

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTER.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



PIOUS ASSASSINATION.

But when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer, Ehud the son of Gera, a Benjamite, a man left-handed: and by him the children of Israel sent a present unto Eglon the king of Moab. But Ehud made him a dagger which had two edges, of a cubit length; and he did gird it under his raiment upon his right thigh. . . . And Ehud said, I have a message from God unto thee. And he arose out of his seat. And Ehud put forth his left hand, and took the dagger from his right thigh, and thrust it into his belly: And the haft also went in after the blade; and the fat closed upon the blade, so that he could not draw the dagger out of his belly; and the dirt came out —JUDGES III., 15-22.

A NEW TRINITY.

CANON WILBERFORCE'S book, which we referred to last week, is now in our hands, and we proceed to give our readers a fuller account of it. The title, *The Trinity of Evil*, is not a bad one. Everybody knows the Trinity of good—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but it was reserved for Canon Wilberforce to reveal the trinity in unity of the Devil. This he does in a volume of a hundred and thirty pages of large type liberally spaced, with sumptuous margins, and stout paper. We take it that the contents, which can be perused in a couple of hours, comprise three lectures delivered on many platforms. They are introduced by a preface, which is another slice from the same joint. Canon Wilberforce seems terribly in earnest; passion and rhetoric abound on every page. But he is also terribly monotonous. He appears to have never heard of logic; he scorns the idea of using light and shade; and we dare say he would regard wit and humor as blasphemous. The result is that his book smells everywhere of the preacher. It is as though three of Mr. Stead's leaders in the *Pall Mall Gazette* had been amplified and adorned for the pulpit.

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The principal person, the Devil the Father, so to speak, in Canon Wilberforce's new Trinity, is Infidelity, and that, of course, deserves our chief attention; but before we deal with it we desire to say a few words on the second and third persons.

Impurity and Intemperance are very old evils. Yet if preaching had any effect on them they ought to have been extinguished long ago. The fact is, however, that sermons roll off the sinner's soul like water off a duck's back. Men are bundles of habits, and their lives are determined by their material surroundings, their daily avocations, and the society they move in. Your born preacher feels this despite all his frothy verbiage, and you always find him leaning towards repression. Being on the wrong tack for a cure, he cries out for a strait-waistcoat. After all his sermonising, and his grandiose appeals to conscience, Canon Wilberforce finally trusts to legislative interference with the liquor traffic to check intemperance, and to similar devices to check impurity. Young men are, indeed, advised to read "Henry Varley's grand Sermon to Men," a pamphlet which to our mind is remarkably like the quack publications sometimes thrust into young men's hands in the street; but somebody, we presume the State, is to "remove that terrible incentive to vice, the utterly inadequate remuneration for women's labor," and society must by-and-by resort to "a searching censorship over books." Canon Wilberforce is not prepared to say that "all forms of literary fiction are necessarily demoralising," but he would exercise a rigorous surveillance over three-volume novels. Mr. Stead's "Revelations" are all right, for they are animated by a high moral purpose, and you may circulate detailed accounts of lewdness if you have a good object. But "trashy inflammatory fiction" should be severely repressed by the strong arm of the law. What an inconsistent sifdgety lot these pious purists are! Young ladies may read, for moral improvement, how a girl was ravished in a brothel; but oh, the dreadful mischief of a novel in which Edwin's arm is always creeping round Angelina's waist!

After this our readers will not be astonished to learn that Canon Wilberforce mistrusts the "influence of knowledge and refinement." Naturally he takes a more professional view, and insists that only the Gospel of Christ will purify mankind. He omits to say whether he refers to Christ's connexion with Mary Magdalen, or to the miracle at Cana, where he turned a large quantity of water into wine after the guests were already three sheets in the wind.

May we venture to suggest to the shrieking purists that talking about vice is a questionable method of purification? The only cure for sensuality is thought. Make men thinkers, and you not only give them new sources of refined pleasure, but you consume in cerebration the nervous energy which might otherwise run riot in sensual excess.

Canon Wilberforce's book contains one good sentence, and it is borrowed from an Atheist. When asked at what age he would commence a boy's education, Mirabeau replied "I would begin twenty years before he is born by educating his mother." A splendid saying, well worthy the fervent genius of the Titan of the Revolution. Give us three generations of Mirabeau's prescription, and there would be no need of Wilberforce's sermons.

With respect to Infidelity, Canon Wilberforce allows in his Preface that its position in the Trinity "may be considered open to criticism." But he is "prepared with abundant proof," which however he prudently withholds, that "the tendency of modern Atheism is directly immoral, and that audacity of opinion not infrequently leads to atrocity of conduct." Further on he advises Christians to be charitable to "infidels." But this is only a passing

weakness, for he soon after asserts that modern science says Amen to David's statement that "the fool hath said in his heart, there is no god." You cannot expect a priest to be civil for long. All who differ from him are rogues or fools.

By cutting two sentences from a book we feel certain he has never read, Canon Wilberforce seeks to prejudice Atheism in the public mind. Suppose we cited two of the most questionable passages in the Bible, without any reference to the rest of the book; what a pretty thing Scripture would appear! The *Elements of Social Science* was written by a man whose purpose was at least as good as Mr. Stead's. Whoever takes the trouble to read it through may, of course, differ from the author, but no one can doubt his earnestness for human welfare. At any rate, they are not entitled to cast stones at him who palm off as the word of God, and put in the hands of little children, a book which contains some of the beastliest stories and most disgusting expressions that ever polluted paper. Besides, the *Elements of Social Science* is not adopted by any Freethought society; it merely takes its chance with other literature on social questions. Mr. Bradlaugh has recommended it, as Canon Wilberforce remarks, and he might do so without endorsing all its theories. But Atheism is not as Christianity. Mr. Bradlaugh is our President, not our Pope, and he is as much bound by our rules as the obscurest member. He may recommend books, but he cannot compile an Index; and it is only just to say that he has never attempted to make the Freethought party responsible for his economical or social views.

But how is it, if the book is so vile, and so patronised by "the most prominent and aggressive unbeliever of the day," that Mr. Bradlaugh's "audacity" of opinion does not lead to "atrocious" of conduct? For years the bigots have raked up every thing they could against him, and eked out research with invention. They have done their dirty worst, and what does it all amount to? Why, the solid nett result, to use a phrase of Beatrice, is as much as you might put on the point of a knife and choke a daw withal. Whatever Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions may be, however false and atrocious, his life has been pretty sound. Can as much be said of all who have opposed him? Nay, can it be said of all the priests of the religion of charity who have traduced him? We have seen some of these men brawlers, some thieves, some forgers, some adulterers, and some guilty of unspeakable crimes. Yet they were all nourished on the pure milk of faith, they lived by expounding the "blessed book," and assuredly they were not perverted by any "audacity of opinion." The fact is religion neither guarantees nor assists morality. What Shelley said of Italy is true everywhere: "Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check." It is, as he said, "not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue."*

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded).

