

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 118.



## INSPIRED SLAVERY.

"Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him for ever."—EX. xxi., 6.

## THE GOD OF BATTLES.

THERE is reason to dread that two of the greatest Empires in the world will soon open "the purple testament of bleeding war." England and Russia are bracing themselves for a death-wrestle in the Baltic, the Black Sea, the Pacific Ocean, Central Asia, and perhaps India. Mr. Gladstone and the Czar, who were such excellent friends five years ago, are now at daggers drawn, and they are going to embroil the world in their quarrel, which will probably cost hundreds of millions of money and hundreds of thousands of lives. Ostensibly they are wrangling about a paltry strip of useless territory in Central Asia, but the real cause of their mighty difference lies in their egoism and obstinacy. They observe diplomatic forms, it is true, yet their quarrel is essentially as vulgar as any street fight. They manifest in a "civilised" manner all the petty feelings which animate a couple of scolding shrews, and all the dark passions of a couple of brawling costermongers. Both these eminent gentlemen, however, are ardent Christians, humble disciples of the Prince of Peace. After eighteen centuries of Christianity, behold the noble spectacle of two of its foremost representatives, religious to the marrow and pious to the finger tips, shaking their fists at each other, and singing, as it were, a parody of Dr. Watts's little hymn:

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,  
For 'tis their nature to,  
Let hungry lions growl and fight,  
Then why not me and you?"

Alas! they do not growl and fight like hungry lions. They will never get within three thousand miles of each other. Their skins are safe, and not a drop of their blood will be spilt. They will simply send thousands of simpletons to blow each other's brains out, rip open each other's entrails, and smash each other into bloody clay, in order to decide the great suit of William *versus* Alexander. When will the people be wise enough to make those fight who declare war? Or when will mankind have sense and humor enough to adopt Carlyle's suggestion for settling international quarrels—locking up the rulers of each state in a common room, every one being armed with a pipe and a good supply of strong tobacco, till one or the other side confessed itself beaten?

England and Russia are both Christian nations. Both regard the Bible as God's word, read it, swear by it, and fling it at the heads of infidels who reject it. The result of their being morally suckled on this book is very natural. They are full of pugnacity, swift to shed blood, and about as regardful of other people's rights as the Jews were when they appropriated the land of Canaan. True, there are some peaceable precepts in the New Testament, but in the long run what is their value? Example, as Burke said, is the school in which men learn, and the only school in which they *will* learn. What is the use of saying, once in a way, "blessed are the peacemakers," if God himself is described as a "man of war," if he planned and commanded the bloodiest and cruellest wars ever waged on earth, and if his prime favorites were nearly all red-handed fighting-men who revelled in slaughter? Without the least exaggeration, the Bible may be called the murderer's text-book. What wonder, then, if nations who are trained to revere it spend half their public income on warfare, and devote half their scientific knowledge to the arts of destruction?

Worshipping the same God, England and Russia will both solicit his aid as soon as they begin fighting, and the professional mystery-men on each side will remind him that he is expected to give both parties the victory. It is difficult to see how the Lord is going to oblige all his friends when they range themselves in hostile camps, and one's success means another's ruin. He is the Lord of hosts, but how can he lead two rival armies? He is the Lord mighty in battle, but how can he arrange a victory for both? Imagine his distraction when his right ear is assailed with prayers from England and his left with prayers from Russia! What is a poor God to do in such circumstances? Macheath between Polly and Lucy was in a mild embarrassment compared with his. He cannot oblige them both, let their sky-pilots charm ever so sweetly; and if he pleases one, he must disappoint the other. Poor God! He can only sing with the gallant highwayman—

"How happy could I be with either,  
Were the other dear charmer away."

When our clergy prayed for victory over the Mahdi the case was simple. It was not Christian against Christian, but Christian against Mohammedan; so the Lord just let Gordon perish to show that the situation was critical, and then proceeded to smash the Mahdi himself. Our troops are now leaving the Soudan, and an English officer is bringing over one of the Mahdi's banners as a present to the Queen. King Coffee's umbrella is our only trophy of the Ashantee War, and this our only trophy of the Soudan War. We suggest that the Archbishop of Canterbury should wear it as a robe on high church festivals. And it might bear the following inscription:—"This piece of bunting was taken from the Mohammedan false prophet, at a cost of five million pounds, and thirty thousand lives; and is respectfully dedicated to the God of Battles." G. W. FOOTE.

## SOME BIBLE BEAUTIES.

SINCE the days of Bishop Butler it has been a commonplace among divines that there is a great deal more in the Bible than has ever been brought out, and that that book has the peculiar merit of teaching any and every doctrine sanctioned by the mind of man. Hence it need cause no astonishment that all the doctrines of modern science, whether of evolution or of belief in universal law, are found to be strictly in accordance with biblical teaching. Nor need one express surprise if a new translation of Genesis should declare that God evolved the heavens and the earth from fire-mist and man from monkeys. Cocceius, a learned Dutch theologian, contended that the Bible, as an infallible revelation must infallibly mean not only what it might appear to mean, but everything whatever that it could be made to mean, and a good deal more beside. It must be understood in every sense of which it is possibly susceptible. Without stretching the matter to this extent, it may safely be said that the Bible has a great many merits which are rarely dilated upon in the churches. To a few of these simple but sublime beauties we will call attention. For instance, it tells how the wisest man had 700 wives and 300 concubines. It informs any man how he may test the fidelity of his wife or wives, by making them drink holy water. It enables him to chastise his servant within an inch of his life without incurring punishment. It shows how women may be turned to salt for turning their heads; how children may be torn in pieces by bears for calling out bald-head; how men may live in a furnace of fire or among lions with as much impunity as we do among house-flies; how a man may stop the sun in order to slaughter his enemies; and how curses may wither fig-trees that obstinately refuse to bear fruit when not in season. What could the heart wish for more?

It gives such instruction in natural history that we learn more certainly of the existence of unicorns, satyrs and dragons in the Bible than from any other source. In addition, it introduces us to a speaking serpent, at least one talking ass, and a prophet-swallowing whale. It exhibits Jonah as such an adept in physiology that he could not only get down a whale's throat, but could resist the action of its stomach. Samuel it shows as a proficient in anatomy, since he hewed Agag in pieces before the Lord. David was a master of the art of calisthenics, dancing before the Lord with all his might. Moses was so skilled in geology that he could at once bring water out of a rock by striking it, and such an excellent chemist that he could turn all the water in the land of Egypt into blood. He understood natural history so much better than we do that he discovered that the hare chews the cud. Noah was so able in building that he could exactly accommodate in one ark every species of animal, and so expert in zoology that he could pick out pairs of every kind and bring them into the ark. Hezekiah understood astronomy sufficiently to induce the Lord to set the sun ten degrees backward. Elijah was an electrician, able to bring fire from heaven, and his pupil, Elisha, understood magnetism sufficiently to make an iron axe swim; Samson was so mighty a hunter that he could catch 300 foxes and tie their tails together; and Ezekiel was such an adept in the art of cookery as to bake cakes with hitherto unappreciated materials.

