

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 146.



GOD AND THE BEASTS; OR, A CURIOUS COVENANT.

"I establish my covenant . . . with every living creature that is with you, of the fowl, of the cattle, and of every beast of the earth"—GENESIS ix., 9, 10. "Surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man."—GENESIS ix., 5.

LAUGHING, to teach the truth, what binders? . . . Joking decides great things, stronger and better oft than earnest can.—HORACE (Milton)

GLADSTONE ON HUXLEY.

A FEW weeks ago we gave our readers a brief account of Professor Huxley's reply to Mr. Gladstone's article on the Mosaic cosmogony in the *Nineteenth Century*. The current number of that magazine contains Mr. Gladstone's rejoinder, with a very interesting reply by Dr. Réville, whose latest volume was the occasion of Mr. Gladstone's peculiar contribution to the impossible task of reconciling Science and the Bible. Dr. Réville writes with charming ease and lucidity, and although the questions he treats are in some respects "caviare to the general," his sentences are so perspicuous that no one can misconceive his meaning. In very urbane, but very decisive language, he tells Mr. Gladstone that a life-long study of Homer, however painful and precise, is not a fit preparation for the work of comparative philology and religion; and that those similarities between Greek and Hebrew mythology are common to all others, and arise spontaneously in certain stages of culture, in different and distant parts of the world, without being communicated. He reminds Mr. Gladstone that he is basing his criticism on very lax interpretations of Genesis; that "days" are arbitrarily transformed into "periods," in direct defiance of the intimation that each day was rounded with evening and morning; that the six "periods" theory upsets the fourth commandment; that the Hebrew

word translated as "firmament" does mean a solid expanse, whose windows were opened at the Deluge; that his metaphysical distinctions between "create" and "make" were foreign to "the old historians who never dreamed of them;" and that Adam and Eve are depicted as ignorant of the elementary laws of morality, as the sentiment of shame which distinguishes man from the brute was unknown to them until they had eaten of the forbidden fruit. In conclusion Dr. Réville praises Mr. Gladstone's political work as a great leader of Liberalism, but remarks, with a tinge of sarcasm, that "perhaps he has been less happy in his excursions into the field of religious science."

Dr. Réville is as clear as daylight, but when we come to Mr. Gladstone all is confused and shifty like a panorama of clouds. After reading his defence of Genesis against Huxley, we are tempted to exclaim, Holy Moses! If all this intricate verbiage is necessary to explain the Scripture, one wonders why God Almighty ever took the trouble to make any revelation at all.

Mr. Gladstone's reply to Professor Huxley would have been impossible if the great biologist had plainly told our ex-premier that he lacked an elementary knowledge of the scientific side of the question. Politeness, we suppose, forbade this but severity is sometimes more wholesome than lenity. The consequence of Huxley's forbearance is that Mr. Gladstone actually supposes him to be an opponent of the nebular hypothesis, which is surely an insult to the educated public who are acquainted with "Lay Sermons." Worse still, Mr. Gladstone repeats his former nonsense about a "diffused light," which existed before the sun, and was capable of producing vegetation; when, according

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to the very nebular hypothesis he patronises, our earth is a child of the sun, and dependent on it through every stage of its career. We are also bound to say that the use Mr. Gladstone makes of Phillips's "Manual of Geology" is a pitiable exhibition. Huxley will not venture to say all he thinks of it, but in private he must laugh consumedly at the astonishing ignorance of the latest champion of Genesis. Here is a man who stands at the head of our greatest political party; who has been, and probably will be again, our Prime Minister; who has received a university education, and is skilled in the classic languages; who is pointed to with pride by millions as the chief Englishman of our time; and yet he is more profoundly ignorant of real science than thousands of schoolboys. It is a sorry sight, but seeing it we can understand Mr. Gladstone's adhesion to Moses; and perhaps where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise.

Now let us see some of the shifts Mr. Gladstone is reduced to in playing the advocate for Moses. The fatal difficulty that the Bible represents whales as created before the mammals they have descended from, is very discreetly disregarded; a little fact which shows that Mr. Gladstone is not seeking truth, but holding a brief. Then again, he tries to explain the discrepancy between Science and the Bible with respect to reptiles in a vein of ponderous absurdity. Genesis brings them on the scene after birds and contemporaneously with mammals, whereas they are prior to both. Well, you see, says Mr. Gladstone, the reptiles are "not one of the main features of the picture," so they are treated "in a loose manner;" another reason being that they were "a family fallen from greatness" who "merely skulked upon the earth." Shade of Artemus Ward, look down with envy!

My fourfold order, says Mr. Gladstone, still holds good. True, you have in one sense knocked it to smithereens, but I didn't mean it in that sense. You classify animals according to *structure*; the Bible classifies them according to *habitat*. You take the creation story as a lecture; I take it as a sermon. The purpose of the writer was moral and religious, and you must not hold him "responsible for scientific precision." Be it so. But that is shifting ground, and crying off from the original battle. When Mr. Gladstone talks about "a just estimate of the purpose" of the author, and of "what was in the mind of the Mosaic writer," he is on a wide sea of conjecture, where Science will not follow him, and where he has no light but—

"The dark lantern of the spirit,
Which none can see by but those who bear it."

After all, says Mr. Gladstone, Genesis says fishes came first and man last. How do you account for that wonderful accuracy? Does it not "entirely transcend, in kind even more than in degree, all known exercise of human faculties?" Really, Mr. Gladstone, you must pardon our turning our heads to hide our laughter.

Mr. Gladstone shows a strange appreciation of Evolution, too, when he inclines to favor it because it supports the Design Argument. As a matter of fact, it does the very opposite; because it explains adaptation as a result of Natural Selection working on infinite variety with prodigal waste. Yet the admission is significant, for it shows how Mr. Gladstone looks at everything with religious spectacles. Evolution is challenged in the name of Christianity. "Do you support my creed? If yes, welcome; if not, avaunt!"