PROTESTANT PERSECUTION.

DR. RULE, the Wesleyan historian of the Inquisition, declares that hideous tribunal to have been peculiarly the offspring of the Church of Rome. The inference often drawn by modern Protestants that that Church alone has persecuted is one which, as the most recent number of the *Crimes of Christianity* amply shows, is unwarranted by the facts of history. In Germany, at the time of the Diet of Spire, when the name of Protestant was first assumed, the Lutheran princes absolutely prohibited the celebration of mass within their dominions. To this they were incited by the great reformer Luther. Roscoe, in his admirable *Life of Leo X.*, remarks that Luther set up his own faith with equal resolution to that with which he had braved the authority of the Romish Church, "but with this difference, that in the one instance he effected his purpose by strenuously insisting on the right of private judgment in matters of faith, whilst in the other he succeeded in laying down

new doctrines, to which he expected that all those who espoused his cause should implicitly submit."*

"Whilst he was engaged in his opposition to the church of Rome, he asserted the right of private judgment in matters of faith with the confidence and courage of a martyr; but no sooner had he freed his followers from the chains of papal domination, than he forged others, in many respects equally intolerable, and it was the employment of his latter years to counteract the beneficial effects produced by his former labors."†

It is simply a fact that in many parts of Germany and Switzerland the Reformation was established by violence against the will of the majority of the people. In persecuting the Catholics, which the Protestants did in every country in which they obtained power, it may be alleged that they were only retaliating for injuries received, or protecting themselves against a power professing intolerance. For hunting and burning to death Arians and Anabaptists, as the early Protestants invariably did, there is no such excuse. In persecuting these heretics the Protestants acted like a bully, who, having been struck by one bigger than himself, proceeds in turn to kick and cuff those who are smaller.

All the reformers believed it was the duty of the magistrates to punish heresy with the sword, and they stigmatised as heretics not only those who had other opinions of the Bible, but those who drew different conclusions as to its teaching from their own. The pious Anabaptists were slaughtered in thousands, and hundreds were tortured and put to death on charges of heresy for dissenting from infant baptism.

Pious John Calvin, rejoicing in the damnation of nine-tenths of the human race, instituted a veritable Inquisition at Geneva, which not only prescribed men's opinions, but regulated their amusements and the pattern of their clothes. "In this politico-religious code," says a contemporary author, "we find one word everywhere present, Death. Death for every criminal guilty of treason against the Deity or of treason against human institutions; death to the son who strikes or curses his father; death to the adulterer; death to the heretic. And after the word death follows everywhere with a ferocious irony the name of God." Calvin sent flying from Geneva all who presumed to express any doubts of his theology, and pursued to the death the poet James Gruet, who ventured to call him a pope, and the learned physician Servetus, who questioned his irrational doctrines.

In England the Star Chamber and High Commission Court proved a very good imitation of the Inquisition. Henry VIII. persecuted alike the Papists who did not go far enough, and the Protestants who went too far. Far more Catholics were imprisoned and burnt in the reign of Elizabeth than Protestants by Sanguinary Queen Mary. Anti-trinitarians and Arians, as on the continent, were burnt alive. Presbyterians, Quakers and Freethinkers, through a long series of years, were imprisoned, branded, scourged and exposed in the pillory. Irish Catholics and Scottish Covenanters were alike pursued to mountains and morasses with fire and sword. Presbyterian was as fierce as Anglican. Knox writing against the Catholics declared:

"None provoking the people to idolatry ought to be exempted from the punishment of death. The whole tribes did indeed execute that sharp judgment against the tribe of Benjamin for a less offence than idolatry. And the same ought to be done wheresoever Christ Jesus and his Evangel is received."‡

Calvin, Beza and Jurieu, all wrote books on the lawfulness of persecution. The murder of Servetus was almost unanimously applauded by all sections of Protestants. The treatise of Beza, in which he declares that Castellio and Socinus, both Rationalists, were the only men who opposed the execution of Servetus, was translated into Low Dutch by the president of the Synod of Dort, and animated the Calvinists of Holland to the fiercest persecution of the Arminiâns. The Protestant dogma of salvation by faith and the damnation of the non-elect proved as powerful incentives to persecution as the sacerdotalism of Rome. Lecky says:

"Persecution among the early Protestants was a distinct and definite doctrine, digested with elaborate treatises, indissolubly connected with a large proportion of the received theology, developed by the most enlightened and far-seeing theologians, and enforced against the most inoffensive as against the most

* Preface to *The Cenci*.

* Chapter xxix., p. 236, Vol. II.; 1883. † P. 238.
‡ Knox's Works, Laing's ed., Vol. IV. p. 500.

formidable sects. It was the doctrine of the palmiest days of Protestantism."

Lecy considers that Protestant persecutions, although defended quite as pertinaciously by the clergy, were never so sanguinary as those of the Catholics. A sufficient reason is that the Renaissance, which gave birth to Protestantism, also gave birth to Freethought, and revived the principles of toleration which existed among the Pagans before the world was cursed with the Christian creed. Protestant persecutions were sanguinary enough both in England, Ireland and Holland, where the torture of poor Nanning Koppezoan, as detailed in the *Crimes of Christianity*, p. 270, will vie with the worst atrocities of the Inquisition.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

CONVOCAION is supposed to represent the voice of the Church, but if any one wishes to know the real wants and wishes of the Church on the subject of Church Reform and listens to Convocation he will be considerably puzzled. The Lower House of Canterbury, the Lower House of York and the House of Laymen have all come to different and discordant conclusions in regard to the measures of reform proposed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. There is but one thing upon which all the clericals are agreed. They want to retain all their national emoluments, but with greater freedom from State control.

THERE was a regular squabble between the Upper and Lower Houses of Convocation of York, the former passing a resolution declaring that the latter had been guilty of insubordination for not considering at once certain proposals that were sent down to it. The *Church Times* is very wroth with Archbishop Thomson, who it declares is showing "increasing testiness."

THE real secret of the opposition of the *Church Times* to the Archbishop lies in his plain statement that disestablishment would mean disruption. His Grace's words are sufficiently notable to preserve. In his opening address he said: "The President of one of the largest and most active of our Church societies has recently declared that if the Church is disestablished, it will be the duty of those who think with him to endeavor to establish relations with the Church of Rome. The avowal is manly and doubtless quite sincere, but it shows how much more disestablishment will mean than some of us could have hoped. It means disruption."