In the science of physiology the Bible teaches us such facts as that a man's strength lies in his hair, that one may be born without the agency of a father, and that five loaves and two small fishes may more than suffice for the nutrition of five thousand persons. In biology we learn that man was made out of dust, and may live to be a thousand years old; in ethnology, that Caucasian, Negro, Mongol and Red Indian, alike sprang from one pair; in chronology, that six thousand years suffice for the accumulation of all geological strata and the evolution of all life; in philology we trace how all languages were suddenly confused at Babel; in medicine we learn that looking at a brass serpent is a capital cure for serpent bites, and that prayer is efficacious in all diseases. In history we learn that an entire nation could cross the sea as if it were dry land, and in physics that a man could walk on the sea and ascend in the air as easily as if composed of hydrogen gas, while in geography it teaches that the earth has corners and that all its kingdoms can be seen in a moment of time.

This never-to-be-sufficiently-praised revelation is not only a perfect guide on terrestrial matters; it is a sufficient authority on those pertaining to the celestial and infernal regions, telling us of the jewelled gates and sea of glass of the one, and giving a sufficient glimpse of the burning lake of fire and brimstone of the other. It shows us Satan visiting heaven among the sons of God and carrying Jesus to sit with him on a pinnacle of the temple. It tells us how devils inhabit men, and may be cast out into pigs. It shows how diseases and devils may be exorcised by handkerchiefs and aprons. It exhibits angels as coming down to eat and to wrestle, and it gives a full picture of the cherubim with four faces; the four beasts, each with six wings and full of eyes; the Iamb with seven horns and seven eyes, and other celestial cattle. That in the face of such astounding revelations sceptics can be found who deny that the Bible is a revelation is a deplorable fact, which can only be ascribed to the carnal depravity of the human heart.

J. M. WHEELER.

## A DIALOGUE BETWEEN A BEETLE AND A BEE.

(After Voltaire—a long way.)

*Beetle:* Touch me not, base enemy of beetle and God! Thou believest in the sufficiency of Nature; thou maintainest the supremacy of matter! I will denounce thee, thou necessarily immoral being! Did I not hear thee declare that matter is eternal and that force is indestructible? I will proclaim thy infamy to the world! I will expose thy evil character! Beware! I warn thee that there is such a place as Holloway Gaol!

*Bee:* Are these your arguments? Is it thus you would persuade? Is this your method of regeneration? I indeed admire your gentleness.

*Beetle:* I will condescend to hear for one moment (*Aside*—While I think of some vile accusation which I may use to incite the populace against him). Tell me, why dost thou not believe?

*Bee:* Why do I not believe what?

*Beetle:* Why this equivocation? Thou knowest full well in what thou oughtest to believe. But I know the blasphemous wickedness of thy heart. Tell me shortly, why dost thou not believe in God?

*Bee:* I know not what you mean by "God."

*Beetle:* Oh! you deny God, do you? Thou vilest of creatures! Thou deeply-dyed and doubly-damned villain! I will hunt thee from place to place. All living things shall hate thee, none shall assist. They shall be taught to shun thee as a plague, thou son of iniquity! Art thou so blind as not to see evidences of his power, his goodness, his mercy, his love?

*Bee:* Goodness! mercy! love! Little enough of these qualities is manifested by you believers.

*Beetle:* Thou speakest like a true Atheist. Thank God we have the power to crush thee.

*Bee:* But surely you will act mercifully.

*Beetle:* Have we not been merciful enough? Have we not given thee proofs unmistakable from the Bible, from the Fathers, from the Councils—to say nothing of the host of commentators who have written for thy edification—evidence-coiners who have labored to convince thee, and the mighty army of preachers who have prayed for thee. Assuredly thou art wilfully blind. I will bear with thee no longer.

*Bee:* But there are many patient observers and eminent thinkers who, like myself, do not know what you mean by "God." I have many philosophers, scientists, humanitarians, all good men and true, on my side.

*Beetle:* The Devil shall possess thee! Hell fire shall consume thee. But we first will have some little satisfaction—Holloway awaits thee.

*Bee:* Was it God, the Devil, or thyself, who invented this method of argument.

*Beetle:* Darest thou couple my holy name with the Devil! Hi, believers! Help! Help! (*They struggle. Hundreds of Beetles rush in to assist in crushing the Bee.*)

*Bee:* Philosophers, scientists, humanitarians! Help! help!

But few have the courage to assist. The battle is too unequal. Holloway and hell for the time prevail.

W. W. COLLIN

## ACID DROPS.

ARCHBISHOP GIBBONS, of Baltimore, has the impudence to say that "the Roman Catholic Church has always been a defender and upholder of the religious and civil rights of others, and wherever and whenever a servant of the Church has been a party to the perpetration of such an injustice, it has been in direct violation of her precepts and her authority . . . The history of the Church offers no example of an attempt to compel anyone to embrace the Catholic faith." No falsehood is so absurd or so reckless but some Christians will gravely utter it for the good of the Church. They appear to adopt Paul's suggestion as their rule of conduct: "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?" (Romans iii., 7).

MR. CAMPBELL WHITE, as Chairman of the Young Women's Christian Association, said at the recent Exeter Hall meeting that "George Eliot was a sceptic because she had known nothing of Christianity." The statement is absurdly false, but who expects truth from a Christian?

MARK TWAIN (Clemens) characteristically thanks the moral icebergs of the Concord (Mass.) Library Committee for advertising his latest work by "praising it with faint damns."

MOODY says: "I have a son, and God knows how I love him; but I would see those beautiful eyes dug out of his head to-night rather than see him grow up to manhood and go down to the grave without Christ." Query—If the revivalist would go to this length with his own darling son, how would he like to serve the sons of others? This is the true spirit of the persecutors. They were all sincere and pious men like Moody.

A WRITER in the *Month* makes an excellent conjecture in support of the narrative in Genesis. He says that since Eve was not startled at the serpent's speech we may suppose that our first parents among other gifts were endowed with the faculty of understanding the language of animals. This is almost as good as the statement of the learned Abbadie that Moses must have been inspired by God or he could never have ventured to write stories of a speaking serpent and a speaking ass, and of God wrestling with Jacob.

THE students of Harvard University recently applied to have attendance at morning prayers optional. The authorities declined to grant the request, doubtless surmising that few students would encourage the prayer-meeting were not attendance compulsory.

