

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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CAIN'S WEDDING.—GEN. iv., 14—17.

FEED MY SHEEP.

“FEED my sheep,” said Christ to Peter, and the Christian priests have always boasted of following that pastoral rule. Every bishop swears to feed the sheep and devour them not when he is ordained. How the vow is kept let facts attest.

The priestly shepherds feed the flock, they will probably say, in a spiritual sense; filling them not with the meat that perisheth, but with the bread of life. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? And what is the use of plenty to eat and drink in this world if we are uncertain of our fate in the next? Of course the parsons like plenty to eat and drink here, but they have through tickets for heaven, and understand the art of making the best of *both* worlds.

It is pretty certain, however, that Jesus Christ understood feeding the flock in a different sense. When he fed them he gave them loaves and fishes, and he condescended to work a miracle on the provisions, so as to afford them a first-rate meal. When he turned water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana in Galilee, he produced a splendid vintage, which won the praises of the guests. He did not give them a bucket of water, and tell them to pray over it till it smelt and tasted like wine. No, he went to work in a more generous fashion, and provided them with real good stuff, although some of the guests were probably too fuddled to discriminate good from bad.

“Oh,” the clergy will say, “what is the use of asking

us to do such things? The age of miracles is past, and we have nothing to give but our prayers.” But we beg to remind them that their Master promised that all who believed in him should be able to work miracles; and if they cannot feed the hungry as he did, it is clearly because they do not believe as they profess to—or, in other words, because they are trading on false pretences.

Joking apart, in what sense *do* the clergy feed the sheep? Take the Archbishop of Canterbury, for instance, who has lately been sitting on the Mansion House committee of investigation into the *Pall Mall Gazette* disclosures. His Grace certifies that the charges brought by that journal against Christian London are substantially true. If they are so, his Grace should ask himself how far he and his brother shepherds have fed the flock even spiritually. What an ignominious confession after so much preaching and praying! Surely the parsons might stand aside awhile, and give their betters an opportunity of clearing away some of their mess. Science and Freethought would effect more moral improvement in a couple of generations than Christianity has effected in eighteen centuries.

What also does his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury towards feeding the flock of half-starving poor in England? Nothing—absolutely nothing; and we hope he is not so gross a hypocrite as to profess the contrary. He is himself fed *by the flock*. Where else does his huge revenue come from? It is a tax upon the industry of every working man and woman in the land, and every time his Grace makes a sumptuous repast, he is eating the substance of the poor. The rest of the sky-pilots are mostly like him. They are shepherds who love the flock, and always pay them great

attention—especially at shearing time. Instead of feeding the sheep, they feed on the sheep—two-legged ones, who baa after the shepherd in the silliest manner, and fancy he is leading them to a delightful place. Nothing of the sort. He leads them periodically to the shearing-place, and eventually to the slaughter-house.

Let the sheep turn on their shepherds, and address them thus: "Gentlemen, we have discovered that it is your duty to feed us, instead of our feeding you. Pray, therefore, don't ask us for any more subscriptions, pew-rents, collections or stipends. We have done with such things for ever. We are going home, where we shall await any food you may send us. A hamper of venison or a dozen of wine won't come amiss. Until they arrive, we are sincerely, but no longer fleecingly—your old sheep."

G. W. FOOTE.

A FEW WORDS ON FREETHOUGHT ORGANISATION.

ALTHOUGH I should like to see the Archbishop of Canterbury put into action his threat to turn the Church of England into a Tory Caucus (for I am convinced nothing would more precipitate the downfall of that Church) I neither count as insignificant the political force of the English Establishment, nor suppose its emoluments will be resigned without a prolonged struggle. In warfare the most disastrous of all mistakes is to underrate the strength of the enemy. And this is an error to which the Freethinker, who sees his views extending on every side and notes the hollowness of Christian pretensions to belief, is particularly liable. It is all very well in joke to talk of subscribing for brooms and wheelbarrows for the parsons, but it is better to bear in mind that we have arrayed against us, not only the long-established State-aided Church and the vested interests which have gathered round all the other Christian sects, but the inert mass of indifferentism which everywhere supports established custom and begets hypocrisy. Before this is overcome we have a long and uphill battle to fight; nor shall we see victory in sight until we have mastered much of the organisation and attractions of the enemy. The churches are strong, not because of their creeds—these are hidden, as far as possible, as a felt source of weakness—but because they retain the strongest secular inducements.

In the London suburb in which I reside, visitors from church and chapel vie with each other in their enticements of attractive services, good music, treats for Sunday-school children, and charitable benefits.

Of the work done by the National Secular Society I am incompetent to speak. Certainly it has advanced in the face of great difficulties and to most Freethinkers is the only alternative to isolation. Yet no one supposes that its large and increasing membership represents a tithe of the Freethinkers of the country. The revision of its principles, decided upon at the last Conference, may do something to render that organisation still more acceptable to Freethinkers.

But the point to which I would direct particular attention is the necessity of Freethinkers providing for the emotional element of human nature to which the churches so largely appeal. The most casual visitor to a Freethought hall can lay his finger upon our weak point. There is little to attract women and children. Lectures on every conceivable subject, from the evolution of an ascidian to the reorganisation of society, form the staple attraction. Man, however, is not simply a logic-chopping machine, and although defined as a "reasoning animal" should more properly be termed "an animal capable of reasoning." No doubt such lectures and debates do much towards stimulating intellectual vigor and equipping missionaries with arguments against the enemy, yet for this purpose they might well be supplemented with special classes of instruction.

In the matter of rendering the secular halls attractive our party is certainly not wealthy enough to indulge in the luxuries of fine paintings, grand organs, stained-glass windows and professional musicians. Yet something more might be done to relieve the monotony of bare walls. The poorest society can have some pictures, if only well-selected woodcuts and chromographs. Nor should there be any difficulty in each society having a trained choir. Any trouble taken in this direction would be amply repaid by the additional attraction to those whose help is most needed, by the pleasure afforded by good music and its power in swaying an audience to one common mood.

