

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 138.



A TETCHY GOD.

“Uzzah put forth his hand to the ark of God, and took hold of it; for the oxen shook it. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there for his error; and there he died by the ark of God.”—2 SAM. vi., 6—7.

HELL GATE.

HELL GATE is blasted. It interfered with the traffic and the Yankees have blown it up with dynamite. There was a terrific explosion, and acres of water were turned into a maelstrom. But nobody was injured, and when the *débris* is cleared away the stately ships will sail over the spot. Human science has triumphed over another obstacle. Instead of praying to the Lord to remove the mountainous obstruction, according to the maxims of Jesus and the practice of his true disciples, the 'cute Yankees gave the job to the engineers. “Here you are,” they said, “blast the darned thing. We'll give you plenty of time and money, only blast it.” So after years of patient labor Hell Gate is blasted.

Colonel Ingersoll's countrymen are not the people to stop short in a good work. Having blasted Hell Gate, they will go on and blast the whole establishment. And we venture to think that the results will be still more beneficial. Nobody will be hurt, and the world's business (material, intellectual and moral) will be transacted with greater ease and rapidity.

Hell is a greater nuisance than Hell Gate ever was. It is the secret of all priestly tyranny. The credulous multitude are kept in subjection by superstitious fears. A whisk of the Devil's tail and a smell of brimstone are enough to

frighten a whole aspiring nation back into slavery. “Rash people, ye are rushing to Hell!” shriek the priests of every country when the inhabitants seek freedom, or aspire to possess a little of that knowledge which is the solvent of all fetters. Faith and fear are one. All religion is at bottom Devil-worship. Even when the clergy pray against the cholera, they are not requesting a good being to befriend them, but asking a Devil to draw it mild. Aware of this, priestcraft instinctively works upon our fears. Its theology is like the rules and regulations of prison, which show you one way in which you may be rewarded, and a hundred ways in which you may be punished. It is like the fabled cherubim with the flaming sword that turned every way to keep poor Adam and Eve out of paradise.

Wherever priestcraft is powerful, Hell is hot and strong. Wherever it is weak, Hell cools down. As the minister becomes the servant instead of the lord of his congregation, he gives them less Hell; until at last he skips the word altogether, or says it so softly that it might be mistaken for Heaven. The Pope of Rome gives you Hell galore. The Free Church minister gives you just as much as you want, and no more.

Ingersoll is right in “going for Hell.” That is the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the be all and the end all of theology. Hell is the bed-rock of the creeds. Fear of the unknown, and all the terrors with which priestcraft

can invest it, is the basis of religion. We need not trouble about Heaven. That came as a consolation afterwards; a bit of plaster on a wound. Heal the wound, and you will see no virtue in the plaster. Destroy Hell, and there is no need for Heaven.

Those who believe in Hell are the natural slaves of those who work it. Yet it keeps neither class moral. One shows the vices of despotism, and the other those of subjection. Tyrants hector and serfs crawl under the same inspiration; those imitate the Lord of Hell and these his victims.

Fortunately, however, multitudes are growing superior to both vices. Hell ceases to terrify them. They walk by the gate and laugh at the keeper. They crack jokes about the establishment, its size, its shape and its temperature. Scepticism on the subject is in the air, and infects people without their knowledge. We were in a barber's shop one day, and a bronzed mariner entered for a shave. "It's a hot day," remarked the professor, as he flourished his razor. "Yes," said the seafaring gentleman. "It's hotter *there*, though," said the face-scraper. "Where?" queried a deep voice through the soapsuds. "Why *there*, you know," was the answer, accompanied with a significant twinkle of the eyes. "Ah, *there*," said the mariner, "yes, I guess it's hotter there—if it's true! Let's hope it ain't. If 'tis, I suppose I shall get used to it in time. I've just come home from the Soudan, and it's darned hot there, I tell ye. I thought I should never get used to it, but I did. It's only a matter of time, and I suppose it'll be the same *There*." Shaver and shaved smiled at each other, and we smiled at them both. They might have started at the idea of a lecture against Hell, but they were on the broad road of Scepticism, and many there be that find it.

Hell Gate was blown up with dynamite, and Hell itself will be blown up with moral dynamite. There is an explosive in men's hearts that will do the business; a love of justice and humanity, a hatred of wrong and cruelty. They revolt against an Almighty Jailor of the Universe. They begin to think the dogma of eternal torture the vilest that ever crawled from the putrefying brain of a priest. They begin to loathe those who would suffuse the darkness of human sorrow with the lurid light of Hell. And they say of Hell what the Yankees said of Hell Gate—Blast it.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIANITY AND WAR.

It was natural that the Church Congress, holding its meeting in a strongly fortified garrison town, the seat of our most extensive naval dockyard, should take as a subject for consideration its attitude in regard to war. It seems somewhat late, in the history of a religion that has caused more bloodshed than any other, to discuss whether indeed it is lawful for Christian men to be a party to the destruction of life and the desolation of homes, which are the inseparable results of war. The truth, of course, is that the patchwork medley of sentiments and dogmas, called Christianity, has no real guidance on this or any other matter of importance. On the one hand, the Sermon on the Mount inculcates a more than Quaker submission to evil, by which the rogues and bullies of the world would greatly benefit, while on the other, Jesus says he came not to bring peace, but a sword, and significantly tells his disciples, "he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one."

While Christians were weak and in a minority, the maxims of peace were on their lips, if not in their lives; but when they obtained the sword of power it was discovered that war was lawful in a righteous cause, and that cause their own. St. Augustine, the great leader of Christian theology, made this distinction, and discovered, moreover, that the Donatists, whose only heresy was the preference of their own church government to one imposed from without, were the proper objects of a religious war. When the Byzantine Emperors opposed themselves to the worship of images, the heads of the Christian Church absolved their subjects from allegiance and fomented civil war. It would be impossible to even mention within the scope of one article all the occasions upon which religion has been made the direct occasion of war by Christians. It suffices to mention the seven crusades which destroyed the lives of millions of men, and devastated Europe and Asia Minor for two hundred years, and which were pre-eminently termed

holy wars, because waged to recover and hold the sepulchre of a dead Jew, a sepulchre which to this day Mohammedan soldiers have to guard lest Latin and Greek Christians should tear each others' eyes out for the right of exhibiting it to pilgrims.