FRANCOIS XAVIER BEAUDRY, who piled up a fortune of over two millions by leasing property for disreputable purposes, died in Montreal last week. Until disease and old age made him captive a fortnight before death, he maintained his daily practice of collecting his exorbitant rents from house to house in person. Miserly in his habits, repulsive enough in his appearance to bear the nick-name "Chion," Mr. Beaudry was as despicable a mortal as ever skulked through the world. His will leaves 350,000 dols. to the Sulpician Fathers for the establishment of an orphanage. His funeral at Notre Dame was all that bell, book, candle, choir and vestments could make it.

THE Church, it is said, will take measures for disconnecting itself from that worthy Christian the Rev. Samuel Ingle, now undergoing eighteen months for his clerical offence with the boy Needham; but, according to the old saying, "once a priest always a priest." The extraordinary mischance by which his crime became known makes one wonder how many clerical offences never come to light.

THOS. HARRIS, deacon of a chapel at Swansea, has pleaded guilty to indictments charging him with obtaining about £30,000 from the St. Helen's Building Societies, and from several Welsh ministers, by means of false cheques, notes and bonds, and by embezzlement. He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, the judge remarking that he had been robbing hundreds of poor people under the cloak of religion.

SOME people say the Afghans are descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. Certainly the portrait of the Ameer, given in the *Christian Herald*, might pass for Jesus Christ himself if only the hair was parted in the middle and a nimbus was put round the head.

THERE have been some lively proceedings at Higham near Rochester, where Mr. Nash, farmer, has had his horse and van sold under distress for extraordinary tithes upon land under hops and fruit, at the instance of the Rev. Dr. Wood, the vicar. The auctioneer was hooted and an indignation meeting held afterwards. The farmers are determined to put the parsons to the trouble of seizing for their tithes.

THE best argument for tithes is that given in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, an early Christian document attributed to the twelve apostles. It is there said that tithes are due to the clergy, because

Ἰωτα, which stands for ten, is the first letter of the name Jesus. A fine sample of religious logic.

A TRAVELLER among the Maoris, the Rev. Mr. Wikite Paa, says that the people in the villages were very kind to him. They gave him food and bedding—in fact, "were just like Christian people in their kindness." If Mr. Wikite Paa ever travels in Christian countries, he may learn, to his surprise, that food and accommodation are not habitually presented to strangers. He had better stay in New Zealand and not lose his native simplicity.

WHILE some converts were being baptised by immersion in McGirt's Creek, Florida, an inquisitive alligator suddenly made his appearance among the party—probably in search of salvation from hunger. The congregation, not being desirous of ministering to his satisfaction in the inward parts, managed to drive him away. Why didn't they take advantage of so promising an accession to their ranks? A converted alligator or a Christian crocodile would be a great "draw" in the revival business. The *Christian Herald* reminds its readers that all baptism services "are certainly watched by an enemy more ruthless and voracious even than the alligator. Of that fact we have Apostolic warning (1 Peter v., 8)."

THE *Christian Herald* narrates how a handsome collection in a "colored church" was obtained by a preacher, who said to his not over-honest congregation of darkies: "L'se tole dat Mr. Thomas, up the land yonder, had some turkeys stole Friday night. I don't want any man who had a hand in stealing dem turkeys to put any money in de plate." Every brother in the Lord felt the strong necessity of avoiding a suspicious economy after such a warning.

THE New York *Truthseeker* gives a large number of returns of the religions of prisoners in the United States and Canada. Out of a total of 44,034 inmates of prisons and reformatories "only three are in any way called Infidels." Over 16,000 were Roman Catholics and 9,975 belonged to the Church of England.

SHE related her experience when converted as follows:—"I used to be very gay, and fond of the world and its fashions, till the Lord showed me my folly. I liked silks and ribbons and laces and feathers, but I found they were dragging me down to hell—so I gave them all to my sister!"

THE Toronto Freemasons have expelled a member for "Agnosticism." Freemasonry in Canada must be as Philistine as in England.

Christianity is progressing in the United States. Rugg, the negro murderer, who strangled two women on Long Island, has embraced the Roman Catholic faith, and George Mills, who was hanged on the 10th instant, for stabbing his wife, joined heartily in the religious services held in his cell an hour before his execution.

ALL the High Church people go in for "orientation." The *Church Times* explains that "the East is the primitive symbol of Christ as the Day-spring from on high, and accordingly, the most ancient Christian custom was to build and to pray towards the east. When the stalls involve sitting north and south the usage is to turn eastwards only at the creeds, as a special mark of belief in our Lord. That is the whole of the matter." Not quite. The eastward position of churches, graves, etc., is one of the many proofs how largely Christianity has copied from ancient sun-worship.

THE *Banner of Faith* calls attention to the fact that in the Church of England Service "absolution or remission of sins is pronounced not by any minister, but by the priest alone, standing in the attitude of authority over the kneeling people." Just so. This is pure priesthood, less consistent but no less dogmatic than the sacerdotalism of Rome.

DR. ELLICOTT, Bishop of Gloucester, who some time ago declared that the Ritualists were "digging the grave of the Establishment," now asserts his belief that the Church of England will endure "till the Lord comes"—that is, we suppose, till the Greek calends.

ACCORDING to some preachers now occupying the Shoreditch Town Hall, the Church of England has but a short time, if it only lasts till the Lord come, for he is confidently announced as positively to appear within a few months, more or less. As, however, a similar announcement was made over eighteen hundred years ago, it is feared that the Lord missed his way on trying to come to earth for the second time, and has been wandering among the planets ever since.

THE *Banner*, in an article on "Disestablishment: its effects as seen in Ireland," decries disestablishment because now, in Ireland, one clergyman has often to minister to several churches. Did the opponents of the clergy ever say much worse of them than this insinuation that they would resign their parishes if disestablished?

THE Rev. Mr. Hatch says that Christians are not bound by the language of the imprecatory Psalms. "There is nothing like them in the New Testament." Unfortunately for Mr. Hatch, the imprecatory Psalms are quoted with approval both in Acts i., 20, and Rom. xi., 9-10. To our mind, the New Testament is to the full as persecuting as the Old, and with the added atrocity of condemning its enemies to eternal torture.

How these Christians love one another! The Rev. J. Ogle, Congregationalist minister of Sherborne, in Dorset, a pretty little town famous for its beer, complains that the squire forbids Dissent in every shape and form, and will not allow any notice-bills of its heretical proceedings to be exhibited anywhere in the place. Fancy all the various squabbling and persecuting sects of Christianity represented in heaven! What a job the Lord will have to keep the peace!

AN article in the *Nonconformist* asserts that on Lord Salisbury's property in Dorsetshire the sword of Damocles is kept hanging over the heads of dissenting chapels by the refusal to grant them a lease, and that whenever a tenant offers himself for a house or shop, the first question asked is, Is he a Dissenter or a Liberal? In the case of the answer being in the affirmative, the agent gives a refusal, preferring to keep the property empty to letting it to such an odious tenant.