Only once, in our opinion, does Mr. Gladstone score a point. He demolishes Huxley's plea for Religion against Theology, and shows that they are the emotional and intellectual sides of the same thing, the one being a sentiment and the other a belief. But in the fervor of his Theology, Mr. Gladstone proceeds to make an admission that will stagger the orthodox. "It may be," he says, "we shall find that Christianity is in some sort a scaffolding, and that the final building is a pure and perfect Theism." To our mind this looks very much like building a bridge for a retreat. If Mr. Gladstone's vaticination comes true, all the great doctors of Christianity, and even its very founder, were only scaffold makers, and the deluded world has only been reading as God's word the bills on the hoarding. Let the scaffolding be pulled down. There will be a great dust, but when it settles we shall see—Nothing. Theism will not be there, and Atheism will occupy the ground.

G. W. FOOTE.

WE are no believers in death-bed repentance of any kind. The discordant cries of Church Reform now resounding from the various organs of clericalism would never have been heard of but for the apprehension that the Church is fast losing its hold upon the people, and that something must be done if Disestablishment and—what is far worse to the clerical mind—Disendowment is to be averted. No amount of scripture-reading or study of the lives of the apostles ever woke the Church up to a sense of its own disordered constitution like the recent vote of the agricultural laborer.

Finding breakers ahead, the rotten old Church is seeking to weather the coming storm by throwing overboard a Jonah or so. Convenient Jonahs are even now sought for. The *Record* finds them in traffickers in livings, the *Church Review* would restrict the power of patrons and provide against the appointment of criminous and incompetent clergymen. The *Church Reformer* would throw over the bishop's seats in the Legislature and the fat livings generally, while the *Church Times* appears to think that an insurance company for poor curates is about all that is needed.

Even the bishops are lifting their voices for Church Reform, and the Primate himself is said to be drafting a measure for presentation to the House of Lords. Juggling is the clerical trade. We may rely upon seeing, during the present year, many a subtly-concocted scheme for the purpose of retaining national wealth without national control. This is what the cry of Home Rule for the Church really means. The trend of most of these proposals is that Parliament shall abdicate its functions of regulating Church matters and vest them in Convocation, with its attendant but subsidiary House of Laymen. But who are the laity? Here lies, as the clericals well know, the *crux* of the whole question. The answer is that the people of England are the laity. You, dear readers, are members of the Church of England. Lord Chancellor Eldon laid it down that there was "no difference as to the persons of whom they were composed between the Church and the State—the Church is the State and the State is the Church." As the judicious Hooker declared, there is not any man a member of the Commonwealth who is not also of the Church of England. Although I have ceased to be a Christian, and no longer claim the privileges of Church membership, I am, nevertheless, what Dean Stanley called "a nonconforming member of the Church of England," and must, I fear, remain so until formally excommunicated. Even then my excommunication might not be recognised by the State, and the Church might be compelled, as in the case of Mr. Jenkins, to receive an heretic into its fold.* The fact of my being a heretic does not debar my legal right to the offices of the Church, or to a voice in the affairs of my parish, any more than the fact of my holding Republican opinions debars me from voting for a member of Parliament pledged to uphold monarchy.

It manifestly would not do, however, to allow all and sundry to have a voice, as they have at present through their representatives in Parliament, in the regulation of Church affairs; therefore some line must be drawn. The most radical of the reformers, like Canon Shuttleworth, would include all who are baptised. But here two difficulties arise. First, that a large number of those baptised in the Anglican Church are now Nonconformists. Second, that the High Church recognises Roman Catholic baptism as valid, while the Low Church equally recognises baptism performed in Nonconformist chapels. Others—it is said Archbishop Benson among their number—would only include those who have had the holy hands of a bishop laid on their heads in Confirmation. As, however, only about ten per cent. of baptised persons, and these mostly females, go through that ceremony, this would at once restrict the membership of the Church of England within narrower bounds than that of the Wesleyans. Others would have only those entitled to the privileges of membership who go regularly to the altar to feast on the body and the blood of Jesus; a restriction which would still further narrow the Church and render more glaring the iniquity of its holding vast sums of national wealth when the needs of the nation for improved education are so great. The

* See The Devil in the Church of England, in "Satires and Profanities," by James Thomson.

very proposals of the Church Reformers show that the Church has lost its ancient basis, and demonstrate that it has no more title to national property than any other of the various sects that teach in the name of religion.

It is a curious thing that nearly all the sudden panics of reform are now coming from the clericals themselves. The laity, save such lords and commoners as are holders of patronage or have relatives in the ministry, are supremely indifferent. This alone shows that all that is really sought is a buffer to mitigate the shock of the movement for Disestablishment. Do the bishops and Church dignitaries really desire reform? Not much. Bishop Ryle seems to have a sufficient sense of his own incompetence to feel the desirability of "lay helpers" in the bishopric, but as he entirely omits to say who is to nominate the lay helpers, we think we are not far out in supposing he wishes to nominate them himself, and to receive for nothing the benefit of their assistance in work he gets £3,600 a year for doing himself.

The most earnest advocates of Church Reform, however, are the poorly-paid curates, who hope that any change will bring them a bigger share of the rich Church pudding. More amusing are the Nonconformist ministers, who would keep the establishment up on condition of its being widened to give them a share in the pickings. The latest manifesto, signed jointly by prominent Broad Church clergymen and some Nonconformist ministers, among whom we notice several Unitarians, demands that the Church shall be reformed "so as to be in fact as well as in name the Church of the nation," and to include "the entire Christian thought and life of the nation." That is, they want it widened sufficiently to admit themselves, oblivious of the fact that if the Church stretched its folds to include all who profess and call themselves Christians, it would still not be the Church of the entire nation, but only of the majority. Yet they know that any change must receive the assent of a Parliament in which Jews and Secularists have seats.

It is reported that Lord Salisbury and his Cabinet are engaged upon a scheme of Church Reform to divide the Liberals and dish the Liberationists. Possibly his lordship may not hold office long enough to carry out these intentions, but even if he does he will find the task far from an easy one. No reforms of any value can be made without touching vested interests and opening up questions of wide import. The identification of the Conservative party with the interests of the Church will not in the long run prove beneficial to either, and we may be sure Parliament will be chary of abdicating its own rights and of investing clerical trustees with the right of ownership. Meantime the outcry for Church Reform will serve to call attention to Church abuses and to familiarise the masses with the true remedy—Disestablishment and Disendowment.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

THE Glasgow *Chiel* wonders why Freethinkers do not consider this journal "a horrible paper." Answer: Because they are Freethinkers. If they were Christians they might even admire the *Chiel*.