In my opinion one of the most important resolutions arrived at the Birmingham Conference of the N. S. S. was that authorising the executive to take steps to procure the compilation of a Secular Hymn Book. It is true that there are already several in existence, notably those respectively compiled by Mrs. Besant and by the Leicester Secular Society. There are also the compilations of Austin Holyoake, H. Smith, Mullogan, the American "Liberal Hymn Book," Putman's "Songs and Singers of the Liberal Faith," the Australian "Secular Hymn Book" compiled by Mr. D. Andrade, and many songs in Mr. Bennett's journal *The Lark*. None of these, however, are published with music and nearly all offend by the inclusion of pieces of no

literary merit. With however so large a repertoire as may be found in these works and in the writings of Mackay, Leno, Denton, Peacock and others, there should be no difficulty in the selection of pieces combining the two requisites of literary excellence and of being singable. Nor should the setting of these to tunes present any grave difficulties. Our party includes many of musical ability (I may perhaps without being invidious mention Mr. Lowry as an original composer) whose services might be put into requisition to marry noble words to noble music. Doubtless to some extent it would be well to fall back on familiar standard airs, and even choice church and chapel music, but in operatic gems, and still more in the *volkslieder* of all nations there is a vast field for selection and arrangement. In this matter the experience of the Leicester, Portsmouth, Birmingham, Huddersfield and other friends would be valuable. Once a committee is formed they will doubtless receive many suggestions besides those of

J. M. WHEELER.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

WHAT can it profit any mortal to adopt locutions and imaginations which do not correspond to fact, which no sane mortal can deliberately adopt in his soul as true, which the most orthodox of mortals can only, and this after infinite essentially impious effort to put out the eyes of his mind, persuade himself to "believe that he believes"? Away, with it! In the name of God, come out of it, all true men!—*T. Carlyle*, "Life of Sterling," chap. vii.

WHAT the light of your mind, which is the direct inspiration of the Almighty, pronounces incredible, that, in God's name, leave uncredited; at your peril do not try believing that.—*Ibid.*, chap. viii.

CHRISTIANITY is human in its origin, erroneous in its theories, delusive in its threats and its rewards. Jesus Christ was a man, with all the faults and imperfections of the prophetic character. The Bible is simply a collection of Jewish writings. The miracles in the Old Testament deserve no more attention from historians than the miracles in Homer. The miracles in the Gospels are like the miracles in Plutarch's Lives; they do not lessen the value of the biography, and the value of the biography does not lessen the absurdity of the miracles.—*Winwood Reade*.

MONKERY AND CHASTITY.—Following Jesus and Paul, the monks cried up virginity as the supreme virtue. St. Ambrose declaimed in its favor, and drove many young women into nunneries. "But of all the praisers of virginity," says Jortin, "Jerome seems to have performed his part the best, who calls Eustochium, the nun, *His Lady*, because she was the spouse of his Lord, and reminds the mother of this lady that she has the honor to be *God's mother-in-law*." But the monks were not all as chaste as they pretended. St. Athanasius said that many of the bishops kept themselves even from matrimony, while monks were the fathers of children. As they grew richer, and dispensed with manual labor, they naturally became more licentious, and in time they "led lawless and scandalous lives, and indulged themselves in all sorts of vices without control." Moseheim describes the monks of the west as "most ignorant and profligate wretches." Hallam says that "their extreme licentiousness was sometimes hardly concealed by the cowl of sanctity." St. Theodore Studita, in the ninth century, was obliged to prohibit the entrance of *female animals* into the monasteries.—"Crimes of Christianity," p. 61.

PART VI. of "Crimes of Christianity" is now ready. It continues the subject of Pious Frauds, dealing with spurious miracles and holy relics, in both of which the Church found a great source of advancement and profit; and the readers will find it one of the most entertaining numbers of the series. Parts VII. and VIII. will deal with the Rise of the Papacy, and the Crimes of the Popes. The latter will be a very delectable piece of reading.

"PA, who was Shylock?" Paterfamilias (with a look of surprise and horror): "Great goodness, boy; you attend church and Sunday-school every week, and don't know who Shylock was? Go and read your Bible, sir."

AT Adrian, Mich., a lady saw a fire-engine-house with a steeple, and innocently asked a gentleman attendant, "What church is that?" The gentleman, after reading the sign, "Deluge No. 3," replied, "I guess it must be the Third Baptist."

A LADY, unable to read, thought that she could impress her neighbor that she was learned, and accordingly asked for the loan of a book. The neighbor "smelling a rat," lent her the Bible. Keeping it a few days, she brought it back, and was asked by the lender how she liked it. She replied: "I think it was just lovely; they got married after all, didn't they?"

CHARLES LAMB was in the habit of wearing a white cravat, and in consequence he was sometimes taken for a clergyman. Once, at a dinner-table among a large number of guests, his white cravat caused such a mistake to be made, and he was called upon to "say grace." "Is there no c-c-clergyman present?" "No, sir," answered a guest. "Th-then," said Lamb, bowing his head, "let us thank God!"

ACID DROPS.

A WRITER in the *Record* quotes the text (Leviticus ix., 19), "Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind; thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee," as an argument against the use of so hybrid a production as the Revised Version of the Holy Bible.

RUSKIN says that "No man has ever lived a right life who has not been chastened by a woman's love, strengthened by her courage, and guided by her discretion." But what of Jesus, whom Ruskin admires so intensely? Why did he not set the right example by taking to himself a wife? He might then have left behind him some little grandsons of God from whom a new chosen people might have developed. The story of Adam and Eve, too, doesn't exactly confirm Ruskin's idea, although Ruskin thinks so highly of the Bible.

THE Baptist *Freeman* speaks of "that skill in suppressing the true and in suggesting the false in which the *Church Times* excels," and declares that "the *Church Times* is perfectly unscrupulous in controversy, and remarkably inaccurate even when there is little temptation to depart from the narrow way." Such are the amenities of religious polemics.

At Hanley there has been an animated discussion in the Town Council concerning the letting of the Town Hall to Secularists for lectures. Alderman Powell said it was "not a question of religious liberty at all; it was a question of God or no God." The Secularists, he held, should build a place for themselves and "maintain it as the religious bodies of the town did their churches and chapels." Will Bigot Powell give us our share of the national property devoted to church purposes? Will he relieve us of rates and taxes as churches and chapels are relieved? Will he alter the laws so that legacies for the propagation of Atheism may be legal? Of course not: he would give us no more justice in the future than we have had in the past. Mr. Broomhead pointed out that the Town Hall was let regularly for religious purposes. The right of Secularist ratepayers to hire the Hall was finally maintained by 11 votes to 8.