A WRITER in the *Record* pretends to answer Matthew Arnold's objection to the alleged prophecy of a virgin giving birth to a son. He says no one but Jesus was called Immanuel, and that had there been the least memory of any other fulfilment, "the Jews would have eagerly preserved it in such works as the Talmud or the Toldoth Jeshu." Why, the record is preserved in Isaiah viii., 3, which says, "I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son." Isaiah took care to fulfil his own prophecy, leaving nothing to the labors of his successors. If it be said his son was called Maher-shalal-hash-baz, and not Immanuel, it may be retorted that the son of Mary was called Jesus, and not Immanuel.

THE *Church Times* continues to denounce Mr. Broadhurst's "Incest Bill." Marriage with a deceased wife's sister is, however, legal in our colonies, and the Bishop of Nelson remarks that "were the epithet 'incestuous,' 'unholy,' and such-like words to be applied as they are in England, a colonial judge would probably find them libellous."

THE absurdity of the opponents of the Bill, in appealing to the old Jew-books to settle modern conditions of marriage, is evident when we remember that the Jews were expressly commanded to marry their brothers' widows, if childless, irrespective of whether they had wives of their own or not. (See Deut. xxv., 5-10.)

THE Rev. E. Lyon, of Leeds, has been lecturing on "Great Christians & Great Infidels." His method is to take the names of Julian, Voltaire, Spinoza, Diderot, Hume and Paine, and oppose to them the names of Washington, Luther, Newton, Bacon, Chalmers and Wesley, disparaging to the utmost the former and extolling the latter. No valuable truth is likely to be elicited by such a method. We freely admit that Christianity can boast of many great men, who have accepted it without thinking of investigating its pretensions. But the orthodoxy of at least three of Mr. Lyon's heroes has been questioned, and though we do not care to disparage his heroes, it is no more true that "Chalmers transformed the worst parts of Edinburgh into an earthly paradise" than that "Paine was an Englishman, Frenchman and American—just as it paid him."

MR. LYONS would find it as hard to prove most of his allegations against Voltaire and Diderot as his statement that Julian put some one to death for refusing to sacrifice. Spinoza and Hume, whose private character could not be maligned, he sets down, the one as a dreamer, the other as an untrustworthy historian. As an instance of Mr. Lyon's recklessness, may be mentioned his statement that "the infidels would abolish all sanctuaries, burn all Bibles, exile all pastors, and do away with marriage." This represents what the Christians actually did when in power. They destroyed the heathen temples, burnt all anti-Christian and heretical writings, abolished the Pagan priests, and by extolling celibacy did their best to do away with marriage.

THE Rev. W. W. Gill and the Rev. J. Chalmers are "greatly pleased" with the nice way in which their Polynesian converts have treated some strange islanders who had shockingly mutilated an old woman and murdered two of her companions. The woman who was left for dead, recovered, and the murderers who had put to sea in a stolen canoe were chased and brought back. The Christian islanders, in the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, would not condemn them. They ruled that because the men were heathen and knew no better their only punishment should be detention until they had learned to read the Bible and pray. As soon as they could read and pray they were dismissed in peace. This incident, the two Christian ministers consider, shows that the natives "have not received the Word in vain." They "have found the 'Pearl of great price.'"

THE inventive genius who supplies the stories to the *British Workman* has got hold of a new yarn about a sceptic who kneels and prays in public, crying five times "God be merciful to me a sinner," as an experiment. Whether the five repetitions were necessary for the man or for the God who converted him is left a doubtful question.

THE Norwich people having commenced sacred concerts on Sunday in the Agricultural Hall, the Rev. W. A. McAllan (Scotch Presbyterian) vehemently protests against the desecration. The pulpit professionals are always averse to opposition.

NOW is the merry month of May, which in the Catholic Church is devoted to Mary—a pun being apparently sufficient ground upon which to found a religious dogma; and the flowers which in old Roman times did honor to a Pagan goddess now do similar service to the mother of God! In like manner she is styled "Star of the Sea," *mare* being Latin for sea.

THE May-pole, and May-day sports generally, show how persistently the old symbols of Nature and phallic worship hold their own for centuries after their real meaning has been lost to all save a curious few. Priests do not encourage investigation into the origin of these customs; they probably know that research would prove Christianity to be of Pagan origin, with a little Judaism thrown in.

THE Merry May meetings, which extend from April to June, are on us again, and the white-chokered parasites buzz round Exeter Hall like insects on a summer's day, much, it is said, to the delight of a class who frequent the Strand, and who look on the May meetings as their harvest time.

By some mysterious dispensation of Providence, it happens that the meetings of the Wesleyan Missionary Society and of the Asylum for Idiots takes place at the same day and hour. It is to be hoped the subscribers will not make the mistake of giving their money to the wrong cause.

DURING the month of May there will be a lavish expenditure of candles for religious worship (!) We would suggest, in view of a possible visit of cholera this summer, that some of the money wasted on candles might be expended more advantageously on soap. This will be more effectual than prayers, and even if there be no cholera epidemic the soap will not be used before it is wanted.

THE *Christian Herald* has a paragraph headed "New Eyes for the Blind." In Sweden, it seems, "a very godly man, named Boltzius," has been greatly honored and blessed by God in healing his countrymen. We are informed "that during five months at Stockholm (according to a leading evangelical clergyman, who had followed Boltzius closely all the time), three thousand had been cured, including persons whose eyes are growing again. Boltzius took a glass eye from a girl, and soon after the new eye was visible." Christian credulity is a beautiful phenomenon.

TEN thousand people of Tonga, in the South Pacific, have seceded from the Wesleyan body and gone over to the Free Church. This news would be very dreadful if it meant that ten thousand more would roast eternally for having turned from the true saving faith, but probably the morning newspaper is right which, commenting on the event, observes that, with a slight substitution, the secessionists may yet sing with the ecstatic nigger:

I'se got on de back of de Mefodis mule,  
Sinner doan' ye stan' dar lookin' like a fool;  
Do bridle bit am silber, de saddle am gold,  
An' I'se boun' fur to go to Aberham's fold,  
An' I'll ride,  
Yes I will—  
An' I'll ride right on to glory!  
I'se sunk my sins in de savin' pool  
An' got on de back of the Free Church mule;  
An' here I stick like a big black leetz,  
Till de ole mule stomp on de golden streets!  
An' I'll ride,  
Yes I will—  
An' I'll ride right on to glory!

THE Christian Colportage Association boasts of selling within the past year 67,000 Bibles. The balance-sheet showed a deficiency of £138, but this was made up upon a strenuous appeal from pious Sam Morley, who deplored the wide dissemination of anti-Christian literature.

THE Rev. J. Williams, vicar of St. Thomas's, Bury, has a new charge to bring against Secularism. He says it cannot be trusted because it robs people of their personality. Has Christianity augmented Mr. Williams's personality by making him beside himself?

