

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. V.—No. 40.]

OCTOBER 4, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 136.



AN ARGUMENTATIVE GOD.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord."—Is. i., 18.

BIBLE SWEARING.

THE Bible might be called the Swearer's Manual. Any person wishing to indulge in swearing must be very hard to please, or an exceedingly old practitioner, if he cannot find something in the Bible to suit his necessities. And it is notable that the creed which worships this precious volume has done more level cursing than any other in the world. For eighteen centuries it has gone on damning everything and everybody it disagreed with; and it still clings to its Athanasian creed (by the way, it was not composed by Athanasius, or known till long after his time), which consigns nine-tenths of mankind to everlasting hell, and which has been likened to a Bengal tiger, because it holds on with its damnation clause. The Church of England has a special day specially set apart for wholesale cursing, and an appointed Commination Service, so as to do it in a regular and comprehensive manner.

If you listen to the mutual objurgations of a couple of enraged fish-fags or rival 'bus drivers, you will find that they never take God's name in vain, but always to some purpose. They never ask the Devil to strike each other blind, or to damn each other. Perhaps they think it a waste of time to solicit a subordinate officer, even of such eminence as Satan. At any rate, they invariably go to headquarters, and ask God to do these things. Byron makes Don Juan reflect—

"Tis strange the Hebrew verb which means *I am*
The English always use to govern *damn!*"

But the Spanish gentleman need not have expressed surprise, for the same rule is observed in every country in Christendom.

There is nothing wonderful in this when we recollect that the Bible God was himself a great hand at hard swearing, at whose feet Commodore Truncheon might have sat as a humble scholar. The Lord swore in his wrath more times than any sensible man would take the trouble to count. He cursed Adam and Eve, the serpent, and the very ground under their feet, in the Garden of Eden; and he continues the same pastime throughout the whole history. Profiting by the divine example, Malachi closes the Old Testament with a curse, and John closes the New Testament with another.

It is true, however, that the New Testament shows a little improvement in this respect. Jesus Christ represents God Almighty as bawling at the poor goats on the Day of Judgment: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels;" which of course means "To hell!—damn you!" But the Prophet of Nazareth hints that we are to shun this bad example, and tells us plainly that we should "Swear not at all." Of course this injunction is open to various interpretations. "I don't swear at *all*," said a witty comedian, "but only at *some*." Yet, on the whole, we may take it that Jesus prohibits swearing. Christians are bound to obey him, but they swear inside the House of Commons, and a good deal more outside. Curiously, however, when Mr. Bradlaugh wants to swear, although he is not a Christian, they won't let him. They insist on keeping the game to themselves.

Simon Peter is the only person in the gospels who flies in the face of Christ's command. When the Master was run in for Blasphemy, the disciples "all forsook him and fled," which is very much worse than the Free-thinkers served me on a similar occasion. Peter, however, wishing to watch the trial, turned up in court as a perfect stranger. One of the maids recognised him, and charged him with being one of the crew. Peter denied it, and she persisted; whereupon he clenched his denial with an oath—"S'w'elp me God, I never knew him." It was a downright lie, of course; and you may generally expect one when a man takes his oath on the subject.

The Revised Bible, we frankly allow, is not such a good Swearer's Manual as the old one. What is the use of telling a man to be *condemned*? It sounds like an offer of a five pound note. Telling a man to go to Hades is like inviting him to dinner. Go to Sheol is a little stronger, but not worse than Go to Coventry. Thomas Carlyle would have found the New Version a poor thing, and for vigorous objurgation it certainly is. It gives us God raging in mild English, and hell-fire without the brimstone. For all that it is no better. An Indian chief in war-paint and feathers is picturesque. Civilised costume makes him look commonplace without improving his character. The Revised Bible reminds us of a savage in a dress suit.

G. W. FOOTE.

RELIGION AND HYSTERIA.

In my paper on the subject of "Religious Madness," in the current number of *Progress*, I have confined myself to those epidemics of religious mania which, influencing large numbers of people, most strikingly show the effect of the holy spirit at its full strength. The subject, however is so large—being, in fact, co-extensive with the history of religion itself—that I venture to supplement that article with a few more illustrations of the subject.

Not less contagious in its character is the disease usually known as *hysteria*, "that proteiform and mutable disorder in which the imaginations, the superstitions and the

follies of all ages, have been evidently reflected."* Even savages are sometimes afflicted with this disease, and it is a noteworthy fact that almost the only instances of insanity among savages are connected with religion. Home anxieties or those of the chase no more dement the savage than the wild animal. It is only when excited by religious terrors that savages work themselves up to a pitch of delirious frenzy, and seek by yells, spells, contortions and incantations, to avert the evils they believe to be supernatural. The feticheeresses of Dahomey, who dance until they excite themselves to convulsive contortions and wild tearing of the flesh, like the Mænads of old in their worship of Bacchus, remind us of the orgies in which savage religious rites are hardly distinguishable from insane debauchery. Dean Swift, in his fragment on the mechanical operation of the spirit, speaking of religious fanatics, says :

"I find there are certain bounds set to the irregularity of human thought, and those a great deal narrower than is commonly apprehended. For as they all frequently interfere, even in their wildest ravings, so there is one fundamental point wherein they are sure to meet, as lines in a centre, and that is the *community of women.*"

The history of many Christian sects, from the early Adamites, who went naked and indulged in wild orgies in their love feasts, to the Oneida Creek community, shows there is some truth in the sarcasm.