A RECENTLY-PUBLISHED text-book of Entomology, by W. F. Kirby, of the British Museum, gives the number of the various species of insects as about 222,000. If Captain Noah took specimens of each of these into the ark with him, we cannot wonder at his taking to drink when he got outside.

THE New York Aldermen voted last week to allow base-ball playing and other athletic exercises on Sundays on some vacant ground. They were notified by their President and another of the members that this vote is in conflict with the penal code.

It is stated that in the United States one or two churches are burned every week.

MARRIAGE LAWS are said to be in a peculiar crisis in Chili. The State declares all marriages not under the civil law illegal, and the church excommunicates all those who obey the law. Those who desire to enter matrimony have to choose between arrest and excommunication.

At Chorillos, in Peru, recently, the feast of St. Peter was observed, and the image of the saint, watched by a silent and respectful crowd, was embarked in a fishing boat and was furnished with fishing lines. After sailing twice around the bay a large fish was caught, and the image was then returned to its pedestal in the Chorillos Church.

ACCORDING to the *Naval Brigade News*, "Josh Billings" says that "impudence, ingratitude, ignorance and cowardice, makes up the creed of infidelity." It is cowardice on the part of an infidel, then, to go to gaol for his opinions; but it is noble heroism on the part of the Christian to put him there. Bruno was a coward to die at the stake; the human fiends who burnt him to ashes were the bravest of the brave. Vanini displayed the basest ingratitude towards his Christian murderers when he declined to change his opinions in answer to their pious attentions. Darwin is a type of the infidel ignorance which loves science rather than God. The consummate impudence of infidels, in daring to differ from God's chosen saints is positively unbearable. Such is Christian reasoning.

JOSH BILLINGS displays the usual shameful bravery of the bigot in making reckless assertions. He says that "no Atheist, with all his boasted bravery, has ever yet dared to advertize his unbelief on his tume-stun." Many cases of the kind have occurred, and Christians have usually had the inscription removed as an outrage on their feelings. The Church would not even allow a Wesleyan minister to have the word "Reverend" put before his name, so petty and so searching is episcopal tyranny. If we don't "insult" Christians by outspoken epitaphs we are cowards, and if we do we are ruffians. Christian justice strongly resembles that of the wolf towards the lamb in the fable, and the only hope is to fight it to the uttermost.

THE *Naval Brigade News* also repeats an anonymous story of a Christian who committed suicide because his mind was unhinged by the "guilty practice" of reading "C. Bradlaugh's infidel literature, including a year's series of an infidel serial, illustrated with coarse and blasphemous caricatures." Mr. Bradlaugh doesn't publish any illustrated serial with caricatures, but accuracy is of no consequence in religious statements. If the suicide occurred as alleged, it was apparently caused by disappointment at the discovery of the fraud which Christianity had deluded him with. Christianity had so weakened and perverted his mind that he could not endure the truth. Truth is not to be blamed for the effects of falsehood. But the suicide may have occurred from other motives purposely concealed. If an "infidel" suicide died with a Bible in his room, would Christians attribute his fate to the Holy Scriptures? We ourselves read our Bible more attentively than ninety-nine out of every hundred Christians. Would Christians lay all our faults to the Word of God?

REUBEN MAY, the begging missionary of Golden Lane, who has so often been shown up in *Truth* and the *Christian World*, issues his annual cadging circular at this time of the year, and a copy has fallen into our hands. Reuben implores his *kyind friends* to "aid at once towards giving the Children, the Sick and the Aged a change in the country." Cheques and Post Office Orders are to be made payable to Reuben May, who will cash them, and of course apply the proceeds to the Lord's work as he understands it. Unfortunately, Reuben will not give others the advantage of his ideas on this point, for if any subscriber wants a balance-sheet Reuben is as deaf as a post.

REUBEN boasts in his cadging circular of having given a good deal of work to the unemployed. He engaged women, he says, to work Scripture mottoes on banners, and men to carry the said mottoed banners in the streets. No doubt the political economists will consider this a very productive expenditure of capital. Reuben forgets to say how many men and women he employed, and where, and at what wages. Perhaps Reuben has forgotten.

POPE LEO XIII. not only appoints earthly ecclesiastics to posts of dignity, but, so we gather from the *Tablet*, also distributes offices in heaven, for he has been graciously pleased to declare and appoint St. Vincent of Paul to be the chief patron and director of all societies of charity throughout the Catholic world. If the Protestants are right, won't the Pope get it hot for blasphemy?

WHILE the Church in England has been revising their Old Testament, the Episcopalians of America have been revising the Church of England Prayer-book. As they have made it less Roman in its tendencies, the *Church Times* pronounces the result "a dismal fiasco."

THE Virgin Mary is said to have appeared at the little mountain village of Corano. A little girl of eleven first reported the celestial visit and now thirty other girls claim to be in direct communication with the Madonna. Intense excitement prevails, and there is a literal "epidemic of ecstasies and visions." It is estimated that 30,000 people have reached the village, and more are on their road thither. Men, as well as women fall on the ground in a delirium of supplication, kissing the stones, weeping, laughing, and singing. Many faint or fall into convulsions, and some are lying in a state of trance. Protestants, of course, pooh-pooh these manifestations and testimonies because they are modern. If they had occurred in a foreign land 2,000 years ago, and had been included in the Sacred Book, they would have been irrefragable proofs of the truth of Christianity.

SOMEONE has favored us with a copy of the *Scripture Reader's Journal*, which he addressed to us at our "Blasphemy Factory, Clerkenwell Green, E.C." This publication is issued by the Church of England Scripture Readers' Association, and we are happy to find that the funds of that society "have been very considerably below the average during the last three months." (Italics in the original.) According to the report of the annual meeting, presided over by the Bishop of Ripon, the chairman remarked that Christians "do good in such odd ways." True; but the falling off in the funds of the Scripture Readers' Association shows that they are getting a little less odd.