In a less obvious and direct, but in no less disastrous a manner than by direct incitement to war, Christianity has powerfully aided the military spirit. It directed the attention of all the most quiet and peaceable natures to the affairs of another world, and by enforcing celibacy upon these, it left the world to be peopled by the ruder and less tamed spirits, so that during the times of its ascendancy, the choice of any high career lay between the profession of a soldier and that of a monk. Now that industrialism has shown the advantages of peace and has evolved a public sentiment in favor of it, Christianity would fain step in and claim the victory.

It is amusing for any one acquainted with the seamy side of Christian history to note how tenderly the speakers at the Church Congress patronised peace without wounding the susceptibilities of the admiral in the chair. Prebendary Row, who opened the subject with a paper, declared there was nothing incompatible with Christianity in a war that was truly defensive, although the Gospel does say "resist not evil" and "to him that taketh thy coat give thy cloak also." He admitted the spirit of the Old Testament was thoroughly warlike, but then God Almighty had greatly improved upon his early dispensation. This reference to the Old Testament pulled up the Rev. A. C. Edersheim, a perverted Jew, who declared that "The wars of Israel concerned their very national existence." We suppose this was because they could not multiply so fast in the wilderness as when they had driven the Canaanites out of the land. He declared that the end of war could not be brought about by "any nostrums such as peace societies, arbitration and the like." The only remedy was to have Christ in the heart, which it was the work of the Church to promote. Judging by the work of the Church in the past, we should have somewhat more reliance on the nostrum of international arbitration, the justification of which was given by the Rev. Mr. Engstrom, who observed that in the conflict of right and wrong the individual could go to a court of justice, but the nation could not. The only layman, who spoke at the close, might well regret "that so little had been said about the attitude and teaching of the Church," which, by the way, declares in its thirty-seventh article that "it is lawful for Christian men, at the commandment of the Magistrate, to wear weapons and serve in the wars." This speaker declared that in a life of eighty years he had heard only one sermon against war, and that we had often prayed for success in a war that was afterwards admitted to have been a mistake. No doubt his experience is not exceptional. The moralists for hire who denounce the opening of picture galleries and museums on Sunday as the opening of a gulf of iniquity, and who preach that free and unsectarian education will be ruinous to the country, have no words of opposition to the spectacle of five millions of non-producers in Christian Europe, armed to the teeth and ready with consecrated banners to rush at a signal to the slaughter of their fellow-beings. What a farce is Christianity and what miserable quacks are its hired teachers!

J. M. WHEELER.

ONE of the most wicked perversions of history we ever met with appears in the *Christian World*, which refers to "the social salvation England derived from her welcome of the Puritans cast out by revolutionary France." The writer of this sentence can hardly be an ignoramus, and we are bound to conclude that he is one of those people who will have their portion in the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire. The Huguenots were expelled by the most Christian Louis XV., the favorite son of Rome, who frequently knelt in prayer after committing adultery with a mistress, or ravishing a young girl in the *Parc aux Cerfs*, and who, after fifty years of vice, finally died a mass of rotten carrion, which drove human beings away and infected the very horses in the stable. Revolutionary France never persecuted man, woman or child. It tolerated all forms of religion, and only deprived the State Church of its ill-gotten wealth.

THE Religious Tract Society, or some other religious organisation for disseminating literature, ought to supply Christian editors with cheap text-books of modern history, and we advise them to begin with the *Christian World*. The *Christian Herald* is perhaps hopeless.

ACID DROPS.

A CLERGYMAN writes to the *Church Times* complaining that the new edition of Crockford's Clerical Directory contains a prominent advertisement of "unfermented grape juice for the communion." The clergyman, while assured that the publishers were unaware of "the pain such an advertisement must cause to numerous subscribers," demands that the outrage be withdrawn. The blood of the Savior must not be represented by an unfermented grape juice, but by the kind of liquor upon which the guests got "well drunk" at Cana, in Galilee.

ANOTHER sky-pilot is in trouble. The Rev. William Acraman, Vicar of Crich, Derbyshire, and formerly of Hereford and Appleton-le-Moors, has been arrested for committing an unnatural offence. And yet there are wicked people who dare to think that we could dispense with the services and example of these State-paid teachers of social purity and superstition!

THE *Christian World* devotes two columns to the praise and glory of "Gipsy Smith," who was formerly a captain in the Salvation Army, but was expelled by Booth for declining to hand over to the "General" a handsome gold watch which was presented to him by his friends. "Gipsy Smith," having to choose between the watch and the "General," wisely selected the more handsome and useful article. Since then he has been preaching at Hanley on his own account with great success. The secret of his attraction is a fine tenor voice; the people listen to his singing and fancy they are hearing the Gospel. Smith was converted nine years ago. "He knew but little of the Bible," says the *Christian World*, "so that it was by the direct action of the Divine Spirit upon this gipsy mind, through the word that was spoken, that he became a healed man." We take this to mean that while other converts to Christianity are made by preachers, "Gipsy Smith" was converted direct by the Holy Ghost. We therefore conclude that he is inspired, and the Queen should at once make him Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE Leeds coroner has had to hold an inquest over another victim of the belief in faith-healing as taught by the Bible. Miss Cope, aged 16, trusted herself in the hands of the Lord and her mother and refused medical aid in her illness. The jury censured the mother for not calling in the doctor till her daughter was nearly dead, and, had she not been a widow, the coroner would probably have sent her for trial for thus showing her belief in God's word.

"A GIRL was forced before the eyes of her parents, and then her throat was cut, lest she should have conceived and should give birth to a Jew." This sentence, which makes one's blood run cold with horror, and then hot with indignation, is from "The Jew Hunt" in Messrs. Foote and Wheeler's "Crimes of Christianity." Fancy the mild and merciful disciples of the meek and lowly Jesus wreaking their lust and hate on a poor girl in order to avenge the Crucifixion which happened nearly fifteen centuries before. And fancy the great Christ looking down from heaven on the hellish scene without interfering. What atrocities have been inflicted on the Jews since the days of Constantine! "The Jew Hunt" reads like a ghastly nightmare. It is full of cruelties which would be almost incredible if the authority of standard, and mostly Christian, historians were not given for every statement. We defy any honest Christian to read it without being shaken in his faith.

THE Queen attended Crathie Church last Sunday with the Princess Beatrice, the Duchess of Connaught and the Duchess of Albany, all of whom are handsomely pensioned by the State. The Rev. A. W. Williamson, of Edinburgh, officiated, and preached from the appropriate text, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."

DR. EDERSHEIM very coolly told the Church Congress that the Bible, including both the Old and New Testament, was opposed to war. We suppose David thought the same of those parts of Holy Scripture that are said (by the Church) to have existed in his day when he said "Blessed be the Lord that teacheth my hands to war and my fingers to fight."

