

Sum N^o

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 129.



MOSES VIEWING THE PROMISED LAND.

“And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho. And the Lord shewed him all the land of Gilead, unto Dan.”—DEUT. xxxiv., 1.

THE BIBLE AND YOUNG GIRLS.

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* continues to print extracts from the religious papers in approval of its revelations. Every little Christian journal is quoted, but there is no space for a line of the article in last week's *Freethinker*. Mr. Stead is hobnobbing with Bishops, and hand in glove with General Booth; and, of course, it would never do to insert an extract from an article that charges Christianity and its ministers with being responsible for nine-tenths of our social evils. But we are not to be deterred from our duty by the silence of the *Pall Mall Gazette* now, any more than we were frightened when it joined in the chorus of bigotry at the time of our prosecution. We recur to the subject this week, with the intention of showing that the Christian preachers who denounce the abominable debauchery of young girls, are the grossest hypocrites, when, at the same time, they place the Bible in the hands of English maidens, and tell them to study it as the Word of God.

In the Revised Bible, an attempt has been made to tone down the indecencies of the holy volume. That fact serves to show how right those Freethinkers are who have protested that the Bible is a dirty book. How can it be expected that young people will grow up pure-minded, when they are enjoined to study night and day, in season and out of season, such a questionable work as the Old Testament? After pondering the fact that God ordained the continuance of the human race through the crime of incest; after reading the adventures of Lot with his daughters, of Judah with Tamar, and of Absalom with his father's concubines; after perusing the filthy story of the angels in Sodom, and of the Levite's mistress; after making acquaintance with the Lord's wanton paramours, Abolah and Aholibah, in the twenty-third of Ezekiel; after learning how the Lord commanded Hosea to marry a public prostitute; after mastering the contents of the Song of Solomon, where a lover lusciously describes the most secret charms of his mistress, and passionately celebrates the rapture of their intercourse; after all this, who but a

dullard or an ignoramus would expect our children to retain their natural modesty?

Let every man lay his hand on his heart and say honestly whether, in his youth, reading the Bible did not set his mind on trains of thought to which he should have remained a stranger. We are prepared to assert that thousands of children receive from the Bible their first knowledge of impurity, and their first promptings of lasciviousness. The subject is one that cannot be further dealt with here; but we appeal to everyone who remembers his own childhood, or has had much to do with the training of young people, to decide whether we are right or wrong.

But something worse remains. The *Pall Mall Gazette* and the clergy are denouncing the "Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon." Very good; but why not denounce the Maiden Tribute of Ancient Israel? Through the lips of Moses, the Bible God ordered the Jews to seize and violate the maidens of Midian. Turn to the thirty-first of Numbers and read:

"Now, therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him. But all the women children, that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves."

"Here," wrote Thomas Paine in the "Age of Reason," is an order to butcher the boys, to massacre the mothers, and debauch the daughters." Thirty-two thousand of these poor girls were handed over, by God's command, to the lust of the Jews. Bishop Watson, in replying to Paine, defends the slaughter of the males, on the ground that "the young men might have become dangerous avengers of what they would esteem their country's wrongs;" a principle that justifies the extermination of every conquered people. But he denies that the girls were, as Paine said, "consigned to debauchery." They were not, he maintains, "reserved for the purposes of debauchery, but of slavery." Really, it would be both in such an age. Paine was a little less than right, and Bishop Watson a little more than wrong.

One in every fifty of those Midianitish maidens was given "unto the Levites, which kept the charge of the tabernacle of the Lord." That is, the priests took six hundred and forty as their share of the "Maiden Tribute." God's ministers have always been sharp after such spoil. After the fall of Khartoum, for instance, the Mahdi took the first choice of female captives, and then the Dervishes picked their share, after which the remnant was handed over to the Arab army.

The Lord himself had thirty-two virgins as his share. What became of them, who can tell? They may have become slave-prostitutes in the temple; they may have been roasted as a burnt-offering to the Lord; or they may have fallen a prey to the high priests. No doubt they were carefully selected for their youth and beauty, points in which the sky-pilots have always been noted connoisseurs.

Now, we ask any candid Englishman whether it is not hypocrisy to palm off this story as God's word, and at the same time to denounce similar things to-day; or whether, if it be right to denounce the Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon, it can also be right to defend the Maiden Tribute of Ancient Israel. We also ask whether a book, containing such abominations, can be put into the hands of boys and girls without corrupting their minds and debasing their characters.

G. W. FOOTE.

IN Somerset there is a hamlet called Hatch. The clergyman's name in an adjoining parish happened to be Duck. His congregation being assembled for service one Sunday morning, were awaiting his arrival and wondering at his non-appearance, when up spake the clerk, and said: "I hereby give notice that there will be no church to-day, as Mr. Duck has gone to Hatch."

AN old gentleman, in bidding good-bye to his son, who was about to enter upon a situation, said: "Remember, my son that punctuality is the soul of business." "The soul of business," exclaimed the son; "well, then, if it is the soul it isn't material."

A PARISH clerk had to give out the notice. "A man has gone to sea; his wife, therefore, asks the prayers of the congregation." He left out the comma, and read: "A man has gone to see his wife, therefore asks the, etc."

CHRISTIANITY AND SCIENCE.

It has been said that when a man has once swallowed the Trinity he can believe anything. Certainly, had we not the standing instance of all orthodox Christians professing faith that two and one make only one, the ease with which they admit the most contradictory propositions would be marvellous. Most modern Christians admit the universality of law, and at the same time believe in miracles. They admit the Bible to have been transcribed, translated and added to, by human hands, and yet they declare it to be the work of God. They grant the earth has existed for hundreds of thousands of years, and yet they keep the Sabbath because "in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed" (Ex. xxxi., 17). Some even will admit the doctrine of evolution, while believing that Adam was made out of dust and woman out of his rib. By bestowing only a Sunday faith in theology, while devoting their week days to Secularism, they contrive in some sort to exist in two centuries at once, and to reconcile the most contradictory beliefs.

