.

A RAILWAY signalman named Armitage, who suffers from religious mania, recently brought the trains to a standstill on the London and North Western Railway by putting all his signals at danger. It was fortunate that his madness took this comparatively safe direction, as the consequences of his religious delusions might otherwise have proved most disastrous.

THE Rev. George Tabberer has been tried by an ecclesiastical court at Coventry on charges of indecency, immorality, profanity and drunkenness. He was found guilty and sentenced to deprivation of his preferments. The Bishop of Worcester and the assessors felt they must draw a line somewhere.

THE Tory *North Star*, Darlington, speaks of the "blasphemous farce" of Mr. Bradlaugh's swearing himself in. What kind of a farce do they call keeping a duly-elected member out?

ON the Sunday following the recent imposing demonstration of law, police, and military in Skye, the Rev. Donald M'Siller, of Portree, preached a sermon from 1 Kings x., 22—"Once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing. . . Ivory, apes and peacocks."

A NEGRO girl in Georgia wanted to go to church a few Sundays ago, but her father, who was not a Christian, would not consent, and for a long time they argued, but the father would not give in. At last the girl made up her mind that she must go to church, and so she went out into the woodshed and procured an axe. This she tried on a stick of wood to see if it was sharp, and then stepping up behind her unchristianlike father, smote him a smite with the weapon that split him wide open. The girl will now be able to attend church regularly every Sunday, but it will be at the prison chapel, for she has been sentenced to imprisonment for life.

A YOUNG man named Maxwell Hutton, who was formerly clerk and Bible-reader at St. Martin's Church, Sylvester Street, Liverpool, was yesterday remanded on a charge of obtaining money by a forged order, which pretended that the churchwardens were raising a subscription in order to obtain a piano for the schools.

JUSTICE NORTH has appropriately presided at a Thieves' Supper in Drury Lane. He is reported as telling his dear criminal brethren that no help was of any avail unless they had help from God. When tempted to do wrong, a few words of prayer would be of benefit. What a pity Sir Ford North did not try a few words of prayer before his unmannerly interruptions of Mr. Foote and before his iniquitous sentences.

CHURCH gambling has reached such a pitch in Birmingham that the Corporation has refused the use of the Town Hall for religious bazaars unless a guarantee is given that there shall be no raffling. The Congregationalists have been carrying on a religious lottery for £5 and £10 banknotes. The Episcopalians issue threepenny tickets for a lottery with prizes including bottles of wine and boxes of cigars. The penalty for carrying on a public lottery is £500, but as yet no one has prosecuted the privileged hypocrites who denounce gambling in secular matters and encourage it in their own churches. The Birmingham Cor-

poration, however, has announced its intention of prosecuting all gamblers impartially, whether found in public-houses or in churches. The religious gamblers will now have to reform themselves under secular compulsion.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* reminds us that these mischievous church lotteries occasionally degenerate into "down-right swindling." It says that in some cases the tickets have been sold and the "draw" has never come off. But the money was not returned as it would have been at a theatre if the entertainment advertised was not given, church morality of course being so much higher in its irreproachable sanctity than the mere common-sense honesty of outside sinners.

THE Rev. W. Rowe, of Sheerness, says "the law of God was a perfect law," and the Bible is "so pure and elevating a book that it could not have proceeded from any but God." A perfect law, which included wholesale massacre and rapine, and murder of one's own wife or children for heresy! The "pure and elevating" relates, we suppose, to the stories of the immaculate conception, of the Levite and his concubine, of Judah and Tamar, and Onan, and Amnon, and Hosea, and Lot, and to all the vile concubinage, polygamy and promiscuous immorality of the patriarchs, judges, kings and prophets whose histories are given in the chaste and delicate book whose pages are so "pure and elevating" that the mere exposure of certain of them to the public gaze has been punished by law as obscenity. As an instance of the "perfection" of the Bible, the reverend lecturer said that no fault could be found with its morals. Slavery, murder, theft, polygamy, are perfect morality, it seems! What curious notions of right and wrong these sky-pilots must have!

A CERTAIN publican's epitaph reads as follows:—

"Here lies below, in hope of Zion,  
The landlord of the 'Golden Lion.'  
His son keeps on the business still,  
Obedient to the heavenly will."

WE read in a Christian contemporary that "As we see truth, it becomes the duty of each of us to utter it." But when we follow this admirable injunction, Christians proceed to give us the opportunity of a year's reflection upon it in the calm seclusion of a prison cell.

