

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 114.



A FRIENDLY CHAT.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."—JOB i., 7.

BISHOP TRIMMER'S SUNDAY DIARY.

BISHOP TRIMMER is one of those worthy prelates who enjoy this world fully, and are exceedingly loth to quit it for another. He is neither very learned nor very clever, but a pushing mediocrity, like most occupants of the episcopal bench. He is an ardent admirer of monarchy and aristocracy, and believes that the function of the Church is to uphold those divine institutions. Three or four times he has had the honor to preach before the Queen, and his sermons on those occasions, printed by special request and dedicated by permission to her Majesty, are replete with loyalty to the throne and sneers at the democratic tendencies of this degenerate age. Being anxious to ally himself to the aristocracy, he married an elderly spinster, the daughter of Lord Pauper, whose charms had never attracted a suitor, and whose mental accomplishments were on a par with her physical beauties. Bishop Trimmer is immensely proud of his aristocratic wife, and as she is an only child, he looks forward to his withered little bantling, the only fruit of their marriage, coming into possession of the family title and estates. He lives in his diocese as little as possible, being passionately fond of London society. He is a familiar figure at royal and aristocratic drawing-rooms and garden-parties, and a regular patron of West-end bazaars where fashionable beauties are wont to assemble. He is also an *habitué* of theatres, showing a marked preference for burlesque,

and being noticeable by the pertinacity with which he gazes through a powerful pair of opera-glasses at the ladies of the ballet. In politics he is a staunch Tory. He has never been known to favor any Liberal measure, and his vote has been constantly recorded for every effort by the Peers to reject or mangle progressive legislation. When he dies, his life will be eulogised in the papers, and he will be held up as a model for general emulation, although he has never had a thought for anything but self. It is rumored that his niche has already been designated in Westminster Abbey.

Bishop Trimmer has one great weakness. He keeps a diary. He is as loquacious as old Burnet, and it is a great pity he cannot find another Pope to do him justice. Portions of his diary have accidentally fallen into our hands; how we need not explain, for it involves a long story. We give our readers a taste of this rarity, and if they approve it, we may gratify their palates again on some future occasion.

Sunday night, August 10, 18—. Last evening I arrived home too late, and I fear too excited, to fill in my diary before going to bed. Lord Fitznoodle's old port has a very fine body, and his champagne is remarkably exhilarating. How fortunate that Lady Trimmer is visiting her uncle in Ploughshire!

Yesterday morning I devoted three hours to my correspondence, and one to my sermon. I lunched with Lady Bareacres, whose youngest daughter is to be presented tomorrow. A charming young creature, with a figure like Hebe; beautiful taper arms, well displayed by the short sleeves, small feet in pretty *bottines*, sparkling black eyes, white teeth and luscious red lips, and a delicious bust. Ah!

The company was select—not a commoner amongst them. Lord Wildsbury, the Tory leader in the Upper House, complimented me on my recent pamphlet on "The Improvement of the Condition of our Rural Poor," and thanked me especially for the handsome manner in which I had vindicated his treatment of the poor on his Capfield estate against Radical aspersions. His lordship informed me that, after long entreaty, he had consented to grant the Methodists a site for a chapel, about six miles from the parish they reside in. I congratulated him on this noble exhibition of Christian charity.

Lord Woodcock conversed with me on the threatened war. He thought it would open up a path for our missionaries as well as our commerce. I had the honor to agree with him. I had no doubt that war was one of God's agencies for Christianising the world, and quoted Wordsworth's "Yea, carnage is thy daughter." His lordship was delighted with the quotation, and promised to use it in his next speech against the Peace party.

Returning home, I found a handsome present awaiting me from young Stukeley—a copy of the fine new edition of "Petronius Arbiter," edited by Von Habenlicht, with many interesting notes on the purplest parts of the text. For an hour or two I swam in what a late writer calls "the delicious stream of his Latinity." How fortunate that ladies do not read Latin! What havoc Lady Trimmer would play with my library if she understood the classic languages! She was up in arms the other day about some spicy French books from Brussels, until I explained that, as President of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, I was obliged to study that class of literature.

At four o'clock I attended a meeting of the Social Purity Society, where I made a speech that was much applauded. Lord Haymarket showed me a villainous pamphlet on the Population question by a notorious infidel. This pernicious publication, he said, was extensively circulated; and he had reason to believe it was the principal cause of the

shameless profligacy of this great city. Its author was—horror of horrors!—a woman, an abandoned creature, dead to all the natural instincts of her sex. He desired me to see whether my Society would not undertake to suppress it. I promised to bring the matter forward at our very next meeting. Poor Haymarket! He sowed his wild oats too rapidly, and is a wreck at thirty-seven. Happily he spends his declining days in the service of his God.

Went in the evening to the Jollity Theatre with the Ponsonbys, who have a box there. The new burlesque is capital fun, and I enjoyed it immensely. Fanny Dawson danced and sang as bewitchingly as ever. She is the most *appetisante* creature on the stage. There was a new girl in the ballet, a superb specimen of the sex, with the finest limbs I ever saw, and as agile as a deer. I must inquire her name of young Osborne, the Secretary of the Curate and Ballet-Girl Society.

Suppered afterwards at Lord Fitznoodle's chambers. He has the best port and champagne in London, and I patronised both rather generously, at the cost of a morning headache. Two or three army men in the party had loose tongues. The conversation was waggish enough, but I fancy the jests were highly seasoned before we broke up. Colonel Sparkish shone with his usual brilliance. I wonder whether he invents or discovers those capital stories. If they were not so blue I might retail them at my own dinner-table.

Sir Clifford Northdown, the Tory leader in the Commons, paid me a flying visit this morning. He was anxious to secure all the influence I possessed in my diocese against the new Affirmation Bill, as our party meant to strain every nerve to prevent its passing. I promised to stir up my clergy at once, and to obtain as many petitions as possible against the measure.

Ran down and lunched at the Bourbon Club at Richmond. The company was, as usual, very exclusive. His Royal Highness looked remarkably well and was the life and soul of the table. I had the honor of losing a game of billiards with him after lunch.

