

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 142.



THE ORIGINAL SALVATION SALLY.

“And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the Lord.”—EXODUS 20, 21.

THE PROSECUTION.

We published a Special Edition of the *Freethinker* last week, containing the latest news as to the Glasgow prosecution, and a report of the proceedings in the Police Court, which we shall not reproduce in our ordinary number this week. The Special Edition can still be obtained at our office, and to it we must refer those readers who wish to see all the details of the case.

When we wrote our article last week we had only just received the telegram announcing Mr. Ferguson's sentence; and, in the absence of full information, we unwittingly did the gallant veteran an injustice. When he appeared at the Police Court on the 14th inst., his counsel could not be present, and sent a clerk to represent him. This gentleman asked for a postponement of the case, in order that his principal might conduct the defence in person. The stipendiary magistrate, however, would grant no delay unless Mr. Ferguson promised not to sell the *Freethinker* in the interim. Our old friend refused point-blank, whereupon the magistrate threatened to send officers to his shop to seize the stock. Mr. Ferguson's friends then advised him to agree to the conditions for a few days, and he reluctantly complied. In a letter to us, dated the 17th inst he says: “I had no other alternative. But I will not stop the sale after Wednesday on any account.”

At the time we wrote, also, we were uncertain whether Mr. Ferguson had gone to prison or not. As a matter of fact he was taken into custody and removed to Glasgow Gaol immediately after the sentence. But on the following

day his counsel went to Edinburgh and applied to the High Court for an interim order of release pending the appeal. Lord Adam issued the order, notwithstanding strenuous opposition, and Mr. Ferguson was liberated the next morning on a ten-pound bail. We earnestly hope the gallant veteran will never return to serve the remainder of his infamous sentence.

The Glasgow Committee do not keep us too well supplied with news, possibly because they are very busy themselves. Unfortunately we were too much occupied to leave town; but we shall be freer in a few days, and we shall then run down to Glasgow, learn all that has been done, see all that is being done, and assist in arranging what is to be done in the immediate future. Up to the present we have left everything in the Committee's hands, although we have been in constant communication with them by post and telegraph. They are on the spot, they are cognisant of all the details, and they can watch all the fluctuations of the case and act accordingly.

A meeting was held at the Glasgow Secular Society's hall in Ingram Street, on Sunday morning, the 15th inst. There was a large attendance, and a Committee of four (Messrs. Brown, McLean, Forrester and Wallace) was appointed to arrange for Mr. Ferguson's defence and the sale of the *Freethinker* in the city. Another meeting was held on Wednesday evening, the 18th inst., when the following resolutions were carried: (1) “That this meeting resolves to support Mr. Robert Ferguson or others prosecuted for selling the *Freethinker* in Glasgow under the infamous Police Act, and appeals to all freemen and lovers of the right of private judgment to assist in resisting tyranny or force in speculative matters.” (2) “That this

meeting remits to the Committee of the Glasgow Secular Society the carrying on of the sale of the *Freethinker* in Glasgow."

Subsequent meetings were held on Sunday and Monday last, and we are informed that the majority of the party are full of fight. One of the Committee writes to us as follows: "Fight we will, and the *Freethinker* shall be sold in Glasgow in spite of the police. In the event of Mr. Ferguson being committed to prison several very able friends have volunteered to take his place and continue the sale." Three young men are ready at once to run the risk of prison on condition that their mothers and families are provided for during their incarceration.

Their courage may soon be tried. Acting on his counsel's advice, Mr. Ferguson is not selling the *Freethinker* at present; and the Committee are of opinion that, although the veteran is "game," he is too old to undergo the hardship of imprisonment. They therefore prefer that the war should be carried on through younger men. There is much to be said for this view. We frankly confess that we shudder at the idea of the poor old man's going back to gaol for twelve days. We know what prison life is, and at his age the ordeal might be fatal. Besides, we learn that during his two days' imprisonment Mr. Ferguson was treated with exceptional cruelty, and he may well dread a renewal of the bitter experience. Although he suffers from a bronchial affection, his flannels were taken from him and he was dressed in knee-breeches. There were no boots to fit him, and as they would not let him wear his own, he had to walk in his stockings for two days on a stone floor. This is how Christians treat an aged Freethinker. Verily Christian charity is a fearful and wonderful thing.

A hint has been thrown out that if Mr. Ferguson refrains from selling future numbers of the *Freethinker* a compromise may be effected in his case. If it can, and if he prefers it, we see no objection to its being done, and we have said so to the Committee. But if it cannot be done, we have strongly advised that the appeal be made, as economically as possible, to the Glasgow Circuit. Heaven and earth should be moved to prevent a Freethinker of eighty from closing his eyes for the last sleep in a Christian gaol. The appeal may succeed in reducing the sentence or commuting it to a fine.

Mr. Ferguson's counsel is naturally sanguine of complete success. He hopes to quash the conviction altogether. We regret, however, that we cannot share his hopes. Notwithstanding the election struggle, Mr. Bradlaugh found time for a brief consultation with us at Northampton last Monday; and after discussing all the points with him, we are bound to say that, from a legal point of view, the appeal does not look hopeful. Still, we repeat, it may lighten the blow which threatens to fall on poor Mr. Ferguson; and that is worth a desperate effort. Besides, as the law's uncertainty is proverbial, and judges vary greatly in their moral sympathies, no one knows what may result from the appeal; and this fact at least is certain, that while Mr. Ferguson may not gain he cannot lose by it.

We have impressed upon the Committee that they should control the orthodox exuberance of Mr. Ferguson's counsel. With a view, apparently, to his own reputation, as well as to accentuate a futile point in his appeal, he expresses great repugnance at the "blasphemy" of the *Freethinker* sketches. It is hardly necessary to obtrude his personal feelings into the case, and if they are expressed in this manner they will certainly prejudice his client.