THE *Christian Herald* has a story and a picture of a pious gentleman stopping a carman on Sunday by pretending he had driven over something or other. When the frightened driver asks anxiously what it is he has driven over, the old gentleman replies, "Over the Fourth Commandment, my friend: 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.'" Suppose the conditions of the accident were reversed and that the carman frightened and stopped a bishop driving to church, or that a Jew or a Freethinker stopped Christian coachmen or waggoners on the Saturday, this being the real seventh day or Sabbath; what would Christians say of the practical joke? We think they would then see mere vulgar impertinence where now they perceive lively and instructive Christian wit. They would then begin to think that those who presume on the good nature of cabmen or carmen in this way might naturally expect a retaliatory reply of a very unpleasant kind from men who understand the use of the whips they carry better than they do the force and bearing of stupid practical jokes.

THE Hereford Branch of the English Church Union has passed a protest against the atrocious insult cast upon the Dean by the recent police-court charge. This is one more example of the beauty of holiness and faith. We have neither, and consequently cannot see the insult. But how about the young "carman out of employment"? Has he no soul to save or character to lose?

WE notice that Sir William Harcourt was the only minister who "had the honor" of an invitation to the baptismal ceremony of the infant Duke of Albany. In view of a prospective grant for the Duke, it might have been well to interest the Radical ministers in the Princelet; and the hymn composed by the Prince Consort, and sung on the occasion, might, with some trifling alteration, have been addressed to Mr. Gladstone:—

"William, who our flock art feeding  
With the shepherd's kindest care;  
All the feeble gently leading,  
While the lambs thy bosom share.  
Never from thy pasture roving  
Let him be the lion's prey;  
Let thy Royal Grants so loving  
Keep him in life's costly way.  
Then within thy fold eternal  
Let him find a well-paid place,  
Feed in pastures ever vernal,  
Get a pension by thy grace."

PENGARNEDD Calvinistic Methodist Chapel has been the scene of a display of muscular Christianity. The parties engaged were Owen Jones and Robert and Sam Evens, father and son. On Sunday morn Jones took possession of a pew claimed by the Evenses, and a battle royal commenced. Ladies fainted, and it

was some time before the combatants could be separated, when, with bleeding noses, they prepared to enjoy the morning's discourse.

OSWALD FUSSELL, a Salvation Army preacher, has been fined at Westminster for being drunk and making use of obscene language.

IN San Francisco they have an original way of dealing with plays as well as with most other things. "Called Back" has been given there, and, instead of adopting the English style of setting forth the bill of the play, they have synopsised it in this wise:—  
"Act I. My God! He is blind. Act II. My God! She is mad. Act III. My God! She is sane. Act IV. My God! he is dead!"  
In England they would vote this blasphemous.

IT is now no crime in Roumania for a Christian to kill a Jew. This principle has been established at a murder trial at Berlad. The counsel for the Christian admitted his guilt, but pleaded "that as every Jew was the murderer of the souls of Christians, it was no crime for a Christian to kill the body of a Jew." This argument secured the acquittal of the murderer. At a time when outrages upon Jews are of almost daily occurrence this infamous judgment is a licence to murder.

THE two men executed on Monday received the Holy Communion before being turned off. Of course they went straight to heaven.

A MAN named Costafloz was executed at St. John's, Quebec, for the murder of a pedlar. He heard mass in the morning, and expressed perfect resignation to his fate; he preserved his firmness when pinioned and during the reading of the death warrant, and was calmly setting out for the scaffold, when an official suggested that he should remove his collar. The culprit's answer, with perfect seriousness, was, "No, I am afraid of catching cold." Was this a case of "unconscious cerebration?"

THE following was written in answer to examination questions on the Church Catechism put to the pupils at a National school in the North of England: "My duty to my neighbour is to do to no man as I would & no to obey the Queen all that who but in authority to subsist myself to all my govern thechters . . . and spiritual pastures . . . to order myself lonely to hurt nobody by word nor deal to be true & just in all my dealers to keep my body in cast, to govern nor desire other men's goods to get my own lively." We quite agree with the *Rock* that there is a vast deal of teaching on religious subjects from which the children gather no intelligent notions whatever. They pick up the words, but the ideas find no entrance to their minds.

THE case against the Romish priest, the Rev. Wentworth Monk, charged with committing a "clerical" offence, has been hushed up, the railway on whose premises the crime occurred refusing to prosecute. The rev. gentleman (?) is to be placed under the discipline of the Church of Rome and will leave the country. He is said to be the son of the Lord Chief Justice of Ottawa, Canada, and is very respectably connected.