Spent an hour in the afternoon at the Zoological Gardens. The weather was glorious, and the ladies' toilettes were magnificent. I was glad to meet my old friend Bishop Glover, who buries himself too much in his diocese. He has come up to oppose the Affirmation Bill, after exhausting the petitioners in the whole county against the measure. He obtained twenty thousand signatures, most of them through the agency of Sunday Schools. We met several more old college friends, among them being the Rev. Arthur Mooney, the Rev. Richard Larkins, and the Rev. Spencer Shepherd. Before leaving the Gardens I enjoyed a few minutes' chat with the Archbishop, who had brought his family to see the animals and hear the music. They found too much vulgar society there during the week, and never came except on Sunday.

Preached in the evening at St. Peter's on the Fourth Commandment, to a crowded congregation who evidently followed me with great sympathy. I pointed out the danger to religion and morality involved in any tampering with the holy Sabbath, dilated on the horrors of a continental Sunday, and denounced the opening of museums, art-galleries and public libraries on the Lord's day. With a little touching up, the sermon will serve for my next week's speech in the House of Lords on the subject, when Harlow's motion comes up for discussion.

Took a cup of tea after the service with old Mrs. Gloomy. She seems to be nearing her end. Her will leaves twenty thousand for the restoration of my cathedral, and I believe a similiar sum to Lady Trimmer. I shall officiate at her burial with the noblest pleasure, for she is without exception the best Christian I ever knew. G. W. FOOTE.

THE virtues of Lady O'Looney are thus commemorated in an Irish churchyard:—

Here lies the body of Lady O'Looney,
Grand-niece to Edmund Burke.
Commonly called "the sublime."
She was bland, passionate, and religious,

Also,

She painted in water-colors.

Also,

She sent several articles to the Exhibition,
She was first cousin to Lady Jones,
And of such is the kingdom of Heaven.

Amen.

A FAMOUS PROPHECY.

ISAIAH THE FIFTY-THIRD.

ON Good Friday the proper lesson appointed to be read in the Church of England is the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. No doubt many Christians believe that this chapter so marvellously foretells the sufferings of their supposed Savior that it is of itself sufficient to confute all unbelief. It is, indeed, the sheet-anchor of all works on prophecy; and by dint of separation from its context and the accommodation of the Christian conception of Jesus to the suffering Messiah said to be depicted in this chapter, it is easily made to look the most plausible of all the alleged prophecies in the Old Testament. The Jews, however, who ought to know something of their own books, have never placed it among the Messianic prophecies. The ablest of them have contended that it refers to themselves. The suffering servant of the Lord is the personified people of Israel. That this is so anyone may convince himself who will read the whole poem from the beginning at chapter forty to the end of Isaiah; for the latter part of Isaiah is a poem, and by a different and superior writer to the author of the first thirty-nine chapters. The burden of this poem is comfort to "my people" Israel in its tribulation. Its subject is the restoration from Babylon. Israel, the elect of God, is throughout the poem personified as an individual, "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend" (xli., 8). All the prophecies in this part of Isaiah which are alleged of Christ, in reality refer to the people Israel. Thus, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delights: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the gentiles," is explained in chap. xlv., 1, where it says, "Yet now hear, O Jacob my servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen" (see also xlv., 4; xlix., 3). At the end of chap. lii. (v. 13), between which and chapter liii. there should be no break, the same "servant" is spoken of.

"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men: So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him: for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard shall they consider."

Then follows the celebrated fifty-third chapter, the salient points of which, without pretending to explain in detail, we shall briefly show do not refer to Jesus:—

"Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

The misleading head-line to this is "The prophet complains of the want of faith." But this is hardly true of Jesus, for if the Gospel accounts are to be believed, he was tolerably successful, the common people hearing him gladly.

"For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him."

The Gospels relate that Jesus was a child who grew and waxed strong in spirit, and that as a youth he increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man. Instead of being without form and comeliness, he is usually represented as ideally beautiful.

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

This, at any rate, does not apply to Jesus in the commencement of his career. So far from indulging in sorrow and grief, his first miracle was wrought to increase the bacchic hilarity of a wedding. Instead of being despised and rejected, we read of his being followed by multitudes worshipping; of his being entertained and lionised; of an attempt to make him a king; of his riding in triumph amidst palm branches and hosannas; and that the main cause why the rulers sought his death was his favor with all the people.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows," etc.

This passage has doubtless done much to introduce the doctrine of vicarious atonement, which, however was not taught by Jesus himself.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth."

Not much like the prophet of Nazareth who stigmatised his opponents as serpents, vipers, whited sepulchres and children of hell whose father was the devil. When arrested he rebukes his enemies: "Are ye come, out as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me?"

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death."

The case was the very reverse with Jesus, who died with the wicked, but who made his grave with the rich, viz., Joseph of Arimathea, who is described as "a good man and a just." Yet such is the confusion of ideas among Christians, that this is often quoted as having been literally fulfilled. That the passage does not refer to Jesus is plainly evident in the next verse, which declares that after all these sufferings, "he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days." How could this be prophesied of Jesus who died childless at the age of thirty-three?

"Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death."

To suppose that Jesus was to divide the spoil with the strong, can only be made out by a system of interpretation which would apply equally to any other character whatever. This famous prophecy when analysed is found like all others in the old Testament, to have no more relation to Jesus of Galilee than to the Mahdi of the Soudan.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

PITY the poor Church of England. According to the *Church Times*, the enormous wealth of the Church of England, estimated at 200 millions, is all a figment. The Church of England, it says, is a very poor Church. Its way of showing this is by dividing the total income of the clergy by their numbers, and showing it only amounts to about £330 a year each. It leaves out of the account the incomes of the bishops, deans and chapters, which would greatly raise the average.

It is true that there are a number of poor men in the Church, some so poor that they are glad to receive old clothes and have their children educated by charity. Clerical poverty, however, usually results from the clergyman being the fool of the family, unfit for any better business, and from the sky-pilots having such large families. Laymen give examples of self-restraint in this respect to their spiritual guides, who have not the sense to follow.

"A VICAR," writing to the London *Daily Chronicle* on the programme of the Liberation Society, declares he would "rather have Toryism if the other alternative is support of robbery and plunder." The Liberal party would lose little if the whole weight of the clergy was put where its main support has ever been—on the side of Toryism. The denunciation of disendowment as "robbery and plunder" is simply wind. A nation can no more rob itself than an individual can. Was Mr. Gladstone a robber when he disendowed the Church in Ireland? If so, it was the new Church that got the benefit of the robbery.

