

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



THE RAISING OF LAZARUS.

“And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes. . . Jesus said unto them, Loose him and let him go forth.”—JOHN xi., 44.

DAMNATION.

DAMNATION is a good mouthful. It has a fine, rolling, impressive sound. Even the feeblest preacher becomes forcible when he utters this powerful word. Many a sermon is redeemed from utter flabbiness by a judicious use of the noun which signifies more than perdition. Its verb is also one of the most vigorous expressions in the pardonable vocabulary of wrath. Hang it, deuce take it, confound it, and such ejaculations are polite and ineffectual compromises. They do very well when you are only irritated, but let a man get well angered, and he says “Damn it.” How soothed he feels after the discharge! His lungs breathe more freely, and his heart is no longer congested. He has blown off the steam and averted an explosion. “My dear,” said a gentleman to his wife, after a very annoying piece of news, “I am just going into the garden to swear.” Five minutes afterwards he returned to the drawing-room, smiling serenely, and was as gentle as a lamb the rest of the evening.

Byron long ago remarked in *Don Juan* that

“’Tis strange the Hebrew word which means ‘I am,’
The English always use to govern damn.”

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True, but this habit is not confined to the English. All over the world, apparently, men damn each other in the name of God. The religious origin of the practice is never forgotten. Yet after all, as James Thomson remarked, common folk mean very little by it except that they are in a temper. If a man says “damn you” when you suddenly remind him of his favorite corn, it does not follow that he wishes to see you frizzling in hell. But when a rigid Calvinist, or a bigoted priest, damns you, he really means it in the fullest sense of the words. He is in no rage; his heart is filled with the cold malignity of theological hatred. In the name of God he consigns you to the nether pit, and half hopes to see you there—from a distance.

In this polite age, however, when our expressions must be parliamentary, and nobody must denounce anybody or anything on penalty of being thought vulgar, there is a tendency to tone down the strong old terms. Hell is getting diluted to Hades, much to the disgust of hot-tempered people, who complain that telling a man to go to Hades sounds like inviting him to dinner. Our Revised Version carries this refining process very far. For this reason, among others, Mr. Spurgeon derides it. As a popular preacher, he knows the value of strong phrases. Even the holy elect of Shaftesbury’s costermongers found that their donkeys, when sworn at in the language of the

Revised Version, would not budge an inch. Their donkeys and Mr. Spurgeon's evidently have a good deal in common.

The last chapter of Mark is a very straightforward piece of writing in the old version. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned." That's the style! A warfaring man, though a fool, can understand it; and the bigger fool he is the better he does understand it. But when we read in the new version that "he that disbelieveth shall be *condemned*," we miss our fine old full-bodied acquaintance. Condemned! What on earth is that? It doesn't sound much. Perhaps it means "condemned in costs." But if, after all, it means the same thing as damned, hadn't we better keep the expressive original? Most people will fancy that condemned means only a lecture from the bench. If it means penal servitude for ever, without a ticket-of-leave, it is a kindness to let them know it. A rose by any other name smells as sweet. Calling the nether pit Hades instead of Hell won't make it any cooler, and condemning instead of damning us won't lessen the Devil's coal-stack.

Anathema, curse, damn, and such words are frequent in the Bible, and very plentiful in ecclesiastical history. One of the finest examples of the latter may be found on p. 139 of the *Crimes of Christianity*. Nestorius, who would not use the phrase Mother of God, was condemned at the Council of Ephesus for his contumacious heresy. Let us put his anathema into vernacular English and see how it reads:

"Damn him who does not damn Nestorius; the orthodox faith damns him. We all damn the heretic Nestorius; we damn all who communicate with him and his impious belief. All the earth damns the unholy religion of Nestorius. Damned be he who does not damn Nestorius."