DR. EDERSHEIM declared that peace societies and international arbitration were "nostrums" but that "when Christ reigned in the hearts of all men then all wars would cease." We should be sorry to take such a pessimistic view, for if wars do not cease till then they will continue for ever. Christ is dethroned every year in thousands of hearts and the process is growing more rapid every day. Besides, if after eighteen centuries of Jesus Christ more Jesus Christ is wanted to put down war, it is very obvious that Jesus Christ is a much worse "nostrum" than peace societies or arbitration.

It is a curious comment on the boasts of these sky-pilots that Mr. J. Henderson, the closing speaker in the debate, remarked that in a life of eighty years he had heard only one sermon against war, although he had heard prayers for the success of a good many.

PROFESSOR CREIGHTON told the Congress that Church History should be more studied. We quite agree with him. We look forward to the time when our "Crimes of Christianity" will be made a text-book of ecclesiastical history in every college in the kingdom.

THE Church Congress closed with a *conversazione*, which was attended by "two thousand ladies and gentlemen." There was a military band and a lavish display of fruit and flowers, and the report adds that "the Corporation plate was on exhibition." A fitting termination to four days' hypocritical twaddle. After talking about the religion which loveth not the world nor the things of the world, the sky-pilots get back to the world as soon as possible, and enjoy military music, the conversation of pretty women, and above all the glitter of gold and silver plate, which probably reminded them of next Sunday's collection.

THE Rev. Arthur Mursell delighted the assembled Baptists with an address on all sorts of subjects, including "Jezebels in Halls of Science." We suppose this is an intended witticism on Mrs. Besant; but it lacks point. Jezebel was not a frequenter of Halls of Science. She was a very pious lady, who, in addition to thieving and murdering, maintained a large number of priests. We advise Arthur Mursell to read his Bible again.

MR. STEAD, of the "revelations," was the hero of the Baptists' Union Conference. One or two speakers who disturbed the general harmony by doubting (with St. Paul, let us add) whether it was right to do ill that good may come, were unanimously shouted down. Mr. Corry, of Cardiff, was suspected of belonging to this reprobate sect, and his rising was the signal for a simian display of mouth, and an asinine display of lung power. But when he informed the Conference that he had contributed £200 to the Stead Defence Fund, he was warmly cheered. The Rev. Dr. Clifford, of Westbourne Park Chapel, "was proud to say that Mr. Stead, who was a Sunday-school teacher and an active member of a Christian Church, was his personal friend." That is the reason why Mr. Stead was not prosecuted for obscenity. If any *Freethought* editor had published six lines of the "revelations" he would have been long ago in gaol. Only say you are a Christian, and that you are working for the Lord Jesus, and you may flood the streets with filth and stop the traffic with processions or make people's lives intolerable by praying, preaching and singing under their windows. "With me all things are lawful," said Paul. Every Christian whippersnapper claims the same license, and the worst of it is, gets it.

TALMAGE says that if Stead went to gaol for abducting Eliza Armstrong "he would go as certainly in the service of God as any martyr ever went to the stake. His position would be sublime from all time and all eternity." Religion appears to sanctify everything from child-stealing up to the wholesale massacre of heathens and savages. Perhaps Moses had the Midianite maidens violated in order to expose such crimes in his disgusting revelations called the Pentateuch.

STEAD'S *Pall Mall Gazette* is getting more pious and Pecksniffian every day. Its latest is an unctuous article on Lord Salisbury's diatribe against infidelity, in which it has the effrontery to say that the English democracy is religious. The way this statement is "proved" is amusing. When Stead and Booth got up their Purity Demonstration in Hyde Park, the people "responded with intense fervor to every appeal made in the name of God." Here be proofs! It might as well be said that the London workmen's clubs are religious because crowds of Hallelujah Lassies at Exeter Hall declare themselves "Safe in the arms of Jesus."

"RELIGION is becoming more and more real to men and women," says the *P. M. G.* Church Congresses and Dissenting Conferences sing a very different tune. We refer Mr. Stead to statistics, but we fear he is too full of the spirit to study them.

HERE, for instance, is the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who has just said at Taunton, that the Church is in danger, and that the movement against it derives its strength less from the growth of Nonconformity than from "the skill of the large infidel party and the growing democratic party." The Bishop adds that "the real strength of the movement is an infidel, democratic and social upheaval against religion."

MR. STEAD complains of a conspiracy of silence against him among the London dailies. Well, let us see how Mr. Stead himself burkes what displeases his highness. Henry Varley has been talking big words in the *P. M. G.* about the rights of free speech, and on hearing that he was engaged in raising funds for another prosecution of the *Freethinker*, we wrote to the editor of the *P. M. G.* on the subject, thinking it would be an interesting fact to him and his readers. Our letter would not have occupied a dozen lines, but of course it was not inserted. We should not be at all surprised to learn that Mr. Stead gave Varley the first subscription.

HERE is a fine illustration of Mr. Stead's Pecksniffian peculiarities. Captain Burton, a gentleman and a scholar whose boots Mr. Stead is not fit to black, is again hauled over the coals

for the hundredth time, about his new translation of the Arabian Nights, which is so "pornographic" that the price of the first volume has actually risen from a pound to twenty-five shillings. Further down, in the very same column, the *P. M. G.* gloats proudly over the fact that thirty-five shillings have been given for a single copy of its own twopennyworth of smut.

DR. STRATHERN, of South Bank, Middlesborough, presents a new objection to the oath. On being called as a witness he declined to kiss the book on the ground that it was to risk catching some disease. This was held not to be a "conscientious objection" within the meaning of the Act, and the doctor, after protesting and holding the magistrates "responsible for the consequences," kissed the book in a very squeamish fashion.

JOHN DAY showed the benefits of religion by reverently kneeling before the altar of his church while cutting his throat. He was taken to the hospital and there died, according to the verdict of the coroner's jury, from congestion of the lungs which "might have been accelerated through loss of blood." If John Day had only had a little more of the religion of Abraham and Joshua and Jephthah and Ehud he would have been saved from suicide; for he would have cut somebody else's throat instead of his own. Lord, increase our faith.

En Avant, the organ of the Salvation Army in France announces the arrival in Paris of a Major Fakir. The Major would appear, says the *Scotsman*, to be an individual of extraordinary sanctity in the view of salvationists. He has performed many pious actions, notably amongst them being the fact that one day, before his conversion, he wrote the name of God upon 20,000 slips of paper and cast them into the river to sanctify the fishes therein, and the souls of those who would eventually devour them. On another occasion he remained three days and nights up to his neck in water, without stirring or eating. If some Christians only stood up to their necks in water for five minutes they would look much better for it.