SIR JOHN KENNAWAY was another speaker. This eminent authority laughed at Voltaire for saying that in another hundred years the Bible would be regarded as unworthy of credence. All right, Sir John, laugh away; it amuses you and does Voltaire no harm. Posterity has already sided with him, for there is scarcely a scholar in Europe who regards the Bible as God's Word in any proper sense of the term.

THE Rev. C. R. Billings, rector of Spitalfields, furnished an excellent commentary on the Bishop of Ripon's observation that the clergy were a dreadfully overworked body. There was, said this strenuous sky-pilot, not only house to house visitation in his parish, but cellar to cellar visitation; and he added "I do not say that I do it, but those good men and good women who are my beloved workers in the work of the Lord do it." Capital.

The Rev. C. R. Billings, like many of his brother sky-pilots, is overworked by proxy.

MRS. BRADLEY, newsagent, 8 Robin Hood Lane, Poplar, exhibited a copy of the *Freethinker* in her shop window. This annoyed the Rev. Mr. Paget, head of the Carnarvon Club, East India Docks, who scolded her for selling such a wicked paper and ordered her to remove it from the window. A few days afterwards the weekly order for literature from the Club was stopped, and Mrs. Bradley was told that it "was only fair to give somebody else a turn." Mrs. Bradley is now going to give the Rev. Mr. Harvey a turn. She intends not only to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window, but to display a contents-bill outside the shop. Oh Harvey, Harvey, you've played your cards badly this time.

ACCORDING to the *Sussex Daily News*, there is a clergyman near Birmingham who, not satisfied with dispensing the well-watered "milk of the word," devotes his time to dairy-farming, and even delivers the supply at Birmingham himself. Evidently he is preparing for disestablishment.

THE President of the Wesleyan Conference protests against the views given in many tracts in regard to "perfect holiness." He says that the lives of believers in "perfect holiness" are not found to support the doctrine. No doubt he speaks from a wide experience.

THE Rev. John Dalton, of Rotherham, who has been compelled to resign his curacy for Ritualism, commended to the prayers of his congregation "the poor man at Bishopthorpe [the Archbishop of York], and all who persecuted the faith of Jesus Christ." Archbishop Thomson, not liking to be publicly prayed for, has compelled Mr. Dalton to apologise.

"CHURCHMAN" writes to the *Liverpool Echo* complaining of the conduct of three sky-pilots and two of their "ladies," who turned a poor lad out of their compartment in a train from Preston to Blackpool because his corduroy trousers offended their taste. "Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven," said Jesus. "Damn you, you little blackguard, clear out," say his loaf-and-fish apostles to-day.

AT a meeting of the Christian Evidence Society in the grounds of Wimbledon Vicarage, the Rev. P. Barker lamented the "wide prevalence of unbelief." Mr. Howard said that Mr. Bradlaugh had his antetype in the first few centuries, but there was no time when infidelity lifted up its head more boldly than now. Exactly; "infidels" were permitted to exist when Christianity had not acquired power, and they are again permitted to exist now Christianity is losing it. Mr. Dowsett believed that the long-continued depression in trade was the result of national sin, and this "abounding wickedness" must be met by "additional money help" to the Christian Evidence Society. The whole cry is for cash down. The Secretary, the Rev. C. L. Engstrom said the only thing the Society suffers from is want of money. Naturally enough that is his view, but we have a shrewd opinion that the Society suffers much more from want of common candor and fairness, and from want of a defensible cause. It is burdened with an incompetent Secretary and with unscrupulous lecturers who think that foul libels on Freethinkers are the best defence of the Christianity whose evil effects they thus so ably set forth.

THE Rev. E. Husband, of St. Michael's, Folkestone, says of the crusade against impurity: "It has been taken up by the 'Salvation Army' in such a way as almost to lower the crusade into a 'Salvation Army' movement. Hideous though the sins be to which we allude, still we do not care to hand over poor, weak-minded prodigals to a sect which lacks all semblance of discretion, and drags religion in the mire of 'religious' buffoonery. Neither have we any faith or any hope that such fanaticism would work any permanent good in those who have been led astray."

THE *English Churchman*, in its account of the death of Sir Moses Montefiore, gravely tells an anecdote of "the well-known Charlotte Elizabeth," who, when on her death-bed, sent her very last words to the Jewish patriarch. "Tell Sir Moses," she said, "tell him with my dying breath, that Jesus is the Messiah." The religious paper naively adds, "What impression this touching message may have produced, we are not permitted to know." We imagine the patriarch smole.

MR. J. T. WOOD has been making discoveries at Ephesus; among others that of a tomb variously said to have been that of St. Luke and of St. John. If the latter, it ought to have been easily identified, for according to a story believed in by all the early Christians, the earth over John's body heaved up and down with the apostle's breathing, John not being dead, but sleeping until the second advent in accordance with Christ's words, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

WHAT the Romanisers in our Church think about Bishops is expressed by the historian Froude in the following terms:—"The latest and most singular theory," he says, "about them

(i.e., Bishops) is that of the modern English Neo-Catholic, who disregards his Bishop's advice and despises his censures; but looks on him nevertheless as some high-bred worn-out animal, useless in himself, but infinitely valuable for some mysterious purpose of spiritual propagation."—"History of England," vol. xii., p. 502).

A GEORGIA man tried to cut the sinews in the feet of his daughter, so that she could not imperil her soul by dancing.

THE *Protestant Times* for August has an article entitled "Episcopal Perfidy," strongly denouncing the bishops who by covertly sanctioning the doctrine of confession and "The Priest in Absolution" are "poisoning the springs of life."

GOD has been comforting the Russians with earthquakes. The settlements of Sukuluk and Belovodsk were laid in ruins, and at Belovodsk a church fell in, many of the congregation being killed. Good and gracious is the Lord in all his ways, and of his loving kindness is no end.

LOUIS RIEL, the Canadian rebel, is a religious fanatic it seems. In making his fervent and oratorical defence he crossed his hands, turned his eyes upwards, and prayed earnestly for the blessing of God on himself, the lawyers, the court, and all present. During the absence of the jury he went to their chairs and prayed over each one separately and sprinkled holy water on it. After this he remained on his knees praying until the weeping jury brought in their verdict of guilty, with a recommendation to mercy.

AN Illinois man has petitioned to have his name changed from Sheol to Shradly. The new version of the Bible renders a new version of his name desirable.