The remark of Dr. Maudsley is equally pointed :

"The ecstatic trances of such saintly women as Catherine de Sienne and St. Theresa, in which they believed themselves to be visited by their Savior and to be received as veritable sponsors into his bosom, were, though they knew it not, little else than vicarious sexual orgasm; a condition of things which the intense contemplation of the naked male figure, carved or sculptured in all its proportions on a cross, is more fitted to produce in young women of susceptible nervous temperament than people are apt to consider."†

It is in the records of nunneries that we find the most characteristic developments of religious hysteria. In the sixteenth century a very extensive mania of this description spread through the convents of Europe. It began it in Germany, but extended through Saxony, Holland and Switzerland, and even as far as Rome. The nuns were all seized with convulsions, and had such acute pains in all parts of their bodies that they bit one another. They prophesied, jumped about in the most fantastic manner and bleated like sheep. Melancthon ascribed these phenomena to the Devil. Luther, it is well known, saw the Devil with the bodily eye and drove him away with a carnal instrument which has since annihilated him—an ink-pot. No wonder those who believed that victims of mental disorder were possessed by the Devil were inclined to treat them as they would have treated the Devil if they had got hold of him. In the case of poor peasant women they were treated as witches and drowned or burnt at the stake. With nuns and persons of standing the favorite discipline was flagellation. Hardwig, Duchess of Poland, almost rivalled Dominic in the dexterous use of the lash. She wore next her skin a cloth that mangled her flesh, which she would not permit her attendants to wash, and "purified her soul by the tears which she shed and the blows she inflicted on her own body." Margaret, daughter of the King of Hungary, unlike the lady mentioned by Boileau, who, desirous of saving her soul without spoiling her body, whipped herself with feathers, would not only take the usual number of stripes, but ask the nuns for an extra quantity, till her body bled all over. The famous Marie Angélique, who surpassed most of her contemporaries in the severity of her mortifications, once requested a friend to provide her with a strong countrywoman to flog her soundly. This holy saint used soot instead of salt to her food, and mixed gall and candle-grease in her pottage. She would suck the rags that had been put on wounds, and indulged in other abominations, thanking God for his goodness in making those things delightful which to others were calculated to excite horror. The devils who were constantly tempting her chastity once sought to affront it by setting her on her head. An immediate miracle was wrought, almost equal to Christ's ascension, for the law of gravitation was suspended in regard to her clothes—they remained stiff and immoveable as the marble drapery of a statue. The blood might be brought into her face by the peculiar attitude in which she

was placed, but there was not the slightest occasion for a blush.

More self-reliant was St. Juliana, when a devil impertinently intruded into her chamber at an unseemly hour. She engaged Beelzebub in a pitched battle—fought him with both tooth and nail, threw him on the floor, trampled on him with her feet, and then "lacerated him with sarcasms."

Violent reaction often followed these spiritual excesses. In some cases a whole community of sisters would take to barking like dogs, mewing like cats, or crowing like cocks. In others they played with toys like children, or climbed trees and vied with each other in very unladylike feats of gymnastics. Let us remember that beneath all these farcical symptoms there was the deep tragedy of unhinged minds, broken hearts, and lives cursed by the terrors of religion.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded).

MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY.

A PIOUS and valiant Christian of Leicester kindly furnishes me with an example of the demoralising effects of his creed. He thinks personal violence the test of truth. I give his elegantly abusive letter in full for the edification of his fellow Christians.

"31 Bath Street, Belgrave Leicester,
September 16, 1885.

"SIR,—With reference to your Attacks in the *National Reformer* [he must mean the *Freethinker*] of Sept. 13th, 1885, upon Abraham, Jacob &c. I have to say that if Abraham had such a *Cur as you* to deal with He would have made you Squeal like a Sucking Pig in Distress, and so would every one of the Brave and Daring men, ay, or Women, whom you have had the Cheek to Decry.

"If among all whom you Designate were such a *Filthy lout as you are*, I am very much deceived, However, if you are *Game* to back up your Assertions with any Pluck, I am your Man at a bit of that which you have Decried in Jacob.

"In order to settle Differences, with the Fist or Gloves, and Obtain a Quiet meeting, please Communicate at once with your Humble servant,
THOS. PATEMAN BARROW."

"W. P. Ball."

I am quite willing to accept this challenge on condition that the Christian champion fights in the Christian fashion, turning one cheek when smitten on the other, resisting not evil, loving his enemies, and so forth. Joking apart, the letter is beneath notice, though it may perhaps interest readers of the *Freethinker* as a specimen of Christian courtesy and Christian methods of argument. As our pugilistic saint thinks himself good at a bit of that which I have decied in Jacob, I may mention that I described Jacob as "unscrupulous" and as a "fraudulent and cowardly scoundrel." I shall not take upon myself, however, the task of disputing any claims that my highly refined and gentlemanly correspondent may think fit to make in this direction. Christians who would like to repudiate this champion may be reminded that they as a body are far more brutal and insulting. He would settle the matter with a stand-up contest and a good pummelling. They make and support the law which inflicts years of imprisonment and many disabilities. They rob men of their liberty, mothers of their children, members of parliament of their seats. Our prizefighting advocate of the religion of peace is but mildly typical of the spirit of Christianity in power.

W. P. BALL.

ACID DROPS.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us a cutting from a Christian journal containing an account of the sufferings of a little child and other cholera patients, side by side with a column of faith-healing trash. He asks two very rational and pertinent questions, namely, "Why does God allow this awful suffering of children?" and "Why don't Bethshan doctors go out and heal these sufferers?" Christians are invited to answer.

MICROPHONES are being set up in Dr. Talmage's Jabbernacle in Brooklyn. They will be connected by wire with the houses of any who wish to hear the sermons of "the great pounder and expounder" without the trouble of attending the Jabbernacle. All that is needed now is for Talmage to bellow his prayers into a phonograph and attach it to the celestial tympanum. Talmage will call for the collections after the service is over.

TALMAGE thoroughly endorses the old stupid idea of a physical resurrection. He says that at the last day the dead "will come up with the same hand, and the same foot, and the same entire body; but with a perfect hand; and a perfect foot; and a perfect body." But how will they be the same if they are all made perfect? Is the wooden leg, or the shrivelled arm, the same thing as the perfect limbs that are to replace them? And how will people be distinguished from each other if all are

* Hecker's "Epidemics of the Middle Ages."

† "Pathology of Mind," p. 144.

made like the one perfect model? Will they wear numbers for their purpose like convicts? What will God do with the two-headed nightingale and monstrosities generally? Will he make a new body for a second head, or will he destroy one of the two minds? Will the perfection be mental as well as physical, and if not why not? And if all are perfect where will be the room for individuality of character and for differences of mind and body which will enable people to recognise each other?

THE Rev. "Sam" Jones, the great American evangelist, speaks of conscience as "that monarch in my bosom, placed there by the divine hands, to reign over my life, to approve the right and disapprove the wrong." Then he proceeds to rebuke Christians by telling them that "the woman who deliberately throws her children into the Ganges and drowns them for conscience's sake is a better woman this very day than the Christian woman who believes the Bible and fails in a thousand things and against her own conscience." Did this divine "monarch," Conscience, teach her to commit murder? Is that what God's guidance by conscience comes to? Or is it not rather religion perverting conscience till crime is virtue and virtue infamy?