LORD HALIFAX, who is supposed to have been alluded to, denies that any words of his bear the construction the Archbishop put upon them. Be this as it may, there is plenty of evidence that disestablishment would mean disruption. Only the other day, at a meeting of the English Church Union, Canon Furse boasted of having said to his Archbishop: "If your Grace uses your influence to aid and abet the majority of the House of Commons in infringing our liberties, all I can say is that we leave you in your lordly establishment, and we will simply walk out of it; but that you will not belong to the Catholic Church and we shall." Those who would walk out into the Catholic Church if their liberties were infringed would certainly do so if their salaries were docked.

It is amusing to see the English Church Union complaining that Church affairs are managed by "aliens." One of the speakers declared: "Under the irregular conditions existing at the present moment, the temporal head of the Church might be a Presbyterian; the Prime Minister, the nominator to the bishoprics, might be a Rationalist or a Unitarian; the Lord Chancellor, the dispenser of Church preferment, might be a Jew; and half the Cabinet might be members of the Liberation Society, and so might be half the House of Commons." No doubt the State will give the English Church Union all the freedom it seeks immediately they relinquish all claim on the national endowments.

THE Rev. James Bain, minister of Duthil, Inverness, had the Clerk of Sessions and some others up for disturbing him at night. The evidence showed a strong animus on the sky-pilot's part against the defendants, and the jury, without retiring, unanimously acquitted them.

JAMES DINSDALE, an exceedingly pious tradesman of Bishop Auckland, and a Primitive Methodist local preacher on the circuit plan, has been sent for trial for extensive frauds. Several of his letters to a female accomplice have been published, in which pious expressions concerning the grace of God and the love of Jesus were mixed with matter "unfit for publication."

UNDER the heading "Awful fate of a blasphemer," the *Star of Gwent* gives a stiff yarn which it says a Mr. Jones of Tredegar has heard from a brother in Utica, New York State. The story relates that a certain medicine pedlar proposed in an hotel that they should have an imitation of the Lord's supper. The company knelt down, and, with beer in one hand and bread in the other, Motter began distributing a bit and sup to each.

When he was half way through, a strange noise was heard, and, looking up, the men saw "an immense ill-formed and foul beast, with pointed horns and eyes that flashed fire." With wild yells the men rushed to their homes and Motter became a raving maniac, dying in the wildest groans and agony, declaring that he had seen the evil one, and that he was lost. Why the evil one should have interfered with the blasphemy instead of allowing it to proceed is not clear. Our Welsh friends must have great faith in the brother of Mr. Jones if they credit this American story.

THERE is a paper published at Bristol bearing the appropriate name of *The Magpie*, and full of the smallest talk we ever had the misfortune to come across. It is evidently conducted by a pious Tory, for it wonders why "this without-a-mind Government" can permit "the publication of a filthy (*sic*) scandalous print called the *Freethinker*." *The Magpie* apparently forgets (but that is nothing wonderful in such a shallow-pated bird) that a desperate effort was made to suppress the *Freethinker* three years ago without the least success; and we may inform it that a recent attempt on the part of the Glasgow City Council has egregiously failed. Feather-headed Christians are always yearning to suppress Freethought, but when they try their hands at the task they find it a great deal beyond their power. As to the filth in the *Freethinker*, it is, of course, easy to find if the reader carries it in his eye. We can quite understand how people who lift their eyes from the dirty parts of the Bible see everything else speckled with filth.

PARSON PLAFORD, the chaplain of Holloway Gaol, has been treating his very mixed congregation to some fresh truths, whether derived from revelation or not we are unable to say, as the Bible is a big book, and we have no time at present to read it through again. In a recent sermon the reverend gentleman told his hearers that God had permitted them to commit robberies that they might go to gaol and hear the Gospel preached. How about those who are not caught? In their cases it would seem that the Lord has over-reached himself. And how about the people who are robbed? Is it fair for the Lord to levy a hard tax on them to provide Parson Plaford with a congregation? Perhaps the chaplain of Holloway Gaol will explain these matters in his next sermon.

At the London Diocesan Conference, the Bishop of London acknowledged that the sale of advowsons is wrong and that it must be stopped. He said that private patronage of the livings in the market provided the very worst kind of incumbents, but the Church as "*particeps criminis*," or sharer in the crime, should compensate the patrons. A resolution was then agreed to in favor of abolishing "next presentations." Death-bed repentances are not particularly edifying spectacles.

ANOTHER subject brought forward was how the Church, the "*particeps criminis*," was to evangelise the masses—with its own corrupt and venal piety, we may suppose. The Church Army is to rival the Salvation Army, and working men are to go among the poor and preach to them as "mates and pals," instead of calling them "dearly beloved brethren." Hadn't the parsons better start catching birds by putting a little salt on their tails?

ARCHDEACON FARRAR wants to reach the poor who don't attend church and chapel by a "brotherhood of Evangelists," who are to live singly, or two by two, as monks of the slums, in poor rooms in poor streets, in the midst of the poor, whom they will thus interest in religion. Does the Archdeacon himself volunteer? Will any of the bishops of Christ come forward to imitate their master and live among the poor as one of them? Catch them at it. They all know a trick worth two of that. They live snug and warm in their luxurious palaces, and hire, with other people's money, the cheap labor needed for patronising the poor with tracts and pious advice.

ONE of the choruses of the oratorio "Naaman" is known as "The Policeman's Chorus" owing to the fact that the words "Haste to Samaria, let us go," sound, when sung, very much like "Haste to some area let us go."

IN the Peshawur Cemetery, in India, is the following epitaph: "Sacred to the memory of the Rev.—, missionary, aged—, murdered by his chowkidar. 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'"

A NEW association which deserves attention has been started at Edinburgh, and their remarkably candid prospectus was published in the *Weekly Scotsman* on Feb. 20. It is entitled an "Association for Aiding Presbyteries in the Inspection of Religious Instruction." The promoters are impressed with the efficient inspection of schools and the benefits arising from the system of payment by results, while as to the clergy "no means exist of testing their work or even for ascertaining that it is performed." They say: "There seems to be no good reason why, in the case at least of the Established Church, which is endowed by the State, the system of payment by results should not be introduced at once. If the stipends of ministers were made to depend on the numbers of souls saved every year . . . it can hardly be

doubted that they would apply themselves to their work with much greater energy and persistence." In other words, "the crown that fadeth not away" has lost its attractiveness to the priests; in their hearts yellow-boys impressed with Cæsar's image reign supreme. What a sweeping charge to make against the Knights of the Choker and Bands! And yet this godly association ought to be good judges.