But in any case this appeal is far from being the end of the struggle. Whatever comes of Mr. Ferguson's case, there appears to be a long, hard fight before us. The *Freethinker* is being sold in Glasgow despite the police, and it is quite possible that before this week's number is in the reader's hands, a summons may be served on the first volunteer. That may be only the second of a series of attacks on our right to exist. The Glasgow Freethinkers do not intend to be beaten, as assuredly we do not, without exhausting every means of defence. It would be a strange irony indeed, if a Glasgow magistrate were allowed to do what Judge North attempted with such signal unsuccess. The gage of battle is flung down, and the only alternative is to pick it up or slink away. We have not sought the contest; it is forced on us. The bigots want the whole earth to themselves, and they will get it unless we defend our own strip of territory. In such an effort we confidently rely on the support of the Freethought party, whose honor

we upheld without flinching or quailing in an hour of darker peril. The list of subscriptions we acknowledge this week is full of encouragement. It shows that the real issue is being faced, and that the Freethought party will rally now as before to the point of attack. Such a course is even safer than the policy of the timid, the vacillating, or the over-discreet; and certainly it is infinitely nobler. The three hundred who fell at Thermopylæ did not beat the Persian hosts, but they saved Greece by precluding Marathon. In any case, they proved themselves heroes worthy of a mighty cause. Standing to your post is what distinguishes a man from driftwood. The grandest figure in the ruins of Pompeii is that of a Roman sentinel clad in full armor and standing like a pillar. Flying crowds passed him, but he stood like a brave soldier at his post, with the thought of Rome in his strong heart. The lava surged round him, but he never budged; and at last it burned out the life it could not conquer. Yet he stands there now, while the frightened multitude are forgotten, preaching a lesson of duty to the world.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE FERGUSON DEFENCE FUND.

WE have received the following subscriptions:—C. A. Berry, 2s. 6d.; F. Goulding, 6d.; George Payne, £2 2s.; "Pudden Next," 5s.; F. A. Fox, 2s.; E. J. Pilcher, 1s.; F. Dlouny, 1s.; Unknown, 1s.; Outcast, 2s. 6d.; A. Park, 1s.; G. Biggs, 1s. 6d.; J. Wadmore, 6d.; Wife, 3d.; Friend, 3d.; — Martin, 6d.; — Sears, 6d.; — Robinson, 6d.; Orlando Wilde, £1; W. Mumby, 10s.; J. Widdicombe, 1s.; W. Bunton, 2s. 6d.; G. V. Ball, 5s.; Dr. W. Mortimer, 10s.; Eleanor Mew, 1s. 3d.; Isaac Mew, 1s. 3d.; H. Arthur, 6d.; J. P. Hunter, 1s.; L. Halewood, 10s.; J. H. M. Hannah, 2s. 6d.; Durham City, 7s. 6d.; A. W. Freer, 2s. 6d.; D. A. Beckett, 10s.; J. Carter, 5s.; W. H. Harris, 1s.; A Hater of Hypocrisy (per W. H. Morrish); Ferguson Defence Fund £10, ditto, *Freethinker* Defence Fund £5; A. Sharples, 1s.; Young Freethinker, 2s. 6d.; G. R., £1; E. Truelove, £1; C. M., 10s.; E. L. A., 3s.; A Well-wisher (Chelsea), 5s.; W. Rudd, sen., 5s.; W. Rudd, jun., 6d.; Mr. Stanley, 2s. 6d.; F. Marzeton, 2s. 6d.; H. H., 1s.; Young Devon, 1s.; J. Bent, 2s. 6d.; C. Brazier, 1s. 6d.; John Schofield, 2s. 6d.; J. M. D. (Worsnop), 2s. 6d.; H. M. Bunton (collected at Leicester), 10s. 2d.; Agnostic, 2s.

Collected by Mr. Foote at Halifax: J. S. Wilson, 1s.; B. Culpan, 2s. 6d.; Two Friends, 1s. 6d.; Friend, 3d.; — Settle, 1s.; Shaw Hill, 1s.; Richmond, 1s.; — Ogg, 1s.; — Mills, 1s.; Sowerby Brigg, 3s.; Friend, 6d.; J. Hartley 6d.; Geo. Smith, 1s.; W. Aspen, 6d.; Jno. Crossley, 1s.; S. Lumb, 1s.; Mrs. Priestley, 6d.; Friend, 6d.; Friend, 3d.; J. Crowther, 6d.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE GLASGOW PROSECUTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—There are doubtless many thousands of persons who are, like myself, disgusted with the brutal bigotry and spirit of persecution that could sentence a respectable tradesman like Mr. Ferguson to fourteen days' hard labor for merely selling the *Freethinker*. As a bookseller, it was part of his business to sell the paper, for booksellers are not supposed to dictate to their customers as to what mental pabulum they shall, or shall not, indulge in. The sentence is monstrous, whether it is carried into effect or not, and shows that the old spirit of torturing is not yet extinct, as some Christians have asserted. Please find cheque enclosed for £15, which a friend has given me; being £10 for the defence of Mr. Ferguson, and £5 for pushing the sale of the *Freethinker* in the streets of Glasgow, or otherwise. If more money is needed than the public subscribe, the donor will give further assistance; and I will open a subscription list here. The effect of the prosecution will doubtless be to cause an enormous additional demand for the *Freethinker*, and a consequently great accession to the ranks of the Secularists.—Very faithfully yours,
W. H. MORRISH.

18 Narrow Wine Street, Bristol,
Nov. 21, 1885.

BLASPHEMY IN SCOTLAND.

THE law against blasphemy in Scotland is even more severe than in England. As late as 1696, Thomas Aikenhead, a young surgeon of Edinburgh, was hanged for calling the Old Testament "Ezra's fables." He was however also declared to have "practised magick and conversed with devils," and perhaps the imputation of sorcery may have had as much to do with the sentence as the indicted charge of blasphemy. The latest trials for blasphemy in Scotland were in 1843-4, when Messrs. Finlay and Robinson were arrested in Edinburgh for selling the *Oracle of Reason* and other "works calculated to bring the Christian

religion into contempt." Paterson went from London to assert the right of free publication and issued the following bill:—

"Under the patronage of the Procurator Fiscal.
PATERSON AND CO.

(of the Blasphemy Depot, London)

BEG to acquaint Infidels in general, and Christians in particular, that, in consequence of the immense demand for blasphemous works—the Procurator Fiscal himself having taken some hundreds of volumes from another shop in this city—they have, with a view to furnish the public with an ample supply, opened a depot at 38 West Register Street.

The Bible and other obscene works NOT sold at this shop."

Paterson was arrested, and was sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment. Robinson received twelve months, and Finlay sixty days. These sentences did not result in the anticipated suppression of free discussion. Matilda Roalfe stepped into the breach, opened a shop in Nicholson Street, and published a manifesto to the public of Edinburgh, wherein she said: "I neither hope nor fear anything from authority, and am resolved to supply the public with works of a controversial and philosophical character, whether such works do or do not bring into contempt the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion."