ELIZABETH PAINTER, of Brill, has been emulating the deed of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite. She cut the throat of her husband as he slumbered in bed, but, unlike Sisera, he did not die. anyhow, she will probably be acquainted with a modern jail.

At a meeting of the Newington Vestry the Clerk read a memorial, asking the Vestry to reconsider the question of removing Parsonage Walk, as, in consequence of the name being unaltered, and no further steps having been taken to clear the thoroughfare of objectionable persons, others of a similar class had come into the street. The Chairman (Rev. G. T. Palmer) said he would undertake to again call the attention of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to the matter. The dear old Church of England is thus supported by prostitution.

The London Bankers have a Prayer Union to themselves, and the pious Lord Mayor places the handsome Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House at the disposal of the members. The bankers, however, transact their piety only with the Lord. Piety from their customers is no recommendation. "Mr. Bullion," said a bishop to the manager of a bank, "I presume you are guided by character when making advances to customers?" "Certainly, my lord; unless we believe a man is honest and industrious, he gets no money." "But if a man attends regularly to his religious duties, and bears a character for piety?" "In that case, my lord, we require double security."

"FATHER" IGNATIUS, preaching during the sitting of the Church Congress, declared that there were rank infidels assembled there, men who denied the inspiration of the Bible. On the other hand, the Rev. H. A. Smith at a meeting of what was called a Protestant Church Congress, held at the same time at Portsmouth, declared the members of the Opposition Congress were Romanists and that he was as far from agreeing with the members of the Society of the Holy Cross, or of the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, as he was from agreeing with the followers of Mahomet. Between Broad Church and High Church, Anglicanism must be in a "parlous" condition.

AN uproarious religious meeting fitly wound up the proceedings at Portsmouth. The occasion was a lecture by Mr. Gardner, late "Brother Austin," entitled "Some facts about Father Ignatius, Lord High Abbot of Llanthony." The Fathers of Llanthony, according to Mr. Gardner, are bent on instituting confession and perpetual adoration of the mass. Their God, he says, is in the shape of bread and water, and they adorn the statue of the Virgin Mary with necklaces, brooches, gold watches, etc. Father Ignatius himself turned up to oppose, but not being permitted, drove away in a very excited state. The audience did not allow Mr. Gardner to complete his lecture but indulged in noisy demonstrations and something like a free fight.

THE TOWN Council of Bristol have a proposal before them to convert a disused chapel in Castle Green into a slaughterhouse for pigs. Formerly it reeked with the blood of the Lamb. What will Jahveh think of the substitution of the animal to which he had such strong aversion?

DR. ANNA KINGSFORD has enfeebled her brain by too watery a diet, or she would not think that Atheists are constitutionally in favor of vivisection. It is because Atheists see the advantages of science to animals as well as to humanity that they are not in favor of having science hampered by a short-sighted sentimentalism. Atheists are as tender and humane as Theists. It is Paul who asks, "Hath God care for oxen?" and the Pope who lays it down as a theological error that man has any duties towards the lower animals.

It is said that Jahveh never made anything in vain but he would have conferred a favor on the world if he had ticketed the dude explaining the uses to which the animal could be put without trespassing upon the prerogative of the monkey.

UNDER the heading "Poor Clergy and Begging Letters," the *Church Times* inserts the following from "An Assistant Curate." "Sir,—May I be permitted through your columns to remind my brother clergy that as according to proverb 'Dog does not eat dog,' so in sending out begging letters they should spare their brother priests, or at any rate, poor vicars and assistant curates."

ANOTHER writer puts forward a simple scheme for the augmentation of poor benefices in the city of York. He says the historical palace of Bishopthorpe is far too large for the needs of a modern prelate. If sold the proceeds could go to the benefit of the poor parsons, and the Archbishop having less expenses could spare a share of his present stipend. Some day the nation will re-arrange the bishops' salaries, as it did in 1836, and perhaps the cause of education will benefit instead of "the poor parsons."

THIS is the conclusive way in which a Christian writer argues against the Old Testament revision: "(1) Paul wrote the epistle to the Hebrews, as proved by 2 Peter iii., 15, 16. (2) Then Paul, in Heb. i., 7, definitely pronounces 'angels' to be the proper translation of *Elohim* (Ps. civ., 5). (3) Heb. ii., 9, uses the same word, 'angels' to translate *Elohim*, in Ps. viii., 5, and so gives Paul's authority that it is correct. (4) But the new revision translates the passage 'little lower than God,' and gives the lie to the decision of Paul, and is, therefore, wrong." This reminds us of Howard Crosby's argument for the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. Jesus, in the gospels, several times refers to the laws Moses gave. Mr. Crosby maintains, therefore, that unless Moses wrote the Pentateuch, Christ was mistaken; and as Christ was God, that could not be. Nevertheless, people keep on doubting that Moses wrote the books ascribed to him. And a good number of the doubters are Christians, too.

THE comparison of God with space has long been a favorite trick with theologians, many of whom would indeed lead us to infer that you have only to exhaust the air from a box twelve feet by twelve to obtain seventeen hundred and twenty-eight feet of solid deity. This is, however, capped by the "*Bibliotheca Sacra*," which declares that the doctrine of the Trinity is demonstrated by the three dimensions of space. This is so satisfactory that all we want to know further is whether the Father represents length, the Son breadth and the Holy Ghost thickness, or which is what, and why?

THE real Trinity is represented by £ s. d. The *Christian Union* for Sept. 25 devotes a leader of a column and a quarter to puffing a sharebroking syndicate, which advertises largely in its columns and offers enormous profits without risk. This is the sort of comment a Christian paper gives on Christ's teaching, "Woe to ye rich," "Lay not up treasures on earth." The same paper follows with an article directed against "The Fashion of Disbelief."

THERE are in the United States, in round numbers, 65,000 clergymen, and they preach seven million sermons a year. And yet the millenium hasn't arrived there, and the unconverted can be counted by millions.

A PARSON who went out to Congo,
Told the heathens that they should not wrong go;
But when dinner was ready
The priest was so deady
That, though there, he did not hear the gong go.