Significant signs of the disposition to which I allude may be found in the fact that the proprietors of the *Christian World Pulpit* find it to their interest to give the most prominent place to a series of discourses in favor of Evolution, by the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, and that the current number of the *Nineteenth Century* contains a paper by the most eminent of Catholic laymen, Mr. St. George Mivart, urging that modern Catholics may claim the utmost scientific freedom. The latter phenomenon is unique enough to merit a little attention.

Mr. St. George Mivart, after stating that biology, from having been the uninfluential study of a few students, has become a power in the world, and is now exercising a fast-growing influence on the government of states and the prosperity of churches, contends that its conclusions must equally be accepted with those of astronomy. He admits that this has been denied, together with the lawfulness of Catholics holding or teaching the doctrine of Evolution, and in support of this denial have been quoted, by the Rev. Jeremiah Murphy, the Vatican decrees, Pope Pius the Ninth's letter to the Archbishop of Munich, the twenty-second proposition of the Syllabus and the authority of many eminent Catholic divines. To these he might have added that of Cardinal Manning, who, less than ten years ago, said of Mr. Darwin's theories: "Revelation has its place, and no man who believes in the revelation of God can yield a hair's breadth."

Mr. Mivart, in the face of these authorities, declares that Catholics may exercise the utmost freedom of scientific research and speculation. Indeed he says

"it is the very distinctness and authority with which scientific truths have been condemned which make secure . . . the scientific freedom of all Catholics who are logical and will not shut their eyes to God's teaching in the history of the Church."

That is to say, the Church, having been wrong before in its scientific judgments—in, for instance, denying the sphericity of the earth and its annual revolution round the sun—it may well be wrong again. As illogically opposed to this view Mr. Mivart mentions the opinions of two Catholic priests, one still preaching in London, who has lately avowed his belief that the sun and the whole sidereal heavens do actually revolve round the earth daily, because this belief is doctrinally binding on him in virtue of Galileo's condemnation; while the other expressed a fervid hope that such might turn out to be the truth, as it would prove the Church to have been right about the matter all along.

Mr. Mivart enters at length into the question of Galileo's condemnation, and shows step by step that Galileo's scientific teaching was condemned as heresy opposed to the scriptures. By order of Pope Urban the Eighth, the Inquisition formally promulgated certain statements for the express purpose that Catholic men of science might be informed what they were to hold on this subject. These statements were as follows:

"That the sun is the centre of the universe and immovable from its place is absurd, philosophically false, and formally heretical, because it is expressly contrary to Holy Scripture.

"That the earth is not the centre of the universe nor immovable, but that it moves and also has diurnal motion, is absurd, philosophically false, and, theologically considered, is at least erroneous in faith."

To the attempt to evade the damaging conclusion by the common assertion that this was not a matter of faith or morals Mr. Mivart replies that—

"When a judge decides a point, he, *ipso facto*, decides that it is within his province to judge concerning it. What is or is not within the supreme authority's province to decide must be known to that authority. An infallible authority must know the limits of its revealed message. If authority can make a mistake in determining its own limits, it may make a mistake in a matter of faith."

What then is the conclusion? That neither the Bible nor the Church are trustworthy, and that priests, after having persecuted to the death any opinion they think opposed to their creeds will endorse that opinion when once it has become strong enough to withstand them? Not at all. The conclusion of Mr. Mivart and every good Christian is simply that science and theology have each their separate place. The Church that has been demonstrated again and again to have been wrong in regard to the earth, must be believed with implicit faith and absolute submission when it speaks of heaven. Wrong in regard to things human, it is infallible in regard to things divine. Discredited when it speaks of man's origin, it is authoritative when it speaks of his destiny. Proved false in regard to the past universal flood, it is, nevertheless, certainly correct in regard to the coming universal conflagration. That is, we must credit a person who cannot tell the right time on a clock at twenty paces with knowing the exact state of the other side of the moon.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

We see in the *Christian World* that a large number of presents have recently been made to Primitive Methodist ministers on changing their positions in the Lord's vineyard. They seem to have all taken the shape of purses of gold, albums, gold watches and chains, time-pieces, tea and coffee services, dressing cases, fruit and flower stands, and other such reminders of the blessings of poverty. What an accommodating creed Christianity is, to be sure. Except a feather bed, we know nothing like it.

JESUS CHRIST and the early Christians appear to have really believed in the blessings of poverty, although there is a suspicious text about the rich women who ministered unto their favorite preacher of their substance; and we fancy the Apostles would have been somewhat startled to hear that brother Peter, for instance, had been presented with a gold watch, and Mrs. Peter with a handsome silver tea service, in recognition of their noble and disinterested efforts to preach Christ and him crucified.

How do we know that Peter had a wife? Because Jesus cured her mother of a bad fever, just as she was about to shuffle off her mortal coil. In fact, Peter's denial of his Master has been accounted for on the theory that the old salt took the first opportunity of revenging himself on Jesus for giving his mother-in-law a fresh lease of life.

LORD ROTHSCHILD swore allegiance on the Pentateuch. Christians say "Swelp me God," and we suppose the Jews say "Holy Moses."

DR. LYMAN ABBOT says that "unbelievers are not agreed among themselves." Perhaps not, on all points; nor is it even likely they will be. They have their differences as well as Christians, and so far Dr. Abbot is right. But their differences are all about minor points, and those chiefly of policy; while the Christians differ about every fundamental doctrine of their faith, and consign each other to hell with the most charming recognition of each other's merits.

PROFESSOR DRUMMOND says that "doubt has a hundred heads." We are glad to hear it, for plenty of brains is an excellent thing. Faith has no head at all.

A PARISHIONER of Holy Trinity, Stroud Green, has served a caveat on the Bishop of London against the institution of the Rev. Robert Linklater to the vicarage. Fight away, good Christians. We dare say bishop-baiting is excellent sport now that these high and mighty dignitaries cannot consign recalcitrant Christians to the stake for a difference of opinion but only to a rather indefinite sheol in the next world.

THE Rev. A. J. Gliddon acknowledges that the borrowing of the jewels and raiment of the Egyptians by the children of Israel "seemed a piece of gross dishonesty, and many a sensitive soul has been troubled by the statement that God countenanced such an immoral deed." But his congregation is to rejoice because "the Revised Version removes that ground of objection. We

now read 'asked' instead of 'borrowed,' and 'let them have' instead of 'lent.'" God and the Israelites are justified, not by any alteration in the actual fact of "spoiling the Egyptians" (see Ex. iii., 22; xii., 36) but simply by changing a word to suit the less religious and more honest minds of modern days.