Miss Roalfe was summoned before the sheriff, who, after hearing her courageous defence, in which she expressed her determination to pursue the same course whenever set at liberty, dealt with the case summarily, giving the highest sentence in his power—two months' imprisonment.

Mr. Baker, "of the United Order of Blasphemers," immediately took Miss Roalfe's place in the shop in Nicholson Street, and her case having excited much sympathy, no further prosecutions were made. Upon her liberation Miss Roalfe returned to her shop, and continued the sale of Freethought literature without further molestation. She published an account of her treatment in prison, in which, after describing the hardships she had to endure, she declared—

"Amid all the privation I endured there was yet one glorious privilege of which they could not rob me—my thoughts were still unfettered; our persecutors have yet to learn that when they have turned the dungeon key upon us, there is still that over which they have no control; thought free as ever defies all their attempts to enslave it, and until they can do this their triumph is incomplete. I still feel the most thorough contempt for that law which will concede to one portion of society rights which it withholds from another. I therefore resolved to act in defiance of such a system, and having weighed all the consequences before I did so act, I have never for one moment regretted it. Let us unite all our energies, nor relax our endeavors until we have obtained the abrogation of a law which is an insult alike to common sense and justice."

Freethought has taken hold of Scotland since the time when this was written, yet the odious Blasphemy Laws still deface the statute book. Mr. Ferguson's case will call attention to the necessity of their abolition, and there are doubtless brave hearts who will see that in Glasgow, as before in Edinburgh, these infamous enactments are defied until rendered of no effect.

J. M. W.

A CHRISTIAN SLANDER RETRACTED.

MR. SPURGEON has sent a proof of the following correction, which is to appear in the current number of the *Sword and Trowel*:—

"PRACTICAL RESULTS OF ATHEISM."—A CORRECTION.

"In the month of August we extracted a paragraph concerning the town of Liberal from one of our American exchanges, which had taken it from the *Burlington (Victoria) Free Press*. We inserted the extract with the name of the originating paper, and supposed it to be in all respects accurate. The truth of the description having been challenged, we promised that we would insert a disclaimer if we were furnished with evidence of its untruthfulness. At once we wrote to friends in America. The evidence which we have received is very conflicting; but we feel bound to say that we judge the article which we inserted to be far from correct, and to have been written in a prejudiced spirit. We should never have dreamed of inserting it had we known what we now know. We desire not only to print the truth, but also nothing but the truth. Whatever the subject may be, it is not right to paint one's opponent in any colors but his own; and we will be no party to the blackening even of Atheists and Freethinkers.

"We are not in a position to give a judicial opinion; for we cannot weigh the evidence; but supposing the persons who have written to be truthful, we judge that the town of Liberal has been in several respects grossly libelled, and therefore we are truly sorry to have given currency to the ill-report. American Christian papers should truthfully chronicle the real result of the sad experiment which is being worked out in Liberal, and should carefully abstain from a word of exaggeration.—C. H. S."

J. Frazer's Penny Comic Pictorial Almanac, 1886.—A capital pennyworth of information and amusement for the inhabitants of Blyth and district.

"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

ACID DROPS.

FROM America we learn that the Rev. Samuel H. McGhee has been released from the penitentiary after serving only eight years and three months out of a fourteen years' sentence for murder. This pious wretch, to whom so much leniency is displayed, was pastor of Christ's Church, Ashton. In order to marry a certain young lady of his flock he poisoned his wife by repeated doses of arsenic, so that she endured two months of excruciating suffering before she expired. After her death the pious poisoner charged his own daughter, a girl of fifteen, and of rather weak mind, with the murder, and tried to make her sign a written confession to that effect. Now he is let loose again to edify society and console Christian congregations with the glorious Gospel of redemption by blood.

WHILE preparing to celebrate mass in the University College, Dublin, Dean O'Loughlin expired from apoplexy. If this had happened to an "infidel" it would have been a striking warning, or a solemn judgment.

ARCHDEACON DENISON is not the only Church dignitary who carries his bigotry and insolence into the field of politics. The Rev. Dr. Potter recently alluded to Mr. Gladstone as "the high priest and evil genius of revolution, who sat in his armchair like a goblin owl." The vicar of Saltney, being asked by Dr. Foster, Liberal candidate, to give him his vote, replied: "No, sir, cannot vote for you; all Liberals are either humbugs or liars." The Rev. W. Littler, preaching at Littleover, in Derbyshire, declared "The curse of God would rest upon anyone who voted for Disestablishment." What are we to think of the Church and religion whose representatives display such uncharitable and abusive proclivities?

ACCORDING to the mortality returns as set forth by Dr. Ogle, superintendent of the statistical department of the General Registry Office, the first place among healthy occupations is held by ministers of religion. The comparative mortality among clergymen, priests and ministers is scarcely more than half the average mortality of the whole community. And yet they talk of their labors and hardships as if they were perfect martyrs! Doctors die off at nearly twice the rate at which these poor overworked laborers in the Lord's vineyard succumb to their arduous toils and self-sacrificing efforts. It is evident either that the Lord works a miracle to reward these self-denying tithedistainers, or else they have about the easiest berth of it in the whole community. Christians may welcome the first explanation, but men of common sense can only accept the second.

AMONG the "Peculiar Proceedings" and "Extraordinary Doings" announced on a Salvation Army hand-bill forwarded to us from Manchester, we find the following: "At 8 p.m., an Upside-Down Meeting. Lots of things will happen, and the Captain will speak on his head for five minutes, two sisters holding him up." Talk of the dignity of religion! Isn't this a caricature of piety, good orthodox Christians, and doesn't it bring your religion into ridicule and contempt more effectively even than Freethought cartoons?