THE thunders of the Church have been launched once more. The Rev. Coker Adams, of Saham Tony, Norfolk, has publicly excommunicated one of his parishioners, a farmer named Payne, who is eighty-two years of age. The rector went through this once alarming ceremony in consequence of the old farmer's "neglect of the Church's ordinances and refusal of her ministrations." But the neighbors won't refuse him food and shelter, and so starve him to death, as was the custom in the good old times when Mother Church was supreme; and the old man can laugh at the impotent Church, which only renders itself a laughing-stock by its idle fulminations. It can bark, but it cannot bite. In 1810 the law was repealed which declared that persons excommunicated could not serve on juries, be witnesses in court, or bring an action.

By the verdict of the jury at Chester County Court, Samuel Manley, a deacon of a local chapel and prominently connected with a Sunday School, has had to pay £50 damages for a "most offensive" assault upon a Mrs. Coppack, whose husband happened to be out when this pious deacon called. Defendant acknowledged that he had been guilty of a similar assault on a previous occasion.

THE Parnellites, who profess such reverence for the oath of allegiance that they cannot allow Mr. Bradlaugh to profane it, cordially cheered Mr. Bright's recent repetition of his allusion to them as "the rebel party," a title they accepted long ago. To take an oath with no intention of keeping it, and to break it after it has been taken, is no profanation in the eyes of devout partisans. It is outspoken honesty that is the unpardonable sin in their eyes.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Guardian* is troubled with an awful problem. A child born in a caravan crossing the desert, was put through the form of baptism without any water. Was this a genuine christening, or must the baby go to hell for lack of this essential to salvation? The *Christian Commonwealth* is quite "Infidel" in its reproof of such unnatural ideas. It holds that it is grievous and humiliating in the extreme that men can discuss a question like this and regard it as a matter of life and death; and it utterly rejects the orthodox doctrine that children are "unregenerate and of the Devil" until they pass through the hands of the priest.

IN a letter to the *Times*, calling attention to the appointment of such distinct Romanisers as the Bishop and Dean of Lincoln and Mr. Linklater, Lord Ebury says that the Archbishop of Canterbury unreservedly admits that "in a great many churches in the province of Canterbury services are performed which are scarcely distinguishable from the Roman Mass." Quite a large section of the Anglican clergy see no objection to swearing adherence to Protestant articles while doing the work of Rome.

THERE is nothing like leather. The assembly of United Methodist Free Churches at Nottingham, while declaring in favor of the Sunday closing of public-houses, protested against the Sunday opening of museums and picture galleries. They want no counter attractions to the chapels.

"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.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

OUR recent article in the *Freethinker* on "The Bible and Young Girls" is reprinted with some additions as a Tract under the title of "THE MAIDEN TRIBUTE TO JEHOVAH." Copies will be supplied at 6d. a hundred, or 7d. post free. One thousand for 4s. While the *Pall Mall Gazette* revelations are fresh, the wide distribution of this Tract will be a splendid blow at the Old Book.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 9, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town; at 7.30, "The Bible and Women."

AUGUST 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London; 31, Battersea.
SEPTEMBER 6, Birmingham; 13 and 20, Hall of Science, London; 27, Liverpool.
OCTOBER 4, Manchester.
NOVEMBER 1 and 8, 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.

S. MAHON writes: "I have just read your new pamphlet on Randolph Churchill, and think it one of the happiest things you ever wrote. I do not remember any political pamphlet (and I have read many in my time) so pointed, sarcastic and crushing. If the public would only read it, Churchill's reputation could not survive the exposure."

J. E. SMYTH.—Thanks, but the joke has already appeared.

W. R. JOSSLYN says: "I am glad to tell you that it was through your imprisonment I came over to Freethought and am now a member of the N. S. S. (Battersea Branch). I am doing my best to educate others. When I commenced to read the *Freethinker* I got one copy and lent it; now I get eight copies, and each one is read by at least six people."

J. WILSON.—Our readers always do us a service by sending us newspapers or cuttings.

R. G.—Write to Mr. Bradlaugh himself if you want information about him. But don't ask such a foolish question personally, unless you want to dust the floor with the back of your coat. Mr. Bradlaugh is over six feet high, and weighs nearly two hundred pounds.

WM. HOOK.—We know no more of Leo Taxil's case than the papers have reported. His late colleagues may have called him a coward without being discourteous; they may know he is a coward. We see from the papers that his wife has not shared his conversion.

H. VIEDGE (South Africa).—The yearly subscription to the *Freethinker* post free to your colony is 8s. 8d.

H. J. BARRETT.—Thanks; shall appear.

W. C.—Anthony Comstock is the man who prosecuted the late D. M. Bennett, editor of the *New York Truthseeker*. He is a sort of Public Prosecutor, and his especial business seems to be like that of C. H. Collette, our English Secretary of the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Comstock is a state official, and according to his own report he has spent a good deal of his own time and the public money in playing the part of detective and informer.

J. GRANGE.—The Liberation Society, 2 Serjeants Inn, Fleet Street, London, issue a number of publications on the Church. One of these, and a very excellent one, is "The Case for Disestablishment." The Secretary will send you a catalogue on application.

B. JOHNSON.—Circulate "The Maiden Tribute to Jehovah."

G. L. M. (Dublin).—Shall appear.

C. PEARCE.—*Agnostic* is a Greek word signifying "not knowing." Professor Huxley, we believe, first applied it to those who are without knowledge of God. (2) We recommend you to read "Crimes of Christianity." Your third question shall be answered next week.

ADONAI.—We have read your letter with great interest, and wish you all success in the society you are projecting. Papers duly received.

W. WILLMAN.—We cordially acknowledged the services of Messrs. Coker and Brown a few weeks ago, and said that they deserved great praise for carrying on the propaganda so energetically in Hyde Park.

T. EDWARDS.—It was duly received. We only acknowledge the sketches that win the prize or are commended.

J. E. R.—Thanks for the anecdote.

J. F.—Cuttings received with thanks. We have already dealt with the *Pall Mall Gazette* disclosures.

C. D.—We are overcrowded with copy this week.

F. CHIVERS considers the Summer Number the best three-pennyworth of amusement in the market.

M. PLACKETT.—It appeared in the *Freethinker* two or three years ago, and has been published in almost every newspaper in the kingdom.