ACCORDING to Dr. Hyades, who has lately returned from Terra del Fuego, whither he was despatched on a mission by the French Government, the Fuegians are the lowest human beings in the scale of existence. The language contains no word for any number above three; they are unable to distinguish one color from another; they have no religion and no funeral rites; and they possess neither chiefs nor slaves. Their only weapons are bone-pointed spears; they grow neither fruit nor vegetables; and as their country is naturally barren, they are obliged to live entirely on animal food. But they are not cannibals; they ill-treat neither their women nor their old people, and they are monogamous. Will it be contended that the Fuegians are descendants of Adam made in the image of God?

THE School Board for Hawick has been discussing a complaint from a parent that his boy was kept doing nothing during the hour he was withdrawn from religious instruction. The Rev. Dr. Macrae, minister of the parish, with the intolerant spirit so often displayed by parsons, said that any man who withdrew his child from religious instruction ought to be "branded in the face of the sun;" and he declined to have the whole machinery of the schools deranged "because some fantastic semi-sceptical person wished to get a lesson in arithmetic instead of a knowledge of eternal life." This meek and lowly teacher of religion advocates breaking the law in order to punish Secularists and their children for acting according to law and asking for their just and legal rights. We are glad to see that Councillor Caldwell protested against such language. The chairman, Councillor Gilroy, said too that he himself did not allow his children to be taught the catechism, the theological part of which, he held, was "enough to damn anybody."

THE Church Missionary Society loudly cheered their Chairman's assertion that Gordon was "conspicuously entitled" to the appellations of Christian missionary and martyr. He exemplified the spirit of Christian propagandism only too truly with Sniders and Krupp cannon. His great Christian mission was the subjugation of brave and independent races to a corrupt and treacherous set of foreign pashas, and the defence of oppressors, cut-throats and traitors against men who fought for their homes and their freedom. His death under such circumstances is glorified as a Christian martyrdom. We thank these enthusiastic Christians for showing us so plainly their ideal of the "true" Christian missionary who carries out Christ's will with fire and sword among the dusky adherents of other creeds.

THE *British Workman* has an anecdote of the usual kind about thirteen infidels who went to the bad. The anonymous writer knows the tale is true enough for a Christian paper because he hears that Mr. John Bowes was told of it by a minister who was told by his father who heard of it from an infidel who apparently must have been a Christian. No opportunity is given for exposing the falsehood of such absurd stories by giving names, localities and dates for verification. Whether they are pure inventions or are evolved after the fashion of myths matters little. They are greedily accepted and repeated by Christian journals whose editors calmly and persistently ignore the text which says that all liars shall be cast into the lake of fire.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury has been showing a party of black swans, i.e., members of the Church of England Working Men's Society, over Lambeth Palace. According to the report, he proved to them the continuity of the Church by pointing to a list of names, from St. Augustine to himself, painted on a wall. He could have as easily proved the connection of Leo XIII. with Peter by reading a list of Popes. The early Archbishops of Canterbury are about as apocryphal as the early Popes or early Kings of Scotland, portraits of all of whom are in Holyrood Abbey, one porter having sat for all the portraits.

"THE unfortunate Bishop of Liverpool seems to be under some spell, which forces him to talk ignorant nonsense pretty nearly as often as he opens his mouth." Respect for bishops is a fundamental item of the Church creed. Yet this is the way in which the *Church Times* writes of Bishop Ryle because he is of the Low Church party. If a bishop who has the gift of the Holy Ghost talks ignorant nonsense pretty nearly as often as he opens his mouth, what must be the case with his ecclesiastical inferiors?

HIGH Churchmen are much scandalised at the Bishop of Winchester and the Dean of Westminster having officiated at the wedding of Sir E. Malet and Lady E. Russell during Lent.

THOSE Christians who have spent forty days fasting in sackcloth and ashes to celebrate the temptation of God Almighty by the Devil, and who fast on Good Friday to celebrate the death of the Creator of the universe, may give a finish to their piety by getting drunk at Easter to celebrate his glorious resurrection.

ON the 19th of May next the world is to come to an end. So the New Hampshire Adventists, an American sect, announce. Some thousands of pious people, it is believed, will live in dread until the date is safely passed.

THE latest idea for raising the wind at American church festivals is the "Mum Social," which is a sort of Quakers' meeting, when the first person who speaks pays a dollar and those who speak afterwards pay smaller amounts, those who keep silent the whole time receiving free refreshments at the close of the meeting.

THE *Rock* gives a report of a lecture in Christ Church School-room by the Rev. F. Griffith on "The Cross," in which it says he clearly proved the universality of the cross as a heathen emblem. He also said that the real shape of the cross on which Christ died was unknown, and that instead of being a Christian emblem the cross was "nothing more than a barbarous instrument of torture, to be looked upon with horror and repulsion." What will the Ritualists and Romanists say to this? Will they prosecute this enemy of the cross for blasphemy?

SPEAKING of Christ's crucifixion, Talmage says to his congregation: "You slew him. I charge the sin first upon myself, then I charge it upon all who hear me to-day. Our sins, our follies, our wickedness put him to death. Our transgressions were the nails, the thorns, the spikes, the vinegar, the mockery, the darkness. I charge it first upon myself, then I charge it upon you. Fratricide! A brother's blood! And we slew him!" What reckless rubbish! We who live now killed a man eighteen hundred years before we were born!

TALMAGE also accuses us all of present-day murder as well. He says: "You say you have never committed murder. How do you know? Have you ever hated anybody? Yes. Then you are a murderer. The Bible says so. Christ says so."

Of course Talmage is fond of the blood of Christ. He speaks of "letting the crimson billows roll over us," and of having our "hands and feet bedabbled with the blood of the Son of God." What a gory gospel it is! Wallowing in a slaughter-house becomes a Christian ideal of the glory of abasement and of moral cleansing.

THE following advertisement appears in a recent number of the *Christian World*:—"A tradesman, who is single and in good health, desires new employment. Qualified to preach and recite his own compositions, etc; could write and conduct a matrimonial journal, etc." The single and healthy tradesman who can preach and recite while delivering his goods, and in his leisure hours can conduct a matrimonial journal, ought not long to be without a situation.