CHRISTIANS haven't very high opinions of each other. The *Church Times* says that "the morality of a country district in England is always worse in proportion as Methodism, especially of the Primitive denomination, is powerful." The *Christian Commonwealth* calls this a "ribald libel," and speaks of "nineteenths of the *Church Times*' statements" as being "so manifestly absurd as to be beneath notice." These Christian sects are about right in their opinions of each other.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Christian Commonwealth* asks the editor—(1) How many wives were the Israelites permitted to have under the Mosaic law? (2) Why were David and Solomon allowed to take a great number of wives? (3) Was it breaking the seventh commandment? To the first question the editor of the *C. C.* replies: "Only one. The Levitical law was distinctly monogamous. The Pentateuch constantly speaks of the 'wife' not the 'wives' of a man." This answer is an absurd falsehood. Deuteronomy xxi., 15, for instance, commences with the words "If a man have two wives"; and no prohibition of the prevailing custom of polygamy exists in the Mosaic law. If the use of the word "wife" in the Pentateuch meant monogamy, then the frequent use of the terms "bond-servant," ox, ass, neighbor, etc., in the singular must also have meant that a man could only own one slave, one ox, one ass, etc., and could only have one neighbor.

THE reply to the second question is that "polygamy was permitted by Moses only 'because of the hardness of their hearts.'" The addle-headed editor is unable to see that his second answer contradicts his first. That the Mosaic law permitted a man to have "only one" wife is quite reconcileable in his mind with the statement that "polygamy was permitted by Moses." And it is by such grossly contradictory assertions that Christian difficulties are to be explained away.

THE answer to the third question is "No. There was no categorical law against polygamy any more than against slavery." Then why did this pious fibber say that the law only allowed one wife? Are we to conclude that Christian editors think any silly lie good enough for their dupes, or must we regard them merely as childishly incompetent in their stupid defence of their fetish the Bible? Perhaps we ought to lay the blame on Christianity, which seems to influence infatuated Christians much as drink does a drunkard.

THE Mormon defence of polygamy as divinely instituted is condemned by Judge Zane as blasphemy and hypocritical cant. The Bible certainly allowed polygamy, and Abraham and the early saints and patriarchs were not limited to one wife each. So that Judge Zane really decides that the contents of the Bible are, to a large extent, blasphemy and hypocritical cant. We quite agree with him, and we think Abraham and Jacob and David deserved six months' imprisonment and heavy fines, more even than the Mormon elders, whose ideas on marriage the learned judge is now briefly, and we hope effectually, correcting in accordance with modern views.

THE *Church Times* deploras "the open profession of brigandage by politicians of the highest rank. We say brigandage, for it is only brigands and Mr. Chamberlain who talk of ransom." We, however, have frequently heard talk of ransom from the pulpit and always thought it a cardinal doctrine of Christianity.

THE *Church Times* advertises two cures of souls beth with the advantage of "small-pop," the word "pop" standing for the said "souls," or population.

NOTICING a history which states that the financial condition of England was very low before the close of Edward VI's reign, the *Church Times* says: "Such would no doubt be the result of another operation in the way of looting the Church." It evidently believes that if God Almighty cannot avert disendowment he can avenge it.

THE will of the late Bishop of Manchester has just been proved. The personalty is sworn at under £85,549—a tolerable accumulation of wealth for a man whose business it was to teach people to despise riches and not lay up treasures on this earth. Ruskin once gave him a good drubbing on the subject. Christ's bishop defending the modern school of political economy against the ardent and eloquent exponent of Christ's emphatic condemnation of usury or interest, furnished a rather pitiable spectacle, we remember. The bishop had worldly common sense and conventionality on his side, but Ruskin certainly had the Gospel. Bible *versus* bishop was amusing and instructive.

ONE of the most awfully awful pieces of blasphemy that has come under our notice was perpetrated by "that sanctified person" his "most Sacred Majesty," as he is styled in the bishop's fulsome dedication of the Bible, James I. It occurs in the modern Solomon's work on "Dæmonologie" published in Edinburgh in 1597, p. 37. He describes how witches were in the habit of meeting and kissing Satan's hinder parts and then declares "so ambitious is he, that he will even imitate God in that parte, where it is said, that Moyses could see but the hinder partes of God." In the margin is put Exodus xxxiii. Another choice piece from this wise king is given in Part XIV. of "Crimes of Christianity."

TRUTH is at times stronger than fiction. In a Free Kirk at Glasgow, on the South side of the River Clyde, a meeting was being held for the purpose of listening to the "experiences" of a number of converts last week, when one poor man got up and said that since his conversion a great miracle had been wrought on him. Previous to that event he never could open his mouth in public, but he had since learned that God who was able to open the mouth of Balaam's Ass, had repeated a similar miracle on him, and he could now address public meetings and speak for his master, as well as Balaam's Ass had spoken for his. Possibly Balaam's celebrated quadruped and he may be utilised at the Second Advent when the "Master" returns to Jerusalem. Gee up, old 'un!

AT a meeting in support of Mr. Baggallay, held at Brixton Hall on Saturday, the 21st inst., a Tory orator named Austin declared that it was needful for the connection of Church and State to continue, as otherwise the Church, if not checked by the State, would become a tyrannical body. We should be sorry indeed to contradict this champion of the Church, but the idea of a divine body—Christ's bride—having to be restrained by a secular one from tyranny is grotesque, and far from flattering to the former, however much it may be to the latter. Such reasoning merely shows the paucity of sound argument in the Christian camp.

THE Rev. Henry Jubal Hole, vicar of Plympton Maurice, declares that—"Any person who puts his mark against the name of a candidate who would vote for Disestablishment, would never forget it; the remembrance of it would pursue him to his dying day, and when he came before the judgment seat, Christ would say unto him, 'Depart from me; I never knew you.'"

Life has the following passage in an article headed "Punishment for Libel":—"One of the last prosecutions for blasphemy was that of Foote, in our own time, who was imprisoned for writings intended to turn the scriptures into ridicule. It is of this man that the story goes that, being supplied as usual in his cell with no other books except a Bible, he devoted such attention to it as to earn a speedy release. And on quitting the gaol the story goes that he returned the sacred volume to the chaplain, telling him that 'it had been the best friend he ever had, and he hoped he would never require it any more.'"

WE never heard this story before, but we live and learn. Perhaps we have forgotten the incident, and had better write to the chaplain of Holloway Gaol to refresh our memory.

"PAUL JONES," in the *West Cumberland Times*, has slept, drunk, or dreamed himself into the notion that the *Freethinker* was prosecuted in Glasgow for obscenity, and he has the impudence to say that young people "cannot possibly escape moral defilement by contact with the *Freethinker*." He also advises the Workington police to worry the local newsgagents who sell our journal.