THE conscience of the Rev. "Sam" bids him stigmatise everyone who goes over to the ranks of Freethought as "a traitor of the deepest dye." Christian courtesy is certainly not a very plentiful article.

A CANTING correspondent in a Yorkshire paper writes against "infidelity." He says: "Whenever infidelity is left alone it dies out swiftly." After harping on this theme, he shows his consistency by demanding that the police shall stop infidel discussions in the market place. "Freethought" is only to air itself in its own house, as, according to this fact-blind correspondent, religious bodies do. He also says that the new emancipation cannot come from "Freethought," and asks "what do we want with 'Freethought'?" After all this he has the consummate impudence to sign himself "Freethought." Some Christian advocates also, we find, are claiming that Jesus Christ was the great "Freethinker"! This indicates the progress Freethought is making. Its adversaries are beginning to envy us the possession of so sound a designation.

AN article headed as "By a Freethinker," and signed by the minister of the Congregational Church at Canonbury, has quite recently appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. But the *Echo* jokingly suggests that an Agnostic compositor might have been the means of this rapid conversion, seeing that the Rev. W. M. Statham, the gentleman in question, is a man of unimpeachable orthodoxy. He artfully calls himself a Freethinker in order that his objections against Disestablishment may seem strengthened as coming from an enemy of Christianity. The morality of such methods seems unimpeachable to the clerical mind. This sham "Freethinker" is sadly afraid that Disestablishment will develop "democratic secularism" and "blatant atheism," and that the churches may become lecture-halls. Another of his objections is that Disestablishment would be welcomed by all infidels and Secularists. A queer Freethinker this!

EARL CARNARVON said, in a speech a few days ago: "I recognise the Bible as the one sole guide for everything in both public and private life." His lordship has no thought of obeying the Bible except so far as he pleases. The "sole guide" of his private and public life orders him to kill all witches, and to stone Sabbath-breakers to death. Why don't he? Because he and his age are superior to the infallible guide which they still, in words, pretend to follow. Such professions are mere hypocrisy or cant.

A RECENT book on Henry Irving tells what looks like an apocryphal anecdote of how when that actor was at Stratford-on-Avon, one of the inhabitants declared that Shakespeare "writ a Boible." If the story is true the rustic was not so far out as the relator thinks. The plays of Shakespeare are indeed a Saxon Bible, and to our mind far superior to the Hebrew one.

THIS is certainly a progressive age. Not only are the receptacles for drinks made in the form of opera-glasses, parasol handles and even prayer-books, so that bibulous ladies may indulge in a nip nearly anywhere and at any time, but prayer-books are now made with small magnifying glasses deftly inserted in the covers, so that when a lady in church appears to be the most devout she may simply be taking an inventory of the various styles of bonnets around her.

LONDON contains 2,000 clergymen and 8,700 public-houses. This makes over four public-houses for each parson.

A MINISTER and his sister were drowned while going to church and a church was struck by lightning. And yet there are people who denounce the men who keep out of danger by going fishing on Sundays.

THE *Evening Standard* of September 28th, speaking of the attitude of the preachers in Canada in regard to the present epidemic of small-pox says: "Prayers, fasting and humiliation, are advocated from the pulpit; increased attention to cleanliness

and vaccination are condemned—such remedies indicating reliance upon the 'arm of flesh,' and being calculated to invite still further punishment."

THE mind of the latest pious murderer (he was jerked to Jesus in Georgia) was only harassed by one doubt: he feared that the man he killed might not be waiting at the pearly gates to welcome him to heaven.

SOME fellow out West has discovered the human soul by the aid of the microscope. When we have heard people boast of the soul we always thought it a small affair.

THERE is doubtless some difference between a preacher of hell and a hell of a preacher, though the public does not recognise the distinction. The former is a man who harps on the terrors of torment while the latter may be called a gospel failure.

A MODERN CREED.

LET all the dogmas perish.
Let all the legends go;
All the grander and the brighter
Are the truths that we shall know;
All the clearer and the sweeter
The paths of duty here;
No present filled with anguish,
No future filled with fear.

THE *Cumberland Times*, New South Wales, contains a story illustrative of the work done by the Salvation Army. A married man, who had been a trusted servant in a Sydney brewery, and who, by dint of thrift and sobriety, had placed himself in comfortable circumstances, became infected with Salvation mania. He told his employer that he could not conscientiously stay any longer in his service, and refused to accept three months' wages due to him. He then mortgaged the house that had been bought by dint of his steadiness, and paid the proceeds to the services of his God. His wife was entirely neglected by him, but the firm called upon her with the cheque for the money that her mad husband had refused. After some months the man appeared to have recovered, and he returned to work. He had not been engaged many days, however, before he entered the office where the two partners of the firm were seated, and dealt one a blow on the face, with the remark: "James, you are a God-forgetting son of Belial, and I am a soldier of the Lord!" On the other gentleman interfering, he also received a blow from the soldier of the Lord. As the above paper remarks, it is all because of an unreasoning anxiety that has possessed men to save their souls from a hell which, if the revisers of the Old Testament are to be believed, exists only in the imagination of the ignorant and superstitious.—*Liberator*.

MISS EVANS, who was regarded by the people of Arundel as a clever, well-educated woman, also had the misfortune to be religious. She became very much depressed in spirits on account of her sins, and went frequently to church. One Wednesday evening she started to attend an evening service, and next day her body was found in the river Arun. She had evidently committed suicide to escape the consoling effects of Christianity. Those who charitably try to regard her death as accidental will have to see in it an illustration of the loving care which the heavenly Father takes of his worshippers. Having had strong doubts whether God would forgive her for something she did thirty years ago, she once consulted the mayor of the town, who said that he should think God had almost forgotten all about the matter by this time. She preferred the priestly consolation of religious terrors to such cheerful levity, and suffered accordingly.