ACCORDING to Talmage only infidels commit suicide. The Rev. J. H. White, chaplain of the Scilly Island, who hung himself on one of the beams of the parsonage attic, is not known to have given any previous tokens of infidelity.

A ROMAN CATHOLIC priest, in a letter to a Dublin paper, condemns the holding of wakes, and says that recently at a wake he found a huge measure containing drink, where, before death, he could scarcely find one attendant for the dying or one drop of wine to moisten the lips.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* has a leading article on the "Weakness of Modern Christianity." It concludes that the only remedy for this lamentable weakness is to go "back to the New Testament, which furnishes the only infallible direction" as to what the belief and practice of Christians should be. Why don't the proprietors of this Christian paper obey the New Testament then, and sell all that they have and give to the poor?

THE telephone has been introduced into Borneo. The natives call it the "hell talker."

WE have been informed more than once by religious contemporaries that "The Star of Bethlehem can now be seen at a little past midnight. Two thousand years have nearly elapsed since the first appearance of this wonderful star is recorded. The appearance of this wonderful heavenly body gives rise to grave conjectures by scientists and theologians. We are on the borders of a great change of some kind. The blood-red sunsets, earthquakes, rumors of wars, signs in the heavens, and great social upheavals, are precursors of a grand event of some kind that is close by." We should like some further information concerning this extraordinary star, but our *scientific* contemporaries remain obstinately ignorant. The star in the east which guided the men from the east in a westward direction when they followed it always was a puzzling phenomenon to us, and always must remain so, we are afraid.

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Dec. 14, Co-operative Hall, King Street, Oldham:—At 11, "Bible Blasphemy;" at 3, "Will Christ Save Us?" at 6.30, "Twelve Months in a Christian Gaol."

Monday, Dec. 15, Large Hall, Liberal Club, Mossley, "Will Christ Save Us?"

Tuesday, Dec. 16, Claremont Hall, London:—At 8.30, "Lives of Christ. IV.—John."

Thursday, 18, Hall of Science, London:—At 8.30, "The History of Priestcraft."—IV.

Friday, Dec. 19, Rutland Hall, Broadway, South Hackney, at 8, "Will Christ Save Us?" For the benefit of the Branch funds.

DECEMBER 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; 15, Milton Hall; 22, Liverpool.

MARCH 1, Manchester; 8, Claremont Hall; 29, Glasgow.

APRIL 19, Hall of Science; 26, Hall of Science.

## 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.—C. E. Ford, A. T. Bailey, J. C., C. Boler, C. D. S., F. Binns, Everton Toffee.

C. GOODALL informs us that he leaves a dozen copies of this paper with the newsagents and finds them all sold.

H. S. DUESBURY.—If any proceedings were taken against you they would certainly fall to the ground.

E. PARKER.—Many thanks.

J. P. MORRIS.—Your verses have merit but are unsuitable to our columns. Thanks for joke.

W. H. A.—We are always glad of cuttings.

J. SANDFIELD.—In youth Shelley professed himself an Atheist, and signed himself an Atheist in an hotel-book in Switzerland.

R. JACQUES.—We are sorry your enjoyment of the Christmas Number is blunted by fear for our safety. We know the risk we run and do not mean to budge for the bigots.

J. H. WHITHAM writes of our Christmas Number: "The more one reads it the more laughable it becomes."—Oct. "The Case for Dis-establishment" (price 1s.), from the Liberation Society.

W. SHAW.—We are always glad of references to articles when the articles themselves cannot be sent.

F. PALMER.—See the account of Richard Carlile in *Progress*.

F. WILCOCKSON.—Your criticism is very just.

A. FREETHINKING ARGUS.—Your scraps are very welcome. All receive attention though they may not all be immediately utilised.

C. BROWN.—What is the use of a God who, as Carlyle says, "does nothing."

R. PEARSON.—In the New Doomsday Book the value of tithes is estimated at five millions sterling. A great deal of land and money has been assigned to the clergy in commutation of tithes.

H. CAMERON (New York).—Glad to read your cheery letter, and regret it is too long for our limited space. Besides, that smoke-room story is rather strong for the drawing-room, at least on this side of the Atlantic.

R. WEBB.—Our remarks on the subject last week are all we care to advance in reply to your letter. We have nothing to do with motives; we judge by actions.