Now for the explanation. "Paul Jones" is a bookseller and printer in the town. He does not sell the *Freethinker*, of course; but a rival Whitehaven firm, which has recently opened a branch at Workington, does; so "Paul Jones," with the true spirit of a Christian tradesman, denounces the opposition shop.

A LITTLE holy war, in which eyes were blackened and noses bleeding, took place between two rival divisions of the Salvation Army at Denby Dale, near Huddersfield. The quarrel was over the cash. The soldiers of the cross, tired of sham fighting, indulged in a real fight for once with one another, and Jahveh must have been delighted to see his favorite liquor flowing freely. It was a real blood and fire meeting, and no mistake.

BISHOPRICS are tending to become family properties. The Wordsworths, Wilberforces and Bickersteths have things their own way. The son of the Bishop of Exeter has been appointed to the new bishopric of Japan. Possibly the Japanese will appreciate their new bishop about as much as we do our old ones.

A CURIOUS metal box has been unearthed at Canterbury. Its purpose was unknown until, being opened, there was found inside three buttons, a piece of tin, and a scrap of paper. Then they knew that it was an ancient contribution box.

THE *Church Reformer* says, "The *Church Times* should be frank and start a 'betting column.' We have many times called attention to the shameless advertisements of the traffic in patronage which our contemporary admits—for a consideration—into its columns. But we were hardly prepared to find the *Church Times* assisting adventurers to entrap its readers into betting on the rise and fall of stocks and shares. Yet it was from its pages that we learnt, from a stockbroker's advertisement, of 'The New Method, by means of which any person may make large sums of money daily without any liability whatsoever beyond the amount of cover. Prospectus free on application.'"

THE New Method for the benefit of Christians who wish to get rich without work is, of course, backing the winning speculations, which is the same thing as backing the right horse. Messrs. Welsher and Blackleg should try advertising in the columns of the *Church Times*.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* is indignant at the "Christian liberality," the "illicit method of criticism" and the "ill-humored intolerance" displayed by a Christian contemporary which has the goodness and the grace to speak of the horrible Christian doctrine of eternal torment as "devilish dogma." The *C. C.* shows that heaven and hell stand and fall together, and that eternal punishment cannot be denied without at the same time rejecting the Christian hope of eternal happiness. It is tired of these hard words and "ungenerous flings" at people who follow the Word of God in its atrocious doctrines. If the most horrible conceivable torture inflicted for all eternity upon the majority of the human race does not deserve a few hard words, we should like the editor of the *C. C.* to inform us what does. Does he think that the horrors of the Christian hell are to be coed over in gentle terms of loving admiration?

THE *C. C.* is quite willing to fling hard but deserved reproaches at far less horrible things than the doctrine of hell-fire. It sees in the pulpit and in the press "striking evidences of moral cowardice." This moral cowardice, it says, truly enough, "destroys pulpit independence" and makes the religious press "practise the questionable art of walking with a balance-pole." The comparison of the attitude of the religious papers to that of a tight-rope performer strikes us as a very apt one so far as the higher class Christian journals are concerned, for these periodicals are obliged to acknowledge Huxley and Darwin as well as Moses and David.

A LADY in Sydney, just deceased, has devoted the whole of her property, nearly £80,000, to religious and charitable institutions. Is this one of the secrets of Christianity's greatness?

SPECIAL NOTICE.

A SPECIAL EDITION of the FREETHINKER was published last Friday, containing a Report of the Trial of Mr. Ferguson at Glasgow, a letter from his solicitor, and many interesting notes.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Nov. 29, Assembly Rooms, Grosvenor Street, Manchester; at 11, "Chamberlain and Churchill"; at 3, "An Hour in Heaven"; at 7, "God's Mother."
Monday, Nov. 30, Secular Hall, Leicester; at 8, "An Hour in Hell."

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

JANUARY 3, Milton Hall, London; 10, Hall of Science, London; 17, Huddersfield; 24, Liverpool; 31, Hall of Science, London.

CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3s.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

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

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—Argus, H. J. Barter, J. Cockburn, H. C. Bowden, G. Hope.

H. S. RUSSELL.—Thanks. Cuttings are always welcome.

IMAGE-BREAKER.—You will find the examination paper set for the last candidates for the N. S. S. lecture-diploma in the N. S. S. Almanack for 1885. For all further information you had better communicate with the secretary, Mr. R. Forder.

ATHEIST BLACKSMITH.—Pleased to receive your manly letter and your subscription.

C. A. BERRY writes: "Will you allow me to press upon your notice what has been mentioned before in your columns, namely, the very great importance of making use of the *Freethinker* when read, by leaving it in railway carriages and giving it to the porters. If you knew the amount of good I have done in this way, I feel sure you would keep a paragraph urging it constantly before your readers."

A. WILLIAMS.—Disestablishment is practically meaningless without Disendowment. The revenues of the Church of England belong to the State, and can only be used for purposes stipulated in Acts of Parliament. If the Church were disendowed those revenues would be devoted to other purposes.

T. MAY.—We have not yet read Count Leo Tolstoy's book, but from the notices we have seen should think it worth reading. We do not object to your outspoken sentiments, but why accuse Secularists of *foolishness*?

FAIR PLAY.—Mr. Sinclair's scurrilous sermon on the Positivists has been already noticed.

F. A. WILLIAMS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

SPINOZA.—Copy of *La Tronada* sent.

A. E. DOWNS.—We have already published Mr. W. S. Caine's promise to vote for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

W. H. HARRIS.—Sorry to hear of the paltry bigotry you refer to.

JOHN CARTER in sending us a subscription for the Ferguson case says, "I am eighty years of age. I expose your paper in my window every week and shall continue to do so. I wish all would do the same."

FREETHINKER.—The pamphlet you inquire about has been out of print for years.

A. W. FREER.—Many thanks, but as we cannot agree on the point we must agree to differ. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. What Freethought paper ever had such a circulation as this journal?

DURHAM CITY.—We remember the incident and the conversation we had with you.

J. H.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. P. HUNTER.—We are obliged for the ticket.

W. MORTIMER.—Always pleased to hear from you.

W. BUNTON (Banbury) writes: "My window, the most prominent in the town, is always filled with the *Freethinker*."

L. HILL says that if every reader of the *Freethinker* subscribed sixpence per week the bigots might easily be beaten.

J. WIDDICOMBE.—Sorry to hear the bigots are stinging you like a hornet's nest. We do not, however, share your surprise at the Glasgow bigots falling on an old man of eighty. It is just like them.