AT an inquest at Cardiff on the death of a man run over by a tramcar, it was proved that the horses were frightened by a band of the Salvation Army. People's lives may be endangered with impunity when it is done in the cause of religion.

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, May 3, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C., at 7, on "Crimes of Christianity."

Wednesday, May 6, Secular Hall, 61 New Church Road, Camberwell, at 8, on "Good God."

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

JUNE 7, Liverpool; 14, Plymouth; 21, Manchester; 28, Bristol.

JULY 5, Hall of Science, London; 12, Camberwell.

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A FREETHINKER.—Fairly good, but not quite up to the mark. Many of your lines don't scan.

L. WALL.—We are obliged to you for the scraps. By all means send more whenever you feel inclined.

R. C.—See the *Freethinker*, Vol. III., No. 39.

D. MAYER.—Giles's "Hebrew and Christian Records" and "Supernatural Religion" are as good works as you can turn to. If you want further references, let us know.

M. FRITH.—You will see from the advertisement on our last page that the press is noticing Mr. Foote's "Shadow of the Sword." The *Birmingham Owl* says that the pamphlet ought to be extensively circulated by all the Liberal organisations in the country. We are afraid it is too plain-spoken for them.

TRUTHSEEKER.—Mill was not really a Theist. His posthumous Essay on Theism, which he did not revise for publication, and which flatly contradicts the other two posthumous Essays which he did revise, merely allows that the Design Argument furnishes a probability of the existence of Deity. Besides, it admits that even this probability would be greatly attenuated by the establishment of Darwinism. Well, Darwinism is established; and how much Theism is there in the extreme attenuation of a mere probability?

J. P. CHACE.—Thanks for the suggestion, although the idea had already occurred to us.

B. W. DAVIES (Redditch) writes: "It is now about twelve months since I became a subscriber to the *Freethinker*, and during that time I have derived more pleasure from it than from all the literature I ever read. At first I was rather shocked at the Comic Sketches, but when I came to read time after time, my dread turned to ridicule of what I dreaded. . . . I was once a Sunday-school teacher and a member of the Wesleyan body." Our correspondent jocularly looks forward to meeting us in Hades. A few weeks ago such a prospect would have been rather pleasant, but now the weather is warmer we would prefer meeting him in a cooler place.

EX-WESLEYAN.—Always pleased to hear from you.

J. SAUNDERS.—You want more practice in versification.

TEACHER sends 2s. 6d. for the Blasphemy Laws Repeal Society.

T. EDWARDS.—Shall appear after some omissions.

ALPHA.—Cobbett's English Grammar is not quite so dry as many others. But you will find no north-west passage in learning; nothing but hard study will accomplish your desire. When you have mastered the rudiments of grammar, read the best authors, and none but the best, for some time.

G. E. FRIEND recommends those who do not keep their *Freethinkers* for binding, or otherwise dispose of them, to drop them in the receptacles for journals at some of the railway stations. He adds, "My sincerest wishes for the success of 'our' paper. My only regret is that there are not sixteen pages of it every week instead of eight."

W. G. EDEN.—The bottomless pit and the brimstone lake are the same place, and you will find them so when you give up your through ticket.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cambria Daily Leader—Week (Toronto)—St. Louis Post-Dispatch—Owl—Sydney Bulletin—Midland Gazette—Bit of Blue—Liverpool Weekly Post—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Hunslet and Holbeck News—Eastern Evening News—British Workman—Liberty—Lucifer—Shrewsbury Chronicle—Truthseeker.

## "FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

We offer another PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Comic Bible Sketch, and a PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Religious Topical Sketch suitable for reproduction; the competition to close on June 1.

The drawing must be done on white cardboard or thick white paper in pure black ink. The lines should be bold and well distinct. Washes or colors must not be used. The size should be about one-third broader than our ordinary single or double column size.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

NOTWITHSTANDING the remarkably fine weather there was a capital audience at the London Hall of Science last Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on a very large subject with a very small title, "Good God." The lecturer's numerous "points" were quickly caught and greeted with laughter or applause, and

his peroration, which concluded with the last five or six lines of Swinburne's "Hymn of Man," fairly brought down the house. Mr. Tarry, of the Christian Evidence Society, offered a little opposition in a spirit which the C. E. S. lecturers too seldom cultivate, and he was replied to good-humoredly though unsparingly.

MR. TARRY saw no reflection on God's goodness in earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, for a quick death was better than a slow one, and to a Christian sudden death was sudden glory. "Then," said Mr. Foote, "Mr. Tarry will thank me for wishing him a sudden death to-night." Mr. Tarry manifested some alarm at the idea, and evidently did not relish the possibility of being taken at his word.

THIS evening (May 3) Mr. Foote lectures again at the Hall of Science, on a new subject, "The Crimes of Christianity." Unlike all the sky-pilots, who will then be holding forth from their Bible boards, the lecturer will explain what Christianity really has done in the world from Simon Peter's burking of Ananias and Sapphira to Judge North's stealing of two years from the lives of Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp. People with very delicate nerves had better stay away, for the revelations will exceed in horror all the Newgate Calendars ever published.

By the way, Messrs. Foote and Wheeler are working at a volume on "The Crimes of Christianity." It will be invaluable to the opponents of that faith, as ample authority will be given for every count in the indictment. This criminal handbook of the most bigoted, persecuting and sanguinary religion that ever cursed the world, is intended to show people what it has done whenever and wherever its opportunities for mischief have equalled its inclination, and thus to warn them against allowing it to revive from its present torpor to drench the earth again with blood and tears.

IN the May number of *Progress* the editor gives a longer instalment of his "Prisoner of Blasphemy," and, under the title of "Butcher and Bolt," deals vigorously with the bad business in Egypt and the Soudan. An interesting paper on Heine, by the late James Thomson, should be read by all Freethinkers. George Payne administers a much-needed castigation to the new school of theology, which tries to put the wine of modern thought into the old bottles of theology. E. N. W. has a thoughtful article on "Shakespeare and the Stage." Mr. Wheeler writes on the "Emperor Julian," taking a medium view between the excessive panegyric of Voltaire and the detractions of Christian writers, and exposing the alleged miracle at the re-building of Jerusalem. Dr. Aveling criticises Lord Lytton's play of "Junius." Mr. Robertson defends himself from the attacks of S. Britton, and "An Usher" continues his paper on "Christian Schools."

CANON LIDDON, in his ecclesiastical manifesto from the pulpit of St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon, treated the subject of Home Life and the Marriage Law. The Canon observed that "from the home at Nazareth family life took a new beginning." But what did he mean when he described the mother of Jesus as "that lowliest and greatest of women, nearer to God than any man, the Blessed Ever-Virgin Mother?" If these words are to be literally understood, it strikes us that the home at Nazareth was not in the true sense a model home at all. Joseph was living with Mary upon those terms which, if practised now, would receive the stern condemnation of the worthy Canon and most of his reverend and very reverend brethren.—*Christian World*.