CHARLES GOODENOUGH.—For the locality of heaven you must apply to the sky-pilots.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Bedfordshire Mercury—Liberal (Barton Co.)—Boston Investigator—National Reformer—Hampshire Telegraph—Present Day—Liberty—Truthseeker (N. Y.)—Mossley Reporter—Tunbridge Wells Advertiser—Hampshire Telegraph—East Kent News—Aberdeen Journal—Herts and Essex Observer—North Wilts Herald—War Cry—Coventry Standard—Shield's Daily Gazette—Evening News—Birmingham Daily Mail—Dundee Evening Telegraph—Boston Guardian—Hawick News.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

CONSIDERING the very great depression in the shipping trade, and the extraordinary number of men out of employment, Mr. Foote's audiences at South Shields last Sunday were surprisingly large and enthusiastic. The profoundest attention was accorded to the afternoon lecture on *Evolution versus The Bible*, and the other lectures were as usual greeted with loud bursts of laughter and applause. On Saturday night Mr. Foote addressed a good audience at Cramlington, and another on Monday evening at Houghton-le-Spring. These are both mining centres, and it is pleasant to learn that Freethought is steadily gaining ground there.

WE cannot speak too highly of the brave endeavors of the South Shields Branch of the N. S. S. The Committee are all working men, but they exert a strong influence in the town, and although they are only a handful they keep Freethought well to the front by judicious policy and hard work.

MR. FOOTE will deliver a lecture in aid of the funds of the Hackney Branch of the N. S. S. at Rutland Hall on Friday evening, Dec. 19. His subject will be "Will Christ Save Us?" Freethinkers in the district should bring their Christian friends.

MR. STANDRING'S *Republican* sustains its interest. The December number contains a vigorous article by the editor on Mr. Gladstone's arrangement with Lord Salisbury. There is an instalment of a capital Political Dictionary, another of the History of the Aristocracy, and some lively editorial notes.

ACCORDING to an American contemporary, "Over three thousand of some of the best of our American and Canadian citizens, ladies and gentlemen, have recorded their names in the 'Freethought Directory,' published by H. L. Green, of Salamanca (N.Y.)"

THE Peckham and Dulwich Radical Club and Secular Hall Society (Limited), has paid a deposit on some valuable freehold premises and land in Rye Lane, Peckham, eminently suitable for the purposes in view. We trust all Freethinkers and Radicals in the neighborhood will lend their co-operation to make the undertaking a success.

OUR good friend Mr. Brumage is always ready to assist the cause at Portsmouth. He takes the occasion of a disparagement of Secularism from a Conservative few on the Portsmouth School Board for a well-timed letter of remonstrance to the *Portsmouth Evening News*.

THE letter from a Scotchman in Italy to the *Record* is a capital advertisement. He says that our "Satanic periodical" is the only English one sold in the principal street of the town from which he writes, and asks if Christian men and women will stand by "while by prose and verse and every art of the engraver and printer certain men are allowed to publish blasphemous execrations and hellish thoughts against our God and Savior." We don't know if this perfervid Scotchman has woke up the persecutors again, but we have recently had several visits from lawyers' clerks and detectives, who purchase numbers and make notes thereof immediately afterwards.

A GOOD advertisement of our Christmas Number is given in the London *Evening News* for Dec. 8. From its saying that "it contains thirteen illustrations of the worst character and when it is stated that one of them is entitled 'Full Report of the Last Supper' some idea will be gained of the nature of the work"—we may judge that the indignation of the *E. N.* was aroused before seeing a copy of the number. The "Full Report of the Lord's Supper" is not illustrated. We shall be happy to send the editor gratuitous copies in return for his kindly notice.

THE halfpenny organ of London Toryism does not recommend our prosecution, because it is averse from giving us "undue notoriety." But it sang a different tune before Judge North's infamous sentence. If imprisonment could put the *Freethinker* down, the bigots would soon play their old game again. They hate Freethought as much as ever, and only refrain from striking us when they find that the blow recoils upon themselves.

THE *Evening News* is a long way behind the times, for in its "Chit-Chat" of the same issue it is hinted "that the author who writes novels under the name of the 'Rev. W. O. Peile' is a lady." Everybody else but the *E. N.* editor has long since failed to discover the difference between clergymen and old ladies.

AN extremely liberal member of the Committee of the Leicester Secular Society moved on Monday last that the Christmas Number of the *Freethinker* should no longer be sold on the Society's premises. He was ignominiously defeated. We pity him in every sense, and congratulate the Committee on their spirited resolution.

IN Madras a Freethought Tract Society has been started to disseminate Freethought literature. It has for the present reprinted four leaflets and circulated them freely. We wish them every success.

PROFESSOR BLACKIE has outraged the feelings of the Scottish Sabbatarians by lecturing for the Glasgow Sunday Society on the "Love Songs of Scotland," and he delighted his audience by singing a parody on "Let us haste to Kelvin Grove."