W. MUMBY sends a subscription and adds, "if Mr. Ferguson has to go to prison the Freethought party ought to get up a testimonial for him, in which case I will send you another ten shillings."

GEORGE PAYNE (Manchester) in sending a cheque adds, "I will send a further subscription if necessary."

A RECRUIT.—You should have sent your name and address, "not for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith."

W. B. DAVIS.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

G. F. TURVEY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

F. WENHAM writes that Mr. Standing's lecture at Uxbridge on the 22nd inst. has resulted in the formation of a branch of the N. S. S.

WORRINGTON.—Delighted with your letter, which is very encouraging.

F. MULOEY.—Many thanks. You have done a real service.

J. WILSON.—The "Crimes of Christianity" is, as the advertisement states, written jointly by Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler. Up to the present each has written as nearly as possible a half of the matter.

Sometimes one editor writes a whole number, and sometimes a number is divided, according to taste and opportunity. Every number is planned and discussed by both editors before a word is written; the manuscript of each is read over by the other before a line is set up; and the proofs are carefully revised by both before a page is printed. When Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler put their joint names to a publication, their collaboration is thorough, so that the work is actually by both and each, and neither can claim a scrap of honor which the other does not share.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current number. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Boston Investigator—Willesden Herald—Truth-seeker—Truth—Lucifer—Market Rasen Mail—Ormskirk Advertiser—Aberdeen People's Journal—Portsmouth Evening News—Liverpool Post—South Wales Daily News—Newcastle Chronicle—Liverpool Mercury—Wakefield Express—Glasgow Mail.

"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 December 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.

ONE of the most damning chapters in the "Crimes of Christianity" is that just published under the title of "Witchcraft." The bloodstained leaves of Christian history have no darker page than that which deals with the Christian treatment of woman under guidance of the divine maxim, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."

OUR Christmas Number will be ready in a day or two. There has been a delay at the engraver's, or we should have been ready more than a week ago. But better late than never; and our Christmas treat is still in good time for the season.

THERE has been also an unavoidable delay with the December number of *Progress*, which should have been ready on the 25th inst., in consequence of Mr. Foote's time being so much occupied with the Glasgow prosecution. But the magazine goes on the press directly the *Freethinker* is off.

MR. GERALD MASSEY has returned from his lecturing tour in Australia and New Zealand, and intends lecturing in Great Britain during the winter season.

MR. ARTHUR CHAMBERLAIN, Liberal candidate for the Evesham division of Worcestershire, promises to vote for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws and the opening of public institutions on Sunday.

THE Glasgow *Evening Times*, commenting on the Ferguson case, evidently sees the absurdity of the magistrate's asking Mr. Ferguson whether he would desist from selling the *Freethinker* altogether, for it notices that it was "a little hard that he should be asked not to sell a paper, the future numbers of which might be artistically inoffensive."

A LETTER from "Anti-Tyranny" appears in the *North British Daily Mail*, from which we make the following extract:—"I have never seen the copy of the *Freethinker* for which old Mr. Ferguson has been sentenced to fourteen days for selling, but I know this, that the man Stipendiary Gemmel has sent to prison without the option of a fine is a most respectable and well-doing old man. I have got a monthly paper from him for years, and know him well. One thing makes me feel very much for him is the fact that he is afflicted with a deep-seated bronchial affection, and requires to be cared for like an egg on a cake. If an old person in this condition is suddenly deprived of care and attention and thrown into a cold cell in midwinter, the chances are that he will be found dead some morning. The refusal of the Stipendiary to accept a fine amounts in this case to absolute cruelty in my opinion, and is deserving of public censure."

INGERSOLL ON WOMAN.

(Being the Introduction to "Men, Women, and Gods,"
by Miss H. Gardener.)

NOTHING gives me more pleasure, nothing gives greater promise for the future, than the fact that woman is achieving intellectual and physical liberty. It is refreshing to know that here, in our country, there are thousands of women who think and express their own thoughts—who are thoroughly free and thoroughly conscientious—who

have neither been narrowed nor corrupted by a heartless creed—who do not worship a being in heaven whom they would shudderingly loathe on earth—women who do not stand before the altar of a cruel faith with downcast eyes of timid acquiescence, and pay to impudent authority the tribute of a thoughtless yes. They are no longer satisfied with being told. They examine for themselves. They have ceased to be the prisoners of society—the satisfied serfs of husbands or the echoes of priests. They demand the rights that naturally belong to intelligent human beings. If wives, they wish to be the equals of husbands; if mothers, they wish to rear their children in the atmosphere of love, liberty and philosophy. They believe that woman can discharge all her duties without the aid of superstition, and preserve all that is true, pure, and tender without sacrificing in the temple of absurdity the convictions of the soul.

Woman is not the intellectual inferior of man. She has lacked, not mind, but opportunity. In the long night of barbarism, physical strength, and the cruelty to use it, were the badges of superiority. Muscle was more than mind. In the ignorant age of faith the loving nature of woman was abused, her conscience was rendered morbid and diseased. It might almost be said that she was betrayed by her own virtues. At best she secured, not opportunity, but flattery, the preface to degradation. She was deprived of liberty, and without that nothing is worth the having. She was taught to obey without question, and to believe without thought. There were universities for men before the alphabet had been taught to women. At the intellectual feast there were no places for wives and mothers. Even now they sit at the second table and eat the crusts and crumbs. The schools for women, at the present time, are just far enough behind those for men to fall heirs to the discarded. On the same principle, when a doctrine becomes too absurd for the pulpit, it is given to the Sunday-school. The ages of muscle and miracle—of fists and faith—are passing away. Minerva occupies at last a higher niche than Hercules. Now a word is stronger than a blow.

At last we see women who depend upon themselves; who stand self-poised amid the shocks of this sad world without leaning for support against a church; who do not go to the literature of barbarism for consolation, nor use the falsehoods and mistakes of the past for the foundation of their hope; women brave enough and tender enough to meet and bear the facts and fortunes of this world.

The men who declare that woman is the intellectual inferior of man do not, and cannot, by offering themselves in evidence, substantiate their declaration.