THIS association will collect subscriptions and appoint as inspectors a number of superannuated schoolmasters, who will, without notice, visit the churches in their districts, make a special return of the numbers of persons of both sexes that sleep in church, of the numbers of half-day hearers and of proved backsliders in each parish. They "will make it their business to ascertain what ministers are doing their duty and what ministers are failing to stem the *Socialistic and infidel quackeries of modern times*. They will be authorised and enjoined to examine the members of congregations, both orally and in writing, as to their knowledge of the scriptures and their growth in grace." It requires a strong imagination indeed to picture full-grown men and women being catechised like children in this last quarter of the nineteenth century. Such an imagination might be able to conjure up "the *Socialistic and infidel quackeries of modern times*," if by that is meant the principles and practice of godless Secularism, for there assuredly there is nothing approaching *quackery*. Secularism offers no nostrum like the blood of Christ to either cure all the ills of life or compensate the sufferer beyond the grave.

THE operations of the association will first be extended to the out-of-the-way parishes of Paisley and Pittenweem, conspicuous only for their bigotry in the cause of the Covenant in the reign of the Charles's. They expect subscriptions to flow in rapidly. We hope they will. Even in priest-ridden Scotland the people will not long stand such impudence. The more vigorously this association can push its ideas the more violently will they be resisted and the more will the interests of unfettered thought be advanced.

AT the Butcher's Annual Breakfast last week at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Mr. Spurgeon told the men that he wanted them to help on matters of temperance and purity. There was a dreadful stench going up from this city to the nostrils of the Almighty. He advised them to keep their bodies pure and clean. Even if they did not serve the Lord he advised them not to lend themselves to the common filthiness which polluted the great mass of the manhood of this city. Only fancy butchers "serving the Lord." There would be a "dreadful stench" if they did. It would be a good plan to get rid of putrid meat. Regarding the treatment of dumb animals, Spurgeon said he supposed the butchers were a roughish lot, but he hoped they would be as kind as possible. If the Lamb of God ever got into a butcher's shop it would stand a very poor chance. But we can assure Spurgeon that the men whom he addressed on this occasion are far more merciful, even to dumb animals, than were the Holy Butchers of the Inquisition.

THE Augustine Congregational Church, Friar Street, Rea ding is advertised for sale. Although the population of that town has been greatly increasing, the church accommodation is largely in excess of the demand.

THE *Malthusian* for March reports that the Rev. Mr. Dinnis, of St. Peter's, East London, said that "when he had to marry very young people, he, with the consent of his bishop, purposely omitted the words 'be fruitful and multiply' from the service." The rev. gentleman may satisfy his conscience by the omission of the clause, and thus, with the consent of his bishop, putting secular welfare before the ordinances of the Church, but it is doubtful if "very young people" about to be married even notice the omission. The Rev. Mr. Dinnis should obtain his bishop's consent to read some extracts from Malthus instead of the Psalm which says, "Thy wife shall be as the fruitful vine, thy children as the olive branches."

AT the Roman Catholic Pro-Cathedral, Kensington, they are still holding requiem masses for the repose of the soul of Cardinal Wiseman, who went to purgatory over a dozen years ago. Query—If it takes all this time to pray out the soul of a cardinal, how long will it take for an ordinary mortal? Of course the explanation is that the masses must be repeated because some one has left money for that purpose; but what chance will the poor devils have for whom no money for masses has been left?

A CROWDED indignation meeting has been held at Robert Town, Liversedge, to protest against the conduct of the Rev. J. W. Nixon in refusing to allow the interment of a Nonconformist in his churchyard unless he himself conducted the burial service.

A NUMBER of writers in the *Nonconformist and Independent* are challenging the reviewer of that journal for having remarked that Dr. Matheson, in writing against Evolution, is twenty years behind his age. One of the writers quotes Dr. Martineau to the effect that "this new book of Genesis [Evolution] as i

removes the tragedy of the Fall, cancels at once the need and scheme of Redemption."

THE Rev. J. M. Wilson, of Clifton College, Bristol, calls the doctrine of evolution "the grim, ghoulis, gibbering phantom of unbelieving savants." What would he think of the retort that his deity is the grim, ghoulis, gibbering phantom of credulous fools?

THERE has been a conference of ministers at Mildmay Park Hall on the long-delayed "Coming of the Lord." As Jesus ought to have put in an appearance during the lifetime of his apostles, some gospel-grinders think it about time to inquire whether he really meant coming at all. Most of the speakers were of opinion that Jesus intends yet to put in a personal, not a spiritual, appearance, and to inaugurate the Millenium, but they are somewhat shaky as to the date when the little event is to happen. Canon Sherard expressed a conviction that the time is near at hand. The *Record* informs us that at the close of his address "there was an audible stir, almost a sigh, through the room, as though men held their breath to listen." Possibly some of them expected Jesus to come with a shout into Mildmay Hall, not knowing the scriptures, how "Our Own Correspondent" has got him safe in his diggings at the West-end.

IN the hearing of a divorce suit recently, Dr. Thomas Hartness, in practice at Derby, before being sworn said that he would only kiss the New Testament under protest. Two prostitutes had already kissed it, and there was every risk of contagion; and he had written an article on the subject which had appeared in the *Lancet*.

AN ex-Baptist minister drowned himself near Indianapolis the other day. Even a Baptist may get too much water sometimes, it appears.

THE Bishop of Lichfield, in his pastoral letter the other day, tells his clergy that "they must cease to look upon all Nonconformists as enemies." We hope we do not strain his lordship's meaning when we understand this to imply that it has till now been the habit of the clergy to regard Nonconformists as enemies. It might be wise to wait and see whether the episcopal injunction produces any effect before any special gratitude for this benevolence is manifested.

THE handsome Congregational Church at Stone, Staffordshire, has been burnt down. God has stupidly frozen all the pumps, and when the fire-engine came he froze that too. In less than two hours the building was gutted. Why don't God look after his own houses?

GOD has also been busy freezing or burying in snow enormous numbers of sheep. Some 8,000 or 10,000 of these harmless animals have been thus lost on the Welsh hills this winter. If God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, as modern Christians assure us, why don't he look after the perishing flocks? The modern bit of pious sentiment about the shorn lamb is quite in opposition to Bible teaching, for St. Paul asks, "Doth God care for oxen?" (1 Cor. ix., 9).

REV. DR. DURYEA is in favor of Sunday newspapers. He says: "If people won't go to church they must do something, and a good newspaper is better than a bad book." Still, if the fishing is good, a man can worry through the day very nicely without either book or newspaper. We don't suppose the reverend gentleman ever thought of that.