JEHOVAH has been in his tantrums again in Austria. He has sent a "fearful hurricane" over Galicia. We suppose he is delighted with the serious loss of life and immense destruction of property he has caused. In many districts the crops are completely destroyed by the hail. Reports say that over 10,000 oaks and maples have been uprooted, and several townships laid waste. One town of 8,000 inhabitants was set on fire by the lightning and nearly burnt to the ground, 5,000 poor people being thus rendered homeless.

LAST week we mentioned a case of petty persecution by the chaplain of one of our ironclads, who went about the ship threatening men for reading Freethought literature. Since then we have heard that about two years ago, on board the same ship, a sailor had ten days' leave stopped as a punishment for reading a leaflet on "Ingersoll and Jesus." Our correspondent also says (but we can scarcely believe it, and hope it is not true) that about twelve months ago, on board the "Hercules," a man was confined in a cell for fourteen days for reading the *Freethinker* and passing it round. The upper officers have absolutely no right to treat men in this way, and if any such case should occur in future, we will do our utmost to bring the matter before the public. No doubt a member of Parliament could be found to question the Government about such a scandalous abuse of power.

AMONG the pamphlets this naval chaplain wished to impound was Mr. Foote's "Shadow of the Sword," which does not deal with theology. Perhaps this disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus is afraid that if the doctrines in that pamphlet are spread, fighting will die out, and there will be no occupation for army and navy chaplains. Shop again!

AN American paper says: "Don't spend your money for a motto 'Save my lambs,' until you have cleaned out your backyard. Cholera don't care a Bungtown copper for mottos."

THE Messianic passages in the Revised Version are "so perverted and mistranslated" that the Rev. A. Levie announces that a committee of twelve persons, Hebrew Christians, will be formed to correct the many errors of the Revisers in the prophecies and in "other important passages equally mistranslated." When will God's Word be finally put right? And what guarantee will there then be that we have at last arrived at an accurate and indisputable version of divine revelation? We doubt the existence of twelve Hebrew Christians competent for even the task of improving the Revision.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* says: "It is plain that inordinate desire to get rid of all the difficulties of Revelation must end in abolishing it altogether." Yes; when mistranslations and frauds are gone, when hell has vanished, when miracles are explained away, when angels are only messengers, and devils only he-goats or satyrs, and spirit only wind or breath, when heaven is only hope and God only an idea, there will be little left of divine revelation, and pious people will have to find something else to quarrel about and to persecute for.

THE Rev. J. Lewis, Roman Catholic priest of Reading, was brought up at Winchester on a warrant last Tuesday, and remanded without bail. On the previous Thursday evening he was at the house of Mr. and Mrs. Dennis, drapers; and on leaving, as he walked behind Mrs. Dennis down the stairs, he dealt her a fearful blow on the back of the head, cutting it open; and on her turning round he struck her again on the forehead, inflicting a wound two inches in length. It is a great pity that the Lord cannot look after his priests a little more carefully. They are always getting into mischief, and too frequently into the police-court.

T. P. BARROW, of Leicester, demands that we insert seven large folios which he has written to show that our sub-editor is bigot. "Every person," he says, "who proclaims his creed to be superior to Christianity must necessarily be bigoted." Our readers will probably agree with us that one sentence of this stuff is a great deal better than seven folios.

THE recently-published "Second Report of the Evangelisation Committee of the London Diocesan Conference" laments that in seven parishes in East London, with a population of 60,000, the average attendance at all the various places of worship amounts only to 3,000. In the West of London the case is much the same. In a street off Leicester Square, out of 246 families, it was found that only 12 were represented in church or chapel. Rattle the missionary-box for the conversion of the heathen!

THE authorities at Naples, fearing disorder, forbade the customary procession of San Vincenzo. The people assembled at the church where the image of the saint is kept, and manifested great indignation. On the image being brought out and

returned to its baldachin or canopy a shout was raised that a miracle had occurred. A deformed child, hitherto unable to walk according to the mother's account, now walked through the church amidst the kisses, caresses and cries of the people. Another shout soon announced another miracle. A deaf and dumb girl had recovered hearing and speech. Then a blind man regained his sight. A fourth miracle, says the writer, was that no one was hurt, so intense was the excitement. The State lottery benefited greatly, for the people ran to play the number of the miracles. The priests, curiously enough, reject all the miracles except the first. The girl, they say, is just as deaf and dumb, and the man just as blind as before.

Apropos of Mr. Ball's recent article on "Christian Cannibalism," the visitor to St. Mary's Parish Church, Portsea, is greeted by a notice over the altar, "He that eateth me shall live by me." A stranger might be excused if he thought this an evident relic of savagery.

DR. PARKER says that "God's reply to sin" is "I will hide My face from them," and this, it seems, "is the most terrific punishment that can befall the life of the human soul." Such language, it seems to us, is merely "sound and fury, signifying nothing." Seeing that God usually manifests himself in storms and plagues and other signal "judgments," it would be a very happy thing if he would completely hide his face from mankind. Far from being a terrific punishment, the cessation of his ebullitions of temper would be a great relief.

DR. PARKER solemnly warns his flock that "The worship of reason always ends in its extinction." He evidently speaks from his own personal experience.

A WRITER in the *Methodist Times* complains of the indifference of the Wesleyans to the social evil, and states that a petition in regard to the Criminal Law Amendment Act, praying that the age for protected girls might be raised to sixteen was announced from the pulpit as "a petition in favor of a *certain object* is lying for signature," with the result that the number of signatures obtained was three.

AMONG the deputations which waited with gifts upon Princess Beatrice on Saturday at Osborne was one composed of ladies, who on behalf of the maidens of England presented her Royal Highness with a Bible on her approaching marriage. We wonder if her particular attention was directed to the Song of Solomon, or to the passages which say "wives be in subjection to your husbands," and "submit yourselves unto your own husbands as unto the Lord."