THE *Chiel* also wonders why the editor of the *Freethinker* does not get "another dose of imprisonment for his gross offences against public decency and good taste." But good taste is a matter of fancy. We attack a pestilent superstition with all our energy; we get plenty of kicks and very few coppers; we have suffered imprisonment for our policy, yet we have the courage to continue it. All this fighting for principle is in shocking bad taste. The *Chiel* turns an honest penny by cracking jokes on ladies' bustles, men's breeches' buttons, first kisses and so forth. All this is in first-rate taste. A mad world, my masters!

AT Loughborough, Mary Frances ("Sister Mary"), of the Convent, Quorndon, has been fined 15s. for assaulting a woman who refused to subscribe to the convent charities. The case may serve to put unsuspecting people on their guard, and may induce them to be more careful in bestowing charities upon persons whose only recommendation is the strange garb in which they appear.

So far from thinking that £10,000 to £15,000 is too large a sum for a successor of the apostle, the *Church Times* holds that "the great professional prizes are too small rather than too large, given the position thrust upon the Bishops by the constitution of English society." That is, bishops must be wealthy because they mingle only with the well-to-do.

THE *Church Times* goes on showing that if the archbishops only had £2,000 a year each and the bishops £1,000 each, the rest of the clergy would only get an increase of £6 10s. each were the remainder divided among them, which is of course a conclusive reason for allowing things to remain as they are.

ANY clergyman who wants a nice house with over five acres attached and £355 a year, in a parish with only a population of 209, has only to purchase the advowson of a living near Coventry, which is now for sale. As the present holder is eighty-three years of age he may reasonably expect not to have to wait too long for his "desirable living, situated in the best part of the county of Warwick."

THE *Church Times*, in a peculiarly Christian article upon Bishop Ryle, urging that churchmen should petition for his removal from the Episcopal bench, declares that "For the bishop to talk about the blasphemous sacrifice of the mass is himself to blaspheme." That is, the *Church Times* accuses a bishop (called by the Holy Ghost to direct us in spiritual matters) of blasphemy for using the words of article xxxi. of the Church of England. We have long thought that sky-pilots in general, and bishops in particular, were the real blasphemers, but scarcely expected that a charge of blasphemy would be grounded upon adherence to the Church articles.

UNDER the disguise of serious language, some very funny proposals are being made for reforming the Church of England. The Rev. G. S. Reaney wants to see the parish principle fully recognised, the endowments used for Christianity in general, without any doctrines in particular, and the parson elected by the whole of the parishioners. Fancy a hotly-contested election, with rival Bible-bangers as candidates, and the parish split up into as many parties as there are sects. Down at Northampton the Freethinkers might carry a candidate who would preach the gospel according to Bradlaugh. What a capital joke the whole business would be.

THE Rev. Compton Reade, rector of Eldon, implores the Nonconformists to drop the cry of Disestablishment and go in for reform. "With the forces of materialism," he says, "marshalling themselves in antagonism to all religion whatsoever, it must be more or less impolitic to throw away such a powerful leverage as the endowments of what should be termed the Reformed Church." In other words, let the Nonconformists come inside the Establishment, and they'll all defend the loaves and fishes together against those infernal infidels. Not a bad idea, only Christian sects hate each other a great deal too much for an amicable union. Even in presence of the common foe, they are like the Jews who fought each other in the streets of Jerusalem while the Roman army was at the gates.

EVEN the venerable Dr. James Martineau has fallen a victim to the same delusion. Writing to Mr. Bosworth Smith, who seems to have constituted himself ecclesiastical tinker-in-chief, he says he is an unwilling Nonconformist, calls the Church "the most venerable and beneficent of all English institutions," and declares he is still ready to defend her from assault. He does not, however, approve the schemes of reform "usually set forth." What he wants to see is a change in "her assumed theory of Christianity;" in other words, he wishes to see her Unitarianised. Others want her Wesleyanised, others Baptistised, others Congregationalised, others Methodised, and others Presbyterianised. We want her civilised—out of existence.

IN France the question of Disestablishment is postponed by the recent election, but, according to Dr. Pressensé, the Paris correspondent of the *Christian World*, it is by no means burked, and "the struggle between Church and State is becoming more and more bitter."

WHILE millions of poor devils are stewing in London fog, the fortunate Spurgeon, who loveth not this world nor the things of this world, is luxuriating at Mentone, where, according to his own statement, he is "drinking in the healing influences of sun, and sea, and air." His restoration goes on rapidly, and he attributes it to "God's grace." But why could not God's grace cure Spurgeon in London as well as Mentone? And why cannot God's grace shift all who suffer from our bleak winter to the balmy air of the sunny Mediterranean? On the whole we back Spurgeon to talk more *cant* than any other man of our time. His hypocritical letters from Mentone, every time he takes his gout there, enable one to understand how it was that George Elliot had such an infinite contempt for him.

THE most refreshing Christmas speech we have seen was delivered by the Rev. R. H. Hadden at the last meeting of the guardians of the City of London Union. This warm-hearted sky-pilot professed himself disgusted at the treats given to paupers at Christmas, and declared that "he did not want to make these people happy on Christmas Day, but every day he would like to make them profoundly and horribly miserable. He would treat them as criminals, and he hoped the wheel and oakum shed would be kept going."

WE hope the Rev. R. H. Hadden will also be "kept going," for his speeches will do more harm to the accursed creed than all our articles, paragraphs and pictures.

By the way, though, why doesn't the reverend gentleman turn his attention to the gluttonous City magnates who devour widow's houses, and for a pretence make long prayers? If pauperism consists in eating and drinking at other people's expense, these men are worse paupers than any of the poor devils in our work-houses; and as the Rev. R. H. Hadden is so fond of making paupers "profoundly and horribly miserable," he might try to give them a dose of the necessary mixture.

Two "infidel" stories, given in the report of Mr. Birch's popular Sunday evenings at the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, Dec. 13, 1885, are specimens of the sort of thing which goes down with a Christian audience. Both are put forward as coming within the personal knowledge of Mr. Birch. One is of an extraordinary Atheist he used to meet in the steamer, "who generally carried in his little hand-bag one or two infidel works." "In the Atheist's bag," says Mr. Birch, "we saw a book called 'Something of Philosophy,' written, I believe, by a lady-Atheist; another was a volume of tracts bound together, one of which by a noted Atheist was, 'Is there a Devil?' A third was called, 'The Bible, a book of superstition;' and a fourth was 'The Freethinker's Guide or Text-Book,' also written by a woman-Atheist." The Christian minister, strange to say, proposed that the Atheist should give one of these books to a sailor-boy. But no; he preferred that the minister should give him a Testament. We can understand this Atheist. The works he "generally carried in his hand-bag"—of course for safety—must be very valuable on account of their extreme rarity. Although tolerably acquainted with Atheistic literature, we have never come across one of them, unless the Freethinkers' Text-Book not Guide, is referred to, part of which was written by Mrs. Besant.