Yet, I must admit that there are thousands of wives who still have faith in the saving power of superstition; who still insist on attending church while husbands prefer the shores, the woods, or the fields. In this way families are divided. Parents grow apart, and unconsciously the pearl of greatest price is thrown away. The wife ceases to be the intellectual companion of the husband. She reads the *Christian Register*, sermons in the Monday papers, and a little gossip about folks and fashions, while he studies the works of Darwin, Hæckel and Humboldt. Their sympathies become estranged. They are no longer mental friends. The husband smiles at the follies of the wife and she weeps for the supposed sins of the husband. Such wives should read this book. They should not be satisfied to remain forever in the cradle of thought, amused with the toys of superstition.

The parasite of woman is the priest.

It must also be admitted that there are thousands of men who believe that superstition is good for women and children; who regard falsehood as the fortress of virtue, and feel indebted to ignorance for the purity of daughters and the fidelity of wives. These men think of priests as detectives in disguise, and regard God as a policeman who prevents elopements. Their opinions about religion are as correct as their estimate of woman.

The Church furnishes but little food for the mind. People of intelligence are growing tired of the platitudes of the pulpit—the iterations of the itinerants. The average sermon is “as tedious as a twice-told tale vexing the ear of a drowsy man.”

One Sunday a gentleman who is a great inventor called at my house. Only a few words had passed between us when he arose, saying he must go as it was time for church. Wondering that a man of his mental wealth could enjoy the

intellectual poverty of the pulpit, I asked for an explanation, and he gave me the following:—“You know that I am an inventor. Well, the moment my mind becomes absorbed in some difficult problem, I am afraid that something may happen to distract my attention. Now, I know that I can sit in church for an hour without the slightest danger of having the current of my thought disturbed.”

Most women cling to the Bible because they have been taught that to give up that book is to give up all hope of another life—of ever meeting again the loved and lost. They have also been taught that the Bible is their friend, their defender, and the real civiliser of man.

Now, if they will only read this book—these three lectures—without fear, and then read the Bible, they will see that the truth or falsity of the dogma of inspiration has nothing to do with the question of immortality. Certainly the Old Testament does not teach us that there is another life, and upon that question even the New is obscure and vague. The hunger of the heart finds only a few small and scattered crumbs. There is nothing definite, solid, and satisfying. United with the idea of immortality we find the absurdity of the resurrection. A prophecy that depends for its fulfilment upon an impossibility cannot satisfy the brain or heart.

There are but few who do not long for a dawn beyond the night. And this longing is born of, and nourished by, the heart. Love wrapped in shadow, bending with tear-filled eyes above its dead, convulsively clasps the out-stretched hand of hope.

I had the pleasure of introducing Helen H. Gardener to her first audience, and in that introduction said a few words that I will repeat.

“We do not know, we cannot say, whether death is a wall or a door, the beginning or end of a day, the spreading of pinions to soar, or the folding forever of wings, the rise or the set of a sun, of an endless life that brings rapture and love to everyone.

“Under the seven-hued arch of hope let the dead sleep.”

They will also discover, as they read the “sacred volume,” that it is not the friend of woman. They will find that the writers of that book, for the most part, speak of woman as a poor beast of burden—a serf, a drudge, a kind of necessary evil—as mere property. Surely a book that upholds polygamy is not the friend of wife and mother.

Even Christ did not place woman on an equality with man. He said not one word about the sacredness of home, the duties of the husband to the wife—nothing calculated to lighten the hearts of those who bear the saddest burdens of this life.

They will also find that the Bible has not civilised mankind. A book that establishes and defends slavery and wanton war is not calculated to soften the hearts of those who believe implicitly that it is the work of God. A book that not only permits but commands religious persecution has not, in my judgment, developed the affectional nature of man. Its influence has been bad and bad only. It has filled the world with bitterness, revenge, and crime, and retarded in countless ways the progress of our race.

The writer of this little volume has read the Bible with open eyes. The mist of sentimentality has not clouded her vision. She has had the courage to tell the result of her investigations. She has been quick to discover contradictions. She appreciates the humorous side of the stupidly solemn. Her heart protests against the cruel, and her brain rejects the childish, the unnatural and the absurd. There is no misunderstanding between her head and heart. She says what she thinks, and feels what she says.

No human being can answer her arguments. There is no answer. All the priests in the world cannot explain away her objections. There is no explanation. They should remain dumb, unless they can show that the impossible is the probable—that slavery is better than freedom—that polygamy is the friend of woman—that the innocent can justly suffer for the guilty—and that to persecute for opinion's sake is an act of love and worship.

Wives who cease to learn, who simply forget and believe, will fill the evening of their lives with barren sighs and bitter tears. The mind should outlast youth.

If, when beauty fades, Thought, the deft and unseen sculptor, hath not left his subtle lines upon the face then all is lost. No charm is left. The light is out. There is no flame within to glorify the wrinkled clay.

BIBLE MAGIC.

In early times religion and magic were intimately associated. Priests among savages are magicians. Their authority rests on imagined and dreaded power. They are supposed by their spells and incantations to have power over nature, or rather the spirits supposed to preside over it. Hence they became the rulers of the people. The modern priest, who is supposed by muttering a formula to change the nature of consecrated elements or by his prayers to bring blessings on the people, betrays his lineal descent from the primitive rain-makers and sorcerers of savagery.

The Bible is full of magic and sorcery. Its heroes are magicians from Jahveh Elohim, who puts Adam into a sleep and then makes woman from his rib, to Jesus who casts out devils and cures blindness with clay and spittle, and whose followers perform similar works by the power of his name. Pious Jacob cheats his uncle by a species of magic with peeled rods. Joseph not only tells fortunes by interpreting dreams but has a divining cup (Gen. xlv., 5), doubtless similar to the magic bowls used to the present day in Egypt, in which, as described by Lane in his "Modern Egyptians" a boy looks and pretends to see images of the future in water.

The fourth chapter of Exodus gives the initiation of Moses into the magician's art by Jahveh, the great adept, who changes the rod of Moses into a serpent and back again into a rod; suddenly makes his hand leprous and as suddenly restores it. Moses and Aaron show themselves superior magicians to those at the court of Pharaoh who, when Aaron cast down his magic rod and it became a serpent, did in like manner with their rods which also became serpents, though Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods (Exodus vii., 11, 12.) Upon this passage the learned Methodist Commentator Dr. Adam Clarke, writing at an age when the belief in witchcraft was almost extinct, after remarking that such feats evidently required something more than jugglery, observes:—

"How much more rational at once to allow that these magicians had familiar spirits who could assume all shapes, change the appearance of the subjects on which they operated, or suddenly convey one thing away and substitute another in its place."