A VENERABLE deity having superintended the disembowelling of men, the ravishing of girls, and the slaughter of babies, his son promises, as a great treat, that the pure in heart shall see this sickening atrocity-monger. Impurity worshipping Purity, and Villainy patronising Goodness make a picture for a world to wonder at.

ALLEGING that George Eliot was in early life a Christian, a writer is trying to prove that she died a Christian on the ground that "the theologians of the Reformation declared with one voice that the new life, once kindled by divine grace in the soul, could not be extinguished." If that is the case, what is to prevent all the Infidels who were Christians in their youth from getting their mansions in "my father's house?"

INGERSOLL says: "I am doing my best for the clergy. They teach that you are to love your enemies. But, somehow, they don't seem to love me. Sometimes I believe that this is because they know that I know that they don't know, and these feelings toward me are, under the circumstances, quite natural, for there is just as much of human nature in the preacher—when you are not looking at him—as in anyone else."

THE *Christian Commonwealth* is engaged on the profitable discussion of what it would like the revised version of the Old Testament to be. In the first place it would have the first verse of Genesis form a separate heading and the second verse "start with chaos, not with nothing." Then by substituting the words "so it became evening and so it became morning," for "the evening and the morning were the first day," it hopes to meet all scientific objections. Another proposition is that *sheol*, sometimes translated "grave," sometimes "hell" and sometimes "pit" shall be rendered by the Greek word *Hades*, which would lead to an utter confusion of ideas between the notions of death held by Aryans and Semites. Another proposed rendering is the substitution of the milder term "peoples" or "nations" instead of "gentiles" and "heathen." But this will quite miss the feeling of the old Jews who looked on all other races as impure and inferior. In all these suggested alterations the evident intention is not to get at the meaning of the Hebrew writers but to accommodate their language to the ideas of the nineteenth century.

THE subscriptions for poor old Newdigate Newdegate only amount to about one-third of the costs of his action against Mr. Bradlaugh. With all their brag on the matter the Conservative and religious bigots don't care to shell out in order to keep God in the constitution.

THE dissenting ministers of Warwickshire, many of whom are Unitarians, have sent in a protest to the Education Department against the "narrow sectarian bias" displayed by the Rev. F. Wilkinson, one of her Majesty's inspectors of schools, whose report treats the unsectarian action of our School Board in excluding certain Trinitarian texts from being learned by heart in the infant school as an "insult" to Christianity. The reverend inspector, though forbidden by law to test religious instruction, makes strong remarks which excludes Unitarians from the Christian fold. The Education Department have communicated their "dissatisfaction" to Mr. Wilkinson, and regret that the objectionable passages were permitted to appear in print in official documents.

SPURGEON says that "Faith can do everything." But it has not converted the world yet, though it has been trying hard for thousands of years. Physically and morally, Faith as a panacea is a wretched failure. The Mahdi's men find it won't even stop bullets or make our rifles spit water, as they believed until experience taught them a very different lesson.

THE oath question has cropped up again at Bishop Auckland, Durham. A juryman named Martindale refused to be sworn on the ground that Jesus Christ said, "Swear not at all." Being asked as to his religious belief he declared himself a Methodist. He was committed for contempt of court and subsequently liberated pending the decision of that worthy Christian Gaoler Harcourt. All this shows the need for abolishing that survival of fetishism, oath-taking.

THE latest *Present Day Tract* is by Sir William Muir and is entitled "The Lord's Supper, an Abiding Witness to the Death

of Christ." A sufficient answer is found in the fact that the ceremony of the Eucharist is much older than Christianity. Justin Martyr, the early Christian father, informs us (Apol. lxvi.) that wine and bread were placed before those initiated into the mysteries of Mithra in the ancient worship of Persia. They are evidently sun-offerings. Yet Christians believe their savior was idiot enough to sit at a table and offer his own body to his disciples to eat and drink. The myth was evidently formed to account for the Pagan custom.

EX-MONK WIDDOWS is lecturing at the East-end against Roman Catholicism. A riot took place at Bethesda Chapel, and extraordinary precautions had to be taken at Victoria Hall to prevent a repetition of the Roman Catholic rowdism. Christian savages, armed with sticks, breaking each others' heads in religious edifices by way of argument, form an edifying spectacle. Such is the Christian unity and love of which believers boast so loudly.

A CIRCULAR distributed at St. James's Church, Brighton, in appealing for an Easter offering for the vicar, calls attention to a very hard case. It states that the income of the living from every source is only £315, and there is no vicarage house. After this, the bitter cry of the destitute and unemployed fades into insignificance.

"A RETIRED SOLICITOR" writes an article in the *Christian Life* (the most bigoted, retrograde, and worst-edited of the Unitarian papers) on "The Blasphemy Laws and their Reformers." His dishonesty is worthy of the journal that abets him. He takes the sum of £9 14s. 6d. subscribed by nine persons, and represents it as the total income from 9,600 members, most of whom, by the way, belong to affiliated societies. He is deliberately blind to the sum of £59 3s. 8d. expended by the Repeal Society during the year, which is duly accounted for on the same balance-sheet.

So much for his honesty. Now for his memory. He says that we were sent to goal for "obtrusively parading infamous pictures outside a shop in the most crowded thoroughfare of London." We never had a chance to do so. Mr. Cattell was the shopkeeper who displayed our famous Christmas Number in Fleet Street, and he got off with an admonition.

WE will not follow our inaccurate critic any farther. His whole article is just fit for the columns of the *Christian Life*, which is at once the best and the worst that can be said of it.

BOARD SCHOOL ESSAYS. No. 5.—MOSES.