DR. NEWMAN HALL is the author of a tract entitled "Come to Jesus." In answer to some very severe criticisms, he wrote a reply replete with sarcasm and bitterness, and read it over to Dr. Binney for suggestions and approval. Whenever he came to any passage which happened to be particularly bitter, he rubbed it in with an emphasis that would make even a mummy squeal. When he had done Dr. Binney said, slowly and deliberately: "While you were reading those hard hits, the thought occurred to me that this would be a capital title: 'Go to the Devil,' by the author of 'Come to Jesus.'" This profane but sensible joke brought Dr. Hall to his senses, and his Philippic found the fire-place.

## GOD ON THE SABBATH.

THE Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association is offering prizes amounting to £95 for essays on the Sabbath question. The first subject proposed is: "What does God's Word teach about the Sabbath?" As we think we can answer this question more freely and truthfully than Christians, we shall forward the following reply to the question put forward by the committee. We do not anticipate, however, that any Christian committee will award us a prize for it.

The Bible teaches us that the Sabbath was instituted by God, who from Mount Sinai commanded, both *viva voce* and in finger-writing on stone, that the seventh day of each week should be kept holy because he had rested on the seventh day, after the work of creation—"wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus xx., 11, 1.). God's Word also teaches that the words uttered and written by God were quite different (Deut. v., 15, 22) and that the Sabbath was instituted in commemoration of the deliverance from Egypt. These "apparent discrepancies," however, harmonise beautifully. Man's tongue, indeed, can say but one thing at once, man's hand can write but one message at a time; but with God all things are possible. How great and glorious is his name!

So important was the Sabbath in the eyes of God, that he devoted one whole commandment of the decalogue to it. Judged by its position in that decalogue and by its length, this commandment is of far greater importance than the brief, obvious, commonplace injunctions against murder, theft, adultery and lying, which follow it. This view is confirmed by the fact that the penalty, and therefore, presumably, the guilt also, divinely attached to breach of this commandment were as great as the penalty, and the guilt, attached to murder. Cities of refuge were built for homicides, but none were prepared for wretches who worked on the Saturday.

The penalty for Sabbath-breaking is death. God's word teaches this clearly: "Whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death" (Ex. xxxv., 2). "Whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people" (Ex. xxxi., 14). "Whosoever doeth any work in the Sabbath day, he shall surely be put to death" (v. 15). And the observance of the seventh day as the Sabbath was to be "for a perpetual covenant" (v. 16), and a sign "for ever," because the Lord rested on the seventh day "and was refreshed" (v. 17). God's word thus teaches us that we are to murder everybody who works on a Saturday, and also everybody who in any other way profanes that sacred day. "Everyone that defileth it shall surely be put to death" (v. 14). God's word also teaches us that we must not cook food nor warm our dwellings on the Saturday—"Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day" (Ex. xxxv., 3). Hence we must also kill all people who dishonor the sacred Saturday by lighting fires in their houses.

God's Word, however, teaches us that there are some exceptions to be made. Jesus has told us that we may pluck ears of corn on the Sabbath, or raise animals out of a ditch, or heal the sick. But in its general aspects he always strongly upheld the stringency and binding nature of the Decalogue and of the Mosaic law (Matt. v., 17—19; Luke xvi., 17, 31). Innovators who presume to tamper with any of the ten great commandments given by God for the guidance of mankind, act on their own authority alone. Those who change the day of observance from the seventh day of the week to the first, do so without the slightest warrant from the Word of God, which teaches as definitely and forcibly as possible that the *seventh* day is holy and never says a word about the first day, or any other day of the week.

This law of the Sabbath, being then unrepealed in the New Testament, and being accepted and confirmed by Christ in the Decalogue, is still in force. Christians who would be faithful and consistent must obey it themselves, and must, with the help of legal enactments, persecute, imprison, and if possible execute, all who dare to infringe the sacredness of God's holy Saturday. Failing this they must seize those whom they may catch trading or toiling on that blessed day, take them without the camp or city—to Hampstead Heath say—and there stone them to death with road-metal, brickbats and broken bottles. Let us pray that we may obey God rather than man. In following the divine injunctions we know

we cannot possibly be wrong. God alone is infallible. Let us then carry out his will and put to death all Sabbath-breakers even as "the congregation" at the express command of the Lord (Numbers xv., 32—36) stoned to death the "man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day." So shall we secure the great and manifold blessings promised by God in Deut. xxviii., to those who "observe and do all his commandments." If we fail to massacre the Saturday-breakers—if our eye pities or our hand spares or our heart falters—if we neglect to keep "all his commandments and his statutes"—then upon us will the terrible curses come. Christians, choose aright! Follow God rather than man! Gather to the slaughter in the name of God, and carry out his holy bidding at any cost.