KISSING GAMES AT SUNDAY-SCHOOL ENTERTAINMENTS.—The *Christian Million* in its editorial columns has the following:—"Side by side with the astonishing development of prudential literature there has grown up in Sunday-Schools and temperance societies with a close membership an equally astonishing development of kissing games. The old-fashioned outdoor kiss-in-the-ring of school treats, and the equally harmless forfeits played (and paid) beneath the mistletoe have given place to a set of kissing games in which teachers and senior scholars indulge for hours together, and which form the great attraction of many gatherings. . . . It was our painful duty to visit a London Sabbath-school entertainment where these things were being carried on from six in the evening till midnight. We protested verbally, and also by leaving an entertainment where we felt the presence of God was not being recognised. It began with a can-can, in which, to an idiotic song and tune, first the upper and then the lower members of the body were raised and swung about. After this an hour was spent in 'kissing and hissing.' Then came the great treat called 'the Army.' Marching round in pairs these Sunday-school teachers went through a drill in which 'Present arms' and 'Fire a volley' meant embracing and kissing between the sexes. When we state that the male 'teachers' knelt down before their partners to embrace them, and that six 'volleys' were ordered at once, or that kissing in that posture was ordered to continue until the word 'Halt' from the fugleman, the reason of our departure and strong indignant protest will be evident."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, March 14, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C.; at 11.15, "Social Utopias;" at 7, "The Eye of Faith."

MARCH 21, Leeds; 28, Milton Hall; 29, Battersea.

APRIL 8, United Radical Club, Hackney; 4, Wigan; 11, Nottingham; 18, Milton Hall; 25, Liverpool; 28, Conference of Association for Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

MAY 2, Manchester; 9, Sheffield; 16, Milton Hall; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

JUNE 6, Oldham; 13, N. S. S. Conference.

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.

J. HELM (Ontario).—Always and especially glad to hear from any of our American readers. Thanks for the cutting. Will you favor us with more when you have an opportunity?

J. BROTHERTON.—Many thanks.

H. G. M.—By all means call at our office when you come to London. We shall be glad to see you. That is a good story of the sky-pilot.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are once more warned that their letters go into the waste-basket unanswered. We cannot trouble about people who have neither a name nor an address.

E. CHAMBERLAIN.—The poem is a good one, but we hope you don't claim it as your own. It was written by Thomas Paine.

R. A. DEITH.—In our opinion vaccination is a medical superstition, and compulsory vaccination a legal iniquity. We intend to write on the subject some day.

F. G. WILLAT.—Of course if there was no first cause there could be no second or third cause. But is there a second or a third cause? You can only say so when you know there is a first. In our opinion, matter and force are eternal; at least we know nothing of a beginning, and cannot conceive of an end. Topsy was right in saying "Specs I growed." She *did* grow; and every organised thing grows too. *Making* is a term of art; there is no such thing in Nature. We pass over your feeble attempt at witticism.

C. N. KING.—Difficult to make an "Acid Drop" of. In one sense the remark is true.

J. PRITCHARD wishes there was a social club in connexion with the Liverpool Branch of the N. S. S., and thinks it would induce a good many young men to join.

J. HORROCK.—A Church of England clergyman may occupy a Dissenting pulpit, but it is illegal for a dissenter to occupy a Church of England pulpit.

GRIEVANCE.—Write to the sky-pilot forbidding him to enter your house in your absence.

A. B. C.—Your suggestion that readers of this paper should give away their copies instead of throwing them aside as waste-paper is a very good one. If discretion is used as to whom they are given, many new subscribers and adherents to our cause might be made.

S. ROSE (Reading) informs us that he has been prayed for by the Salvation Army, but as they did not give the right address the Lord went instead to a man next door whom he was unable to accommodate with wings, the man weighing over eighteen stone.

TRUTHSEEKER (Bermondsey) calls attention to the lectures on Science and the Bible, by the Rev. W. W. Howard, Wesleyan Chapel, Great Dover Street, S.E. Thanks for scraps.

ARGUS.—Many thanks for your always welcome budget.

J. D. LEGGET.—Lockyer's *Elementary Astronomy*, price 4s. 6d., or Proctor's *Flowers of the Sky*, 2s. 6d., may suit you. We are glad you appreciate last week's cartoon.

J. A.—No doubt the Revised Version is in many respects an improvement. Scholarship and textual criticism have advanced since the days of James I. But of course there are great obscurities in the Hebrew of the Old Testament, leading to conjectural translations; and the New Testament is made difficult by varying texts.

ANTI-CHRISTIAN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. C. SAVILLE.—Shall appear.

J. DE FRAINE.—Only waiting for room.

G. PAYNE (Manchester) writes: "Your article on our Hall will no doubt do good, and I am glad to say there are signs that the various efforts to stir our friends are beginning to tell."

L. SAMPSON, who was referred to in our columns recently as opposing Mr. H. A. Long at the London Hall of Science, remarks that he is not the president of the Hyde Park Branch, but the chairman of the outdoor propaganda.

A. W.—*Bible Romances* will be bound in cloth eventually with an index. *Erzygess*, Vol. V. can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street; price 5s.

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.—*Liberal*—*Bridport News*—*Charleston News and Courier*—*Republican*—*Malthusian*—*Auckland Chronicle*—*Inverness Courier*—*Pontypool Free Press*—*Thinker*—*Lucifer*—*Star of Gwent*—*South Wales Times*—*Women's Suffrage Journal*—*Magpie*—*Bladud*—*Umpire*—*Liberator*—*Manchester City News*.

SUGAR PLUMS.

WE are happy to state that there is a prospect of a public debate in London between the Rev. Dr. McCann and Mr. Foote. The negotiations are still pending, but we hope to make a definite announcement next week.

THE Christian Evidence Society's second lecture at the London Hall of Science was delivered on Thursday, March 4, by the Rev. Dr. McCann. There was a large attendance. Dr. McCann had up-hill work in addressing an audience almost entirely hostile, but he acquitted himself with ability and good temper. There were many interruptions, but as the lecturer admitted, none of them were ill-humored. It would be better, however, if the audience would refrain altogether, and let the discussion commence when the lecture is over. Mr. Greg and Mr. Mortimer replied to Dr. McCann, and were heartily applauded. Mr. Greg was extremely courteous, but Mr. Mortimer's criticism was marred by a touch of superciliousness which deepened once or twice into something like insult. No doubt the discourtesy was not intentional, but arose from a want of self-command in the heat of discussion. Nothing is gained by incivilities on the platform, and they are especially uncalled for when the lecturer is so courteous and good-tempered as Dr. McCann. Mr. Foote made a ten-minutes' speech, but he remarked that a discussion in which so many shared tended to become desultory and therefore ineffective. Mr. Foote asked Dr. McCann whether it would not be better to hold a set debate on the subject. The reverend gentleman would give no promise then, but he has reconsidered the matter since as our readers have seen.