At a recent flower-show in St. Ives, the words "God is love," elaborately painted and framed, were exhibited amongst a few objects of fine art. The Committee added the words, "Not for competition." We suppose they were afraid the public would otherwise fancy that the Almighty had entered the list of competitors for a prize.

A WOOLWICH teetotaler, in the sartorial business, has declined to make a suit of clothes for a publican. He is more particular than the Lord, who made suits of clothes for two sinners (see Genesis iii., 21).

MR. BARNES RICHARDS having counselled teetotalers to let the Bible alone, as although they can cite fifty-four verses on their side, the publican can show no less than one hundred and twenty-two verses to support his view, a correspondent of the *Western Morning News*, who, we presume, thinks that Noah and Lot got drunk on unfermented grape juice, asks for "any one passage in which two things are distinctly connected—viz., intoxicating quality and Divine sanction?" We give him two. Deut. xiv., 26, which expressly permits money to be used "for wine or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth." The word for strong drink is *shechar*, which is to this day used by Jews in connexion with drunkenness. Prov. xxxi., 6, 7, "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts. Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more." One will hardly forget his misery on teetotal regimen.

THE New York *Truthseeker* for July 11 gives a list of over forty clerical criminals whose misdoings have been chronicled in the press within the past few weeks. The sins of these saintly shepherds are mostly of a sexual character.

OLD readers of the *Secularist* will remember a scathing exposure by B.V. (republished in "Satires and Profanities") of the Rev. F. W. Monek, a spiritist Medium, who wound up a career of charlatany in England by receiving three months' hard labor at Huddersfield. We understand that this is the same individual who has been accumulating a large fortune in Brooklyn, New York, as "a Christian healer," and who, according to the *Truthseeker*, has just been forced to disgorge a sum fraudulently obtained from one of his lady dupes.

JOHN RIDDING, caretaker of the Presbyterian Church, Rock

Ferry, was charged on remand before Mr. Preston, the Birkenhead stipendiary, on Monday, with indecently assaulting three little girls, aged respectively eleven, twelve and thirteen. The evidence showed that Ridding was in the habit of giving little girls small sums of money to assist in cleaning the church, and the allegation against him is that he availed himself of the opportunity to assault them in the church or one of the adjoining rooms. He was committed to the assizes. *Quis custodiet custodes?* Which is, being interpreted for the benefit of the C. E. S. lecturers, Who will take care of the caretakers?

LIVERPOOL has so long suffered from the incubus of narrow sectarianism that even the slightest glimmer of a break in the gloom is hailed as a portent of brighter days. For some considerable time a devoted few have directed their energies to having the Museum, Libraries and Art Gallery opened on Sunday, and the Libraries Committee were at length prevailed upon to cause inquiries to be made as to the working of Sunday opening in other towns. The result of the investigation has been published, and, with one or two unimportant exceptions, the replies are of a very gratifying nature. The decision of the City Council has yet to be taken on the matter. The Liberal daily papers have devoted a great deal of space to the correspondence on the subject, and the letters of "R. M." in the *Mercury*, which were given great prominence, have excited many commendatory expressions. The authorship of the letters of "R. M." is but thinly veiled by the initials, and affords peculiar pleasure to Freethinkers.

THE *Daily Telegraph* had starred on its placard last Tuesday the line "A Repentant Atheist." Doubtless some who purchased the paper expected to read that Mr. Bradlaugh had become converted and sent letters of apology to Archbishop Benson and Lord Randolph Churchill, and that Mr. Foote had joined the Salvation Army and apologised to Jesus Christ and Judge North. What they read however was that Leo Taxil, a French anti-clerical writer, had turned Catholic, and that "This step he had taken because he was thoroughly disgusted and disheartened by the insults levelled at him by the whole Republican party, Opportunists, Radicals, and all." French Freethought is too well established to be disturbed by the defection of one of its writers. Conversions from the other side are never mentioned by "our correspondent."

AN English Catholic paper says that "a terrible carriage accident which happened some time ago to his wife, and it may be added the little encouragement which his works received, was the primary cause of his change of sentiments!" What an ingenuous admission. If Leo Taxil is frightened from Freethought because it doesn't pay, the cause is well rid of him. Quite another kind of stuff is needed for the great battle of liberty.

A WICKED BOOK.

(A slightly revised version of a Christian poem entitled "Little Children, Love one another.")

A little girl with a horrified look
Sat slowly reading a ponderous book
All bound with silver and edged with gold,
And its weight was more than the child could hold.
For she had been taught to ponder it o'er,
Though every day she loathed it more;
For she read—and her horror she could not smother—
"Slay ye every man his brother."*

She found that a man must kill his wife,
And take his little daughter's life,
If these should say their litanies
To any other god than his (Deut. xiii., 6—11).
She saw the order Christ had given
That none shall follow him to heaven
Unless they hate their own dear mother,
Their sister and their little brother (Luke xiv., 26).

She felt it was a wicked book,
The lesson to her heart she took.
She closed the book with a proud firm grace
And a steadfast look in her brave young face
That said as plain as words could say,
"This dreadful book I won't obey;
'Tis wrong, I'm sure, to kill each other;
And I will love, not hate, my brother."

W. P. B.

* Exodus xxxii., 27. Christians will complain that I am unfair because this divine command was not universal. But it was typical, and in conjunction with passages like Deut. xiii., 6—15, it was universal so far as heretics were concerned; while the command "Little children, love one another" was not applied actually to little children, as assumed by Christians when it suits their purpose, but to adult members of the Church who are only figurately called "little children." The love is not to be extended to heretics, for true Christians are to have no fellowship with "accursed" members of other sects than their own (Gal. i., 9; 2 John 10; 1 Cor. xvi., 22; Titus iii., 10; Gal. v., 12; Matt. x., 14, 15).

SPECIAL NOTICE

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 26, Claremont Hall, Penton Street, Pentonville, N., at 7.30, on "The Rib Story."

AUGUST 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

SEPTEMBER 13 and 20, Hall of Science, London.

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.—Newspaper cuttings (Birmingham).

GOD IN A BOX.—Sorry to hear that you have no good Liberal paper in Nottingham. The *Journal* used to be outspoken, but we suppose it has changed.

SIGNALMAN.—We wrote you personally because we thought your mates would like to see a letter from us. See "Acid Drops" further.