Moziz woz borne a horphun is farthur an muther dine wen he woz offul jung. Is nativ villidge woz name phairo an is rillidgon woz a fillystine. Heed eat nothink but bull rushes an livd in a lions' den name danyell wot he found brayin in the forris of Sarahs dessert with a kleerpackra needle a bitin is hooph like anythink. He woz offul strong an used to tare lions jors asunder to there tails an make snaques (bore konstripshuns) an penny rinkles out o stix to pleas is unkle saul an virgiuyer an like wize blow a narp. Moziz ony bruther an sister woz isself an they had bin drownid in the flud maid by Noer but Moziz woz savd from a norrid deth by a wale witch swallerd im in mistake for a sack of baynits witch woz bein cent by the lord to blow up the tower of refuse wot woz bilded by god to konfuze the langwidges in them daze. Moziz done meny mirrykles by slewin Samsun with the jor bone of an ax name bale-um witch cride out wen yer smite with won jor bone allus turn the uther to be smut. He also slewd david king of the egyptshuns with a island fling coz he woodnt let the children of his friend Hisrul dabbul an ketch shrimps an noysters in the ded See. Moziz bilded a burnin bush witch he livd in to speak to the lord an he also writ sum books on pillers o brim stone an treacle witch he givd god for is lors sayin weevil be to him who dares to think, likewise he wot sheds the blud of the lam shall be washt witer than snow then god a pointed Moziz by porin sun parafine on is balld ed witch maid im shout offul thereoph the lord naled up a kuppel of reign bows on the klowds so heed remember wot Moziz the profit ad tolled im an they entered a convent tergether the lord sayin thou shall not bow wow to any shaven himmidge but misself for I bringed yer out of the bon-dige wearhouse an done my dooty as a man an a bruther. But a cay woz ni wen the peepul woz to suffer a grate lost by a loozin the profit they had maid, for Moziz dide a paneful deth after wrestlin with the lord for sevrul weeks an munths on the top of mount arrowroot an brakein God sin hue sos he cant walk an fly. He woz bestrate by a fillystine for sum gold peaces name Julia Seazer who woz gord to deth by sum bares becoz he ad no beard on is hed witch woz a norrid sin in those daze. Moziz dine wurdz woz my god how thou hast shaken me an my kup o bitters is more than I can share. God berryd Moziz in the sand and putted a toadstool on is grave with a priskripshun tellin how heed dide bravly fitin to the hend after woundin is hennymy an killin im agin an agin. No one nose wear the remanes of the grate poet lize an so it must ever be a mistry to god an is wife Misses virgin—gon gon gon to the land of the grave an the ome of the flee

Wear the wimmin seaze from trublin
An you lie on Jezus manly chest.—BILLY BROWN

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 5, Bolton Secular Hall, 70 Bark Street, Bolton:—At 10.45, "Christianity in its Cradle;" at 3, "Bible Blunders;" at 6.30, "Cheap Salvation."

Wednesday, April 8, Opening of Camberwell Secular Hall.

APRIL 12, Milton Hall; 14, Walworth; 19, Hall of Science; 26, Hall of Science.

MAY 3, Hall of Science; 6, Camberwell; 10, Milton Hall; 17, Hall of Science; 20, Camberwell; 24, N. S. S. Conference; 31, Manchester.

JUNE 7, Liverpool; 14, Plymouth; 28, Bristol.

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, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct 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. Ward.

YOUNG CONTRIBUTOR.—The joke has already appeared in the *Freethinker*. The original story is in Mark Twain.

ALFRED CLARK.—Glad to see the cheery way you talk of your "latter end." If the godly report the "awfully sudden death of an Atheist" in your neighborhood, we will oblige you (retrospectively) by exposing the story.

J. BROOKS.—According to the report of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England, the bishops received last year £86,736 4s. 4d.

H. LEE.—Lucilio Vanini was burnt for Atheism at Toulouse, Feb. 19, 1619.

C. SHARP.—You do us a service by inquiring for the paper of news-agents. Those who get it sell it easily.

J. MUNRO.—An account of the origin of Easter appeared in the *Freethinker* for April 13, 1884.

LIBERTY.—The most reliable account of the Inquisition is probably that of Llorente, an English translation of which appeared in 1826. Dr. Rule, a Wesleyan minister, has also a history of the Catholic institution, published in 1874.

A FREETHINKER sends us an account of "Major Pearson's" proceedings which he witnessed at Ashton, Lancashire. The proceedings were of too vulgar a character to deserve much attention.

H. MARKALL asks us to announce that the Kilburn Branch of the N. S. S. makes a fresh start on April 5th, at the "Admiral Nelson," Carlton Road, when Mr. Haslam will lecture on "Civilisation."

A. R. BEYNON.—Thanks. Your cuttings are very welcome.

H. HARLAND desires us to note the annual meeting of the Ball's Pond Secular Hall Society on April 14.

A. W. EXELL says that the Pioneer Sunday Cricket Club opens its second season on Easter Sunday. Address, 31 Arlington Street, New North Road, N.

J. KILBEY.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

YELROC.—No. 30 of Vol. II. is unobtainable. Only a dozen copies or so were printed.

F. BAXTER.—Thanks. Glad to hear the Brighton Branch is going on well.

S. BROWN.—We do not know Mr. Hooper's address. You had better write to the Nottingham Secular Society, at their lecture room, Pelham Street.

A. E. CROOKSON.—We should have wondered if the Rev. Dr. Cocker had answered your letter. When the sky-pilots preach they expect you to take it all in as "according to Cocker."

ARGUS.—Always glad to hear from you.

J. W. GRANSHAW.—Thanks. By all means send the American papers.

GREY-HEADED ATHEIST.—Glad you enjoy our "Acid Drops" so much. There is very little fun to be got out of the Christian Policeman's new paper, "On and Off Duty." It is simply stupid, utterly and yawningly stupid, from beginning to end. The joke about Sergeant Herring (cured) from Yarmouth, is your own, and a very good one.

INQUIRER.—The laws of nature are not entities or proclamations; they are simply ways in which things happen. Prayer does not alter them. We know nothing about the origin of matter; it is probably eternal. Accounting for the world is a long job; it cannot be done in a paragraph. You must study astronomy, and particularly the nebular theory, for yourself.