THE other story is a more familiar one. It is that of a dying Atheist who refuses to see his friends from a secular hall, but who eagerly accepts the ministrations of a Sunday-school teacher, and says: "Do you mind kneeling down and praying God to have mercy on a poor infidel who wants pardon?" The climax of this oft-told story is richer than usual. After ordering his wife to burn his infidel books, she heard him say to himself—"Only barely in time." He evidently thought that his death-bed repentance changed his fate from one of everlasting misery to one of eternal glory. Credulity must abound in Manchester when stories like these are the popular weapons against Free-thought.

MR. BIRCH has been requested by Mr. Bletcher to give the name of this Atheist whose son and daughter are said to have attended Mr. Birch's Sunday-school the name of his friend who came from the infidel society; the particular infidel society meant and the date when they belonged to the said society. In reply to these pertinent inquiries, Mr. Birch simply says, "I must decline to have any correspondence with any member of your society." Our readers will put their own construction upon Mr. Birch's refusal to supply particulars.

CHRIST'S soldiers in the Church Army are, considering the essentially aggressive nature of their profession, more conspicuous for discretion than valor. In reply to a challenge from Mr. Sampson, Vice-chairman of the out-door propaganda of the Hyde Park Branch N. S. S., the secretary, on behalf of the Rev. W. Carlile and the whole "Army," declines to enter the enemy's lines on his king's service, thus: "We are so satisfied with the truth of the doctrines which we hold, and are so convinced of the power of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that we prefer that those who disagree with us should come and hear the message of salvation from those who proclaim it. All hail the power of Jesu's name!"

THE legend about Mr. Chamberlain having offered the agricultural voters three acres and a cow has been backed up by Bible authority as under—

"One of the Chamberlains said" (Esther vii., 9),
 "The field give I thee" (Genesis xxiii., 11); and
 "A very fair heifer" (Jeremiah xlvi., 20).

JOHN HORTON, an ex-Wesleyan preacher, and clerk to the Wesleyan trustees in Manchester, has been committed to trial for forging cheques to the tune of £5,000.

ANOTHER noted American spiritist named Wyman, has been caught doing the materializing trick, and now lies in gaol in Iowa, on a charge of obtaining money under false pretences.

IRELAND is to be separated from Great Britain. The Rev. M. Baxter, clergyman of the Church of England and editor and proprietor of the *Christian Herald*, assures us of the fact, and he cannot possibly be mistaken, because he draws his infallible information from the inspired prophecies of Daniel. The separation is to be one of the many signs of the end of the world in 1896 or 1897. We should describe Baxter as "cracked," if it

were not for a shrewd suspicion that he is much more N than F. He knows what brings the money in from ignorant dupes of the class he cultivates.

THE Streatham Young Men's Christian Association are going to debate the question, "Has the introduction of machinery into agriculture made man less dependent upon God?" These pious young men evidently fear that the steam ploughs and reaping machines of modern science may defeat God, as the iron chariots of the mountaineers of Judah baffled him in the old days (Judges i., 19). The Devil must have been tempting them to admit so dangerous a discussion, just as he once tempted David to enter light-hearted upon the road to ruin by committing the awful crime of taking a census.

AN American Church paper declares that some of the body known as "Primitives," in Georgia, having dug pits from fear of cyclones, have been denounced by others of the sect as showing a lack of faith. They hold that the Church should refuse fellowship with those who have not sufficient trust in God to meet cyclones above ground. Hence another select church has been formed with the name of "Anti-cyclone Primitives."

Church Work for December contains an article upon Secularist Propaganda, by A. T. F., who pretends to some personal acquaintance with the subject. He divides Secularists into four classes, according to the attitude they take in regard to the Christian myth. In the last of these classes, the most directly antagonistic, he places Mr. Foote and those who share his views. A. T. F. deplors the existence of the *Freethinker*, but protests against Christians instigating the prosecution of our journal.

AT a meeting of the Swansea School Board, the Rev. E. J. Wolfe proposed a course of religious instruction "in view of the serious crimes that have lately disgraced this district." Canon Richards, who seconded the resolution said "Put only the New Testament in the hands of the children, don't give them the Old if you have any regard for their morality." Canon Richards' conscience perhaps will not permit him to conceal the fact any longer, but it is hardly fair that he should act the commercial for God at a good salary and at the same time publicly condemn the major portion of his goods.

YVES GUYOT, in his capital pamphlet on "English and French Morality," compares the zeal of Stead, Jarrett and the Salvationists to that of the Archbishop of Bologna, who abducted the Jewish boy, Mortara, and to the missionaries who carry on a similar game in China. M. Guyot says: "The salvation of Chinese children brings in five or six millions of francs annually to the missionaries of 'La Sainte Enfance,' to which mission there is but one thing wanting—the children. A former Consul of France, who passed ten years in China, M. Eugène Simon, has described the zeal of these missionaries. In order to justify their demand for subscriptions, they must get hold of Chinese children at any cost; if they don't, their occupation, their *raison d'être* is gone. It is by the salvation of Chinese children that they earn their living. They get children then, in whatsoever way they can, and having once got them, they refuse to give them up. This was the cause of the massacre of the French at Tien-Tsin in 1870." A pious French bishop of *La Sainte Enfance* was logical enough to wish that an epidemic would relieve him of his orphans, for then they would go straight to heaven, while on earth they were in constant danger of falling back into sin.