WHILE Mr. Foote was in Holloway Gaol Mr. Gerald Massey sent him a copy of his *Natural Genesis*, with a letter stating that both were doing the same work though in different ways. Since then Mr. Massey has been lecturing in Australia, New Zealand and America, and having recently returned to England he has engaged to deliver a course of ten Sunday afternoon lectures at St. George's Hall, Langham Place, London, W. The course will begin on March 28. The prices of admission are 1s., and 6d. Season tickets for reserved seats, price 10s. 6d., can be had of Messrs. Williams and Norgate, 14 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

THE little paper published at the Freethought town of Liberal, Barton Co., Missouri, has in commencing its sixth volume put on a new and improved appearance, and has followed our lead in putting out a Comic Bible Sketch illustrating God's anger with Uzzah for touching his travelling trunk.

OUR Madras contemporary the *Thinker* reprints from our pages Mr. Ball's trenchant reply to the Catholic priest Father Lambert.

THE Liverpool City Council has resolved, though with the narrow majority of one, to give free organ recitals in St. George's Hall on Sunday afternoons. The motion to that effect was proposed in an able speech by Mr. P. H. Rathbone and seconded by Alderman Samuelson. It was strenuously opposed by Sir W. B. Forwood and Mr. Whitley, M.P. Alderman Jennings read a strong letter by the Bishop of Liverpool against the proposal. Dr. Ryle took a trade view of the case, and thought the organ recitals "would seriously injure all the afternoon Sunday-schools in the city of Liverpool." That the motion was carried in face of all this opposition shows that even Tory Liverpool is making progress.

MR. RATHBONE'S speech must have been very unpleasant reading to the clergy. He thought they must have little belief in their own teaching if they fancied one hour of music would ruin the faith of Liverpool. Music was the one thing people ventured to carry forward into the next world, and "he did not think their bishop himself would dare to say, however much he might think so, that it would be an addition to the happiness of heaven that he should be called upon to say a few words to the assembled angels in the intervals of their songs." In conclusion he expressed his belief that the ministers took a professional view of Sunday, and that rather than let it pass out of their hands they would hand it over to the Devil.

In his treatise on the Anthropoid Apes (reviewed by Dr. Ave-ling in the March number of *Progress*), Professor Hartmann tells a touching story of a monkey which belonged to the Zoological Gardens at Dresden. Mafuca, as she was named, was a personage of polite manners. She would blow her nose with a handkerchief, put on her own boots, wring out her own linen, steal keys and open locks. She had a cup of tea every morning and one of cocoa every evening, and at any time would fill her own cup or tumbler without spilling a drop. Her death was quite pathetic. After some years' experience of the Dresden climate, she showed symptoms of consumption; and, if unable to realise the progress of the disease, she was quite conscious when it was drawing to a close. She would scarcely allow her friend, Dr. Schopf, who nursed her throughout her illness, to

leave her sight. When the end approached, feeling her forces ebbing, she threw her arms round his neck, kissing him repeatedly, held out her hand to grasp his, and fell back lifeless.

THE agitation against extraordinary tithes continues to grow in Kent. The farmers round Smarden have held an indignation meeting protesting against the severe sentence passed on Mr. Cooper, a farmer, for participating in the assault on the auctioneer who conducted the sale of parsons' plunder at Biddendam. A memorial was sent on to the Home Secretary. Even a local *Conservative* Association passed a resolution declaring that Parliament ought to attend to the matter.

THE *Freethinker* goes all over the world where the English language is spoken. One of our readers sends us an extract from a letter from his brother out in Queensland, to whom he sends a copy of this journal every week: "I thank you very much for the *Freethinker*. I lend it, and it is doing a great amount of eye-opening." This is good news indeed.

In taking up the subject of the "Evolution of Theology," in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*, Professor Huxley proves he is as much at home in that department of anthropology as he is in all that concerns the human structure. He is simply a better theologian than the theologians, for he understands the worth of evidence and has the key to the present position of theology from a knowledge of its growths in the past. We intend to review Professor Huxley's papers when they are finished, and in the meantime direct attention to the first instalment, which shows, mainly from the story of Saul and the witch of Endor, how similar was the belief of the Jews of the eleventh and twelfth centuries B.C. to the primitive ghost theory which is found at the root of all early theologies.

In the *Fortnightly Review* Mr. G. J. Romanes reviews "Mr. Mivart on the Rights of Reason," contending for the absolute agnosticism of science, and overthrowing Mr. Mivart's attempt to lug in a deity in order to explain instinct.

BIBLE DRAGONS.—III.

THE remarkable dragon is one of the principal performers in the book of Revelation, and is of course the Devil himself. He first appears in heaven as the "great red dragon," a very ungentlemanly monster who persists in annoying the "woman clothed with the sun" (Rev. xii.) He has "seven heads and ten horns; and seven crowns upon his heads." His tail is so extensive and powerful that it "drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." The thickly-studded milky way evidently was a part of the sky not swept by this tremendous "narrative," which was probably the biggest tail on record. But we learn that presently "there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels. . . And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him." After this the "dragon" or "serpent" "cast out of his mouth water as a flood after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood." But the inanimate globe was tender-hearted and took compassion on the poor persecuted lady crowned with ten stars and clothed with the sun. "The earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth." Baffled in his ungallant attempt to drown the lady and devour her baby, the great seven-headed dragon deposes power and authority to a beast like a leopard which rises out of the sea and copies the dragon its master in likewise having seven heads and ten horns. It differs from the dragon, however, in wearing ten crowns upon its ten horns instead of seven crowns upon its seven heads. The dragon and the beast are then straightway worshipped and glorified by all the world (Rev. xiii., 3, 4). After a while this sublime revelation depicts to us frogs jumping "out of the mouth of the dragon and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet" (Rev. xvi., 13). These are "unclean spirits," the "spirits of devils working miracles." Finally, after the beast and the false prophet have been "cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone," an angel comes down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand, and without any apparent fighting or resistance, he lays hold on the poor old dragon, and binds him fast for a thousand years. At the end of this time his fate will be cremation without ever being cremated into ashes.