E. JAGGER.—We are much obliged for the paper.

W. BRYAN (Bristol).—Mr. Foote has booked the date. You shall have a list of subjects to select from in due course.

J. BENT.—Theists have never yet been able to reconcile the omnipotence and omnibenevolence of God with existing evil.

FRIENDS who notice reviews of our publications or accounts of our work in the papers will greatly oblige by forwarding the same.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Porcupine—Middlesex Times—Illustrated Bits—Hampshire Independent—Liberal—Boston Investigator—Oldham Chronicle—Lucifer—New York Truthseeker—Philosophic Inquirer—Portsmouth Evening News—Burton Chronicle—Wakefield Evening Herald—Yorkshire Post—On and Off Duty—East London Press—Derbyshire Courier—Staffordshire News—Kent Messenger—To-Day—North Wilts Herald—Morley Times—Oldham Evening Chronicle—Staffordshire Chronicle—Western Independent—Edinburgh Evening News.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

In consequence of Mr. Foote's absence in Scotland the result of the competition will not be announced till next week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

IN *Progress* for April, Mr. Foote, in addition to the continuation of his "Prisoner for Blasphemy," writes stirringly on "The Ogre of War." It is a notable fact that the work of opposition to the Ogre is left to Atheists. E. N. W., under the title of "Easy as A B C," advocates a reform of the alphabet as the essential of spelling reform. An Usher continues his interesting paper on "Christian Schools." Mr. Wheeler, in an article on "Church Property," shows that the whole of the enormous revenues of the Church of England belong of right to the State. Mr. Robertson, in a paper on "The Future of Marriage," notices at length the pamphlet with that title which was briefly reviewed in these pages. For scientific readers, Mr. Collins writes on "The Sun," and Dr. Aveling concludes his paper on "Man's Manufacture of Organic Substances." "Seen Thrice," by B. V., and "Is Shelley a Great Poet?" are also concluded.

MESSRS. BROOKS AND CHRYSAL, of Manchester, have in the press, and will issue simultaneously with the revised Bible on May 1, a work on the Bibles of other nations. It will contain selections from the Tripitakas of the Buddhists, from the Vedas of the Hindus, the Zendavesta of the Parsees, the Koran of the Mahomedans, the Egyptian Book of the Dead, and from the Talmud and Apocryphal New Testament. It will be prefaced by a letter on "Bibles" by F. Max Muller and a General Introduction by the editor, J. S. Hodgson, D.Sc.

PROF. PFLEIDERER'S Hibbert Lecture on "The Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by the Influence of Paulinism on Christianity" begins on Monday, April 13, and is continued for the three following Mondays and Wednesdays. Free tickets for the course may be obtained from Messrs. Williams and Norgate, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

CONSIDERED only as a literary curiosity, "The Jewish Life of Christ" would be a good investment. The translation of the *Sepher Toldoth Jeshu* issued by Richard Carlile is so scarce that a copy can hardly be obtained for love or money. But the book is something more than this. It contains in substance what has been the Jewish version of the story of Jesus ever since the second century. As Christianity admittedly arose among the Jews, and was not accepted by them, every one ought to know what they have to say on the matter.

Now the fine weather is coming there will be renewed activity at all the outdoor stations. Propagandists will find the "*Freethinker* Tracts" effective aids in the work of emancipation from superstition.

THIS month our veteran American contemporary, the *Boston Investigator*, established by Horace Seever and Frances Wright, enters upon its fifty-fifth year. From the beginning it has acted up to its motto, "Hew to the line and let the chips fall where they will." Long may it continue. We notice that the *Investigator* occasionally takes a clipping from the *Freethinker*. It might do worse than extract from us oftener.

Liberal, the organ of the Freethought community of that name in Barton County, Missouri, advocates the establishment of a purely scientific and secular American college. Although Harvard and Cornell Universities are said to be very nearly Freethought institutions, it declares there is room for a purely secular university, where the doctrines of evolution could be taught and the students made aware of the origin of the so-called sacred books, and it believes *Liberal* is the place to found such an institution. Let our American cousins cultivate Sunday science classes first. They will get all the universities in time.

THE use of the Peckham Public Hall has (at a very short notice and after bills had been printed) been refused for a political lecture by Mr. Bradlaugh, M.P. A large tent will now be erected at the back of the Peckham Radical Club, and Mr. Bradlaugh will deliver his lecture there at eight p.m. on Easter Monday.

MR. C. HOOLE, M.A., has published a new translation of the Apostolical Fathers, with an Introductory Notice. Mr. Hoole says, "Into the theological aspects of these writings it does not form part of the present work to enter." Yet three lines further on he says, "there is no trace of such doctrines as the supremacy of the Bishop of Rome or the worship of the Virgin Mary." He might have added there is neither any trace of the Trinity, the Incarnation, nor of other than a spiritual resurrection of Jesus.

MR. BHAGWAN DASS is the name of a Hindoo gentleman who the missionaries (padris, the natives call them) converted to Christianity. After his conversion he studied the system more deeply, with the result that he relapsed back to Hindooism, as the more philosophical faith. He is now lecturing throughout India against Christianity.

A NEW Radical club has been started at Portsmouth. Its programme is one of the most thorough-going we have met, and deserves to be copied:—1. Complete citizen suffrage, without

distinction of sex. 2. Equal [electoral districts. 3. Triennial Parliaments. 4. Payment of members. 5. Abolition of an hereditary House of Lords. 6. Disestablishment and disendowment of the State Church. 7. Radical reform of the Land Laws. 8. Abolition of perpetual pensions. 9. The nationalisation of the ordinary tithe charge, and the total abolition of the extraordinary tithe. 10. The abolition of compulsory oath taking, by the substitution of affirmation. 11. The total repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. 12. The absolute refusal of further monetary grants to members of the Royal Family. 13. The equalisation of the poor rate throughout the country. 14. Free trade with all the world. 15. That no Government shall involve the country in war without the consent of Parliament first obtained.

THE *Oldham Chronicle* for March 28 says:—"Arrows of Freethought' and 'Bible Romances' are two volumes of merciless, vigorous, smart pamphlets, by G. W. Foote. The author believes in ridicule, sarcasm, blasphemy. He does not mince matters in the least. He strikes right out, and takes his chance. He is one of the Freethought leaders who never did believe in trimming, and who has contempt only for those who do. He is a bold, relentless and slashing champion of Secularism, and those who hold with him will highly prize these telling and outspoken articles and addresses."

MR. SHARMAN sends us a copy of his Address to the Electors of the North Division of Paddington, in which he favors nearly every Radical reform, including "complete civil and religious liberty." We understand that Mr. Sharman has been invited by the Liberal Council to address a public meeting shortly. If he is selected to fight the Liberal battle he will command the support of Freethinkers at least, and we shall be happy to render any assistance in our power.

MR. LANG contributes to the *Nineteenth Century* an article on The Comparative Study of Ghost Stories. He shows that the famous story of a ghost who returns to say that immortality is true, is very wide-spread, and that the yarns collected by the Psychical Society are well known to savages, whose mediums produce the same manifestations as the Slades and Sludges of spiritist drawing-rooms.