THE *Yorkshireman* relates the following incident as having actually occurred at a Dissenting chapel in Kirkgate, Bradford. The minister was enlarging upon the fact that although there was no commerce or barter on the Sabbath day, there was one thing you could buy freely. It was a great—a sacred thing. "What was the one great and sacred thing you could buy on the Sabbath, my friends?" Before he could answer, a little boy popped up his hand. The minister saw it. Here was an opportunity not to be missed. He pointed to the child. "Ah," he cried, "here is one who can tell me; come hither, little one!" and he beckoned the child to his side with a glad smile. Now for a beautiful episode with which to crown his discourse. The child approached, and he lifted him to a place beside him. "Tell the people, little one—speak in a loud voice so that they can all hear you—tell them. What is that we can all buy on the Sabbath?" "Hokey-pokey!" piped the lad at the top of his voice. He meant the soap-like concoction of ice sold by Italian vendors, not the hocus-pocus of theological platitudes.

THE Religious Tract Society are sending out an edition of 3,000 Bible pictures to the Fiji Islanders. We could lend them a few of our blocks cheap. They would amuse the natives more and deceive them less. "God and the Beasts" might be tried for a start, only unfortunately it might make the converts think, and that would be dangerous to their faith.

"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, Jan. 10, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C.; 11.15, "Shelley on Ireland;" 7.30, "The Church in Danger."

JANUARY 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.—R. S. T.

F. CLAYDON.—We stated in our article that Christmas Day was fixed on the twenty-fifth of December in the second half of the fourth century. Reckoning the years from the birth of Christ means writing as we now do, "Anno Domini—the Year of our Lord—so and so." That only began in the sixth century, and was only legalised in the tenth. The common era was that of Cæsar, and this continued to be popular in Spain even so late as the thirteenth century.

WM. OWEN.—In cases where Freethinkers belong to friendly societies they should use their influence to prevent any manifestation of a sectarian spirit, either in the rules or forms of initiation.

P. BROWN.—Newspaper cuttings are always welcome.

E. HUGHES.—Many thanks. The two tales of the men who wanted their infidel books burnt look much like Christian fibs for the glory of God.

MAHOMET.—The tract can be printed if you are prepared to take 5,000 copies at the ordinary rate. We never issue less than 20,000.

G. C.—You have simply to give notice to the parish registrar, and at the end of three weeks you can get married. A special license will enable you to marry within a shorter time, but it costs more.

A. ANDRADE.—Hardly up to the mark.

A. SERCOMBE.—The lines are good, but not particularly *apropos* of anybody.

DEVEREUX.—We gave the address on the pamphlet, which also states that copies may be obtained from Mr. Butterick, newsagent, 50 Barbican, E.C.

WM. EMSLEY.—Your verses ought to have come in time for the Christmas festivities.

S. LOWE.—We are overcrowded with copy at present.

"A RECRUIT."—We are always glad of marked newspapers. Thanks.

H. ROWDEN.—The pretended "Sentence of Pontius Pilate," given in "The Servant's Friend," is without the slightest evidence of authenticity, and has never been put forward as genuine by any theologian of repute.

B. CARD.—The theory of pious ancestors having endowed the Church of England is largely a pious fraud. Old private endowments were mainly legacies for masses to draw souls out of purgatory. St. Paul's Cathedral was paid for by a compulsory tax on coals.

H. W. KITCHENER.—We regret we cannot find room for it, being overcrowded with copy at present.

E. C. B.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with the editorial article on the Irish Question in *Progress*. Others besides yourself have asked Mr. Foote to reprint it in a separate form for general distribution. He has a notion however of amplifying it first, and strengthening it with historical references and figures.

J. J. BROWN.—The subject you broach is one for an essay and not for a paragraph.

R. WALLACE (Glasgow).—We regret to hear of the serious illness of your president, Mr. George Ridley, whom we have known for years as one of the main pillars of Freethought in your city.

DR. VOELKEL writes us from Hamburg: "We have at Magdeburg and at Berlin societies of Freethinkers, and I am going to lecture at the latter place as I have at the former. Your *Freethinker* I always have with me; I'll show it at Berlin, and shall be very glad to get you new friends."

As we go to press we learn that the Gymnasium Hall, Huddersfield, is no longer available for Freethought lectures, the directors having for some reason closed it on Sundays to all parties. This will to some extent militate against the success of Mr. Foote's lectures at Huddersfield on the 17th inst., and we therefore trust that all Freethinkers in the district will crowd into the Secular Hall and bring with them as many of their friends as possible.

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.

A CATALOGUE of the Progressive Publishing Company's Works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Railway Chariot—Yorkshireman—Truthseeker—Women's Suffrage Journal—Church Reformer—Bradford Daily Telegraph—Cambria Daily Leader—Boston Investigator—Weekly Dispatch—Hampstead and Highgate Express—Western Morning News.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

We regret that there is no sketch good enough to take either of the prizes for the January 1 competition.

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 February 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.

In the present Babel of voices on Ireland it may be pleasant to many Freethinkers and Radicals to hear what a great Atheist and Republican said seventy years ago on the subject. This morning (January 10) Mr. Foote will lecture at the London Hall of Science on "Shelley on Ireland." His evening lecture will be on "The Church in Danger!"

The Second Part of "Comic Bible Sketches" is now ready. A large number were ordered before publication, and we expect as great a rush for this part as there was for the first. We have been advised to raise a fund for presenting all the clergy with a copy, but we charitably decline to do so, for our Comic Bible would make them all Freethinkers, and we are reluctant to deprive so many heads of families of their living, to say nothing of suddenly throwing an extra burden on the ratepayers, who would have to provide them with temporary relief.

PRINCIPAL CAIRD, of Glasgow University, has startled the Scotties by some very plain remarks on religion and morality, a summary of which we have pleasure in quoting from the *Christian World*:—"He told his hearers that religious belief was very often a pure accident. Many Protestants and Presbyterians in Scotland would have been equally zealous for Roman Catholicism had they been brought up in France and Spain. Independent of all creeds, there was the distinction between the pure and the impure, the selfish and the self-sacrificing. If they took a candid survey of men in domestic, social, and public life, could they say that tenderness, and uprightness, and integrity, or civic purity, were to be found always amongst those of the religious world, or were at all monopolised by men connected with the Christian church? Was it in church circles that meekness and humility, forbearance and courtesy, were most to be found? Was it not in the religious world that intolerance, party spirit, and censoriousness attained their rankest growth?"

HELL is cooling down rapidly, Christians themselves are flooding and ventilating it. Here, for instance, is the *Christian World* denouncing those who represent God "as ingeniously contriving, throughout eternity, a variety of torments for creatures that owed their existence to himself," and branding the doctrine of everlasting hell as "blasphemy." After all, as Galileo said, the world *does* move, and even Christians get carried along with it.