As dragons are now scouted as fabulous, the Revisers endeavor to expunge them from God's word, as if we moderns knew better than the Omniscient. They tell us the original Hebrew means "howling monsters" or "sea-monsters." But what did God mean? Did he intend to speak of dragons, jackals, adders, serpents, howling creatures, great whales, sea-monsters, many-headed leviathans, water-spouts, crocodiles, fire-breathing monsters, or of something else yet to be discovered by the abler Revisers of the future? What a blunderer he must be to express himself with such uncertainty. And when will the revision of his blunders end? With a little more revision of so faulty and untrustworthy a revelation we shall find that cherubims are humming birds and angels only policemen, just as Elijah's ravens will be wandering Arabs and the "mules" of Genesis xxxvi., 24, have become "hot springs." Witches and wizards will only be poisoners or fortune-tellers. Biblical devils will be modernised into wicked men or evil thoughts. The talking serpent that tempted Eve will be an insinuating gorilla, or a cultured chimpanzee, or an anthropoid masher of some extinct species. Hell will merely be a hole or grave, and the fire will only be the slow combustion which, as a chemical fact, gradually effects the oxidation of the carbon compounds composing the softer portions of the body. The Holy Ghost will be a hale or healthy or wholesome *gust* (for the words are etymologically identical, and the Ghost himself is but "breath" in the original Greek of the gospels); and this wholesome gust or pleasant breeze will indicate the value of thorough ventilation, while baptism will only show the corresponding necessity of cleanliness. By degrees the superstition of the Bible would thus be revised into scientific teaching if only the game lasted long enough. But people will give up the discredited Bible long before this, and when there is neither money nor fame to be gained, the bungling Revelation from heaven will be treated just as any other ancient book. Its flagrant errors will be acknowledged and its immoralities will be condemned, and will no longer be made a means of enslaving men's minds and robbing us of cash and liberty.

W. P. BALL.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

LONDON, MARCH 8, 1886.

I AM glad to inform you of having succeeded in getting Jesus away from Paris, as the life there was demoralising him, for he still considers the daughters of men are fair; so under promise of keeping up the *incognito*, he at last tore himself away from the gay and festive capital, consenting to take up his quarters at my diggings. The chief reason for his decision was his having heard the interviewers were on his track. My excuse for not presenting Jesus at your office yet is that he is so afraid of the Joe Parkers and Booths will pounce on him. We therefore arrived late on Saturday in London, and he begged me to save him as much as possible from England's terrible Sunday—that fearful day of gloom.

He seems a very sociable fellow, and nursed the youngest child of "Your Own Correspondent," to the entire satisfaction of Mrs. Own Correspondent, using such cabalistic phrases as "Ketcher, Ketcher," etc., *à la Tilly Slowboy*.

After a hand at cards, conversation naturally took place:

"How's John the Presbyter getting on?"

"Oh!" answered Jesus, "poor chap, he's in the heavenly Bedlam. That lady clothed with the stars was too tall for him. He spends his time mostly in playing "hop skotch" and marbles with the juvenile cherubims; and as for poor Ezekiel—well! his costume consists mostly of a straight waistcoat."

"How about the chap that went up in a fiery chariot?"

"His case," said Jesus, "was a sad one. He's in the museum as an incinerated mummy, and Jahveh has utilised his omnibus by running it as a twopenny tramcar. Judas Iscariot applied for the place of conductor, but 'was declined with thanks.' He would be sure to manipulate the ticket-puncher."

It was very amusing to see Jesus, after he had retired to his room, attending to his pedal extremities, not having been used to our modern boots. He borrowed a razor and commenced trimming his corns.

"Ah!" said Jesus, "I once attended to some one else's corn on the Sabbath. Now I have to attend to my own, thanks to these infernal boots."

On Monday I took him to the Globe; he was highly amused with the *Private Secretary*; but Tuesday at Old Drury delighted him most. The clown's tricks he watched with high glee, and especially his stage walk. I found him privately trying to do the outside edge, bowing his legs, and really imitating Payne very well—so well, in fact, that, should he take to the stage, he

would make a better clown than tragic actor. I was in doubt what to get for his sustenance, having read he had a penchant for broiled fish and honeycomb. When that fare was mentioned to him he grasped his throat in agony and asked if I thought him mad.

"No!" said Jesus. "Let us have pork—pork, with sage and onions, not forgetting the apple-sauce—if it suits your family, that's about my fighting weight."

He's rather jocular, and his language at present rather slangy. He knows it, poor fellow, and attributes it to all the intellectual fry going to Hades. The highest intellect in heaven is about on a par with Dr. Kinns.

My means are, as you know, too limited to engage a "buttons," so Jesus kindly volunteered to black his own boots. He seems terribly annoyed at being woke up of a night by slight love passages between the neighbors' cats, and has expended nearly all the portable effects in his room as missiles to pelt the pussies—it's rather ludicrous to see Jesus in scanty attire, window open, and boot in hand, taking steady aim.

The cold seems to affect him severely. Even in bed I noticed his knees were drawn up to his chin. He says this continued cold is because those larrikins up above have been fooling with the switch-board and touched the wrong lever. He won't wear a nightcap, and Mrs. Own Correspondent tells me he must have his hair cut, or the washing-bill will spell "ruin" in the matter of pillow slips. I notice also there is still a little of the Jew about him, as he has had an altercation with the laundryman concerning his shirts; it finished, I think, by his spinning the proverbial coin and asking the man to speculate double or quits on the obverse or reverse.

Jesus has read your *Crimes of Christianity*, and the description of the Inquisition so horrified him that he has serious intentions of renouncing the "old geysir," as he calls his father, and becoming a member of the National Secular Society. The only question that prevents him giving a definite answer is what his mother will do up above without him. He thinks if he could persuade her to come down here, the old lady and himself could arrange a lecturing tour in the provinces. I think it possible to get him a respectable situation for the present as waiter, and, after showing him how to get his own living, might induce him to contribute an article or two to the *Freethinker*.

THE STARVATION AND TEMPTATION OF CHRIST.

ALL good Christians are now commemorating the starvation and temptation of our blessed Savior by putting themselves on half-rations and doing a little extra praying. But there are such a few individuals coming under that category that other folks—especially the unemployed—receive no benefit from the keeping of Lent. If the majority of the British people were true Christians, what an enormous amount of spare food there would be for those who are, much against their will, compelled to closely imitate Christ's starvation performance.

The reason for this half-hearted keeping of Lent is because people begin to doubt if Christ ever fasted at all; they therefore put themselves to very little discomfort. They are unconsciously becoming sceptical, and know as well as we do that it is impossible for a man to exist for forty days and forty nights without food, or they must have known that if this man was really God, who is supposed to be omnipotent, it was not a very wonderful performance, because it would make no difference to him if he fasted until doomsday.

It is supposed by some persons that Moses fasted forty days and forty nights when he was with the Lord writing the Ten Commandments, but the Bible only says that during that time "he did neither eat bread nor drink water." The artful beggar may have turned his nose up at such paltry diet as "bread and water," and gone in for something more dainty. If Moses really went without food all that time he must have been a living skeleton when he came amongst the people again; and we suppose Christ cut a similar figure after a similar performance.