W. P. BALL.

## FAITH OR REASON?

O CHRIST! if thou didst triumph over death  
And art the very God of very God,  
Who lovest mercy and who changest not,  
Shall we be damned if, in this cruel world,  
We fail to see thy promises fulfilled—  
The signs thou saidst would follow on belief?  
We see no wonder-workers in thy Church;  
No exorcist; no healer of the sick;  
No monstrous linguist, no one poison-proof.  
'Tis said thou didst foretell these proofs of faith;  
These proofs of faith we find not in our midst.  
Is faith then dead? Does no one now believe?  
Shall we be damned if thus we syllogise?  
'Tis said that God, in ruth, the hungry fed,  
And of his bounty, baskets full remained.  
He does not now the poor and hungry feed;  
Then God, erst ruthless, is the ruthless now,  
But God, the absolute, no change can know.  
The tale shows God to be a God of Change;  
Then we the tale entirely must reject!  
What, then, remains? We talk to empty air!  
We conjure up a Savior, then essay  
To prove that he, objectively, exists;  
Ignoring all the while the proven fact  
That man at once is Savior, Lost and Saved!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## EXTRACTS FROM JOSEPH SYMES'S "LIBERATOR."

SCENE OUTSIDE GOSPEL SHOP.—Sleek divine: "My friend, why not go in and hear the gospel preached?" Working man: "Vell, now you 'ave axed me, it's just this way; while I stand out here I hear it gratis, and if I goes in I has to pay or appear mean."

JONAH AND THE WHALE.—The Rev. Mr. —, Free Church minister of —, a few miles from the Granite City, for four Sundays gave a series of lectures on the Prophet Jonah. A friend visiting a Mrs. M—, who though a staunch upholder of the "Auld Kirk," occasionally during the winter months visited the Free because it was nearer, asked Mrs. M— how she liked the Rev. M—. "No weel ava," was her answer, "He jist took a fortnicht tae git Jonah into the whale's belly, an' anither fortnicht tae tak' him out, an' fat sort o' preachin' ca' ye that?"

ONE GOD AS GOOD AS ANOTHER.—It was in a railway train. In course of conversation it came out that one of the party was an Atheist. The discovery acted like a powerful electric shock to the company, and the most pious gentleman present exclaimed, "What a d—d scoundrel you must be not to believe in a God!" "Ah," dryly remarked the Atheist, "I presume you believe in all the gods." "Certainly not," retorted the defender of Theism, "I believe in only one God." "What a d—d scoundrel, to use your own pious words, you must be to reject so many gods and retain but one out of millions equally good!" replied the Atheist.

A CHURCH writer thinks that compromise in "matters other than ecclesiastical" is a good thing, but in Church matters "it is only an invention of Satan, whereby he may crush every jot of living truth, and cast into perdition those who ally themselves with such a treacherous principle." The *Rock* thinks this is plain speaking, of which "the present time is certainly much in need." What nice practical people to deal with these Churchmen must be!

THERE are over twenty thousand deaths annually in India from snake bites. A superstitious reverence for the serpent tribe prevents the natives from killing these pests. Serpent worship is one of the most ancient beliefs, and it is curious that the non-idolatrous Moses should make an image of a brazen serpent or seraphim (Numb. xxi.) Living snakes are worshipped throughout India, and on their feast days the worshippers resort to the snake's lair, which they bedaub with streaks of vermilion, and close at hand they suspend garlands of flowers.

## COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 99.

THE ceremony depicted in our ninety-ninth Comic Bible Sketch is, according to Bible commentators, a beautiful type of the vicarious sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The fact of Jahveh having a son being unknown in the Jewish dispensation, instead of the lamb being offered the father, a ram—called the ram of consecration—was offered in its place, and the priestly family was anointed with its blood.



DIPPED IN THE BLOOD OF THE RAM.

"And he slew it, and Moses took of the blood of it, and put it upon the tip of Aaron's right ear, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot."—LEVITICUS. viii., 23.

Critics are divided in opinion whether this most important rite was a form of priestly baptism or a survival of primitive tattooing. As according to Peter, Christians are a royal priesthood, they clearly ought to practise this divinely instituted ceremony in place of circumcision. Since every part of the Bible is inspired, there is no reason Christians should not be tarred with the same brush.