THE Annual Children's Party at the London Hall of Science takes place next Thursday evening, January 14. Children of Freethinkers are welcome from everywhere and anywhere, only their elders must bring them and fetch them home. All sorts of amusements are provided, and we can say from experience that uproarious fun is the order of the evening. We always make a point of dropping in to see the sport. Of course funds are required to provide the entertainment, to say nothing of the oranges, cakes, milk and lemonade that disappear as if by magic. Subscriptions can be sent to Mr. Anderson at the Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., or to Mr. Cookney, the Secretary of the Children's Party Committee.

A WRITER in the *Nonconformist and Independent*, who boasts a wide acquaintance with the ministry, declares that while poor people will readily attend week night concerts held in chapels and even pay a small sum for doing so, they cannot be induced to attend free week night sermons or prayer-meetings. He further declares that working men will not give up their beds to attend Sunday morning services, nor the rich give up their late dinners to attend in the evening. He suggests prayer and humiliation as the remedies.

As a sign of how Freethought is gaining recognition we may remark that the *Nottingham Journal* and the *Evening Mail* give good reports of the funeral of Mr. Edward Shelton. They describe the proceedings as "of a very orderly and impressive character throughout," and publish an extract from the Burial Service which Mr. Arthur Hunt read at the grave.

THE SHAKERS.

THE Shakers are conspicuous as one of the few sects of Christians who really believe the Bible. They endeavor to obey Christ and to imitate the Apostles. Hence the hysterical jabbering called the gift of tongues still survives among them, together with so-called prophecy, and other pious forms of raving and excitement, which are all ascribed to the direct influence of the indwelling Holy Spirit as in the apostolic times (Acts ii., 3, 4). Believing

that Christ and Paul were in earnest in discrediting and discouraging marriage, they abstain from it and teach that those who have wives should live as though they had none, so that thus the purity of heaven may be attained upon earth. They live in communities or families which are socialistic except in being ruled by elders and by revelations. They believe that the long over-due millenium promised by Christ is at hand, and that he spoke truth when he promised that the Holy Ghost should come and should guide them into all truth. They believe, in fact, in many fundamental Christian doctrines which ordinary Christians only profess to believe, or even openly poo-hoo as only fit for silly fanatics or credulous children.

The manifestations of the Spirit on which the Shakers found their worship are various. Sometimes the Holy Ghost is merry and social, and only makes the worshippers dance or march about the room to the accompaniment of the hymns they sing. Sometimes he inspires them to shout and clap their hands or to rave out most wonderful prophecies, as they consider them. Sometimes he sends them into fits, hysterics or convulsions, but he is grown so decorous and respectable now-a-days that this does not happen nearly so often as in the earlier days, when he exerted himself to more purpose and with greater power.

The "United Society of Believers," or Millennial Church," as the Shakers term themselves, traces itself back historically to the Camisards (wearers of *chemises*, or peasant smocks; Spanish *camisado*, a shirt)—not the Camisards who at the beginning of the eighteenth century bravely fought an ultimately successful peasants' war against Romish despotism in the Cevennes, but to the truer Christians, and therefore contemptibly inferior men and women, who were also called Camisards, but who only distinguished themselves by raving, prophesying and working miracles of faith-healing at Dauphiny and elsewhere in France at the end of the seventeenth century.* Three of these inspired prophets came over to England in 1705, and soon turned the heads of some two or three hundred persons in England, who straightway also fell prophesying and miracle-working, some of them even claiming the power of raising the dead. Of the sect thus formed Anna Leo afterwards became the inspired head, and was acknowledged by the members of the society as their spiritual mother in Christ, as Mrs. Girling is now acknowledged by the few adherents left in England. Anna Leo and her followers emigrated to America in obedience to one of the numerous alleged revelations with which she, like the scriptural prophets, was favored. The sect has so far flourished in this promised land of the West that the Shaker communities there are said to boast of some 7,000 or 8,000 members.

The English branch, with Mrs. Girling at its head, has not been nearly so successful. According to an account in the *Daily News* of a recent visit to Mrs. Girling's encampment at "Tiptoe," in Hampshire, she has only about forty followers, and these suffer greatly from sheer lack of the necessaries of life. After living by the roadside, exposed to great hardships from the inclemency of the weather, they were glad to hire land and build six large canvas huts; but as the canvas has not been painted, the rain penetrates through into their dwellings in damp weather. Notwithstanding this discomfort and their extreme poverty, they are described as cheerful, intelligent, respectable and clean. They are evidently sincere, and if the firm endurance of suffering is any proof of the truth of religious doctrines, Mrs. Girling's revelation should be as true as St. John's, and her followers' belief as trustworthy as that of Peter or Paul. Mrs. Girling adds a new and pleasing feature to Christianity. Both in its theology and in its history the Bible patronises the male sex and almost ignores the equal rights of women—because of the hardness of our hearts of course, and not because God is partial to one sex, and that his own. Thanks to the promised inspiration which would guide her into all truth, she corrects and supports Christ as Christ corrects and supports Moses. In her own person she adds the lacking female element to the masculine godhead of Christianity. She is the "mother-representative," "the living part," of deity. She is God or Christ in a new form or incarnation. She says: "I am the second appearing of Jesus,

* It may be, after all, that the two sects are one, and that I am deceived by Protestant information, which to save the credit of Protestantism, repudiates as far as possible the wilder convulsionists and faith-healers.

the Christ of God." Her life is the "same life that once was crucified in male form," for God is both male and female, our father and our mother.

Mrs. Girling's madness is only the religious madness of ordinary Christians carried a little further. Her hallucinations are not as striking or as objectionable as were those of Ezekiel, Isaiah, or Jesus. Of course, all Christians will see that her revelation of God incarnate as a female and as our mother is an evident hallucination and a very blasphemous and insulting one, but it is no hallucination or insult on their part to regard Jehovah and his Son as a male, or two males, and as our father—the "everlasting Father," as Christians make Isaiah (ix., 6) call the divine Son. The modern prophetess believes that she is exempted from death, and that it is absolutely impossible that she should leave her disciples. Hence she makes no provision for a successor, though she is now very ill, being quite broken down and appearing "greatly emaciated and much distressed." Like most religious enthusiasts, she feels she is a persecuted martyr. She complains bitterly that she has been "cruelly driven aside by all," and has had to "endure intense suffering for upwards of seventeen years," although she had been quite willing to unite with the Baptists, Wesleyans or Congregationalists if they had only been willing to receive her as the "terrestrial presence of a Celestial Being." Notwithstanding her sufferings, however, and Christ's teaching of asceticism, she owns she would furnish her tables with luxuries if she had the means, for, she says, "Happiness is ours; it belongs to us, and us alone."