Two or three years ago we had occasion to expose the "conversion" of a young fellow in Glasgow at one of Moody's meetings. His name was Allen Paul, and the Christians described him as a convert from Atheism. We proved that he never was an Atheist, and that he certainly was a hypocritical young scoundrel. A few days after his conversion he was sent to gaol for sixty days for stealing a coat. We now learn that his subsequent career has been a uniform course of crime. Moody ought to be proud of his protégé.

AMONGST other exploits, Allen Paul stole a watch from John Smillie, wood merchant, of Easthouse; whereby hangs a very funny tale. At a local school, where the young thief was well known, the inspector, while examining the scholars in biblical knowledge, asked what Paul was put in prison for. The boys were all nonplussed with the exception of one little fellow who held up his hand, and replied, "Please, sir, for stealing John Smillie's watch."

THE following is taken from the back of a ticket for a recent meeting of the Hackney and E. Middlesex Band of Hope Union, at which Samuel Morley presided:—"I made diligent inquiry as to the criminals in the county gaol of Manchester, and found that out of 649 Protestant prisoners, 593 had been at Sabbath schools on an average of from six to seven years each. This is a very startling statement. Let it not be supposed that I am depreciating Sabbath schools. On the contrary I believe if there were not Sabbath schools there would be far more criminals in the gaols. But that was not the only sad fact I discovered in the county gaol of Manchester. I found that out of 724 Protestants prisoners, eighty-one had been Sunday school teachers. I found that one in nine of the Protestant prisoners had been a teacher in a Sunday school, and some of them had been so from fourteen to sixteen years."—Extract from an address by the Rev. W. Caine, M.A., late chaplain of Salford Gaol.

THE Calvinistic Methodist Association has been conferring at Cardiff. The leaders are in a great way about the spread of unbelief. The Rev. E. Matthews says that "there is a consciousness growing among the more thoughtful of the ministers that the secular element which was unfortunately introduced into the educational agencies of the Principality is producing disastrous results." The general opinion is that the Bible must be stuffed into the children at school or Christianity is gone.

THE April number of the *Nineteenth Century* has "A Short Tract upon Oaths" by Sir Stephen de Vere, with the object of showing that oaths of all sorts are ethically unsound and practically dangerous, and that they tend to the obscuration and not the elucidation of truth. Sir Stephen de Vere declares that an experience of nearly fifty years in courts of justice has convinced him that oaths are not a reliable test of truth, but that as they multiply perjury increases in an accelerated ratio. He wishes to

see them entirely abolished. There is nothing new in all this but every blow upon heated iron adds to the malleability of the mass. Some day the superstition of oath-taking will be cited in proof of the barbarism and superstition still existing in the nineteenth century.

MR. HENRY SPICER, Liberal candidate for Islington, promises to vote for the Affirmation Bill and the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws. If Freethinkers "heckle" their local candidates they will probably find a similar result in very many cases.

WAS CHRIST CONSISTENT?

It has long struck us that the portraits or descriptions indirectly given in the Gospels—for, curiously enough, no direct personal description or portraiture as by an eyewitness or philosophical historian is ever attempted—are irreconcilable. Hence we were somewhat surprised to find that one of the Religious Tract Society's "Present Day Tracts" is entitled "The Unity of the Character of the Christ of the Gospels a Proof of its Historical Reality." In this work the Rev. Prebendary Row, M.A., maintains that the "artless" writings of the Evangelists, who made no conscious attempt whatever to depict a character, resulted in "that most perfect of all delineations, the Christ of the Gospels," a portraiture whose parts are in perfect harmony because "copied from the life."

Christians are fond of reasoning in a circle. The Messiahship of Jesus has first been assumed as an undoubted and all-important fact, and he has been installed as master of their hearts and lives. From their early education and their subsequent reading and surroundings they learn to regard him as the loftiest example of ideal moral excellence. They quietly assume that their absurdly-exaggerated view of Christ's character rests on an indisputable basis, and they are strengthened in their delusion by the admissions of various sympathetic or time-serving Freethinkers who are still largely under the subtle influence of feelings and ideas imbibed from their Christian environment. Christians thus beg the question of Christ's consistency and perfection, and then jump to the conclusion that they have thereby proved the historical accuracy of the Gospel portraiture of Jesus because the illiterate disciples could not possibly have imagined and forged so sublimely perfect and consistent a character. We totally deny both the perfection and the consistency of the original "Christian hero" of the New Testament, but for the present we shall deal specially with the question of consistency.

As the myth of Christ was evolved by credulous and excited imaginations working upon a basis of historical fact—a definite basis in the existent records, prophecies and teachings of the Old Testament and of the Rabbis, and an obscure and uncertain basis in the personality, possibly entirely mythical, around which the legends and sayings crystallised—as these minds worked in the direction of the religious impulses of the age, and as the legends and notes gradually collected and circulated by disciples and admirers were continually passing through a kind of natural selection or survival of the fittest, there would naturally be some degree of consistency; for the more incongruous stories, such as those depicting the "contemptible" Christ (to use Prebendary Row's own expression) of the "spurious," that is rejected, gospels, would be discarded. Only such stories and sayings as were then felt to be instructive and creditable would be received and recorded as genuine. As, however, the intelligence and morality and learning of the early Christians were not of a very high order, a large amount of very inferior matter was admitted, and the good and the bad, the sensible and ridiculous, the natural and the superstitious, were finally jumbled up together, and fixed in writing in the form of the four Gospels as we now have them. Inconsistencies which escaped the notice or the criticism of the myth-evolving story-tellers and book-compiling believers of those days cannot, however, so easily escape the truth-seeking criticism of the nineteenth century.

Minds accustomed to literary judgment will, if unbiassed, readily perceive a great difference between the smooth-tongued sophist and transcendental theologian of St. John's Gospel and the comparatively plain and business-like teacher and miracle-worker of the synoptical gospels, which are so evidently founded in the main on varying forms of one common original. And these patchwork gospels, even if

taken by themselves, only present a patchwork Christ, who has to be rounded off and idealised into fictitious consistency by the varying imaginations of individual believers, who naturally can never agree in the conclusions they found on such irreconcilable data. Some, for example, hold that Christ is merciful to all, while others hold that he is only kind to believers, and that he will burn his enemies alive for ever. Christ is depicted in both aspects—as loving all and dying for all, and as judging all men and sending the majority of them into eternal fire. We fail to see the beautiful and perfect consistency of these pictures, and if one of them is claimed as the “most perfect manifestation of benevolence,” the other may equally be stigmatised as the manifestation of the most fiendish malice.