## PARKER ON THE TABERNACLE.

DR. PARKER, of the City temple, has been preaching on the Tabernacle—not Spurgeon's Tabernacle, but the curious little Tabernacle, forty-five feet by fifteen in dimensions, which Moses constructed of red rams' skins, badgers' skins, linen, goats' hair, etc. (Ex. xxxvi., 19, 14, 8), according to the elaborate instructions issued by Jehovah (Ex. xxv. to xl). Our great City Templar notices that the account of making the Tabernacle occupies much more space in the Bible than the history of the creation of the heavens and the earth. He says: "This is a remarkable corroboration of the authenticity of both accounts. A long account of the creation would have been impossible. A short account of the Tabernacle would have been equally impossible." Why the history of the formation of a whole universe of things must necessarily be brief, and the history of the construction of a tent must be long, we cannot for the life of us make out. Neither can we see how the relative length and brevity of the two accounts furnish "remarkable corroboration" of their authenticity. We lack faith. Christianity evidently supplies intellectual faculties unknown to the ordinary mind. Only those who have acquired these supernatural abilities can hope to reconcile the bold statements and conflicting ideas on which Dr. Parker relies. Speaking of the "temporary character" of the Tabernacle, he says for instance that "To God everything is temporary," yet almost immediately after he cries, "Everything is built for eternity—every insect, every dog, every leaf." Then he exclaims, "How wonderful the tabernacle and the human frame correspond in perfection of detail and sublimity of purpose!" A marquee of skins and cloth fifteen feet high, and covering seventy-five square yards, is a glorious wonder to the eyes of the enraptured preacher! Posts of shittim wood, red and blue curtains with loops and tassels, gold candlesticks and snuffers and snuff-dishes (Ex. xxv., 38), brass ash-pans and fire-shovels and flesh-hooks and basons (Ex. xxvii., 3), and all the rude glaring upholstery and ceremonial and sacrificial paraphernalia of barbaric priestcraft, excite Dr. Parker's highest admiration, and reveal to his adoring gaze a truly divine "perfection of detail and sublimity of purpose!" But idiocy of this kind succeeds well, pays well. It is the fashion among the conceited babes and sucklings to whom God has given a wisdom not of this world.

From the report in the *Christian Commonwealth*, we find that this modest Christian preacher next proceeded to lash scientific men immeasurably his superiors for observing faults and blemishes in the natural objects and organs made by the divine artificer. With all the courage and confidence and arrogance of the most determined Christian blindness to obvious fact, he cries: "There are some men who have blasphemously charged the Divine work with imperfection. Daring men, having great courage on paper and great dauntlessness in privacy, who have lived themselves into a well-earned obscurity, who have said that the human eye is not ideally perfect!" As if Helmholtz and Tyndall, for instance, were to withdraw their remarks on the various imperfections of the eye at the bidding of conceited piety! The consummate impudence of these pretentious pulpit-charlatans—for educated men who thus authoritatively condemn and repress the honest announcement of scientific truth deserve no better title—seems indeed to be immeasurable. Perhaps all our great scientific men will now humbly apply for clerical permits stating what facts they may be allowed to discover and announce.

Dr. Parker finally concludes that the "meaning of the Tabernacle" (not Spurgeon's, of course) is "the Temple" (Dr. Parker's "Temple"?), and the meaning of the Temple is the true Church.

W. P. BALL.

## "BRUMMAGEM LIBERALISM."

MR. DANIEL BAKER, whose letter in reply to our article on Brummagem Liberalism we inserted a fortnight ago, is still dissatisfied. He writes again as follows:—

"SIR,—In my previous note, having reference to what you are pleased to call 'Brummagem Liberalism,' I asked only that you should retract or explain in what way I had ever 'hoodwinked' or deceived the Liberal party in regard to Baskerville Hall. I denied the aspersion cast on myself, and you instead of withdrawing the imputation so unjustifiably made, appended a footnote making matters worse; but with one redeeming admission, viz., that I was or am not one of your devotees. The premises whereon the Hall stand were sold by public auction. I bought them with the entire consent of the few friends of Secularism at that time, meeting in a wretched room, among whom there does not appear one of the names you favor me with in your last issue. The foundation-stone was publicly laid, the premises built and publicly opened, and have still been occupied during eight years without let or hindrance; and during this time many members of the party stigmatised have assisted by occupying the platform. As in my previous note, so in this, I decline to enter upon a long controversy with the men whose names you have given in the last copy of *Freethinker* as confirming you in what was originally published Nov. 16 concerning myself, but will leave it with you to act as shall seem meet to you in regard to my modest request.—I am, sir, yours respectfully, DANIEL BAKER."