WRITING from Paris to the *Christian World*, Dr. Pressensé says that "it behoves the Liberal party at the present time to concentrate all its energies in a vigorous protest against that Staté irreligion which the extreme Radical party openly avow, and which they would fain introduce into our public schools by means of Atheistic manuals." We are glad to hear that Atheism is so dangerous in France. The Atheistic manuals Dr. Pressensé refers to simply exclude God from the public schools, but they give him a fair chance to push his fortunes outside among the adult population, which is all he is entitled to, and all that any honest God would ever think of demanding.

DR. PRESSENSÉ, although a Protestant, is too anxious for the fate of religion in general to watch with equanimity its complete disendowment. He therefore hopes the Liberals will anticipate the Radicals by severing the Church from the State themselves. He wishes them to give all the clergy "life annuities in the shape of pensions," to place "a certain amount of capital" at their disposal, and to "hand over to them their places of worship." A modest demand! But alas! what hope is there of obtaining it? for "the election of M. Floquet to the Presidency of the Chamber of Deputies is an emphatic triumph of Radicalism."

WE understand that Mr. W. W. Collins has accepted a most tempting offer to spend the next few years of his life at the Antipodes. The English Secular Societies will lose an able and eloquent advocate, but what they lose the Australians will gain. Mr. Collins's talents will still be employed in furthering the cause of Freethought.

THE advanced Unitarians intend to start a new magazine of religious thought and scholarship. Professor Carpenter, Dr. Crosskey, the Rev. R. Armstrong and others are the promoters. A review to supply the place of the *Old Theological* and the *Modern Review* is a desideratum, but if the projectors wish a success they should go in for high-class criticism irrespective of whether it comes from a Unitarian or Freethought quarter.

ON Wednesday evening, May 6, Mr. Bradlaugh lectures at the Hall of Science on behalf of Mr. F. Haslam, the well-known Freethought lecturer, who has recently gone through much distress. We trust there will be a full gathering and that all who can afford it will take shilling tickets. Mrs. Besant will preside.

AN esteemed Liverpool correspondent writes: "Allow me to congratulate you on the 'Shadow of the Sword,' which I have heard well spoken of by several friends. Should it run to a second edition I would suggest as an appropriate text, 'They who live by the sword shall die by the sword.' Nothing riles the 'unco' guid' so much as a text which they ignore being affixed to a Secular tract. I notice that you sometimes give a second illustration of the same text, as in this week's *Freethinker*. Should you ever give a second cartoon of the fall of Jericho, I would suggest Jericho depicted as a fortress of superstition, priests and bishops manning the walls, and the victorious army of Freethinkers (Bradlaugh, Foote, etc.) demolishing it, not with a blast, but with blasphemy."

THE *Sydney Bulletin* thus pithily answers a correspondent:—"Rogans": "Why are the clergy making such a fuss about this religious business in State schools?" Why, dear boy, because they find the ground slipping from under them. We were a teacher once, and had to stand by while a kid read Scripture stories we didn't believe a word of. Of course, 'twas monstrous to make us teach as true old Jack-and-the-Bean-Stalk fables that even Churchmen had exploded.

#### CORONERS AND THE OATH.

THE Act of Parliament which allowed Freethinking witnesses to affirm has not, as we all know, been extended to Freethinkers as jurors. Several instances of the rejection of unbelievers as jurymen have been reported in the press, and these cases are becoming more numerous, owing to the spread of Freethought. Some coroners, however, are not content with having to insult a fellow-citizen by refusing his services after he has been called away from his business to render them. They are making it a practice to illegally detain those whom they declare to be disqualified from acting as jurymen. These insulted incompetent ones have to wait in court until the conclusion of the inquest. It is time this petty tyranny was ended, and it was with this end in view that Mr. Labouchere has been asking the Attorney-General whether the recent detention of a rejected Freethinking juror by Dr. Diplock was in accordance with law, and if so, with what law? The Attorney-General replied, according to the *Daily News* report:

"That he understood that the power of the coroner in such cases would be similar to that of a judge. The coroner's explanation was, that having on a previous occasion excused a juror on the ground that his religious belief prevented his taking an oath, out of a jury summoned on another occasion in the same district there was scarcely any one who had not doubts as to his religious belief. (Laughter.) Under those circumstances, in order to prevent such an objection, he had retained jurymen, and they would bear the same burden of attendance as those who had no difficulties with regard to religious belief. (Laughter.)"

The pretentiously-practical cynicism of the official defender of Christian insolence and injustice, and the Gallio-like laughter of a "Christian legislature" over his exposure of the insincerity of the ordinary religious juror, show only too plainly what a pitiful hypocrisy our national piety must be. The want of insight and the want of sympathy with a wronged fellow-citizen whose petty persecution only amuses the Christian upholders of Christian persecution, are much to be regretted. Wearisome as the tedious hours of routine procedure may be, and refreshing as the least gleam of humor or jocularly may be to worn-out legislators, they should remember that it is their solemn duty to secure equal justice for all, and that laughter at wrong-doing ill befits a grave assembly of representatives. If legislators thus lull their consciences into a happy repose, and joyously ridicule the various religious wrongs which they do not suffer, but only inflict, what morality and sense of justice are we to expect from their inferiors?

The honorable House forgets itself when it smilingly endorses the immorality and the inexpediency of compelling conformity to religious orthodoxy by petty punishment. It will honor the hypocrites who are thus influenced, and who constituted in the case given by the Attorney-General nearly the whole of the jury, with the rights and duties of citizenship of which the honest, thoughtful man is deprived with the acquiescence of a laughing legislature. Dishonest and cowardly conformity is fit and proper to do the social work for which courageous insight and truth are happily disqualified. Honor is outlawed, and dishonor is driven into the social fold. Exquisite joke—for Carlyle's Dead Sea apes and the frivolous bigots who forget the great duties of justice and of human brotherhood. The House dishonors itself. It should repent of wrong done even to the meanest citizen, and should reform its evil enactments. The passing of Mr. Hopwood's simple Bill allowing affirmation in all cases is all that is needed for clearing away this difficulty and far more burning iniquities of which this is but a comparatively insignificant type.

In September, 1881, Dr. Diplock made an Atheist take the oath as a juror, threatening him with pains and penalties if he refused. He now with perfect legality declines to accept that which he once wrongly enforced, and adds on his own authority a compensating penalty for the compulsory non-performance of a citizen's duties. Of course we may expect officialism to support officialism, whether in the House or out of it.

I believe that the Attorney-General is wrong in his law—that is, if his statement is *bonâ fide*, and not a mere attempt to appear to justify conduct which he is afraid to condemn. I hope that before long some enterprising Freethinker will follow Mr. Bradlaugh's advice, and sue the Coroner for false imprisonment if detained after the jury has been sworn. An important service would thus be rendered to the cause of Freethought. By enforcing our right of withdrawal, we can compel Christians to allow affirmation.