H. MORGAN writes that Mr. Whitely, the Liberal candidate for the Southern division of Kent, is perfectly sound on all matters that specially affect Freethinkers.

W. C.—Thanks for the reference. There are many such points in quaint old Sir Thomas Browne.

H. M. R. is surprised that the sky-pilots have it all their own way on the sands at New Brighton. He thinks that two or three Liverpool Freethinkers should cross the river, distribute a few tracts and carry on a little discussion.

H. S. D.—Thanks for the jokes, which will doubtless be useful.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Staffordshire Sentinel—Naval Brigade News—Sydney Bulletin—Winnowing Breeze—Warrington Examiner—Boston Investigator—Ironclad Age—Freethinkers' Magazine—Unitarian Herald—North Star—Midland Free Press—Women's Suffrage Journal—Truthseeker—Manchester Examiner—Newcastle Weekly Chronicle—Liberty—York Evening Press—Daily Telegraph.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

The prize for the best Comic Bible Sketch has been awarded to W. E. Fowler, 22 Gough Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, conditionally on its reproducing properly, the ink being somewhat blue.

The prize for the best Religious Topical Sketch has been awarded to F. Wilcockson, 76 St. Stephen's Street, Salford, Manchester. His sketch, which will appear next week, is entitled "Healing by Un-faith." It is a capital cartoon and contains a good portrait of Mr. Foote.

HIGHLY COMMENDED AND MAY BE USED.—A. Smith, C. Puttock, G. R. Warnes, James Wright, R. Saunders (subject inappropriate), José Pinder.

COMMENDED.—R. McPherson, Mr. Cocker, E. J. Conway, L. Sampson.

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 September 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.

JUDGE STALLO, who has been sent as ambassador from the United States to Italy, is an avowed Freethinker. The Roman Catholics feel horrified. Judge Stallo in 1869 declared that our modern civilisation cannot in any just sense be called Christian but had been acquired in spite of Christian resistance. The surest and readiest way of discovering where truth and progress are bringing new light and hope, he thinks, is "to look in the direction in which the Pope and his church have driven their latest anathema, or a Protestant ecclesiastic has sent his loudest curse."

At a recent meeting of the Central Council of Diocesan Conferences it was stated that the Church of England is losing more people through emigration than she is winning through her missionary labors.

MR. SHARMAN requests us to acknowledge the receipt of 5s. for the National Association for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws from the Rev. Arnold D. Taylor, Churchstanton Rectory, Honiton, Devon.

THE *Freethinkers' Magazine*, edited by Mr. H. L. Green of Salamanca, who has done much in successfully organising the Freethought party in the United States, is a live periodical full of interest in regard to the progress of the movement in America. The number for July contains among other interesting matter a kindly reference to ourselves and a warm endorsement of our Comic Bible Sketches, which it declares are well worth a dollar as a prescription for good health, that is if you want to laugh and grow fat.

MR. T. H. DARWIN is busy preparing the life of his illustrious father, which will be published by Murray about the end of the year.

THE Municipality of Paris has named one of the streets leading to the Sorbonne "Rue de Giordano Bruno" and has voted 200 francs to the monument to Bruno to be erected in Rome. It is estimated that the monument will cost about 30,000 francs although the work of the Sculptor Feran will be gratis.

"WHY GOD NO KILL THE DEVIL?"

In "Robinson Crusoe," Defoe gives us an account of the theological instruction which he thinks that an honest, earnest Christian would communicate to a heathen friend and servant. Robinson Crusoe finds it tolerably easy to substitute in Friday's mind the Christian God for the heathen god Benu-muckee, and he also easily exposes the frauds of the priests who pretend to receive messages from the heathen god on some sacred Sinai of his own. But he finds great difficulty in teaching Friday the orthodox doctrines concerning Satan; for Defoe, though a good Christian, was an honest and realistic writer who fairly expressed obvious difficulties by putting them into the mouth of the new convert. Robinson Crusoe proceeds with the narrative thus:—

"The poor creature puzzled me once in such a manner, by a question merely natural and innocent, that I scarce knew what to say.

"I had been talking a great deal to him of the power of God, his omnipotence, his dreadful aversion to sin—his being a consuming fire to the workers of iniquity—how, as he had made us all, he could destroy us and all the world in a moment; and he listened with great seriousness to me all the while. After this I had been telling him how the Devil was God's enemy in the hearts of men, and used all his malice and skill to defeat the good designs of Providence and to ruin the kingdom of Christ

in the world, and the like. 'Well,' says Friday, 'but you say God is so strong, so great: is he not much strong, much might as the Devil?' 'Yes, yes,' says I, 'Friday, God is stronger than the Devil; God is above the Devil, and therefore we pray to God to tread him under our feet, and enable us to resist his temptations and quench his fiery darts.' 'But,' says he again, 'if God much strong, much might as the Devil, why God no kill the Devil, so make him no more do wicked?'

Robinson Crusoe is dumb-founded with the question, and pretends not to hear it, but Friday is too earnest to allow the matter to pass. When he repeats his question, Crusoe, having recovered himself a little, replies that God reserves the Devil for the judgment, and will then punish him. Friday says, "But why not kill the Devil now?" whereto Crusoe weakly replies, "You may as well ask me why God does not kill you and me, when we do wicked things here that offend him. We are preserved to repent and be pardoned." Friday muses over this and is satisfied. "Well, well," he says, "that well: so you, I, devil, all wicked, all preserve, repent, God pardon all." Crusoe now finds himself "run down again by him to the last degree." He is, in fact, completely discomfited, and has to resort to prayer before he can recover sufficient confidence to renew the conversation.

The truth is that Friday has the best of the argument. All the divines that ever lived have been as unable to answer his question as Robinson Crusoe was. They break down as hopelessly, though not as candidly and honestly, for they cloak their failure in verbiage and sophistry, and never own to a defeat.