What a fine flavor there is in this vigorous cursing! How characteristic of the heroic ages of faith when Christians damned each other with a noble relish! Not even a Scotch Presbytery could do anything like it now. It was worthy of Jehovah himself who was the most accomplished swearer in the world's pantheon. In the ninety-fifth Psalm he himself says "I swear in my wrath." When this happens to be the psalm for the day in the Church Service, the congregation shout in chorus after this self-admission of divine frailty, "Glory be to the Father [old Jahveh, that is] and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen." Which we take to mean, although of course we may be mistaken, that the Lord is to go on eternally swearing in his wrath, for his damnation endureth for ever.

Ruskin remarks, in *Sesame and Lilies*, that Christendom has been desolated by the mis-rendering of condemn as damn. We regret we cannot agree with him. The doctrine of salvation by faith is not only taught by St. Paul, but supported by the very text Mr. Ruskin refers to, even in its mildest translation. Whatever the Greek word means, the obvious drift of the passage is that faith (coupled with baptism) is a virtue, and unbelief a sin; and Revelation expressly tells us that unbelievers shall have their portion in the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire. It was not a disputed text, but the whole doctrine of damnation for unbelief, that kept Europe embroiled in religious wars, lit the fires of the stake, and deluged the earth with blood and tears.

G. W. FOOTE.

IMMORAL LITERATURE.

A VERY ably written and thoughtful work recently published, entitled *Scientific Meliorism*, by Jane Hume Clapperton, has some valuable suggestions in regard to the education we give our children and the desirability of its not educing, as it too often does, characteristics inimical to social welfare. Among other things, the authoress points out that no sooner has a child mastered the difficulties of spelling, than sensational story-books are put into its hands which are often calculated to rouse anti-social instincts of cruelty, hatred, revenge, treachery or cunning. Certain children's books are instanced such as *Blue Beard*, *Jack the Giant Killer*, *Jack and the Beanstalk*, and *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*. In regard to the last of these the authoress says:—

"After reading *Ali Baba*, a boy's mind is full of shifting scenes to call into play his predatory instincts, his greed, his

tendency to cunning and revenge, and to exercise his latent power of bearing thoughts of bloodshed and pain without flinching, and so tend to make him cruel. He thinks of the forty robbers and that delightful cave of theirs, filled with their plunder: he glories in the thought of Ali Baba helping himself so lavishly, and wishes he were there to do the same: and then the little scene at home when robbery is called 'good luck' and Ali Baba's wife gloats over the plunder and counts the money piece by piece! If we had seriously wished to train our boy to play an unscrupulous part in the great commercial rings, we scarcely could have hit upon a more effectual course than feeding his bright innocent imagination with such a tale as this."

With how much greater force does this reasoning apply to teaching the Bible to young children. Few parents put the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* into their children's hands without a warning that it is not all true, and the child soon learns that the misdeeds of its characters have the parent's reprobation. But in the Bible the child not only reads how Abraham was ready to slay his son, but he hears him praised for his faith in consequence. He reads how Jacob prospered by cheating his brother and his uncle, and few parents are bold enough to describe the patriarch's conduct in the proper terms. He or she reads how Moses slew an Egyptian and buried him in the sand, and how the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and then plagued the Egyptian people because their ruler would not let the Israelites go. They read the Lord's direction to spoil the Egyptians and to exterminate the various nations of Canaan and possess their land. They read how Ebud treacherously stabbed king Eglon and was made a judge over Israel; and how Jael drives a nail into the temples of Sisera, and is extolled as blessed over other women; how David takes another man's wife, and has her husband set in the forefront of the battle, and how this man after God's own heart puts his enemies to death, cutting some with saws and axes, and putting others into the brick-kiln. Can such semi-savage stories as these have other than a pernicious influence on the infantile mind? They are all the outcome of a barbarous period of history, and the only lesson the child can gather from them is that God chooses liars, cheats and assassins for his favorites. His parents may tell him that Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead for lying, but he will also read that the Lord sent lying spirits; and the examples of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will seem more natural than that of the primitive Christians who died so suspiciously in the presence of Peter.