SOME of the papers are inquiring into the subject of the money and property amassed by Booth. He has been purchasing lands in many States of America in the names of some of his lieutenants, and he now wants these lands conveyed to him. He wants to hold them, he says, as trustee "on behalf of the Army." An enormous amount of property in England is held by him, it is stated, on this flimsy pretence. The Army is "General" Booth himself. The word is his trade name, and the soldiers are merely his servants dismissable at pleasure. Legally there is no such body incorporated and it cannot hold property, so that there seems to be nothing whatever to prevent the "General" doing what he pleases with the cash. If he were in earnest he could easily nominate a few more co-trustees. Perhaps he knows too much of Christians to trust any of them. He prefers to face the temptation alone. Other Christians might steal the property or quarrel over it. As sole "trustee" the "General" cannot very well quarrel with himself, or steal his own property, or scandalise himself with Christian bickerings and edifying recriminations and exposures. If he succeeds in getting the modest £20,000 he expects as the result of his *Pall Mall Gazette* revelations, it is to be hoped that the subscribers will relieve him from the invidious and dangerous position of sole trusteeship. An honest and honorable man would shrink from such a position, and they might at least pay their Christian "General" the compliment of treating him as a man of integrity and honor would insist on being treated.

THE *Times* has a long account of the Roman Catholic missionaries in China and of their failure and difficulties after two centuries of comparative success. The Chinese are described as very tolerant, Mohammedans and Christians having been admitted to high posts. But the Roman Catholic priests associated themselves with the political interests of France, and they and their converts became a great trouble and a serious danger to the Chinese empire. Father Louvet, simultaneously glorifying his country and his religion, writes: "Who has opened to France the gates of Cochin China? . . . Are not the native Christians whom we teach devoted to the French influence? Are not the 60,000 Annamite Christians the best part of the friends of France in this country? Is not the missionary influence exercised daily in favor of France?" The Christians, under French protection, were also constantly interfering with the course of local justice where criminal converts were concerned. Naturally enough they have been regarded by the Chinese as insidious foes ready at any minute to welcome French invaders. Hence the recent massacres.

ANOTHER correspondent sends us a view of Lady Grimstone's tomb, from which we should judge that the high iron railings, by enclosing the five trees in narrow compass and making them appear to grow out of the grave, gave rise to the legend that she wished them to grow from her heart. We have never heard anything beyond the superstitious legend to lead us to suppose Lady Grimstone was an Atheist, or even any unbeliever in brimstone. It seems curious that a miracle should have been wrought for this lady after she was dead, while living infidels are so much in need of a little miraculous evidence which is constantly denied them.

A PRINTED hymn used at the opening service of St. Savior's Church, Bolton, lies before us. By a happy misprint it reads "Hear thy people as they prey." The compositor evidently understands something of the genuine spirit of Christianity.

THE *Huddersfield Examiner*, reporting the meetings of the Salvation Army Life Guards at Kirkburton, says: "Nothing remarkable took place at these meetings beyond pocket-picking, which was carried out to an extent never before witnessed at Kirkburton." It seems that a visit from the Life Guards is a very doubtful benefit.

DR. HEBER NEWTON in his "Plain Words on Modern Unbelief," says: "Don't step out of Christianity until you have something better to step into." Yet Dr. Newton has stepped out of orthodoxy without making it at all clear what it is he has stepped into.

THE Hindus have a particular verse of their sacred Vedas which is held in peculiar veneration. It is called the Gayatri, and as translated by Professor Monier Williams reads, "Let us meditate on that excellent glory of the divine vivifier. May he enlighten our understanding." According to the *Madras Thinker*, the Christians are widely circulating copies of what they call "The True Gayatri," substituting the words "Jesus Christ" for divine vivifier. This looks very like a pious fraud. Such artifices as these were largely employed in converting the ancient Pagans to Christianity.

BOTH Mohammedans and Jews also have favorite verses. That from the Koran is a protest against Christianity: "God is one God; he begetteth not, neither is he begotten." That from the Old Testament is Deuteronomy vi., 4, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one God," which some Rabbis call the essence of the whole law. It is worthy of note that many of the Jews who were put to death by pious Christians in the middle ages died with these words on their lips, showing that, in their opinion, they were testifying against Christian polytheism and idolatry.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* revives an anecdote of an unbelieving collier who had a lump of coal fall on him while mining, whereupon, thinking he was about to die, he called out on the name of the Lord. The moral is that "there is nothing like a lump of coal for knocking infidelity out of a man." But the coal proves more efficacious still if it is lighted underneath the man, does it not, Christian brethren? You have tried this kind of argument for centuries, and it proved tolerably successful while allowed. Jehovah's method of knocking the infidelity out of a man was by stoning him to death. At the present day a blow with a stone or a stick is often sufficient to evoke the latent religion in a man in the shape of a pious exclamation of "O Christ!" or "Good God!"

THE *Christian Commonwealth* justly complains of the practice of claiming distinguished men and women as Christians as soon as they are dead, if they only happened to repeat a few platitudes about the value of the Bible or the example of Christ. Thus the preachers vied in claiming Abraham Lincoln as a splendid type of a Christian, though during his life he made no claim to being a Christian at all. Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Charles Reade, and now General Grant, are given as similar examples. The *Christian Commonwealth* is "tired of this miserable pretence;" and

so are we. But religion is a most insidious destroyer of morality, and until morality conquers religion pious pretences will continue to flourish.

THE same journal admits that there is at present a greater depression in the churches than in trade. It says "prosperity seems to have departed from the churches. From all quarters it is the same story—dwindling congregations and declining membership." Wesleyans, Congregationalists and Baptists alike tell the same tale of failure. "The many will not come to hear the Gospel; the few who do come and listen to it refuse to comply with its conditions; while a large proportion of those who do come into the churches are not retained. Alongside of all this there exists another palpable fact, and that is that candidates for the ministry are becoming fewer and fewer."

THE *Christian Commonwealth* attributes this happy state of things to the faults of the churches, both Roman and Protestant, who have mutilated the Gospel and quarrelled among themselves. It says, truly enough, that "the ministry has become professional and perfunctory; the poor are despised, and the rich courted; while the most vulgar and questionable tricks are resorted to in advertising and raising money." The remedy recommended as usual by the *C.C.* is "the rejection of all human traditions"—which we thoroughly agree with, since it abolishes the Bible—and a return to the teaching and practices of the apostolic times—which is impossible, since these would include faith-healing, raising the dead, striking half-hearted subscribers with instant death, angelic visitations, ascents of Christ, displays of supernatural tongues of fire, and a few other difficult feats, besides communism, strife as between Peter and Paul, striking men blind for unbelief, blind credulity, ignorance, sensational falsehood, and a few other decidedly objectionable features.