MR. BAKER is a little heated and very inaccurate. We never said he was not one of "our devotees;" we simply remarked that he was not a member of the Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S., and therefore not entitled to ask for a retraction of what we wrote about it. Nor did we cast any "aspersion" on him; we merely said that, in purchasing premises on behalf of the Birmingham Secular Society, he dared not disclose the purpose for which they were intended until he was in full possession. That is no reflection on Mr. Baker, but on the boasted "Liberalism" of Birmingham. Mr. Baker has always had, and still retains, our respect for his long service to Secularism; but he is not infallible, and we fancy he will regret in calmer moments his sneer at "those men."

MR. J. MORRIS sends us a screed on our article as long as a man's arm, which he supposes we are afraid to print. Well, to tell the truth, we are. This is a small paper, and we dare not print a whole column of such uninteresting matter. Mr. Morris has a right to his opinions, but we are not bound to publish them for him. It would be a different matter if he could challenge our facts. Our readers can form their own judgement on the evidence, without hearing counsel's opinions on one side or the other; and we beg to say that friend and foe must alike consider the discussion closed.

ONE evening after going through the usual preaching palaver at a revival service, in a small village in Cornwall, the minister in charge called on one of the brothers to pray. Three brothers promptly obeyed their superior officer's commands, but as one at a time was sufficient, two sat down, and the one that proved his lungs in best repair continued to thunder forth hell fire and damnation until further orders. During the time this brother was emptying himself, the minister walked up and down the chapel exhorting sinners to flee from the wrath to come. Presently he came up to a youth about eighteen years of age, and asked him if he had given his heart to God. The young man looked at him and said, "What the deuce shall I do for a heart if I give mine to God?" The minister did not ask any more questions, but did what the Yanks call a mizzle.

**PROFANE JOKES.**

"How did you enjoy the Rev. Mr. Muddle-text's sermon, Maria?" "How could I enjoy a sermon with Mrs. Smith sitting just in front in a new bonnet worth at least two guineas. You must think I have a warm religious temperament."

An eccentric Baptist minister in Virginia was noted for his quaint sayings. He was the owner of a fine yoke of oxen and losing one of them—a loss he could ill afford—was well nigh inconsolable. His good wife endeavoring to comfort him, quoted the words, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away." "Yes, Elizabeth, I know," replied the old man; "but for the damned life of me, I can't see what the blessed Lord wanted *with an odd steer.*"

WHAT HE SAID.—"How many of your parents, children, say grace?" asked the teacher. "Please, mum, what's them?" asked an overgrown girl in a last year's hat. "Why, Maggie," exclaimed the teacher, "is it possible you don't know what grace is? Doesn't your father say something before you begin to eat?" "Oh!" responded the girl, with a glow of intelligence. "Yes, mum, he does; he always says, 'Don't make pigs of yourselves; that's all the butter there is in the house.'"

In a small Scotch parish a young probationer was officiating in the absence of the regular minister, and, as he had been tired with a long journey and wanted a rest before delivering the sermon, he gave a long Psalm to be sung, not knowing that the precursor was suffering from a bad cold. The first four verses were finished not so badly, but at the fifth Tammas stuck, and no amount of tuning could get him started again. At last the minister had to stand up, and that in no pleasant mood. Leaning over the pulpit side, he thus addressed the precursor: "Tammas, if ye mak' sic a wark about skirling out four verses o' a Psalm now, what'll ye dae through a' the ages o' eternity?"

DR. HINCHCLIFFE, Bishop of Peterborough, was asked one day what was to be understood by the expression, "He clothed himself with curses as with a garment." "The clearest thing in the world," replied the doctor; "the man had a habit of swearing."

LITERATURE, it seems, affects the consumption of certain beverages. An enormous trade in aerated waters has arisen since Byron, in "Don Juan," commended the virtues of soda-water. This may also account for the enormous trade in whisky since the Bible first published the story of Noah's defiance of prohibition doctrine.

Mrs. GLUBBINS: "These ere tracs ain't no use ter me, sir." Bombardier Salvation Army Artillery: Read and think over them, Mrs. Glubbins; they may cause you to join the Army. Oh, enlist! enlist! and follow the spirit-stirring drum." Mrs. Glubbins: "Eh? Speerit sterlin'! If there's any o' that sort o' thing a-goin' on—well, there! I'll think it hoving, and give you a hanswer to-morrer!"

Now, boys," said a Sunday-school teacher, "What was in the ark of the covenant which the priests carried on their shoulders? Yes, my little man, you may answer." Little man: "Noah, sir; and his family and two of every living creature."

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