The question itself is a sign of mental liberty and of progress. It never seems to have occurred to the inferior class of minds that wrote and accepted the Christian Scriptures. "God willed it" was with them sufficient answer to anything. God was all-powerful and therefore there could be no criticism of his acts, but only the most unquestioning submission to them. All might was his, and all might was synonymous with all right. If he made angels whom he would torment for ever in the fires of hell, no early Christian would dare to ask why in a genuine spirit of criticism. If God allowed these fallen angels, and especially their prince, to lead the world astray into vice and crime, and worst of all into unbelief and everlasting ruin, no saint would allow himself to think otherwise of this awful permission than as the best and holiest action of a being utterly irresponsible because his will was omnipotent and was hence the sole standard of right and wrong, indisputable and certain however inscrutable some manifestations of it might appear to be. The Eastern mind bowed in abject slavery before absolute sovereignty. The Western mind has questions to ask, and it asks them with ever increasing force; but the theologians still fail to explain why God made a Devil and created evil (Isaiah xlvi., 7), why he permits the evil which he and the Devil jointly or separately cause, and why he does not end it once for all by destroying or converting the "Evil One" from whom it more immediately flows.

It is not from humanity that the Christian God refrains from killing Satan. It may be from inhumanity, from pure malevolence and love of vengeance. It may be because God will not allow Satan to escape by a comparatively painless extinction from the everlasting torments which he, as the more powerful fiend, will delight to inflict upon his hated rival. Satan may also be spared from motives of policy. He is a convenient scapegoat, on whose head may be put the more despicable crimes and cruelties of which God grows ashamed, in proportion as mankind advances in morality. Besides thus preserving God's character by contrast, and by bearing his sins, as Christ, they say, bore ours, he is useful as a bogey in frightening Christ's sheep into the fold. Only unworthy motives and suicidal excuses will account for an omnipotent God's permission of the wholesale fraud and misery of which the Devil is usually assumed to be the author.

From another and more rational point of view, we may see that God spares the Devil, not as a personal scapegoat or scarecrow or victim, but solely because good and evil continue in the world side by side, as universal and tremendous facts, and God and Devil are, in men's minds, largely representative of these two permanent and apparently indestructible principles. The ceaseless conflict between good and evil, taking shape in men's minds as a ceaseless conflict between a personal God and a personal Devil, necessitates the preservation of the latter so long as

evil continues. As Theists, however, in their ardor, have gifted their God with omnipotence as well as with perfect goodness and benevolence, they have by their flatteries created for themselves an utterly insoluble difficulty. Crime, vice, tyranny, and undeserved suffering, are too conspicuous and too wide-spread to be ignored, and too real and too terrible to be reconciled with a perfectly benevolent omnipotence. To destroy evil, or to change it into good, would be the first task of almighty goodness, if such existed; but in this case evil would never have been created or permitted, and no Devil would have been required as its secondary author and promoter.

The true answer to Friday's question and the Theist's perplexing puzzle is fast being arrived at by mankind. It is a short, sharp, simple answer, of the kind that will solve many other vexed problems and foolish assumptions in religion and metaphysics. God doesn't kill the Devil because neither of them exist.

W. P. BALL.

JACK'S STORY.

RELIGION be all very proper
And handy, maybe, now and then,
But prayin's for kids and women,
I think—not for able men.

As a parson you plays your game, sir,
When you sings and preaches and prays;
I reckon as that's your dooty,
And dooty's a thing as pays.

I'm a sailor, thank God, not a parson—
A sanctified son of a gun—
And sailors is orkard to tackle,
As you'll find, sir, afore I've done.

You've spun me a yarn about prayin',
And a lot as I don't understand;
Now I'll tell you o' somethin' as happened
One night on the Goodwin Sand.

It was three year ago come November,
I were mate o' the "Ocean Belle,"
We wasn't far off o' the Goodwin,
And the night was as black as hell.

Our ship was old and rotten
And the wind was blowing a gale,
And the way we was pitchin' and tossin'
'Ud a turned a nigger pale.

I know'd we was in for a dustin'
And it war'n't no use to funk;
So I goes astarn to the cap'n
And finds him three parts drunk.

He know'd just as well as I did
There was nothin' more to be done,
So I goes to the other sailors
And tells 'em one by one.

And some on 'em takes to swearin'
And some on 'em takes to rum;
That's a way tars 'as o' preparin'
Their souls for kingdom come.

But one on 'em slinks away, sir,
And makes for the cabin stairs,
And down below we could hear him
A-shoutin' out his prayers.

A shock comes all of a sudden,
And on we went with a thud,
And the old ship strain'd and stagger'd—
'Twas enough to curdle your blood.

But we didn't begin a weepin'
An' whinin' "Thy will be done,"
We did a darned sight better—
We fired the minit gun.

And after we'd waited in terror
An hour—a week it seemed—
Somethin' we heard on the water,
And "Hip, hurrah!" we screamed.

And over the roar o' the billows
We caught the answerin' cheer
And the splash of oars in the lifeboat;
We know'd as help was near.

Well, to make my story short, sir,
We'd hardly left the ship
Than she gives a roll to port, sir,
And under she goes with a dip.

And when we looks at each other
I' the light of the dawnin' day,
I'm darned if we hadn't forgot
The chap as went down to pray.

My argument may be rotten—
As rotten as that old ship—
But I think if he hadn't been prayin'
He'd a given "Old Jones" the slip,

For the men as took to swearin'
And the men as took to drink
Was saved by the Ramsgit lifeboat,
And he was left to sink.

G. R. SIMS.

(From an old number of the "Referee.")

INGERSOLL INTERVIEWED.

THE American papers find that Colonel Ingersoll makes good copy. He is, accordingly, frequently interviewed respecting his views on various questions. Ingersoll says that he rather likes newspaper men for they generally use him fair except when they belong to the religious press, and then they are about as unfair and fanatical as the clergy. One of the latest interviewers was the "we" of the *Saganan Sun* (Michigan) who came to ask about the Catholic reply to Ingersoll by Father Lambert and other matters. Asked if this was not the strongest thing that had yet appeared against him, Ingersoll answered:

"I don't consider it strong at all. It may be more ingenious and cunning than some of the others, but they are all weak and evade the point at issue."

"Did you ever say that this book contained the strongest arguments used against you, and they were unanswerable?"

"I never made any such statement."

"Will you please write your denial on the fly-leaf of the book?"