THE *C.C.*, while owning the failure of the churches, says that "it is not Christianity that has failed, but only the human perversions and caricatures of it." The churches, then, are caricatures of Christianity. Why don't the elect few prosecute the churches for caricaturing Christianity, as they did us? Only because they lack the power. When they had it the sects prosecuted and murdered each other just as they would like to prosecute, and even execute, the honest "infidels" of to-day.

IF THE DEVIL WERE TO DIE!

BROTHER saints and moralisers,
Tho' I wish not to offend
I would ask if it is justice
To defame your dearest friend.
That you every Sabbath do it
Is a fact none can deny;
But what would be your situation
If the Devil were to die?

Recollect those worthy shepherds
Who in such rich pastures dwell,
Pious bishops, deacons, elders,
Cardinals, priests, and pope as well;
If by chance they lose their father
Where for refuge would they fly?
Wretched would be their condition
If the Devil were to die.

Where would be those happy gatherings
Called "May Meetings" every year—
Where would be those waiting brethren,
And those weeping sisters dear—
If there were no one to tempt them
To be sinful on the sly?
The Church indeed would be deserted
If the Devil were to die.

Tails, and hoof, and horns, and pitchfork.
And the unique fiery robe,
Chain and all alas would vanish,
Tho' it reaches round the globe.
And the pit without a bottom,
No more brimstone would supply.
Things would be most truly awful
If the Devil were to die.

There would be no Booths nor Parkers,
Luxuriating like the Turk;
And the Moodys, Sankeys, Spurgeons,
All must starve or go to work.
Canting would be at a discount,
Truth would triumph o'er a lie.
Who would fight about religion
If the Devil were to die?

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

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Oct. 4, Assembly Rooms, Grosvenor Street, Manchester; at 11, "Woman's Worst Foe—the Bible" at 3, "History of the Devil;" at 7, "An Hour in Hell."

OCTOBER 11, Milton Hall, London; 18, Wigan; 20, Walworth; 25, Sheffield.

NOVEMBER 1 and 8, Hall of Science, London; 15, Milton Hall, London; 22, Halifax; 29, Manchester.

DECEMBER 6, Plymouth; 13, Milton Hall, London; 20, Hall of Science, London; 27, Milton Hall, London.

CORRESPONDENTS.

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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.

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RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—D. Walker, C. Dawson, W. C. Hart, J. W. (Norwich), American cuttings.

C. LA PORTE.—It was certainly an awkward *contresens*. Thanks for your promise as to the African missionaries.

C. W. H. L.—Hardly in our line. Perhaps Lord Bramwell's little pamphlet "Drink" would help you.

A. FORRESTER.—Thanks for the suggestion.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—Education or no education, if your sketch is good enough it will attain the prize.

J. LAMBIE (New Zealand).—We are much obliged to you for championing our policy at the Antipodes. We had seen the extract before.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are again warned that their letters go straight into the waste-basket.

J. BIRKETT.—There is no life of James Thomson published, but there is a biographical preface by Mr. Dobell to the last volume of poems, "A Voice from the Nile." He died in 1882.

WM. BRADBURY (Kensal Green) asks for the support of members of the Paddington Branch and friends at the outdoor meeting next Sunday.

A. wishes to know what papers reported the case of the son of the Rev. Mr. Watts, of Kirtling, Newmarket. Can any of our correspondents oblige?

ARGUS.—Your scraps are always welcome.

J. BLACK.—Dr. Pusey and many other orthodox commentators admit that the Lord's command to Hosea to take an adulteress can only be taken literally.

J. BLAND.—We are always pleased to hear from you and to be assured of your support. We are glad to hear that both the *Freethinker* and *Progress* are retained in the reading-room of the Oakenshaw Colliery.

W. J. CAIGER.—We do not dispute that some people are "reclaimed" by hysterical appeals to their emotions or by religious hopes and terrors. But there is a large offset in the wrong foundation given to morals, which should be based on truth. Let but the attention which has been given to an after-life be concentrated on this, and the evils will be ameliorated in a surer way. Infidelity, as you call it, has not had its chance, but still has to fight for room to live. Cannot you at any rate influence your fellows for good outside the Salvation Army as well as within?

J. SANDERSON denies that Mr. Knight represented the views of the Boiler-makers' Society on the Sunday question.

J. MELLING.—Scraps are always welcome.

J. BELL.—Thanks for the expression of your good opinion. The suppressed poem attributed to Burns has often been reprinted.

D. WALKER.—Professor Gairdner's paper on Insanity will come useful some day.

A. RICH.—Mr. Foote's lecture on the "History of the Devil" which you so highly appreciate, is not printed, but perhaps the "Bible Devil" would serve your turn.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—An Atheist is one without belief in a God; a Theist one who believes in God. This word, like Deist, is used to signify one who believes in a God but denies revelation. A Freethinker claims to think freely on all religious matters. An Idealist is one who aspires after some idea. It is impossible to state the number of Freethinkers in Great Britain. So many are unavowed. Whittaker's Almanack estimates the number of English-speaking Freethinkers at one million.

F. WILCOCKSON.—We shall be glad if you will send your new address. ANSWERS to several correspondents stand over in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence from town.

The Catalogue of the Progressive Publishing Company's works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liberty—Truthseeker—Glasgow Medical Journal—Glasgow Evening News—Cambria Daily Leader—Scottish People—Anarchist—Western Mail—Glasgow Evening Times—Liverpool Echo—Literary World.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

THE result of the Prize Competition will be announced next week.

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 November 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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had splendid audiences at Liverpool last Sunday, some Freethinkers travelling twenty, thirty, and even forty miles, to be present. In the evening every inch of standing room was occupied, the walls reeked with perspiration, and crowds were turned away from the doors. We are glad to hear that several new members were enrolled. The Liverpool Branch is gaining fresh strength every week, and is now in a flourishing condition. We hope, before long, to see the Freethinkers of this great city located in a hall of their own.

OUR next issue will contain some particulars of Mr. Foote's Bristol debate with Mr. Stainforth, who affirms that the Mosaic account of the origin of man is scientific, while the theory of Evolution is the reverse.