Speculations upon the possible success of Mrs. Girling's attempt to found a new religion of completed Christianity are rather vain in an era of newspaper correspondents and scientific criticism. The very darkness of obscurity and ignorance which would have rendered possible the growth of credulity and its myths and miracles would have stultified her appeal to the enlightened sense of sexual justice and her theological vindication of the suppressed or ignored sex which would not then have been specially recognised as the religious one. The suicidal institution of celibacy alone would necessarily prevent the spread of Shakerism as a universal or widespread religion, for the sect can only flourish by the multiplication and conversion of outsiders whom it adopts. The conversion of the race would mean its extinction. So unpractical and unsuited to human nature are the special tenets and practices of the Shakers that unless they abandon them as the early Christians did their communism, they are not even likely to be as successful and as respected as the Quakers, who also received their somewhat similar name from the tremblings, ravings and convulsions of the religious ecstasy in which the earlier members indulged.

W. P. BALL.

OBITUARY.—It is my painful duty to record the death of Mr. Edward Shelton, a vice-president of the Nottingham Branch of the National Secular Society, at his residence, 41 Scarborough Terrace, Bentinck Road, Nottingham, on the 30th ult. Our dear friend, who was in his fifty-first year, had for many years been an earnest and consistent Secularist, and although of a quiet and undemonstrative disposition, the Free-thought cause in Nottingham has on many occasions benefited by his generous and ever open-handed liberality. He had long been in a delicate state of health, owing to a serious affection of the lungs, and to a last severe attack of this deadly disease, lasting little more than a week, he unfortunately succumbed. In accordance with his wish, strongly expressed to both his executors, the funeral was a purely secular one. The interment took place in the General Cemetery, Nottingham, on Saturday, the 2nd inst., and the Secular Burial Service, as written by the late Mr. Austin Holyoake, with some appropriate personal additions, was read at the grave-side by Mr. Arthur Hunt, in a very solemn and impressive manner. A large number of spectators, including many Freethought friends, were present. Much sympathy is felt for his sorrowing widow and young children, and he is deeply lamented by his numerous friends.—W. B. COLUMBINE.

SLATER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—W. Balmforth, 1s.; J. Howarth, 1s.; R. Balmforth, 2s. 6d.; M. Burton 1s. 6d.; J. H. Moore, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Brook, 1s.; J. Dyson, 6d.; Mr. Mellor, 6d.; Mr. S., 6d.; Noah Briggs, 5s.; Richard Hough, 5s.—W. H. REYNOLDS, Treasurer, Camplin House, New Cross, S.E.

THE world will have religion of some kind, even though it should fly for it to the intellectual whoredom of spiritualism.—*Tyndall.*

THE GLASGOW PROSECUTION.

There is no fresh news this week. We understand that the Edinburgh "agents" are awaiting the return of the Solicitor-General, in order to get the proposed arrangement carried through. The subscribers to the Defence Fund have the satisfaction of knowing that Mr. Ferguson has not undergone his cruel sentence, and is not likely to. That alone is worth all the money. But there is the added satisfaction of knowing that the bigots are practically beaten, and that the sale of the *Freethinker* continues as before, and will probably not be interfered with again.

The Glasgow Committee have received the following:—Andrew Lonie, 1s.; John Wright, 2s. 6d.; John Gray, 1s. 6d.; J. McDonald, 6d.; David Anderson, 1s.; James F. Irvine, 1s.; Andrew Gemmel, 2s. 6d.; Robert Irvine, 1s.; John Wilson, 1s.; Jno. Harvey, 1s.; Geo. Bennett, 1s.; G. Bell, 1s.; Edwd. McGowan, 1s.; E. Walwyk, 1s.; A Friend, 1s.; Burns Kinloch, 6d.; Urban Noon, 1s.; James Michie, 6d.; William Thorpe, 3d.; Charles Webster, 6d.; Wm. Turnbull, 1s.; A. Weir, 2s. 6d.

THE ECLIPSE OF THE GODS.

BY CHARLES BRIGHT.

In the earth's day of youth, the cerulean spaces
Were filled up, in terror, with demon-like faces;
While a stone or a stick
Had an unpleasant trick
Of assuming a shape which resembled Old Nick;
So that folk in despair
Would fall down and swear
That they worshipped the stone, or the stick, or the air;
Until some brave chief
Would give them relief
By daring the stone, or the stick, or the air,
To pitch into him and have it out square;
When, of course, it was found that nothing was there,
And the poor prostrate people, divested of care,
Uncrooked their bent knees,
And for a brief interval breathed at their ease,
But as seasons passed
Their minds were o'ercast
By new fears of the universe, mystic and vast:
So they worshipped the serpent, the bird, and the beast,
They worshipped at fast, and they worshipped at feast,
They worshipped at birth, at marriage, and death,
They worshipped a sound, and they worshipped a breath,
They worshipped a word, a lamb, and a book,
They worshipped a father, a child, and a spook,
They worshipped a relic, a tomb, and a nook,
They worshipped a mitre, a vestment, and crook,
They worshipped a Joss,
They worshipped a cross,
And at one time, in Rome, they worshipped a "hoss."
There was scarcely a thing
Insufficient to bring
The masses to kneel, and to pray, and to sing;
Imploring the wind
To be gentle and kind;
Entreating the rain
To dry up and abstain,
Or else come down again;
Asking for health,
More children or wealth;
Asking for life,
To spend it in strife;
Asking for sheep, and horses, and cattle;
Asking the sun to stand still in a battle;
Asking that sins might not find a recorder;
Asking a blessing when doing a murder;
Asking a curse upon brethren who roam,
And demanding all good for themselves and their home.
Thus gods upon gods, we have fallen before 'em,
Declaring how fondly we love and adore 'em;
A Jupiter, Brahma, Jehovah, or Jesus,
Conceived of our fancy, to please us or tease us;
Till at length
We gain strength
To calmly investigate Nature's revelations,
Unawed by the darkness of priestly concealments,
Undeterred by the yell,
Which the ignorant swell,
Affirming our certain cremation in hell;
And find, in surprise,
That to those who are wise,
The universe brings
No hideous things
With the vices of devils and sceptre of kings,—

No almighty god
Who delights in the rod,
Is angry with those by whom he's not wooed,
With those who his message have misunderstood,
And can only be bribed by the shedding of blood.—*Rationalist.*

REVIEWS.