W. P. BALL.

(To be concluded).

THE DEVIL'S FOSTER PARENTS.
A REJOINDER.*

MEN don't believe in the Devil now,
As their fathers did of old;
They're forced to see that he spoils their creed,
So he's left out in the cold.

There's hardly a hint at the “cloven foot,”
Or the fiery abode below,
To be found in sermon or tract to-day,
For it's rather “played out,” you know!

But who was it mixed the poisonous draught
That has palsied heart and brain,
And round the bier filled the heart with fear
That was bursting with grief and pain?

Who dogged the steps of the toiling poor?
Who dug the pit for their feet?
Who sowed the tares in the fields of Time,
Where Knowledge was sowing wheat?

Who blighted the bloom of childhood's days
With the fiery breath of hell?
In school and home told the cursèd tale—
Won't somebody rise and tell?

Yes someone will answer you as of old,
Since lights through the darkness gleam,
And the rack and stake you cannot use now
For doubting your hideous dream.

Oh! priests of a hateful worn-out creed,
How long is it since the time
When brave hearts spoke in the cause of truth
Exposing your faith “sublime”?

When Ignorance far and wide prevailed
Beneath your sway supreme,
Fair Science tried to raise her voice
And show her wiser scheme;

But for you the Devil would soon have died,
But you clung to this *sine qua non*,
And crushing his foe with your priestly power—
Still carried his business on!

Now times are changed and you know full well
That the game won't do to-day,
For Knowledge laughs when you speak of hell
And no longer fears your sway.

So you fight it out amongst yourselves
And damn each other now
and make yourselves responsible
For the everlasting row

To be heard in home, and Church and State,
To the country's furthest bound;
For *pro* or *con* a unanimous vote
Is nowhere to be found.

Fight on! it tells of swift decay.
We'll see the end anon,
And only simpletons want to know
Who'll carry your business on!

J. DE FRAINE.



THE Bishop of Newcastle, speaking at a meeting of the Ladies' Association for Promoting the Gospel, said we had no right to enter the Soudan “unless we were prepared to follow up that work with teaching the stronger and better religion.” We must only use bullets when they are to be followed by the Bible, and only take other people's territory when we intend to also impose on them our religion.

CANON WILBERFORCE, in the face of Jesus making wine for guests well drunk and such texts as Deut. xiv., 26, Prov. xxxi., 7, is hard pushed to find his favorite doctrine of teetotalism in the Bible, so he tells his hearers in a sermon preached in York that the word “amethyst” means “abstinence from strong drink,” and an amethyst being one of the jewels in the New Jerusalem, it implies that only abstainers will enter that jewelled city.

SAYS the Rev. Jabez Walker, “Christianity is the religion of cheerfulness.” Oh, yes; and the majority of mankind are going to roast eternally, for “many are called but few chosen.” We can understand the cheerfulness of a philosopher like Hume, who declared that a serene mind was better than a thousand a year, but not the cheerfulness of those who believe the majority of their fellow-beings are walking the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire. Christianity is a religion of cheerfulness if you don't believe in it.

THE Rev. O. F. Morris ridicules the Darwinian theory, which he describes as a monkey giving birth to a man. Christians find it far easier to credit that a dove gave birth to a Lamb.

THE Rev. J. W. Bardsley, M.A., lecturing on the Bible, said that not a single inaccuracy had been conclusively established against it. He also said that the “Jordan was 13,000 feet above the level of the sea.” The one statement is as absurdly untrue as the other. Of course it is not the slightest use showing these black gentry that Joseph had two fathers and that Jehoram's son was two years older than his father. To them a thousand years are as a day and black is as white, and words must necessarily and undoubtedly mean whatever best suits the purpose in hand.

CANON KNOX-LITTLE has been preaching against the “sacrilege” of celebrating the Lord's supper in the evening instead of the morning. Pity he can't attend to real evils instead of manufacturing artificial ones.

REVIEWS.

Why Men do Not Believe the Bible. By a BRISTOL ARTISAN. Morrish: Bristol. 2d.—The writer's grammar shows a want of scholastic education, but his matter shows that he possesses considerable powers of thought. The Rev. J. M. Wilson, headmaster of Clifton College, to whose lectures this pamphlet is a reply, will find it difficult to refute. Probably he will not attempt the task, but trust to that discretion which is now the better part of clerical valor.

Our Corner. April.—Freethought Publishing Co.—Mr. Bradlaugh writes on Freemasonry, with the purpose of showing that it is not an anti-religious institution. Most people care very little whether it is or not. Mr. Bradlaugh's interest in the organisation is explained by the fact of his membership. Mrs. Besant continues her “Redistribution of Political Power,” dealing with the results of the Reform Bill of 1867. Alexander Dunbar follows with a bright paper on “Miracles in Mayo.” Arthur Gigadibs pursues his careful, but rather superfluous inquiry into the “Upshot of Hamlet.” Mr. G. B. Shaw and Miss Hypatia Bradlaugh both give instalments of novels. The “Art Corner” is up to its usual good level.

* A poem entitled “Is the Devil Dead?” has been circulating in the Christian papers. It is an orthodox production. After bewailing the decay of belief in the Devil, it recites a number of evils that exist in society, and ends by asking, if the Devil is dead, who carries his business on.

PROFANE JOKES.

In a suburban school, a teacher gave out the word "psalter" to a class in spelling. It was a "poser" to all till it reached the foot of the class, when a curly-headed little fellow spelt it correctly, and on being asked to define it, shouted out "More salt."

THE *Boston Bee* contains the following polite hint:—"Deacon"—is requested not to commence snoring in church to-morrow morning until after the commencement of the sermon, as several of the congregation are anxious to hear the text.

A YOUNSTER of a theological turn of mind asked his Christian parent the other day what this "Reversed Vision of the Old Testament" was that he saw alluded to in the religious papers. He was advised to correct his own reversed vision.

PRIEST: "Pat I believe I saw you asleep in church last Sunday." Pat: "No, indade, your reverence didn't. You moight a' seen me with my oies shut; but divil a bit o' sleep could I get anyhow, wid your sorsechin' an' your thumpin' of the poor cushions."

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