TWO new works on Evolution are announced as forthcoming in the *International Scientific Series*. Professor Hartmann on "Anthropoid Apes" and "The Mammalia in their relation to Primeval Times," by Oscar Schmidt, author of "Darwinism and Descent."

DR. BARRY, writing in the current number of the *Dublin Review*, complains that not only is modern science to a great extent anti-Christian, but that also modern literature, considered as a whole, is decidedly anti-Christian. What is more, there is little likelihood of either science or literature going back in a Christian direction.

THE New York State Convention of Freethinkers, held at Albany, was, according to reports in the *Truthseeker*, a grand success. Addresses were delivered by Colonel Ingersoll, J. McCabe (the new secretary), Elizur Wright, T. B. Wakeman, C. B. Reynolds, Courtland Palmer, Horace Seever, J. E. Remsberg, and others. Dr. Brown made a good point when he offered as a motto for God "Damn others as you would damn yourself." The Annual Congress of the National Liberal League of America will be held during the ensuing month, when it will be proposed that the name be changed to "The American Secular Union."

THERE is little likelihood of France receding from her advanced Freethought position. No nation is making such Herculean strides in the matter of education, which is there free, compulsory and secular. No fees are paid even for advanced classes and apprenticeship schools. There is no corporal punishment and hardly any non-attendance. The scholars occasionally take long tours with the masters, and only this year there was a large excursion to England. In this, as in some other matters, they manage things better in France.

THE record of the atrocities perpetrated by Christians against the race from whom they have derived their religion and their God forms a prominent feature of the "Crimes of Christianity." The authors of the work with that title have consulted quite a library of works in order to give their readers a condensed and accurate account of the "Jew Hunt" from the time when Christians first possessed the sword of civil power to the present day.

THE *Rock*, dealing with the subject of Christian evidence, acknowledges that "a terrible amount of injury has been done by those who argue on evidential matters without having really grasped the points at issue, and thus mis-state the case of the opponents they are trying to answer." The *Rock* also warns clergymen, who deal with objections and difficulties in the pulpit that "to deal with them by a shallow and unreal dialectic is worse than useless, for such apparent arguments do not really convince, and the intelligent man will be shocked at the dishonesty, or disgusted with the stupidity of the preacher who uses them." We wish, but we can scarcely venture to say we hope, that Christians generally would take these remarks to heart.

THE Bill for Bible Reading in State schools in New Zealand was lost on its second reading by eighteen votes to fifty.

THE Berlin City Mission reports that in that city "indifference to religion has spread to a frightful extent." "Christian churches are hardly anywhere to be seen," and very few attend even at those which are open. While there are nominally 900,000 Protestants, there is church accommodation for only about 40,000 of them at the outside.

A LEEDS correspondent, Mr. Fisher, the secretary of the local Branch of the N. S. S., informs us that Mr. T. Paylor has obtained the special prize for English Literature in the examinations connected with the Yorkshire Union of Mechanics' Institutes. Mr. Paylor is a young, earnest member of the Leeds branch of the National Secular Society, and his success has been viewed with pleasurable interest by his fellow-members, who all anticipate great things of him.

THE great demonstration on Sunday last is a convincing proof that the people of London will not tamely submit to have their rights of free speech trampled on, either by magistrates or the police. The persecution of the Socialists for airing their opinions

in a deserted spot, while policemen were reprimanded for interfering with the noisy processions of Salvationists, raised popular indignation to a pitch which rendered extremely judicious the absence of the police in the now celebrated Dod Street. The gathering, by the way, has been wrongly described as a Socialist one. It was an assembly of Democrats certainly, but the subject which drew so large a crowd together was not Socialism, but the upholding of the right of free speech without disorder.

CHRIST'S APPEARANCE.

(Concluded from page 307).

As art advanced, better representations of Christ were put forward by artists, but not necessarily as genuine originals. One portrait is ingeniously made up of the intricate meanderings of a single unbroken line, the thinning and thickening of which produces the light and shade. As "effective" demands, that is cash demands, for goods will usually bring the supply, so innumerable pictures of Christ and his mother were produced in the past, and so in our own day photographs of Christ are sold prepared from a drawn portrait.

The ideal Christ-face of modern art resembles that on the cameo pretended to have been sent together with a letter to the Roman Senate by Publius Lentulus, the alleged predecessor of Pontius Pilate. In this forged letter Jesus is described as being tall and handsome. His countenance is full of mingled authority and love, being wonderfully beautiful and agreeable, though he never smiles and occasionally weeps. He has a smooth forehead, a clear but ruddy and healthful complexion, bright blue eyes (hardly a Jewish trait this), hair "of the color of wine" falling beneath his shoulders in abundant curls, and a thick cleft beard of the same color as his hair.

Unfortunately, the portraits and descriptions of Christ being worthless, we are as completely in the dark as to Christ's appearance as were the primitive Christians. Our ideas on the matter are mere guesswork. The irrepressible Talmage indeed informs us that according to tradition Jesus was "the most infinitely beautiful being that ever walked our small earth." But the real fact is that the earlier traditions of the Fathers speak of Christ as mean and ugly in appearance. Origen, for instance, so describes him. Justin Martyr and Tertullian speak of Christ as ungracious in aspect and short in stature, and Cyril of Jerusalem says he was of coarse aspect even beyond the ordinary race of men. It seems to me that the Fathers had three reasons for adopting this view. First, "the evangelical prophet" Isaiah, in the passage which introduces the fifty-third chapter so relied upon by Christians as the fullest and most distinctive and perfect prophecy of Christ, says that "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Is. lii., 14). Secondly, they had a contempt for worldly beauty and an admiration or fellow-feeling for ugliness and asceticism generally. Thirdly, this view must have been in harmony with such traditional descriptions as may have reached them, and with such logical probabilities as possibly might have influenced their reasoning faculties.