Lecture on War. By G. W. H. HARRIS: Standring, London.—Specially interesting, as written by a soldier, who served during the Indian Mutiny and took part in the capture of Lucknow. Knowing war personally, he denounces it as the sum of all villainies.

Papers for the Times. January. London: Foulger and Co.—Contains an excellent article on John Brown, and a thoughtful article on "Women in Politics." Among the other contents is a very inadequate review of Burton's "Arabian Nights."

The Confessional, Romish and Anglican—An Exposé. By SALADIN. W. Stewart and Co., 41 Farringdon Street, E.C.—The institution of private confession is one of the chief instruments of priestly power. Hence the attempt of the High Church party to re-introduce the sacerdotal abomination against which Saladin's keen lance is hurled. It is a pity, however, that the exposure is mainly founded on "The Priest in Absolution," a work long since withdrawn from circulation, and for which not even the members of the Society of the Holy Cross are now responsible, and on extracts from Ligouri and Dens, which were never intended for lay perusal. These extracts being given in Latin, moreover, prevent their being an eye-opener to the general public.

English and French Morality, from a Frenchman's Point of View. By YVES GUYOT (Deputé). Price 1s. The Modern Press, 13 Paternoster Row, London, E.C.—We heartily commend this pamphlet to the attention of all persons interested in the subject of State prevention and regulation of vice. M. Guyot cannot understand the pious morality which shelters known criminals while entrapping innocent girls in order to show that the thing can be done. He believes in publicity, education and liberty, in opposition to those methods of repression which have been continually employed against prostitution with perpetual non-success. M. Guyot writes with clear head and full knowledge of the question, not only in France, but also in England. We trust his pamphlet will have a wide circulation.

A History of the Jews, written for young Freethinkers. By CONSTANCE HOWELL. Freethought Publishing Co.—We can honestly and heartily recommend this little volume, which Miss Howell intends as a supplement to her "Biography of Jesus Christ" and "After Life of the Apostles." It is written in pure, nervous English, and without any attempt at fine writing, it contains many happy phrases. The writer's object is to give a probable account of the ancient Jews, from the time of Moses to the fall of Jerusalem, for young people and for "those more advanced in years, who have only newly entered into the paths of scepticism." This, in our opinion, she has admirably done; although she relies a little more than we are inclined to on some of the Bible legends as semi-historical. Miss Howell's final sentence, giving her verdict on the "chosen people," is entirely true—"The Jews are, and always have been, victims to their religion." That is the key-note of their history, and it is never forgotten throughout this volume. Miss Howell writes as an open Atheist, and Freethinkers who put her "History of the Jews" into their children's hands may rely on its complete freedom from the mawkish sentimentality which disfigures the work of so many would-be religious reformers. "Can God die?" she asks; and the answer is, "Yes, as fear dies from the heart of the brave, as ignorance dies in the mind of the wise, as darkness dies in radiant sunshine. Happy will be the day when from all the countries of the world, and from the lips of all mankind, goes forth the 'glad tidings of great joy,' that God is dead!" A book written by a woman who has a head to match this brave spirit should not lack readers, nor do we think it will.

WHEN Vestryman Green bowed his head to read the response^s of the litany last Sunday he was very drowsy indeed, and he had repeated, "Lord have mercy upon us miserable sinners" but three times when he fell asleep. His wife nudged him with her parasol without success. When the preacher reached, "And now seventeenthly, my beloved brethren," Vestryman Green awoke, and being unconscious of the lapse of time, responded in a sonorous and fervent voice, "Lord have mercy upon us miserable sinners."

SHE was a preacher's little child, and, of course, had had it sedulously instilled into her mind that "God" had his weather eye constantly upon her, that wherever she chanced to be he was by her side or in close pursuit. All this teaching had its due effect, as it proved. One day the family dog was following her about, much to her annoyance. At last she turned sharply upon her canine would-be friend and petulently exclaimed, "You just go away, now! It's 'nough to have God tagging 'round after a body everywhere they go, without you! I won't have it."

PROFANE JOKES.

"WHAT is profanity?" asks a newspaper writer. It is what a church-member says when he tries on roller-skates for the first time.

"I DON'T think my religion will be any obstacle to our union," he urged; "I am a Spiritualist." "I am afraid it will," she replied, "Papa is a Prohibitionist, you know."

"Now, Uncle Gabe, if you have anything on your heart, any last wish, speak out," said the parson to an old negro who had only a few hours to live. "I ain't got no last wish cept dat I wants ter get well."

A GIFTED postess writes: "The devil arose from his little bed, and washed his face and combed his head." We hope not to be considered profane if we ask where in hell he got his water?

A CALIFORNIA missionary spent the best part of the summer endeavoring to Christianise a Chinaman. The missionary thought he was getting along very nicely until "John" made a proposition to him to "put in" with him and start a faro bank.

"I HATE," said a French priest, "to confess an Irishman, for there are four questions I always have to ask before I can get at the sins." "Are you married or single?" "Bedad, I am, sir." "Are you married or single?" "No, sir." "Are you married or single?" "Yes, sir." "Are you a married man?" "No, sir."

ERNEST (six years old):—"But, mother dear, is it really true the world was made in six days?" Mamma:—"Yes, Ernie; and if God had pleased, he could have made it in two days." Ernest (after a moment's consideration):—"Oh! mamma, that would never have done, you know; why, we should have had Sunday every other day!"

PARSON GRIDLEY, of Waco, is very much opposed to dancing. He said recently to a young lady of the congregation: "Are you one of those giddy girls to whom dancing is a heavenly pastime?" "No, I don't think dancing is perfectly heavenly." "Ah, that's right." "Dancing is not perfectly heavenly," continued the young lady, "for, you see, it comes to an end too soon; but it is very much like heaven as long as it lasts."

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