THE *Missionary Visitor* has found out why prayer is not answered. A Sunday-school teacher explains to a puzzled pupil that the Bible is quite true when it says, "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." But the knocks are "runaway knocks." We ask for blessings but are not so insane as really to expect them. We fear Jesus will not hear us and admit us, and so we go away. The "earnest-faced" boy now has a new light dawning in his soul and shining in his eyes, and he announces his determination of hauging on to the knocker and banging away till he forces poor Jesus to open the door to him.

"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.—ADVT.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Oct. 25, Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, Sheffield; at 11, "Twelve Months in a Christian Gao!" at 3, "Our Girls and the Bible; or, a Freethinker's View of the *Pall Mall Gazette* Revelations;" at 7, "Good God."

NOVEMBER 1 and 8, Hall of Science, London; 15, Milton Hall, London; 22, Halifax; 29, Manchester; 30, Leicester.

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

JANUARY 10, Hall of Science, London; 17, Huddersfield; 24, Liverpool; 31, Hall of Science, 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.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—G. H. Firth, B., A. L., W. Farley, G. O. Coote, J. Saunders.

A. LERCOMBE.—The Catholic Church does not make the distinction between the Apocrypha and the other books of the Bible which is made in the sixth article of the Church of England, to be found in all prayer books. The Ecclesiastics of Jesus, the son of Sirach, is better worth reading than much in the Bible.

C. WARD.—Thanks. Always glad to hear from you.

"YOUNG READER" writes: "I lately came into possession of your 'Freethought Gleanings,' and I must say it is the best pennyworth I have read—Gems of Thought indeed, containing the very essence of advanced literature. It should have an immense sale. I noticed on the top 'Part I.' Have you any subsequent parts?" We are sorry to say that "Freethought Gleanings" has not had an immense sale. Only one part has been published. The plan of the work will some day be carried out under a different title.

T. DICKSON.—Too broad for our columns. Try the *War Cry* or the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

J. WIDDICOMBE.—Personal experiences such as your manuscript begins with would be interesting and acceptable. What follows is not so welcome, as we are overcrowded with general copy.

W. EMSLEY.—Your verses are not bad, but they are hardly suitable to our columns.

H. BRYCESON.—Yes, to both your questions.

JAMES BIDDOE informs us that his "honored mother," who is nearly eighty years of age, has written the best book in existence except the Bible, only it is not published. He warns us to beware, for he is good at "argument" and is an educated "gentleman." He is anxious for our "edification," and threatens to "rite a long article" for the *Freethinker* which will convert every one of our readers as well as the whole staff. Mrs. Weldon says that the Lunacy Commissioners keep many a sane man in asylums. It is obvious they leave many lunatics at large.

B. MOORE.—We answered the libel on the town of Liberal last week, and must let the matter rest.

B. DAWSON (Spennymoor) writes: "I have to thank you and Mr. Wheeler for the 'Crimes of Christianity.' I think it the most damaging of all the things written against Christianity. If Judge North had known it, he would have given you three years in order to prevent the exposure of his villainous creed. I hope you will continue the work up to the present date. It is a great boon to those who cannot buy expensive works. I send the numbers to advanced Christians, and much good has resulted. What an eye-opener!"

W. FRITH.—You will find all the principal Forgeries of the early Christians dealt with in Part V. of the "Crimes of Christianity." All the chief authorities on the subject are specified in the footnotes.

J. COLE.—Mill's "System of Logic" is now published at 5s. It is stiff reading for a beginner, but if you persevere you will get through it with profit. Bain's work is more technical than Mill's.

C. ISRAEL.—We sent a copy of the "Jewish Life of Christ" to the *Jewish World and Chronicle*, but neither had the courage to review it. We are not surprised, however; for Jews are still afraid to speak too loud against Christianity.

INFIDEL.—"Bible Contradictions" is part of a general Handbook to the Bible. Thanks for the cuttings.

W. CAVE.—Glad to hear from you, but poetry is hardly your forte.

G. BARBER.—Relfe Brothers are the publishers of Paul Bert's book.

C. WILDE.—We anticipated clergymen's objections in our criticism of Lord Salisbury.

T. WILLIAMS.—Thanks. It may be useful.

A. POMEROY.—We used so much of Clifford's sentence as served our purpose, and you will observe we did not put the words in quotation marks.

J. WARBURTON.—All Church property is national property, held subject to law and amenable to fresh law.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Inverness Courier—Highland News—Kentish Express—Church Reformer—Truthseeker—Kensington News—Hampshire Post—Liberty—Truth—Western Mercury—Boston Investigator—Derby Telegraph—Glad Tidings—Portsmouth Evening News—Liverpool Echo—Liverpool Mercury—Christian Worker—Western Daily Press—Newcastle Chronicle—Bradford Telegraph.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

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

THE Rev. Philip Hains attended Mr. Foote's afternoon lecture at Wigan last Sunday, and offered some desultory opposition. After two long speeches, the reverend gentleman rose to make a third. Many of the audience left, and the chairman said the discussion must close, as there was barely time for Mr. Foote to refresh himself for the evening lecture. "Well, then," said Mr. Hains, who seemed bent on creating a disturbance, "I shall say that Mr. Foote is afraid of discussion." Curiously the reverend gentleman had been talking a great deal about the *kind* spirit of Christianity. We suppose he considers his attempt to deprive a Freethought lecturer of a few minutes' rest between two meetings as an excellent specimen of Christian charity. So do we.

MR. HAINS was invited to come again in the evening, when he could have as much more discussion as he pleased. But he declined the invitation, having probably to attend his own gospel shop. He also declined to meet Mr. Foote in a set debate. But we hope he will change his mind. The Wigan Freethinkers would very much like to see him in a public discussion, and Mr. Foote would be happy to champion their side in the battle.

PART XII. of the "Crimes of Christianity," which will be ready next Thursday, deals with the Crusades, and gives all the salient features of that unparalleled outburst of ignorant and credulous fanaticism. When the reader reflects that the Crusaders were led by a goat and a goose filled with the Holy Ghost, he will not be surprised to find a remarkable history of folly, cruelty and lust.

A LONG letter on "Women and the Church Congress," from "One who has the misfortune to be born of the Inferior Sex," appeared in the *Portsmouth Evening News* for Oct. 17. It boldly states that women are beginning to be dissatisfied with a religion which makes them the mere slaves of man, and points out that "Masculinism reigns supreme in the Bible." When women generally find this out the days of priestcraft will be over.

AT the Evangelical Alliance Conference at Glasgow, Principal Simon presented what the *Christian World* calls "gloomy statistics as to the religious condition of Germany, and especially its capital." Germany is at present the most powerful country in Europe, its industries are becoming more and more active, its science is famous in the world, and on the whole its political influence is used to maintain the peace of Europe. Statistics show that as Germany progresses her religion dies out, and the same is essentially true of every country in the civilised world.