The faint light shed upon the matter by reasoning would indicate that Jesus must have had a thoroughly Jewish cast of countenance, and that probably, like the great apostle Paul, he was of ignoble and contemptible, or at least commonplace, aspect and demeanor. His personality was certainly not sufficiently striking or commandingly attractive to secure him a powerful following in his own days. It was the subsequent development of the Trinitarian superstition on the basis of his alleged atoning sacrifice that slowly spread abroad the ever-growing Christian myth after his death. If too his aspect had been noble and beautiful, the curious indifference or silence of his disciples would surely have disappeared, and the Gospels would have embodied some recollections or traditions of the sublime majesty and inimitable power that shone forth from his gracious and dignified countenance. The silence of some and the descriptions of others alike tend to destroy the idea that Christ's form and countenance were of a noble and impressive type. As Christianity spread, however, the idea of a deity on earth with a pug-nose like that of the great Socrates, or of a beggarly and insignificant aspect generally, was felt to be displeasing if not absolutely repulsive. The fair sex especially, upon whom so much depended, would hardly care to love and worship and idealise a miserable mockery of a man as their God. Hence

the original idea of an ugly and withered Jesus became unpopular. Such views ceased therefore to be put forth, and accordingly died away by the end of the fourth century, their place being gradually refilled with a captivating presentment of an effeminate, lackadaisical man-god, suitable to the tastes of monks and devotees. As the languishing airs of this namby-pamby bandbox hero do not suit the more robust taste of modern Saxons, it is a wonder that some better and more manly and realistic portraiture has not been evolved and adopted. The explanation probably is that the "effective" demand arises mainly from the sentimentalism of weak natures, and that stronger and healthier tastes and intellects find little that is attractive in a subject so replete with sickening fraud and the silliest high-flown gush that hysterical piety can achieve or purchase.

W. P. BALL.

S A I N T B A L A A M .

PROMINENT, in days of yore, among Bible saints was Balaam, a gentleman who would probably have remained in dim obscurity but for a talkative companion who frequently accompanied him, and who has since become as well known to fame as his master. Soon after their peripatations through Egypt and the wilderness with Moses and Aaron, the children of Israel having engaged in the numerous battles with alien nations and slaughtered the Amorites with a great slaughter, they at length settled in the plains of Moab.

Balak, the king of the Moabites, having witnessed the wicked butchery of the Amorites, felt a little uneasy as to the safety of his own people. Accordingly he sent to Pethor for Balaam, the son of Beor, a prophet whose chief office seems to have been the blessing or cursing of various people at so much per head. Receiving instructions from the king, the elders of Moab proceeded on a mission to Balaam, and the deputation, having been politely introduced, sought to induce the worthy prophet to come to the land of Moab and pronounce a terrible curse upon the Israelites. About the same time God also paid a visit to Balaam, and, seeing the elders, inquired secretly of Balaam their business. Frankly enough, Balaam answered: "Balak, the son of Zippor, king of Moab, hath sent unto me saying, Behold there is a people come out of Egypt which covereth the face of the earth; come now, curse me them; peradventure I shall be able to overcome them and drive them out." One would naturally have thought that the infinitely wise God of the universe would have known this without making any such inquiries, but apparently he did not. So, having heard Balaam's plain statement, God proceeded to tell him that he should not go on such an errand; that the Israelites were blessed, and should not be cursed. Politely, therefore, but probably with some reluctance, Balaam declined Balak's generous offer, and the elders forthwith returned to the king and informed him as to how matters stood.

Balak was not, however, to be dissuaded from his desire to have the Israelites cursed; for the second time, therefore, he sent to Balaam, appointing princes of great reputation as his ambassadors in the place of the elders. Coming to Balaam, the princes urged him on no account to be hindered from pronouncing a great curse upon the Israelites, which would do him no personal harm, but would certainly win him favor in the eyes of Balak and the Moabites. Balaam was not to be induced. "If," said he, "Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God." Fancy a Jewish prophet talking thus! Balak, however, had made no offers of gold or silver, but only of honors to be conferred upon the prophet provided he cursed the Israelites with sufficient vigor.

The Lord paid a second visit to Balaam and bade him go with the princes to Balak, but admonished him only to say that which he (the Lord) should put into his mouth. This looks very much as though Balaam consented to be a party to a very disreputable transaction; that he consented to go before the king of Moab as one who wished to obtain honors by false pretences. Although the Lord directed Balaam to go, he appears very soon to have seen reason to alter his mind; for while the prophet was on the road the "Lord's anger was kindled" against him, and he sent an angel to stay him in his course.

Mounting his favorite moke, Balaam set out on his journey, but had not travelled far before he encountered an obstacle in his path. He did not see it himself, but his

ass, who was gifted with spiritual vision, beheld that an angel with drawn sword occupied the roadway. What was the poor donkey to do? With commendable courage she at first attempted to dodge the angel, and, to effect her purpose, the ass turned aside into a field. Thinking perhaps that it was only natural stubbornness that had prompted the donkey to go out of the proper course, Balaam smote the animal to "turn her into the way." A second time the donkey tried to escape the angel, but as he, she, or it (the angel's sex being unknown) had taken the precaution to get into that portion of the road which was narrow, the ass failed again, and, rushing violently against the wall, crushed Saint Balaam's foot, who, with true religious forbearance, struck the ass yet again. A third time the poor creature tried to evade the angel, but again failing, fell upon the ground, and so provoked Balaam's wrath that he smote the poor animal with a staff so furiously that she opened her mouth and remonstrated in vigorous language with the prophet, who, being in no wise surprised at hearing a religious ass speak, told her plainly that if he had had a sword in his hand he would surely have killed her.

It may be here remarked that only asses and prophets have as yet been privileged to see an angel, and it is rather fortunate for Balaam that the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was not then in existence, otherwise it is very probable that he would have had time to study the inside of a gaol before presenting himself to the king of Moab.

When his dialogue with the ass was finished, Balaam was privileged to have his eyes open, and he too beheld the angel, who very strongly rebuked him for having beaten the ass so unmercifully. Having cried "peccavi," and metaphorically apologised to the donkey, Balaam was allowed to pursue his course, having emphatic instructions from the angel that he was to speak only that which he should direct him. Content to obey this order, Balaam came to Balak, from whom he consented to receive presents; then, with shameless audacity, he turned round and piously blessed the people he had been handsomely paid to curse.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

REVIEWS.

Tobacco. September. Caton: Gracechurch Street.—A well-printed publication, combining business with pleasure. Smoking deadens the intellect, say the non-smokers; yet, as a matter of fact, tobacco literature is remarkably lively. Smokers will find a good deal to interest them in *Tobacco*.