ANONYMOUS correspondents must not expect to be answered. We cannot converse with people who wear masks or veils.

P. DAVIS.—We don't know whether Secularists ever call themselves "sinners," but you ought to after sending us a mass of incomprehensible writing, which looks as though it came from Colney Hatch. There is a big Newfoundland dog in our basement who would like to see you for a few minutes.

C. ASHLEY.—Balfour Stewart's "Elementary Physics" is a good book. We believe the price is 4s. 6d. "Natural Philosophy" is an effete phrase.

OUR readers will do us a service by sending us any notices of *Progress* or of our other publications, that may appear in their local press.

OLD SUBSCRIBER.—Thanks. Cuttings are always welcome.

W. E. H. F.—Good, but hardly up to the mark. All Ingersoll's lectures can be procured from our office.

J.M.—You may rely on us pursuing our old policy without fear of God or man.

J. PLIMSOLL.—Glad to hear from you. Send us news or cuttings whenever you can.

C. L.—It is gratifying to learn that you have not only enjoyed our Summer Number, but passed it through so many other hands. We shall deal with the crimes and vices of the Popes in a later number of the "Crimes of Christianity." As to Circumcision, the oldest Greek historian, Herodotus, tells us that it was practised by many ancient nations, including the Egyptians and Ethiopians. The idea of a mighty state like Egypt borrowing the rite from a horde of slaves like the Jews is too absurd for confutation. Circumcision is of such antiquity that its actual origin is lost in the obscurity of immemorial time. But it was probably phallic in the beginning, and continued as a blind superstition. At any rate it prevailed amongst many peoples, of whom the Jews were by no means the most important.

P. H. S.—We are glad to find that Freethinkers are heckling Parliamentary candidates on the question of the Blasphemy Laws.

A. CORDELL.—The Mr. Slater you heard at the Congress Hall, Clapton, was, we understand, at one time an "unbeliever," but we do not think he was ever a member of a Secular society, and if he actually said what you state he could not have understood Freethought. But perhaps there is some mistake. Anyhow, these "conversions" prove nothing; otherwise Freethought would be able to boast more than all the creeds, because ninety-nine out of every hundred Freethinkers have been converted from Christianity.

E. GORDON.—No doubt Mr. B. H. Cowper is more ready to expose Mr. Ramsey's "lies" behind his back than before his face. Ask Mr. Cowper to expose the "lies" in Parts V. and VI. of the "Crimes of Christianity."

W. S. PYATT.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

W. COLE.—Sorry to hear your newsagent will not supply you with the "Crimes of Christianity." If you order direct from our office, address to Mr. Ramsey.

J. SAUNDERS.—Pleased to hear you have just read "The Shadow of the Sword" with thrilling interest. You hope it will shame the bloodthirsty Christians. Alas! they take a deal of shaming. Your suggestion shall be considered.

W. MALLESON.—The title, "The Maiden Tribute," affixed to the republication of the *Pall Mall Gazette* revelations has no relation to the Lord's tribute of maidens (Numbers xxxi., 17, 18, 40), but to the tribute sent from Athens to the Minotaur at Crete.

ALE. JONES.—It is a disputed point among theologians whether Mary Magdalen or some other Mary was the sister of Lazarus.

A YOUNG FREETHINKER.—No part of the Bible can be proved to have been in existence earlier than the eighth century B.C. The Egyptian Book of the Dead, the Hindu Rig-Veda, and the Chinese Shou King are far earlier.

INQUIRER.—Read E. P. Merdith's "Prophet of Nazareth," which you can procure from Mr. E. Truelove, 256 High Holborn.

PAGAN.—Very pleased to read your interesting letter. Leo Taxil's case is dealt with in another column.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liverpool Mercury—Unitarian Herald—Monroe's Ironclad Age—Philosophic Inquirer (Madras)—Nottingham Express—Church Reformer—Hants and Surrey Times—Manchester Evening News—Midland Free Press—Nottingham Daily Express—Freethought Review—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 August 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.

"RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: the Woodstock Bantam," is the title of the latest pamphlet from Mr. Foote's active pen. Liberals and Radicals would do something towards checking the Tory Democracy dodge by distributing copies of this pamphlet right and left. The vituperator of Mr. Gladstone, the opposer and calumniator of Mr. Bradlaugh, the miserable copier of Benjamin Disraeli, the self-seeker who exhibits great zeal for God when an Atheist threatens the family pension, has never been so searchingly studied before. His speeches have all been carefully followed and compared, and all his paltry tricks exposed to the light of day. The pamphlet will be an eye-opener to thousands.

MR. WILLIAM DIGBY, the Liberal candidate for North Paddington, has declared himself in favor of abolishing all oaths and opening museums on Sunday. When asked if he would vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, he replied, "Most decidedly."

WE hear that the Freethought lectures in Hyde Park are attracting very large audiences. Mr. Small, of Liverpool, recently gave a scientific discourse on the first chapter of Genesis, and was loudly cheered on stating that he would deliver a similar lecture there before returning to Liverpool. A lecture is given every evening, weather permitting, near the Marble Arch. So much progress has been made in enrolling members, that premises are being sought for the purpose of continuing the lectures indoors during the winter.

OUR readers will remember Mrs. Sykes, the plucky Southend shopkeeper whom the bigots made such desperate efforts to put down last summer. The old lady who tried to get an honest living on Sunday by selling sweetmeats was summoned and fined again and again. Subscriptions were raised to defray her costs assistance being solicited through the columns of the *Freethinker* and the *National Reformer*. Her son, Mr. John Sykes, now writes: "No summonses have been issued this season against my mother, so we have outlived the law, and, being as wide open on Sunday as ever, we have beaten the bigots and triumphed over the bloodthirsty crew of Christians who were so eager to destroy my poor old mother. To you and Mrs. Besant I owe a debt of gratitude, which I shall try to repay by doing all I can to destroy the accursed creed."

WE have the name and address of a gentleman who served on a coroner's jury about twelve months ago, and was sworn on what to all appearance was a copy of the New Testament, but, on opening the volume, he found it to be one of Fielding's novels.