A WORKING MAN, writing in *Time* on the Modern Pulpit, says that "Men are recognising now, as they have never recognised before, that theology is always a useless, and is very often a vicious, element in our moral evolution. It may have been necessary in the past, but its work is done now, and the men and women of the future will have none of it."

A PLYMOUTH correspondent urges us to advertise our handsome shilling edition of Ingersoll's "Mistakes of Moses" in the London dailies. He says the work is as accurate as Colenso, and full of a literary charm, such as the good Bishop never possessed, which makes it as fascinating as a novel; and he fancies that if people were only acquainted with it they would buy it by the thousand. Unfortunately, advertising in the London dailies is a costly process. Still the suggestion is worth considering, and we would strain a point to put Ingersoll's book into the hands of the general public.

By the way, people are always asking us whether our "Mistakes of Moses" is a lecture. No, it is a book, and the only one Ingersoll has ever written. The lecture, which is published under the same title, contains only a few samples from the warehouse. Ingersoll's "Mistakes of Moses" ought to be placed beside Paine's "Age of Reason" in every Freethinker's library; and it is even a better volume than Paine's to lend to an inquiring Christian.

MR. FOOTE'S "Bible Romances" are now concluded. The Second Series, comprising numbers 13 to 22 inclusive, are being bound up in a ninepenny volume, and will be ready on the 28th, inst. The first series has been a greater success than any other shilling volume issued from the Freethought press.

A CURSE OF A BLESSING.

THE impertinence of the pious is painfully apparent to every Freethinker, nay, to every person of ordinary intelligence whose inherent reverence for the large army of agents of the Hell-Fire Insurance Company does not blind them to the facts of everyday life. These pious gentry are the most successful beggars in Europe. It is part of their profession. They do it in the name of the Lord, and thus avoid prosecution.

St. Balaam, being a prophet, was very pious. When, therefore, he had had an interview with Balak, he begged of him to "Build me here seven altars; prepare me here seven oxen and seven rams;" whereupon "Balak did as Balaam had spoken; and Balak and Balaam offered on every altar a bullock and a ram." This request was no sooner made than granted. Balaam's God, no doubt, greatly enjoyed the perfume arising from this seething mass of animal flesh—a wanton waste of roast beef and roast mutton nevertheless. But see what follows. Balaam had been specially retained to curse the Israelites; he had had oxen and rams for sacrifice; he had also promise of honors and rewards, or, in other words, his brief had been backed by a handsome prospective fee; and when the hour comes for him to deliver his opening curse he actually has the barefaced impudence to turn round and act as counsel for the defence. Such is the way of most Bible saints, and such, let me say, is the way of their pious descendants!

It will be observed, however, that it is a very rare occurrence indeed for saints to refuse to curse a people, for cursing is their especial business. What are they without it? Lame and harmless as bleating lambs! The feeblest of parsons in their second childhood find the vital spark rekindled when they launch forth a terrible curse upon those dreadful monsters that disturb their pleasant dreams—"the infidels." "In the name of the Lord" they curse and execrate the Freethinker.

"They curse him in sleeping, that every night
He will dream of the Devil and wake in a fright."

When, however, they discover that he does nothing of the sort they are amazed and horrified at his coolness. Barham exactly describes the pious wonder when he says:

"But what gave rise to no little surprise,
Nobody seemed one penny the worse."

Three times Balak implores of Balaam to curse the Israelites; three times Balaam makes sacrifices, and blesses the seed of Jacob instead. Even in pronouncing the blessing, this saintly man could not forget his true vocation; he had to "fall a-cursing" after all. "Blessed is he," saith Balaam, referring to the Israelites, "that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee." What a curse of a blessing!

Jesus was the Son of God; he taught men to "bless those that cursed them;" so that God instructed his Son to contradict his old teaching—a teaching which he had specially instructed Balaam to proclaim in the presence of Balak and all the princes of Moab.

In another passage Balaam expressed the hope that he might die the death of the righteous and that his end might be like that of Jacob! Jacob forsooth! Jacob, it may be true, like many another scoundrel, died quietly and easily in his bed. But that surely was not because he was righteous. He had been a liar, a trickster and a thief. He had defrauded his brother of his birthright and a blessing, had robbed his father-in-law of sheep and cattle, and deceived his blind old father in the last hours of his life. Yet death did not visit him roughly, but touched him gently, so that he died peacefully and calmly—so calmly, indeed, that Balaam wished to die like him. How the righteous die we have no means of knowing, for Jesus tells us that none are righteous, "no not one," and he ought to know. But we know that a great many better men than Jacob—believers in Jahveh too—have died indescribably painful deaths in the performance of noble deeds, and it might be imagined, as Mill says, as though in punishment for the performance of them.

Balaam blessed Israel. He blessed the seed of Jacob, which he predicted would spread over the face of the earth and out of which a "star" should rise and smite the corners of Moab and destroy all the children of Sheth. Immediately following this blessing we find that the children of Israel commenced to misbehave themselves with the daughters of Moab, who not only won them physically,

but induced them to bow down to their gods. Then the Lord's temper was ruffled, and his anger was kindled against Israel. And the Lord gave the following humane instructions. He "said unto Moses, Take all the heads of the people and hang them up before the Lord against the sun, that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel. And Moses said unto the judges of Israel, Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor" (Numbers xxv., 4—5). "And those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand" (verse 9). Surely Balaam might as well have cursed the Israelites while he was about it; his blessing seems to have had the effect Balak desired.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

MR. BROADHURST AND THE SUNDAY QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—I see a reference made in your paper of the 11th instant, to the small sum of money our Society contributed towards Mr. Broadhurst's testimonial, and the inference you draw therefrom is that our Society refused to contribute because of Mr. Broadhurst's views on the Sunday questions. Now, Sir, for Mr. Broadhurst's sake, and the reputation of our Society, I most positively deny the correctness of the inference you have drawn. The only reason why more money was not given towards the testimonial was, that we had such a large number of members out of employment with large families dependent upon them for support that it took all the money we could spare to meet their wants. "Charity begins at home" with us, and the cry for bread from the families of our members has the first claim on the Society.

Knowing the members of our Society as I do I am fully convinced that, even if their views on the Sunday question did not square with that of Mr. Broadhurst, they are more generous than to allow a difference of opinion to interfere in any such a way, and not to recognise all the other great services he has rendered to his class as a workman.—I am, dear sir, yours truly,
R. KNIGHT.