It says in St. Matthew's gospel that Jesus after starving himself for nearly six weeks, was hungry. Well that is surprising, but what is still more surprising is that the Devil was able to recognise him after that severe strain on his constitution. But such was the case. And when the Devil found out who he was, he desired to test his qualification for being a member of the Holy Trinity. Seeing that Jesus looked rather thin and hungry, he said to him, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." But Jesus couldn't see the joke of this; he thought he ought to have something better than bread after waiting all this while, and therefore refused to comply with the Devil's humble request, remarking that "man shall not live by bread alone." Yet there are plenty of poor wretches who get very little else. Perhaps the Devil was only the foreman of a stoneyard, and wanted him to turn the stones into bread by breaking them. It was merely a figure of speech.

Seeing that Christ was a little above that sort of work, the Devil took him up "into an exceeding high mountain." Jesus was very thin, as before stated, so it was easy work to give him a "flying angel" to the top. Then the Devil "showed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." That was a wonderful performance—it licked Christ's starving trick into fits. He showed him both sides of the globe at

once. But why did he want to take him up into a high mountain for that purpose? He could have shown Christ "all the kingdoms of the world" almost as well if he had put him in a sand-pit—or in a railway-tunnel if there had been one—in fact he might have made one for the occasion.

And when the Devil had shown Jesus all the kingdoms, he offered him the whole lot if he would fall down and worship him. But Jesus couldn't see it. He knew they didn't belong to the artful old Devil, so he firmly resisted that tempting offer, and politely told him to take a back seat. Jesus is next brought by the Devil to Jerusalem and fixed on a pinnacle of the temple. Mustn't the Jews have stared to see the Devil and Christ's skeleton floating over the housetops to their destination. From these comfortable quarters Satan wanted Jesus to throw himself off just to show him that he was the Son of God, and telling him that angels will be on the look out to prevent him grazing his bones against the building—in case the Jews might bring an action for damages. But Jesus couldn't see the force of his companion's argument, and stoutly refused to obey him. Then we are told the Devil left him. What a shame to leave poor Jesus in such a predicament—stuck on a pinnacle of the temple. We wonder how he got down. Perhaps this is only a mistake, because in Matthew's Gospel he is taken to the pinnacle of the temple before his excursion to the top of the mountain. Let us hope this latter is the correct version as it would be far easier for poor Jesus to descend from a mountain than from the top of a church spire. What a pity God, when he wrote his Bible, forgot which place the Devil took his Son to first, as good Christians are left in wonder and deep concern as to how their Savior fared. Yet we doubt whether it would have been of much consequence if God had entirely forgotten the miserable farce. People will no longer be bamboozled by such nonsense as is attached to this and other Gospel yarns. There is not one person in a thousand who really believes in the starvation and temptation of Jesus Christ, and the proof of this disbelief is demonstrated by the absence of voluntary fasting during Lent on the part of the general public. SCOFFER.

FERGUSON DEFENCE FUND.

THERE is still a considerable deficit to be met, and we trust our readers will not fail to subscribe the necessary amount. Mr. Robert Wallace, the Secretary of the Glasgow Committee informs us that auditors were appointed last Sunday to examine the accounts and prepare a balance-sheet. Mr. Ferguson's photograph is being taken and will shortly be on sale for his benefit. The price will be duly advertised.

The following additional subscriptions have been received:—M. A., £1; H. G. Martin, 5s.; J. C. S. Hanham, £1; A. Smith, 1s.

The Glasgow Committee wish us to acknowledge the following:—Per Mr. Ferguson: J. Colquhoun, 10s.; W. Robertson, 2s.; J. Crabtree, 10s.; Defensor Fidei, 2s.; O. A., 6d.; R. G., 5s. Per Mr. Nicholson, from friends in Edinburgh, 19s. 5d. H. Croughan, 1s.; W. A. Fytherleigh (Devon), 2s.

REVIEWS.

Papers for the Times. March. London: Foulger and Co.—This magazine is well printed and tastefully got up. The articles are thoughtful and suggestive. Perhaps the most interesting in the present number is a notice of the *Dial*, which Emerson edited over forty years ago.

The Church Reformer. March. London: W. Reeves.—Mr. Headlam's paper sustains its interest and continues its attack on public grievances. We do not gather, however, that Christian Socialism is particularly flourishing.

Women's Suffrage Journal. March. Trubner and Co.—The present number does not call for special notice. Miss Becker should try to make her paper more interesting. It is too much of a dry chronicle.

A SETTLER in a Welsh colony in South America sends a letter, which has been published in the *Manchester City News*. It contains one of the best missionary stories we have read for some time. One of the Indian chiefs was dying, and a Spanish priest was sent for to administer consolation. The writer was asked to interpret between them, and thus describes the conversation:—Chief: "To what sort of a country do the Christians go after death?" Priest: "Into a noble country." C.: "Is there sufficient pasture for all cattle?" P.: "There is plenty." C.: "Have they plenty of guano and of ostriches there?" P.: "Any amount." C.: "Are there lions in that place?" "Yes, millions." "Are they able to hunt and catch the lions?" "Only those who die good Christians can catch the lions." Chief (stooping down to the visitor, in a very low voice): "Have they got brandy there?" P.: "Brandy! yes, without any end." Chief (falling back on his pillow): "I die a Christian."

PROFANE JOKES.

"I CAN'T account for the small attendance at Church on Sundays," remarked Parson Jones. "Neither can I," remarked Fogg, with his customary frankness. "I went a few Sundays ago, and I couldn't see anything to attract the small attendance I saw there."

NICE young man (lecturing to a Sunday-school): "Now, is there any little boy or little girl who would like to ask any questions? Well, little boy, I see your hand; you needn't snap your fingers. What question would you like to ask?" Small Boy: "How much longer is this jawin' goin' to last?"

WHEN the christening party duly waits at the font, how needful it is to be quite sure of the sex and the name of the infant. My friend H— forgetting to ask, and assuming, I suppose, from its lusty cries that the child was a boy, proceeded with the service as written, when he was somewhat discomfited by a buxom lass with, "Please, sir, he's a she."

JONES: "I am shocked, Mr. Smith, to find that you keep your cigar shop open on Sunday." Smith: "You make a mistake, sir. I am a strict church-member, and never go near the shop on Sunday." Jones: "But it is open." Smith: "Possibly it is. You see, my partner is a Hebrew and he worships on Saturday, the Hebrew Sabbath, and never goes near the shop on that day. He naturally considers Sunday the beginning of the secular week. There is no moral objection to that, is there?" Jones: "Probably not; but the shop is open on Saturday, too." Smith: "Of course; I attend to things then."

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