It is stated that whereas at Oxford twenty-five years ago more than four-fifths of the teaching staff of the University were clergymen of the Church of England, at present the proportion is only about ten per cent. Even some of these, like the Regius Professor of Greek, have done something to raise Oxford from its former fossilised condition.

A PUBLIC meeting was held at Claremont Hall last Monday evening for the purpose of organising a Radical Association in Clerkenwell; a resolution to that effect being carried with only one dissident. Mr. Samuel Storey, M.P., took the chair. He was very warmly greeted, and made an excellent speech, full of sound advice. Among the other speakers was Mr. G. W. Foote, who met with a most enthusiastic reception. It is also worth noting that his references to the State Church, the Parliamentary Oath, and the Blasphemy Laws, were loudly applauded.

THE American comic paper *Puck* has a very good illustration of the Revised Version. In the upper left-hand corner is represented hell with a figure of Satan looking superannuated. A placard announces that the business is removed to Sheol. Passengers have embarked in Charon's ferry for the latter place and are waving their handkerchiefs in farewell to the old Devil. Sheol is depicted as a pleasant spot with gardens and fountains, in which Galileo, Paine, Voltaire, Darwin, Mill and others are enjoying themselves.

THE Rev. Dr. Pressensé, the Paris correspondent of the *Christian World*, complains that there is a religion of irreligion in that city. At one of the Freemason's lodges lately there was performed a parody of the Christian rite of Baptism. Three of the fifteen children to be baptised wore veils. On one was written *Ignorance*, on another *Fanaticism*, and on the third *Misery*. As these evils were denounced in their natural order, the veils were dropped. Tony Révillon, one of the deputies for Belleville, was present, and was loudly applauded as he dwelt on the duty of parents to train up their children free from superstition. But the most important person present was M. Constans, Gambetta's

Minister of the Interior, who spoke as follows:—"Clerical exhortations are losing their influence day by day, even in this our priest-ridden country. In the villages of my department, where there are no cafés as yet, a few people still go to church just to pass the time away; but the preaching of the *cures* makes no impression on the so-called stronger sex. It is true that the cassocks are parading themselves boldly, but they will soon creep into their holes again."

DR. PRESSENSE calls this language "portentous." So it is. It shows that French Radicalism, which is the vital spirit of the Republic, is freethought to the core, and never forgets that the priest is the great enemy of liberty and progress.

A CORRESPONDENT writes us from East London West (a funny name) South Africa. He has been reading the *Freethinker* for several months, and having "derived a vast amount of pleasure and information," he has ordered a large parcel of literature from our office for distribution among his friends. He hopes it will do something to counteract the missionaries, who are "the curse of the country;" for "there is not a Kaffir or Hottentot who embraces their faith, but turns out a vagabond, a drunkard and a thief."

THE *Hants and Surrey Times* acknowledges that "infidelity" is on the increase, and that the working classes of our large cities are practically Secularists. It is indignant that dukes with tarnished names become legislators by the accident of birth, while legislators freely elected by the people are rejected because they have the honesty to unmask their faces and proclaim their anti-religious opinions.

WE don't see, however, why the *Hants and Surrey Times* should complain that the Leicester Secularists played cricket on Sunday in a "sheer spirit of bravado," and that they "unfortunately do not shrink from wounding the sensibilities of men and women who hold contrary opinions." How else are they to act? They simply exercise their right of playing cricket on Sunday. Are they to give up their right and other people's right because bigots object to it? And if the bigots' susceptibilities are outraged, are the assaults and persecutions with which they retaliate no outrage whatever on the Secularists? Why don't the Sabbatarians allow liberty and refrain from hurting the persons and the feelings of Sunday pleasure-seekers? Are the courteous consideration and self-denial to be all on one side? Sabbatarians rush at Sabbath-breakers like a bull at a red rag. We think it high time that this Sabbatarian mad bull was chained up. Complaints of the insolence and audacity of peaceful people who hurt its feelings by enjoying themselves on Sunday we regard as mere bigotry or parrot-like thoughtlessness.

THE INSCRIPTION ON THE CROSS.

THE superscription alleged to have been written over the head of Jesus, when he was publicly executed as a pretendedly political offender, but really, of course, for the crime of blasphemy (Mark xv., 64), was so brief and so notorious, that the evangelists might reasonably be expected to record it with perfect accuracy. So little, however, does inspiration ensure historical correctness of fact, that the writers of the Gospels have been unable to transmit with fidelity a plain statement of the words of a simple and publicly-displayed document, which was read by "many of the Jews" (John xx., 20). Mark, whose alleged gospel is apparently the more ancient, and certainly the shorter and less elaborated, says (xv., 26) that the superscription placed over Jesus by the Roman governor was "THE KING OF THE JEWS." Luke (xxiii., 38) says it was "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." Matthew (xxvii., 37) further enlarges the announcement into "THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS." John (xix., 19) says the writing was "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." This want of agreement shows that the evangelists did not select trustworthy sources of information, and did not verify their statements by reference to official records, or private notes or diaries, written at the time of the events narrated. The discrepancies are fatal to the claims put forth on behalf of the inspired writers as careful and faithful historians; but they strikingly confirm the scientific explanation of the origin of the Gospels in popularly-evolved myths and anecdotes transmitted with continual growths and variations from mouth to mouth, and from private memoranda to more and more complete collections of jottings and stories.

Of course Christians will say that the differences arise from the superscription being in three different languages. But if these three versions were different, and the evangelists did happen to differ in their selection, the difficulty is not entirely removed. Three languages will not account for four versions. Besides, Luke, in telling us of the three

languages, says that the superscription "was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin and Hebrew, THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." The superscription was the same in each language. Whence, then, did John get the words "OF NAZARETH"? And why does he say that the title he gives (namely, "JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS") was written in three languages? Why does Mark condense the superscription into "The King of the Jews," or Matthew expand it into "This is Jesus the King of the Jews"? Why is the Holy Ghost so inexcusably loose and careless as an historian? Was his memory so bad that he could not repeat the same tale twice alike?

The true answer of course is that the Holy Ghost was a mere figment of credulous imaginations, only nominally covering the naturally loose and inaccurate statements made by simple-minded and superstitious men totally incompetent to discharge the duties of an historian or editor.