CHRISTIAN OPPOSITION TO FREETHOUGHT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The North Western district possesses a very satisfactory proportion of Freethinkers, and large audiences are the rule at Milton Hall. Notably on the occasion of Mr. Foot's last lecture, "God's Mother," the place was crammed, and it would have had a disquieting influence on the minds of neighboring sky-pilots, had they witnessed the numbers filing out at the close of the lecture. Possibly such was the case, for a few days after two posters were simultaneously issued by Messrs. Woffendale and Whitmore, and conspicuously displayed in Keatish Town and neighborhood. One of these (Woffendale's) is very funny: the bill is headed in large type with the interrogation, "Why believe?" and underneath, against the dates of the four following Sundays, are placed, "In God, Christ, Heaven and Hell, and Christianity" respectively. The degree of belief, or rather non-belief, is thus to be determined by dates, and the style adopted is one which would be more naturally expected to emanate from propagandists of Freethought rather than Christianity. It would be pretty safe to expect that a man who disbelieved in God on the 18th October would disbelieve in Christ on 25th ditto., and so on to the end; while it can scarcely be said to work in the same direction on the other side, for there are numbers of people who profess belief in God and scout the particular dogmas of Christianity. Perhaps, however, Mr. Woffendale hopes to catch a stray "Infidel" or two, and by administering four weekly doses get his medicine swallowed by these means, knowing that it is useless to expect it to be "bolted" in one dose. It looks rather ominous when Christians are obliged to imitate the style of Freethought propaganda to draw their audiences, added to which is the announcement that there will be "hymns and anthems by a full choir." Possibly the "hymns and anthems" will form in this instance, as in many others, the principal or sole attraction, for it is certain that congregations would become beautifully less, especially as regards the female portion of them, were they deprived of the free musical entertainment which the parsons have found a necessary addition to the ordinary service. Mr. Whitmore announces four lectures on the same dates, two of which are to deal with Christian and Infidel lives and deaths. It would, perhaps, be too much to expect that they will not be so largely composed of self-glorification, scurrility and falsehood, as on previous occasions.—

J. DE FRAINE.

DURING the recent revival one of our young men always took a front seat, near the choir. The minister observed this, and complimented and encouraged the young man in the deep interest he was manifesting. The man of God was somewhat astounded when he heard that the young man explained his apparent interest in religion by saying: "If I hadn't took a seat near the choir my rival would have been half-way home with Miss — before I could have got to her."

A PIOUS POLITICIAN.

A CERTAIN School Board member, known
For quasi-Liberal pious tone,
In his ambition condescends
To claim us Radicals as friends.
Willing that Nonconformity
(His own, not others') should be "free"
(In fairly shared supremacy
O'er sceptic creeds and godless foes),
He owns religious freedom grows,
And feels, or feigns, he is content
To work for Disestablishment.
So he began as Liberal thorough
To cultivate our Liberal borough.
For he aspires to higher game
Than School Boards as his final aim;
And hence, the shrewd among us guess,
He read a paper or address
To members of our club one night:
Our aid would serve him in the fight.

A man of money and of mark,
He rather thinks no dog should bark
When such a godly man as he
Speaks forth as fair as fair can be.
To earnest listeners, grave and few,
Though later on their numbers grew.
His half-hour's eloquence he spent
On "Liberalism and what it meant,"
As subject of the night's debate;
And he agreed to separate
That ill-match'd pair called Church and
State,

But other Liberal claims forgot,
Though certain Radicals did not.
These learned but little from his speech;
They knew much more than he could
teach,

And when discussion came they cried
For rights that he and his denied.
Their protests and their ardent pleas
Surprised him from his smooth-tongued
ease.

"Religion bondman to the State,
Living upon a levied rate,"
They said, "is clearly out of date
Alike in churches or in schools;
In both the same stern logic rules."
To him they seemed both fiends and
fools;

For all their claims for godless right
Were strangely awful in his sight.
He seemed to shudder at the thought
That views like theirs should e'er be
taught.

They urged that teachers were not free;
Too clearly were they seen to be
State clergy for the juveniles
Of these by far too verdant isles,
A priesthood bound to teach to youth
Outrageous myths as living truth;
Forced to believe and shape their souls—
Or lie—just as the State controls;
Well trained in State-paid faith, and sent
To be a new Establishment,
To preach and pray, a saintly clique,
Every day throughout the week.
All men, they said, he must agree,
Should have religious liberty;
And even teachers could not quite
Forfeit this fundamental right.
This and much more they warmly claimed
Of Liberalism, if truly named,
And of its maxims not ashamed.
They showed religious wrongs not few,
And steadfastly demanded, too,
With wild audacity of plea,
That all these wrongs should cease to be!

Brought unexpectedly to bay
By this revolt against his sway,
By criticism's hostile tone
Where he felt sure of praise alone,
He rose and in imposing fashion,
At times in towering bursts of passion,
Hurled fierce replies, his indignation
Creating quite a marked sensation.
He glared, he foamed, his purpling face
Gleamed apoplexy *versus* grace.
For since this holy war he waged
With feelings cruelly outraged
By clearest claims for simple right,
He felt on fire, he long'd to smite.

So, answering from his heart that night,
He in his haste gave unwise vent
To thoughts and words I here present
Exposed more fully, to display
Quite clearly to the light of day
The rabid sentiments that rule
The bigots of his godly school.

"I rise," he cried, "more than amazed
To hear such dangerous questions raised.
Would you have little children taught
To set their very God at naught?
To mock at Christ not understood,
To forfeit every hope of good,
To live like swine and die like beasts
For want of those whom you deem priests,
Because they teach sound Bible truths
To gutter waifs and graceless youths?
Of course they must teach these to pray
And show them all the only way
To save their souls, their lives, from sin,
From vice and theft and dirt and gin.
I say to all, I say to each,
No teacher can be fit to teach,
Nay, fit to live or breathe earth's breath,
Who has no faith. 'Tis moral death
He spreads around. He shall, he must,
Teach children in their God to trust;
And if he will not preach and pray,
Then let him go and starve, I say.
What? You protest? As fellow creatures
You claim a conscience clause for teachers
Who wish not also to be preachers?
Perish the thought! Faith were undone!
You touch MY CONSCIENCE, Sir, and none
Shall violate that sacred trust,
Shall trample conscience in the dust
For carnal justice. God forbid!
Well know I what my fathers did.
For conscience' sake they fought and bled
And nobly died. Shall it be said
They bled for naught, they died in vain?
Basely shall I give up their gain,
The freedom, nay the sacred right,
Of conscience to oppress and smite,
To bind and gag in holy fear,
To sit in state and domineer
O'er all it knoweth by its own
Infallibility alone
Is vile, ungodly, impious, cursed?
Of all surrenders this were worst.
Of course the laws we shape refuse
Equality to hostile views,
Or freedom save to those we choose.
Of course old-fashion'd laws combine
To check your views and forward mine.
Of course our creed must rule the State,
Although our chapels pay no rate.
Of course you have to pay their share.
All Christians know that this is fair.
Such laws are right and good, I say,
To pious minds above fair play.
Oh! touch them not! They aid my view;
Leave me alone, and I'll leave you.