The plea that a Freethinker, who is neither witness nor juror, may be punished by a Coroner, solely on the ground that other men would otherwise profess Freethought, is as immoral as it is illegal. The hypothetical impossibility of forming a religious jury on some future occasion is no more a justification for depriving a non-religious and legally disqualified man of his personal liberty than an anticipation of Christian murders would be for hanging an Atheist. If the disqualification is felt to be a desirable and attractive release from a burden, the Christian persecutors should correct their mistake by equalising the position of believers and non-believers before the law. Freethinkers desire neither unfair exemptions nor unfair impositions. But if Christians will not pass an Affirmation Bill, Freethinkers must utilise insulting exemptions as well as endure insulting penalties. If jurors desert Christianity wholesale it is no business of the Freethinker to provide a remedy. The responsibility for this and for grave evils which will yet crop up in legal and criminal matters, rests with the makers and upholders of iniquitous Christian laws, and not with those who would abolish them.

W. P. BALL.

THE *Derbyshire Times*, selecting educational incidents from *Chambers' Journal*, supplies another batch, "nearly as amusing." Asked: "Why the Israelites made a golden calf?" The answer was, "Because they hadn't enough silver to make a cow." "Where was Bishop Latimer burned to death?" "In the fire," replied a little fellow, looking very grave and wise. An equally unexpected reply was elicited from a pupil when asked, "What did the Israelites do when they came out of the Red Sea?" "They dried themselves." "What is the feminine of friar?" First bright boy: "Hasn't any." "Next." Second bright boy: "Nun." "That's right." "First boy (indignantly), "That's just what I said."

OBITUARY.—We regret to announce the death of Mr. John Edgar Myers, which took place at his residence, Meanwood Road, Leeds, on Tuesday, April 21. Mr. Myers was at one time well known in dramatic circles, but for many years, owing to declining health, he had confined himself to the teaching of elocution. He was a staunch Freethinker, and has many a time occupied the platform as an earnest lecturer and reciter. Throughout a lingering and painful illness he maintained his antagonism to cant, and his interment, at Woodhouse Lane Cemetery, was by his wish without superstitious ceremonial.

## ONE HUNDRED BIBLE QUESTIONS.

THESE questions and answers have been compiled with the object of showing a few of the errors and absurdities in the Bible. In regard to the Christian religion, it must be acknowledged that the Rabbis and other learned Jews should be the best judges of whether or not Jesus fulfilled their prophecies; how is it, then, that they did not, and do not now, believe in him? It seems clear enough that if a Supreme Being *wished* us to believe in Jesus or the Bible, or anything else, that he would give us sufficient evidence for doing so, instead of blinding our eyes and hardening our hearts, so that we could not understand and be converted (John xii., 39-40).

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. iii., 16). Every word of God is pure (Prov. xxx., 5). Search the scriptures (John v., 39).

1. Where does God command human beings to be sacrificed unto him?—Gen. xxii., 1, 2; Lev. xxvii., 28, 29; Num. xxxi., 28, 29, 40, 41.

2. Give an instance where a judge of Israel offered up his only child as a burnt offering unto the Lord?—Judges xi., 30, to the end.

3. Where does God say he will cause people to commit the worst kind of cannibalism, namely, eating their children and friends?—Jer. xix., 9.

4. What reward did Jesus offer to those who eat his flesh and drink his blood?—Eternal life (John vi., 54).

5. Were the Israelites allowed by God to murder their servants?—Yes (Ex. xxi., 20, 21).

6. What prophet did the Lord seek to kill?—Moses (Ex. iv., 24).

7. To whom did the Lord show his "back parts"?—Moses (Ex. xxxiii., 23).

8. With whom did the Lord speak face to face?—Moses (Ex. xxxiii., 11), and Jacob (Gen. xxxii., 29, 30; see also Ex. xxiv., 10, 11).

9. Where is it mentioned that no man can see God's face and live; and that no man hath seen God at any time?—Ex. xxxiii., 20; John i., 18; 1 John iv., 12.

10. Where is it mentioned that God commanded one of the greatest of his prophets to walk about entirely naked for three years?—Isaiah xx., 2, 3.

11. What other great prophet went naked?—Micah (Micah i., 8).

12. Are we led to suppose this was a common practice among the prophets?—Yes (1 Sam. xix., 23, 24; 2 Sam. vi., 20).

13. Was howling a common practice among the prophets?—Yes (Ezekiel xxi., 12; Micah i., 8; Jer. xlvi., 31).

14. What prophet was commanded by God to lie on his left side three hundred and ninety days, and forty days on his right side; also to bake his food with unmentionable filth?—Ezekiel (Ezekiel iv., 4, 5, 6, 12).

15. What prophet was commanded by God to marry a disreputable woman?—Hosea (Hosea i., 2).

16. Did God command Hosea to have further intercourse with disreputable women?—Yes (Hosea iii., 1, 2).

17. What prophet had undue intimacy with a prophetess with the consent of God?—Isaiah (Isaiah viii., 2, 3).

18. What prophets were commanded by God to eat books, and rolls of parchment?—Ezekiel (Ezekiel iii., 1); and John (Rev. x., 8, 9).

19. What prophet was commanded by God to besiege a tile, and afterwards an iron pan?—Ezekiel (Ezekiel iv., 1, 2, 3).

20. Whom did the Lord deprive of his wife ("the desire of his eyes") and command not to mourn for her?—Ezekiel (Ezekiel xxiv., 16, 17, 18).

21. Mention two young men whose hearts the Lord hardened that he might slay them?—Hophni and Phineas (1 Sam. ii., 25).

22. Have we any other instances of the Lord hardening hearts?—Yes (Ex. x., 1; Deut. ii., 30; Joshua xi., 20; John xii., 40); and we are told "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth" (Romans ix., 18).

23. What prophet of the Lord cursed certain people, smote them, plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God?—Nehemiah (Nehemiah xiii., 25).

24. What great prophet cursed a man for not slaying him at his birth?—Jeremiah (Jer. xx., 16, 17).

25. What other inspired writer cursed the day he was born?—Job (iii., 3).

26. Where does the Lord say he will make people drunk in his fury?—Isaiah lxiii., 6.

27. And where does he command people to drink, and be drunken, and spue?—Jer. xxv., 27.

28. Is there much of this kind of language in the prophets?—Yes, and far worse; they are full of obscene comparisons.

29. Who overcame God in a wrestling match?—Jacob (Gen. xxxii., 24, to end).

30. Who dined with him?—Abraham (Gen. xviii.).

31. Why could not the tribe of Judah with the aid of God dispossess a part of the Canaanites of their land?—Because they had chariots of iron (Judges i., 19).