Charles Bradlaugh and the Irish Nation. By Humanitas. Freethought Publishing Company: London.—A capital pamphlet, tracing Mr. Bradlaugh's speeches and votes on the Irish question, showing how he has always championed the rights of our sister isle, and exposing the base ingratitude of the present Irish party towards one of their country's best friends.

Our Corner. October. Freethought Publishing Company.—Mr. Bradlaugh opens with a criticism, bristling with statistics, on our Hundred-Million Budget. Mrs. Besant concludes her "Evolution of Society," as a full-blown Socialist: a rapid conversion, begun and completed (to all appearance) since the Bradlaugh-Hyndman debate. From the same pen there is a rapid, bright review of Stepniak's "Underground Russia." Mr. Robertson continues his admirable paper on Poe. One of the best articles is Alexander Dunbar's, on "Disendowment in Ireland."

A PROUS young man had stopped at an Indiana hotel for a week, and when he came home he was investigated as to the customs of the town, and also of the house. "Did they ask you to ask the blessing?" inquired an old lady. "Yes, ma'm, they did." "And did you do it?" "No, ma'm, I didn't." "Goodness gracious, why didn't you?" "Because, ma'm, it didn't look to me, from the appearance of things, that the Lord was anywhere within hearing distance, so I didn't see any use in it."

At a London police-court recently an individual who had been affected by the Salvation Army was brought up charged with being a lunatic wandering at large. The magistrate—a genial old gentleman—asked him if he had any friends. "The Lord is my only friend," said the prisoner. "Yes," said the magistrate; "but have you anybody who will become surety for you?" "The Lord," said the prisoner again, "is my salvation. He will become surety for me." "Yes, but you see," said the magistrate hesitatingly, "I want the name and address of some friend of yours." "Address?" shouted the prisoner, "Why, the Lord is everywhere!" "Well, you see," replied the magistrate, fairly got into a corner, "for the purposes of bail, we should require some more settled residence."

A LETTER TO GOD.

O THREE-in-one and one in three—
If such a godly trine there be—
I hope you'll some attention pay
To what I'm now about to say;
For as you're here as well as there,
Above, below and everywhere,
It will not put you much about
To listen to my speech right out.
You say—at least they say you say—
That all for Adam's sin must pay;
And yet you tell us that your Son
Has paid the debt for everyone;
But if the fact we don't believe,
A stamped receipt we'll not receive.
Now, God the Father, God the Son,
God the Ghost, rolled into one,
For once, just drop the anagogic,
And use plain common-sense and logic
How can my faith affect a fact?
Or how can doubt undo an act?
If I'm condemned to death and hell,
Though I may doubt that Adam fell,
Why should I not be saved though I
May doubt that one of you did die?
If I'm condemned to death by you
For something which I did not do,
It certainly appears to me
Like adding "cheek" to injury,
To say that I must something do
Before I'll pardoned be by you.
*If all were curst without a test,
Without a test all should be blest!*
If pardon's wanted 'twixt us two
'Tis you of me not I of you.
'Tis I, not you, it seems to me,
Who ought indemnified to be.
Just think of it! because you failed
To start aright you have entailed
On all the wretched human race
The evils of your own disgrace!
It makes my very bile to squirm
To think that such an ancient firm
As Jahveh, Jesus, Ghost and Co.,
Should ever stoop so very low!
Why don't you let us know the truth?
We have to guess it now forsooth,
From some *old pamphlets* which, they say,
Were copied from some older day;
And so on backwards do we jog,
Until we're smothered in the fog.
Why don't you let us know, I say,
In some straight-forward sort of way,
If you exist up there or not?
It does seem such confounded rot
For men and women, old and young,
To pray with head and heart and tongue,
For ages to the great "I AM,"
Who does not seem to care one damn
For those who hourly on him call,
Or else he's not a god at all!
If what the Bible says be true,
I've only this to say of you:
That one whose conduct is so bad
Must be a most infernal cad!
So to your heav'n I'll say farewell;
I'd rather be with Nick in hell!
If, by next week, I don't receive
An answer I shall then believe
That you're asleep, or down with cramp,
Or, peradventure, on the tramp;
Or, that you are, 'tis very plain,
A myth, or figment of the brain!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"CROWNER'S QUEST LAW."

"Hamlet," Act V., Scene I.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—When will the people break the fetters of Christian ignorance, bigotry and superstition? The oaths—sham—invoking the name of an unknown quantity on all occasions, is no less an absurdity than are the verdicts of coroner's juries. Not long ago I was present at an inquest, where the jury debated whether the verdict should be *felo de se* or "temporary insanity." "Tired of buttoning and unbuttoning" would be more *apropos* in cases of suicide.—Your obedient servant,

CHAS. KROLL LAFORTE.

8 Citizen Road, N., Sep. 24, 1885.

PROFANE JOKES.

THE Ecclesiastical motto par excellence. Ad majorem L.S Dei gloriam!

"God helps those who help themselves," said a little boy who was stealing the jam while his ma was absent.

No intention has yet been manifested by people who use the telephone to revise the customary exclamation of "Hello!" into "Sheelo!"

It was one of the good little boys from a Sunday-school near Boston who gave this interpretation to a verse taught him by his teacher: "Behold, a greater than Solomon is here!" "Hold a grater to Solomon's ear!"

A pious individual remonstrated with an old cobbler for mending boots on the Lord's day. "My dear friend," replied the cobbler, "Jesus Christ distinctly said it was lawful to heel on the Sabbath; and surely there's no harm done in saving soles."

A sanctimonious lady met Homer Martin one Sunday morning on the way to take an excursion by steamer. "Are you going to church?" she inquired. "No, ma'am," said he. "But of course you like to go to church," she said. "I like it immensely," said the wag, "but I can restrain myself."

JENKINS was in the pantry trying to open a can of tomatoes, and making a good deal of unnecessary noise about it. "What in the world is the matter?" demanded his wife from the kitchen, "what are you trying to open that can of tomatoes with?" "Can-opener, of course," he growled back, "do you suppose I am trying to open it with my teeth?" "No; I thought, perhaps, judging from your language, you were trying to open it with prayer."

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SUNDAY LECTURES.—Athenæum, 73 Tottenham Court Road—Edward Aveling, Oct. 4: Morning, 11, "The Age of the World;" evening, 7, "Creeds and the Want of One." Readings and music at each lecture. Admission—1s., 6d., 3d.

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Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.