Probably, in default of the historical evidence which will never be forthcoming, and of the scientific method of treatment which Christians will not allow, the only way of ascertaining the exact words of the superscription will be to send to the Church of Santa Croce, where the original document is kept as a precious relic, together with the Holy Cross itself. This should satisfy Roman Catholic Christians. As to the woefully split-up minority, the Protestants, they must remain in the deserts of doubt and the torments of uncertainty, as a punishment for their want of sufficient faith. If these Protestant heretics will only remember that the Holy Cross is sure to be the genuine one, because various other churches have also simultaneously had possession of the only true Cross, of which, as history tells us, enough fragments were sold to build a navy, they will doubtless accept the document also as another real genuine—pious fraud; and in this case all hope of clearing up the difficulty vanishes. The rejected Gospels would probably only complicate the matter, and, of course, are of no authority.

W. P. BALL.

ITEMS FROM THE "SYDNEY BULLETIN." (April 11, 1885.)

CARLETON, a Melbourne Bohemian of the past, was a good Catholic, and used to wear a little crucifix on a chain hung round his neck. One day he met a friend whose tongue appeared about to start on an Arctic voyage, being wrapped in fur, so to speak. The friend asked him if he had such a thing as the price of a drink on him. "The price of a drink?" said Carleton (who was of Greek descent through Milesius); why it's only this blessed morning I pawned me little Jaysus for fippence." And he burst into tears and tripped up a little girl who was going on an errand, with a stick he called Napoleon, and picking up the coppers that rolled out of her hand, plunged into a "pub" with his friend. This story is probably true. It was the friend who told us.

THE Salvation Army was stoned in a South Australian town the other day. The captain turned round with a meek smile and told the crowd that he could stand it: the apostles had to stand it before. We have seen several battalions of the Salvation Army, and could not help thinking that, if cleanliness was next to godliness, we would rather have seen a little less godliness. If the Army is to be stoned at all—a thing which we by no means advocate—then it should be holey-stoned.

AN EPITAPH.—A local preacher died suddenly in the very top-most fury of a tea-fight in a New Zealand town the other week. We send two copies of this issue to St. Peter—so that there may be no delay in passing one of them on. We send them by a tract distributor whom we killed this morning for the purpose. The preacher, when he gets this, can paste the little epitaph hereunder on his crown, and not go wholly unhonored in heaven. Thus—

He lived his life well;
His death was the quickest
On record—he fell
Where the muffins were thickest

This style half-a-crown for all under the rank of Bishops. Bishops, 5s. and upwards, according to girth of paunch and sanctity.

ONE for the Freethinkers.—Not one of them is in gaol.

It is curious that Christians are always so severe in their denunciations of illegitimacy when it is to that they owe the birth of their savior.

"THE GRAND OLD MAN" Cigars are so named because—like the Grand Old Man himself—they have never been equalled.—Thornes, Maker, Bradford, Yorks. All Liberal and Radical Clubs should try them.

REVIEW.

The Old Testament. ANONYMOUS. Translated out of the Original Tongues: Being the Version Set forth A.D. 1611 Compared with the most Ancient Authorities and Revised. Published by the Henry Bill Publishing Co., Norwich, Conn.

THIS latest aspirant for literary honors comes at us with a volume of one thousand and thirty-five large pages, bound in Persian morocco, and with gilt edges to the leaves. As indicated by the stamp on the back of the book, as also by the title-page, the work has recently been revised. A glance at the contents leads us to remark that it ought to be revised again. Reasons for this will appear later.

The exact nature of this production it would perhaps be difficult to define off-hand. The author has divided his work into thirty-nine essays, called books, largely made up of laudatory matter concerning an individual variously termed God, Jehovah, Jah, and the Lord; a single division called "Esther," the history of a remarkable woman of no morals, being an exception to the rule, and containing no reference to the hero of the others.

Our author breaks ground with "The First Book of Moses, commonly called Genesis." Moses apparently had no last name unless we accept that of Schaumberg, ascribed to him by *Texas Siftings*, a religious journal published in the South. We may here say that five of these books are written by this man Moses, the last containing an account of his funeral, which we must regard as a remarkable literary achievement on the part of Moses. As to the book of Genesis, it may be said that in it the author displays a woeful ignorance of scientific facts, and no regard whatsoever for accuracy. Instances of this are too frequent to be enumerated here.

In the next book, called "Exodus," we find a preposterous tale about the career of a foundling. The writer must have had an idea that his readers would swallow anything. It cannot be crammed down the throat of this writer.

"Leviticus," following, is a most disgusting performance, evidently written by a cannibal. We pass it with a feeling of relief that lasts only until we reach the succeeding book, "Numbers," which describes a census-taking. The method of enumerating the population consisted of killing those who were not agile enough to get away, and counting the slain. This saved the expense of taking their names.

"Deuteronomy" is a series of directions to the inhabitants as to their conduct towards one another. A people barbarous enough to need these statutes would not be worth praying for. "Deuteronomy" was promulgated beyond Jordan. The locality of "beyond Jordan," it will be readily conceded, would depend mainly upon which side of that river the speaker was situated.

"Joshua," the sixth book, gives the history of a red-handed robber and murderer who should have died young. The statement therein contained that this individual caused the sun and moon to stand still relieves the story of all probable truth. Munchausen was a talented liar, but it was his misfortune to come after the writer of "Joshua," compared with whom for promiscuous mendacity, he was a truthful man.

"Judges" is the story of a strong man named Samson, who married the daughter of a Philistine. "And it came to pass," we read, that after a while Samson presented "his wife with a kid." In the due course of nature it might be expected that she would have reciprocated, but there is no record that she did so. Samson's decease was effected by a Buddensied tenement falling on him.

The book of "Ruth" bears internal evidence of having been interpolated in the present century by Emile Zola, author of the sister-work, "Nana."

The book of "Samuel" we pass; it is incoherent.

"Kings" might be dismissed for the same reason; and as there is no reason at all for noticing it, it will have to slide.

"Chronicles" is just as bad. It is not of the slightest interest to know that "Josiah gave to the children of the people, of the flock, lambs and kids to the number of thirty thousand, and three thousand bullocks," etc. If he had given each a ticket for a bath, good might have resulted.