The great apostle of infidelity took out his pencil and wrote lengthwise in a large, bold hand on the fly-leaf, the following words:

"I never thought this reply unanswerable. On the contrary, I never thought it worth answering. I have read but little of it, but that little is poor and puerile.—R. G. INGERSOLL."

The Colonel was then asked why he had refused to have his lecture "What Must we do to be Saved?" issued by Messrs. Funk and Wagnall, together with Joseph Parker's reply. Ingersoll replied that he refused on the ground that Mr. Parker was rude and ill-mannered—that his reply was unsaleable in itself and he did not care to furnish to other publishers than his own the only saleable thing in the proposed work.

"Mr. Ingersoll, I believe you are endeavoring to tear down Christianity and obliterate the same from the face of the earth. If so, what do you propose to give us in its place. Anything better?"

"Yes, I would tear down Christianity and scatter the fragments to the winds. When a doctor cures a patient of a disease he should leave him and not inflict another upon him. Get rid of the evils of Christianity and there will be good enough in the world."

"Do you like this business of lecturing through the country?"

"Can't say I do."

"Is your chief object in making money?" Mr. Ingersoll laughed good-naturedly and said:

"Such is the orthodox story. To be sure I want money for my time the same as my friends Beecher and Talmage, but I feel a missionary spirit in this matter, to assist in the enlightenment and good of my fellow mortals. When I first started out I did not expect to make money in the business. Then my chief thought was how to escape the fury of the orthodox crowd, and escape lynching. My audiences were not large at first, but gradually increased, and to-day I have more calls than I can possibly attend to. This idea that I follow lecturing for the money there is in it, is all bosh. I can lay up more money by practice in my profession. But absence from home is my principal objection to this business."

"I understand that at home your family do not ask you for money, but each help themselves to what they want—go and come when they please?"

"Correct. I do the same, and they have as good right to freedom as I."

"I understand that you never punished your children corporally, and never used coercion as a means of restraint."

"True. The person who would inflict corporal punishment upon a child, must be an ignoramus, a tyrant or a barbarian, and, perhaps, all combined. I would much rather strike my wife than an innocent, defenceless child, for she might have the power to resent and punish the insult, and rather than be guilty of such an act towards the one I professed to love, I would sever my right hand."

"What do you think of the talked-of conflict between Infidelity and Christianity?"

"It is surely coming, and the day is not far distant. Even now the Protestant churches are going to pieces, and when the shock of battle comes it will be mostly with the Church of Rome."

"When that conflict comes do you think that the Protestants and Catholics will unite against Infidelity?"

"Most assuredly they will, for mutual protection; but there will not be many left. Before the final crisis comes many will go back into the Church of Rome, but the greater portion will join the standard of Freethought and liberty."

"How long do you think the Church of Rome will hold out when the conflict comes upon her?"

"Hard to determine. That Church is a large and compact body, with the most complete system of government yet devised by man. While the leaders are enlightened, the masses are ignorant, credulous and obedient to their superiors, and abound in almost unlimited faith in the Church and its institutions; still the light of modern advancement is breaking in upon this Church, and there are many Liberalists who were formerly Catholics. An enlightened Catholic rarely goes into Protestant orthodoxy. When they change it is generally to the side of Liberty."

The Colonel's utterances, being widely repeated in America, are doing much to prepare the public mind for the coming conflict.

THE PARABLES OF JOSHUA BEN PANDIRA.

(REVISED VERSION.)

"And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables: that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them."—MARK IV., 11, 12.

AND it came to pass that Joshua opened his mouth and spoke a parable unto them, saying, Verily, verily, I say unto you, the kingdom of heaven is like unto an unjust steward that made a feast and behold he gave it all unto the last, and from the others he took away even what they had not, and cast them into outer darkness where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth.

And when his disciples heard this saying they marvelled exceedingly.

And Joshua, knowing the hardness of their hearts, said unto them, Ye fools and blind. If I tell you ye will not believe; and if I also ask you ye will not answer me nor let me go. Verily, verily I say unto you, there is more joy in heaven over ninety-nine sinners than over one just person. Wherefore be ye also ready.

And they were astonished at his doctrine.

And again he said, Behold the fig-tree which after the mustard seed is greatest among trees, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Do men gather thistles therefrom. Nevertheless because it bringeth not forth fruit when the season it not yet, behold I curse it and it withereth away. For behold a greater than Solomon is here. Verily, verily I say unto you I am the way and the truth and the life. All that came before me were thieves and robbers. Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.

And they cried, Hosanna to the Son of David, Hosanna to the highest.

And it came to pass that the people murmured at their taxes. And he spoke a parable unto them, saying:

Now a certain sower of mustard seed had great riches. And he died and went to hell. And in hell he lift up his eyes and saw the beggar at his gates in Abraham's bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy upon me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Remember Lot's wife. For many are called but few are chosen.

Then Peter saith unto him, Lord show us this parable.

And Joshua answered and said, O generation of vipers how shall ye escape the damnation of hell? And I say unto you how to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, and ye shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. But they that would not that I should reign over them bring them hither and slay them before me. And Peter went out and wept bitterly.

And again he spake a parable unto them, saying, A certain man made a great supper and bade many. But they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him I have bought a piece of ground, and needs must go and see it; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. Then saith he to his servants, Bind them hand and foot and take them away and cast them into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

And when his disciples heard these words they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. LUCIANUS.

PROFANE JOKES.

YOUNG LARKINS has taken to buying penny New Testaments and distributing them a leaf at a time. He calls it spreading the word.

A NEW YORK Sunday-school teacher required her class to repeat an appropriate verse of Scripture when putting their contributions in the box. The youngest boy dropped in his penny with the quotation, "A fool and his money are soon parted."

MOSES SHAUMBERG is in the habit of making the most amusing bulls. For instance, when Sam Spilkins told him that there were no Jewish soldiers in the Egyptian army in the days of Pharaoh, Moses explained: "I tells you how dat vash. All de able-bodied Chewish soldiers were drowned choost so soon as they vas born."

It makes the new preacher awful mad to be fumbling with the intricacies of a front gate fastening, trying to get in and make his first pastoral call, to have the woman of the house turn the slats in the bay window and call out, "We haven't got no old clothes to give away, and there ain't a cold vittle in the house!"

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