Aaron also used his rod to change *all* the water into blood, a feat which the Egyptian magicians also contrived to perform—we presume with the aid of spirits. If you believe in spirits there is no end to the supposition of what they might do. The magic rod of Moses is used to divide the water of the Red Sea, so that the children went through the midst of the sea on dry ground (Ex. xiv., 16), and to draw water from a rock (Num. xx., 8). Aaron's rod blossoms miraculously to show the superiority of the tribe of Levi (Num. xvii., 8).

The Urim and Thummin of Aaron's breastplate were also magic articles used in divination (see Num. xxviii., 21; 1 Sam. xxiii., 9, and xxx., 7—8). Casting lots was another method of divination often referred to in the Bible. Prov. xvi., 31, says "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is with the Lord." It was because "when Saul inquired of Jahveh, Jahveh answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by Urim, nor by prophets" (1 Sam. xxviii., 6), that he resorted to the witch at Endor. The ephod and holy plate (Ex. xxviii.), and the phylacteries worn as frontlets between the eyes (Deut. vi., 8), were magical amulets. Modern Arabs wear scraps of the Koran in a similar way. The holy oil (Ex. xxx.) and the water of jealousy (Num. v.) were magical, as was also the brazen serpent.* The great Wizard's ark was also endowed with magical powers, bringing with it victory and punishing those who infringed its tabu.† His sanctuary was also called an oracle where the priest "inquired of the Lord" (2 Sam. xvi., 23; 1 Kings vi., 16).

The teraphim were also magical, as we learn from Ezek. xxi., 21, where the word is translated "images." The prophet Hosea, one of the very earliest of the Old Testament writers (about 740), announced as a misfortune that "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." Laban, although a believer in Elohim, calls the teraphim "his gods" (Genesis xxxi., 29, 30), and so does Micah (Judges xviii., 18—24). The latter chapter shows that the teraphim were worshipped and served by the descen-

dants of Moses down to the time of David (see Revised Version). David's wife Michal kept one in the house (1 Sam. xix., 13). How comes it, then, one may ask, that divination and sorcery are denounced in Deuteronomy xviii.? The answer is simple. The Deuteronomic law was first found in the time of Josiah, B.C. 641 (see 2 Kings xxii., 8—11), and there is abundant evidence it was not known before that time.* Josiah, as we learn from 2 Kings xxiii., 24, put away "the familiar spirits, and the wizards and the teraphim and the idols," as Hezekiah (B.C. 726) had destroyed the brazen serpent. Not only had Jezebel practised witchcraft (2 Kings ix., 22), but Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah, "dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards" (2 Chron. xxxiii., 6). These, it may be said, were wicked persons. Yet another piece of evidence is derived from the fact that *Nashon*, the chief of the tribe of Judah, and one of the ancestry of the blessed Savior, signifies "enchanter." Zechariah (B.C. 580) shows the great advance made from the time of Hosea by declaring that "the teraphim have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams" (x., 2).

The Talmud, compiled between A.D. 200 and 500, abounds with notices of contemporary magic, showing that among the Jews it long survived idolatry. In our notes to "The Jewish Life of Christ," Mr. Foote and I have dealt fully with the charge of magic brought against Jesus by the Jews, and shown the many instances in the Bible in which the divine name (by which Jesus is said to have performed his miracles) was regarded as a spell. Prayer, indeed, may be termed but a survival of magic, assuming like it a supernatural power which may be induced or compelled to do what would not happen in the ordinary course of nature. Of the pernicious consequences arising from the Bible-supported belief in magic, abundant evidence is given in No. 14 of "The Crimes of Christianity," dealing with Witchcraft.

J. M. WHEELER.

PROFANE JOKES.

NURSE: "Katie, you should not take the sugar. Your mother may not see you, but some one does." Katie (aged four): "I know who you mean—God; but he don't tell."

A CLERGYMAN, seeing many of his parishioners drowsy, paused awhile, and then said: "I come now to the third head of my discourse, to which I ask the serious and candid attention of all who are not asleep."

"A HALF-DRUNKEN Congressman once staggered up to Greeley and exclaimed: "I am a self-made man." Horace replied that he was glad to hear it; "for," he said, "that relieves God of a great responsibility."

COUNTRY editor to minister: "I hear you preached yesterday on 'Save My Lambs,' Mr. B." "Yes." "Would you mind giving me a synopsis of the sermon for this week's issue? We have just added an agricultural department to the paper and it's catching the farmers right and left."

CURATES' MANIFESTO.—A manuscript copy of a declaration of the views of no fewer than 200 curates of the Church of England who are in favor of disestablishment, has been sent to the *Daily News*. The document sets forth twelve specific reasons why the Church should be freed from State control in order to place itself in more harmonious relation with the people. The first reason assigned is that the Church is practically the parson's freehold, and that the parishioners have, in fact, no voice. 2. That even people who pay money for endowment are overruled by the bishops, who place their friends and relatives in the enjoyment of the proceeds. 3. That in country districts many churches are empty, because the parson cannot or will not adapt himself to the people. 4. That curates who have a future before them and who are not "established" frequently succeed in filling the churches, to be rewarded in many instances only by dismissal by what the Bishop would call his "dear rector." 5. That the curate does the work, and the rector takes the pay. 6. That the bishops, who receive the grand emoluments and who are members of the Legislature, have done nothing in the way of Church reform. 7. That while in other professions promotion is achieved by merit, it goes in the Church through relationship. 8. That these considerations have a demoralising effect upon the clergymen themselves. 9 and 10. That the ornate services of cathedrals contrast strongly with the poverty clustering around these stately edifices. 11 boldly asserts that the Church establishment as a whole sticks to its abuses for the sake of gold. 12. That if the Church were disestablished parishioners would be left free to choose their own minister. The above topics are elaborated with considerable force; and if the points enumerated are not altogether novel, the expression of them by so many paid servants of the Church itself is certainly a noteworthy and encouraging phenomenon.

* See *Freethinker*, No. 183, p. 42.

† See "God in a Box," by G. W. Foote.

* See *Freethinker*, No. 194, p. 130.

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The succeeding parts will be issued at intervals of a fortnight.

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