"Ezra" contains no central idea around which any remarks can be clustered. Ezra's chief feat was to induce the men of his congregation to put away their wives and children, and take other wives.

Nehemiah was the son of Hachaliah, and has a book named after him in this collection. The book is a wail.

Esther, after whom the next book is named, is a Madam Pompadour without any redeeming qualities to speak of. She topped off an evening's entertainment by causing a man named Haman to be hanged on a gallows three hundred feet high.

The hero of the book of "Job," smitten with boils, was very miserable. Having scraped himself with a piece of a broken pot, and rolled himself in ashes, which doubtless greatly aggravated his uneasiness, he indulges in deep thought. He is something of a student of nature, and is greatly impressed with the behemoth—which is to say, the hippopotamus. This animal, he declares, eateth grass like an ox, moveth his tail like a cedar, and lieth under a lotus. "Behold," goes on Job, "if a river overflow, he trembleth not; he is confident though Jordan swell to his mouth." If Job had known that the hippopotamus could swim, the confidence of that animal in the presence of a freshet

would not have so surprised him. Job recovered and enjoyed thereafter one hundred and forty years.

The "Psalms" number one hundred and forty-nine. They are not without usefulness as illustrating what a man will say when reduced to delirium by debauchery and dissipation.

"Proverbs" are solid chunks of wisdom. They are the only part of the work that asks for justice for the working woman. Of her it says, "Give her the fruit of her hands." Christian employers who pay their female employées twenty-four cents a day, and then hint to them that they must "dress a little more respectably," should make a note of this.

"Ecclesiastes" is not without merit, and we are therefore somewhat surprised to find it in the collection now under consideration. Of a future life this preacher says, "Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward, or of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth?" Questions like this indicate modesty, if nothing more. We see here, also, the crepuscular glimmerings of Agnosticism.

"The Song of Songs" represents a bad case of two hearts that beat as one and are not used to it. They are wholly unable to keep their condition to themselves. The work is not adapted to general and indiscriminate perusal. A compositor, unless indured, could not put it in type without blushing.

"Isaiah" is an exhortation.

"Jeremiah" is a wail.

"Lamentations" is Jeremiah continued.

"Ezekiel" was not half revised. It should have been edited with a paint-brush, and declined with a reprimand. In printed form it is about the only excuse for the existence of Anthony Comstock.

"Daniel" tells us of a man so objectionable personally that the lions would not eat him.

"Hosea" is unfit for publication.

"Amos" informs us that "the day shall come that the plowman shall overtake the reaper." It will then behove the plowman to turn to and bind, and help the reaper along.

"Obadiah" comprises a vision, and is an exception to the rule that brevity is the soul of wit. It is the farthest from being funny of anything we ever saw. Obadiah greatly overrated his ability as a humorist.

According to "Jonah," a prophet whose prophecy was not fulfilled, a fish obligingly swallowed a man and took him ashore after a three day's cruise. The tale might be diverting to a marine.

"Micah" calls upon the Lord to feed his people with a rod. We can merely remark that it would take a people a long time to get fat on that diet.

"Nahum" is a nightmare.

"Habakkuk" furnishes a song "for the chief musicians, on stringed instruments." Lovers of mnemonics can find some diversion in spelling Habakkuk with an *h* and an *a*, and a *b* and an *o*, and a *k* and a *k*, and a *u* and a *k*.

"Zephaniah" was chosen of the Lord. It was bad taste. We should never have picked him out.

"Zechariah" adumbrates a period when "every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holy unto the Lord of Hosts." The pot will then doubtless cease to reflect upon the complexion of the kettle.

"Malachi" is an arsenal of expletives in all varieties of upholstery. It has the merit of closing the volume, and therefore should have come earlier.

Thus we have passed briefly and casually over this peculiar volume. The review may be somewhat disappointing, but so is the subject of it. We were misled by the binding and gilt edges into a belief that the book possessed merit which a perusal of it has failed to develop. It is a whitened sepulchre. If it sells only according to its merits, the proceeds can scarcely indemnify the publisher. The volume is on our shelf. We should be glad to let anyone have it who would reimburse us for the advertisement of the "Holy Bible" which has recently several times appeared in these columns.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

CONSTANTINE.—It is believed that he put to death his eldest son, Crispus, and his own wife, Fausta, the same year that he convened the Council of Nice. Zozimus and Sozomen pretend that the heathen priests having told him there was no expiation for such great crimes, he then made open profession of Christianity and demolished many temples in the East.—*Voltaire*, "Philosophical Dictionary."

Essays on Death and Funerals. Part II. By JOSEPH HENRY. Salina, Kansas, U.S.—The author is a thoughtful man; his object is to dispel the terror of death which ignorance and religion have induced, by showing that death is as natural as birth.

The Church Reformer. July 15. F. Verinder: Gough Square, London, E.C.—The Rev. S. D. Headlams monthly is always pleasant reading even to Freethinkers. We notice among the editorial notes the statement that "the wood-cuts in the *Freethinker* are as nothing in their offensiveness compared with a statue to such a man as Charles II. in a Christian Church."

PROFANE JOKES.

THE other day there was a sale of household effects. Enter woman of the house, who has been out a short time, during which the auctioneer has sold a large family Bible. Woman of the house (to neighbor): "What did the family Bible fetch, Mrs. Jones?" Mrs. Jones: "A pound." Woman of the house: "Only a pound! Too bad, too bad; an' it never was opened."

ANOTHER good old Providence story is in relation to the foreknowledge of God. One of the wags of those days got into an argument with a Baptist minister upon the subject. "Do you suppose that God knew," asked the wag, "that Brown and Ives would launch the ship Ann Hope to-day at twelve o'clock?" "Yes," said the minister, "as much as that I am here now." "Well," said the wag, "he got mistaken, for they have put the launch off till next week."

THE Sunday-school lesson was about Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness, and the teacher was asking questions of her scholars. "What did Moses strike the rock for?" she inquired. "For water," answered the class promptly. "Was Moses blessed for what he had done?" "No, ma'am." "Why not?" This was a poser for some time, but finally, a tough looking small boy held up his hand. "Well, Tommy, why not?" asked the teacher, encouragingly. "Because, mum, he didn't strike it for beer."

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