"Attacking singly or in swarms,
Urging what you call 'reforms,'
You torture me, you tempt, you flout,
Till scarce I know what I'm about;
So fierce I feel while you upbraid,
So persecuted and betray'd.
And yet 'tis strange you cannot see
That you and I, friends, should agree.
You wilfully ignore, forsooth,
The axiom, the settled truth,
That reigns in lone monarchic style
Like Selkirk on his desert isle,
In pious minds, and gives us light—
That we alone are always right
And others always wrong. 'Tis so.
By signs infallible we know.
If you are ignorant, then learn,
And humbly to the fold return.
Our Holy League of rival sects
(Leagued alone in such respects
As joint-stock plundering directs),
Seizing anew old rules in senates,
Taxes the land to teach our tenets.
Not to men—we dare not thus
Defy dread power adverse to us.
Modern progress, modern man,
Indignantly reject that plan.
But children, helpless in our hands,
Receive, before their mind expands,
Our mystic doctrines and our 'tone,'
Rejected, as we sadly own,

Were but their reason fully grown;
But being craftily thus sown,
Surviving through life's after-season,
Despite all truth and right and reason.

"The needs of politics apart,
I loathe the unregenerate heart
Of natural man, which from their throne
Would cast the saints, mocking God's
own

With bare equality alone.
Oh, how relentlessly it strives
To wreck the comfort of our lives,
The object of each saint's career,
The hopes to pious hearts most dear,
By breaking chains in which it lies
Fetter'd by us, the pious wise!
This natural man with whom we war,
This natural heart which we abhor,
Soon would, alas, were it unchecked,
Force on each meek and humble sect,
On us indeed, God's own elect,
The unpardonable sin, the sin
'Gainst holy conscience (God within),
The godlessness, the abomination,
Of strictly equal toleration,
Which impious wretches dare to claim,
Some even in their Creator's name,
From us, the noble few of worth,
God's chosen ones, the salt of earth!
Yet many there are, many indeed,
Who dare despise this holy creed.
They champion Bradlaugh's claim to sit,
And sanction blasphemy as wit,
Or claim at least that men shall not
Receive for it a felon's lot;
They ne'er will let me be at peace
Till all religious taxes cease,
And all immunities as well.
Church tithes we know 'tis time they fell,
But I will never be enticed,
For all your votes, to give up Christ!

"You want museums opened, too,
On God's own Sabbath, for the true
Proprietors, you say, to view
If they so wish! Good God! what next?
Must my poor conscience thus be vex'd,
Thus mock'd, thus bitterly perplex'd?
Must my supporters urge such ends?
Oh, save me, save me from such friends.
My chapel opens free as air;
My private pope speaks freely there.
What can you want besides this chance?
Joyous Sundays, as in France,
For him who daily ploughs and delves?
Liberty to please yourselves
As we do? What more can we do?
Churches and chapels welcome you,
And public-houses open too.
You've Beer and Bible, leagued as friends—
Fiend and God—for mutual ends.
What would you more? You've God and
Devil,

Thus striving fairly on a level.
I drive my careless ignorant brother
To the one or to the other.
You see, we are not much afraid
Of influences that degrade.
We stand comparison, we trust,
With grovelling rivals of the dust.
But higher influences must,
We shriek, be ours alone! Priest-ridden,
All other good must be forbidden
On that one day of rest and light,
That sole spare day, the toilers' right,
On which, you say, the masses might,
In fresh unweariedness and leisure
With social zest, with wholesome pleasure,
Seek and welcome, free from care,
The wise and good and true and fair.
We need these days which your vile plan
Would take from God to give to man.
For on these precious leisure days
'Tis our monopoly to raise
To humanise, to lift men's gaze
To what we think are nobler ways,
And higher thought, and true endeavor.
We have patented for ever
This sole right. We yield it never.
Our wide domain spreads everywhere,
And we allow no rivals there;
No poachers in our game-preserve
Of stupor'd heart and vicious nerve,
Lest Wisdom tempt and capture thus
The many who will not come to us.

Oh, 'twere a saddening sight to see
Well plann'd museums open'd free
When those who need them most have time!
God grant I share in no such crime!

"What? You demand with one accord
Libraries for the impious horde?
Picture galleries too? O Lord!
And lecture halls? Oh for the sword
Of pious Gideon, to smite
The subtle modern Midianite.
My persecuted conscience then
Might win sweet peace from wicked men,
Sweet rest and priceless liberty.
Fiercely I demand, Will ye
Not let my tortured conscience be?
Will ye not cease to trouble it
Like scoffing vampires from the pit?"

No, good friend, indeed, not we,
Till all this rabid bigotry
Grows just to all, grants liberty
To other views, to other men;
Then shall we cease and not till then.
The thoughtful conscience of mankind
Repents the past, becomes less blind.
It grows. It learns. It wills the right.
It seeks true freedom, loves real light,
Travelling surely, day by day,
Its glorious ever-onward way,
While bigots curse in deep dismay.
W. P. BALL.

PROFANE JOKES.

It is now stated that the revisers changed the name to she-ol because, being mostly married men they considered the feminine gender more appropriate.

An Alabama darkey was heard to soliloquize philosophically: "De sun am so hot, de cotton am so grassy, de work am so hard, dat dis darkey feel called upon to preach."

WHILE the wine was being passed around during the administration of the sacrament in a Minneapolis (Minn.) church, the other Sunday, the congregation was electrified by the sudden exclamation of a little boy, "Ma, I'll take beer!" A ripple of suppressed laughter disturbed the solemnity of the occasion.

A CHURCH member got tipsy the other day, and in that condition was met by his pastor. Being sternly rebuked for his conduct, he excused himself in this wise: "You know, parson, that for more than twenty years I've served the Lord faithfully and well, and so I thought I might as well take a day."

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