32. Where does the Lord perpetrate a grave error in natural history?—Where he says the hare chews the cud (Lev. xi., 5).

33. Where are we told that an ass spoke, and saved a man's life?—Numbers xxii., 30, 33.

34. Who slew a thousand men with the jaw-bone of an ass?—Samson (Judges xv., 15).

35. What other remarkable feat did he perform?—He caught three hundred foxes and tied their tails together (Judges xv., 4).

36. Whom did God kill for steadying the ark when the oxen shook it?—Uzzah (2 Sam. vi., 6, 7).

37. How did God punish his people for taking a census?—By killing seventy thousand men in a plague (2 Sam. xxiv., 15.)

38. Where are we told "The dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward?"—Eccles. ix., 5; see also Isaiah xxxviii., 18; Psalms lxxxviii., 5, 10; cxv., 17; vi., 5.

39. Where are we told that a man "Hath no preeminence above a beast?"—Eccles. iii., 19, to end; see also Eccles. ii., 16; Psalms xlix., 12.

40. To whom did the Lord send an evil spirit to trouble him?—Saul (1 Sam. xvi., 14; 1 Sam. xviii., 10). He also sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem (Jud. ix., 23).

41. Where is it mentioned that God sent a lying spirit to cause prophets to prophesy falsely?—1 Kings xxii., 22; 2 Chron. xviii., 21.

42. Where is God mentioned as having deceived one of the greatest of his prophets?—Jer. xx., 7.

43. Why ought Jeremiah to have been destroyed?—Because the Lord says he will destroy the prophet whom he deceives (Ezekiel xiv., 9).

44. Who created evil?—The Lord (Isaiah xlv., 7).

45. Where are we told that "the Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil?"—Prov. xvi., 4.

46. Where are the Israelites told by God to spend their money on wine, or strong drink, or on whatsoever they desired?—Deut. xiv., 26.

47. Give a few more texts in favor of wine and strong drink—Prov. xxxi., 6, 7; Psalms civ., 15; 1 Tim. v., 23; John ii. 7 to 10.

48. Do God and Jesus drink wine in heaven?—Yes (Judges ix., 13; Mark xiv., 25).

49. Where are we told God sent "strong delusion" on people so that they might believe a lie?—2 Thess. ii., 11.

50. Whom did God hate before he was born?—Esau (Romans ix., 11, 12, 13; see also Mal. i., 3). J. E. ROOSE.

(To be concluded.)

## REVIEWS.

*Patriotism by Charity.* By G. J. HOLYOAKE. Book Store, Humberstone Gate, Leicester—A protest against the rule in Liberal Associations allowing members to join without subscribing. It is written in Mr. Holyoake's well-known vein, and contains many pungent and some happy phrases.

*Our Corner, May.* Freethought Publishing Company.—Mr. Bradlaugh continues his article on Freemasonry. Mrs. Besant resumes her Autobiographical Sketches, and concludes her Redistribution of Political Power, both of which are very interesting. The paper by "Arthur Gigadibs" on the "Upshot of Hamlet" is also continued; it is a laborious piece of analysis which suffers from being read in instalments. Leopold Katscher continues his rather diffuse paper on Georges Sand, and Mr. G. B. Shaw his story, "The Irrational Knot." The notes on Art, Literature, Science and Politics are all readable, Miss Cracknel bearing the bell.

## A SABBATH DAY'S JOURNEY—A Sunday "League."

THE family had just got home from church before the rain, when the little girl said, "Well, we beat the Lord that time, didn't we, ma?"

THE importance of punctuation was well shown by a notice recently read in a church in Michigan, which ran as follows: "Dr. — will deliver a lecture on Saturday evening of this week. Subject: The Circulation of the Blood in the Baptist Church."

WHEN the late Bishop of London revisited the University Chapel at Cambridge, after a long absence, he found the same verger there whom he remembered in his college days, and said to him, "You have much to be grateful for." "I have, indeed," replied the old man, "for I have heard every sermon that has been preached in the chapel for fifty years, and, bless the Lord, I am a Christian still!"

IN one of the New Orleans courts a negro was called as a witness. The judge, noted for austerity, held out the book and the witness was sworn, and, of course, expected to kiss the book. But the witness was unused to criminal proceedings. "Why don't you kiss?" demanded the magistrate. "Sar!" "Ain't you going to kiss?" was again inquired. "Sar!" repeated the astonished darkey. "Kiss, I tell you!" thundered the judge. "Yes sar! yes sar!" exclaimed the frightened and trembling darkey. The long arms of the son of Ham were thrown around the judicial neck, and before he could be prevented a stentorian smack resounded through the court-room. "Take him off!" cried the court, while the loud shouts of the spectators testified the appreciation of the fun. At last the half-strangled judge was rescued from the clasp of the literal witness.

## PROFANE JOKES.

"Oh," said the afflicted wife, weeping over his body, "he said he would take off his flannels anyway, and, poor man, he little thought how soon he would go to that place where flannels are never needed."

**MORE THAN HE COULD STAND.**—Scene: Parsonage in Hampshire. Vicar, to Scotch gardener, who has given up his situation: "Well, Sandy, I hear you are about to leave us." Sandy: "Ay, ay, sir; it's quite true." Vicar: "I thought you were well pleased with your—." Sandy: "Oh, I hae nae faut tae fin' wi'ither you or the leddy; but man, the folk about here dinna respec' the Sawbbath, an' they keep awfu' bad whuskey!"

"ARE you a privileged member?" inquired one of the doorkeepers of the United States' Senate of a stranger who attempted to pass into the chamber occupied by that august body. "What do you mean by such a man?" asked the stranger. The reply was, "A Governor, an ex-member of Congress, or a Foreign Minister." The stranger said, "I am a minister." "From what court or country, if you please?" asked the official. "From the court of Heaven, sir," replied the stranger, looking very grave and pointing upwards. "This Government holds no intercourse with that power at present," was the answer. The stranger bowed and retired.

AMONG the congregation assembled at a chapel near Wigan was an elderly lady, well known as an eccentric character. The lesson read by the minister that day happened to be the 22nd chapter of St. Matthew. During the reading of the 25th and 26th verses, which related the history of the woman who had seven husbands, all of whom died before her, the old lady seemed to grow very excited, and when the next verse was read, which says, "And last of all the woman died also," the old lady, unable to control herself any longer, cried out at the top of her voice, "Time for her!"

AMONG several good stories told of the late Duke of Wellington—not the "Iron Duke," but his son—is the following:—A lady much interested in a church for which subscriptions were needed, wrote to the duke, telling him that feeling sure that she might count on his well-known liberality, she had put him down for two hundred pounds, and hoped he would send her a cheque. The duke courteously replied that he was glad to know she thought so well of him. He, too, was building a church, and was equally convinced that he might count on her well-known liberality to assist in the good work; he had, therefore, put her name down for two hundred pounds; "and so," he concluded, "no money need pass between us."

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