This is not all. No parent would think of putting in their children's hands a complete copy of the *Arabian Nights* like that brought out for the use of students by Captain Burton. Yet the very people who hold up their hands in horror at such a book, and who will prohibit their daughters reading Shakespeare, will place in their hands as the word of God, and as their guide and counsellor in life, a book which contains some of the filthiest stories and grossest obscenities ever penned. The girl who may not read of Imogen, or Desdemona, may gloat over the stories of Onan, of Judith and Tamar, of Lot and his daughters, of Amnon and Tamar, and of Absalom and his father's concubines, or may revel in the luscious descriptions of the erotic Song of Solomon, or read how the Lord commanded Hosea to commit adultery. What can be expected but that she is prepared to fall a prey to the first sanctimonious scoundrel who, of course, combines religiosity with his sensuality.

Some parents fondly delude themselves into the belief that their children only read the chapters and verses selected for them. Those who know children well, know that this is a great mistake, and that the indecent passages of the Bible are pointed out in school, church and elsewhere, by one to another until they are usually more familiar to the children than the Sermon on the Mount.

But, it is said, children ought to be acquainted with the Bible, if only on the ground of its great influence upon the beliefs of the world. Let it be taught then in its true relation not as the infallible word of God, but as a collection of books, reflecting the belief of less cultured times, and forming but one of several collections of so-called sacred documents. Let only what is worthy in it be retained, and let the rest, and by far the larger part, be drastically expunged.

J. M. WHEELER.

PROFESSOR FLOWER'S idea that the whale was once a four-footed animal is not an absurd one, strange as it may seem. Animals that live to be a thousand years old and take in boarders like Jonah, have something more than a low down fishy history.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

JESUS IN LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

MARCH 18, 1886.

JESUS is sadly depressed. Acting on my advice, he visited the Archbishop of Canterbury to start his mission at the fountain-head, explained who he was, and wanted to make the necessary arrangements for the accomplishment of the millenium. The result was not favorable. The Yard Dog has appropriated part of J. C.'s pants from the rear, also a black eye has been fitted on the front of J. C., his massive brow coming in contact with the closed digits of the gardener—in fact, Christ was thrown out as an impostor, and threatened with the police, the Archbishop saying his residence was not the place for him, but kindly telling him the time of the next train for Colney Hatch, and offering him the single fare. Until Christ's eye is better, he will stay indoors, but has kindly consented to "sling ink," as he calls it; so herewith I enclose his first contribution to the *Freethinker*:

CHRIST ON HIS MIRACLES.

Since I have arrived in London, I have noticed the more or less futile attempts to explain my miracles. As I was the principal actor in those scenes which occurred 1800 years ago, perhaps you will allow this paper to appear in order to thoroughly refute the false science of Dr. Kinns, and expose the lame manner in which my apparent miracles are explained by such poor tools as the Parkers, Talmages, etc., who forget that the Gospel-mongers wrote long after the performance of my trick act of levitation. I can see now, it would have been better to have speculated in a patent metallic pocket-book, so that notes could have been made at the time, and not to have allowed those four old fossils to write down from hearsay and so bring doubts on my veracity.

The first miracle I shall touch on is the Gadarean swine and the devils coming from the two men. Of course the two men were accomplices and had provided themselves with a powerful aroma of sage and onions. Now every Christian scientist knows the fierce animosity and terrible dread the porcine race has to the barest hint of sage and onions. This was of course known to me. Directly the porkers inhaled the pungent essence, their fears closed the portals of their senses and they sought to secure safety in flight. Blinded by the horrid thoughts this gruesome smell conjured up—the vision of crackling—the human sarcophagus in the near future—they stampeded, took the wrong turning, rushed into the sea and immolated themselves on the altar of wrong conceptions. Naturally, I had a very urgent appointment some distance off, for there was no knowing how soon the respected owner of the curly-tailed ones might turn up. Why did I perform this seeming miracle with other people's property? For excellent reasons—firstly, to increase the market quotation of pork and thereby favor the breeders; secondly, it being a time of great depression in trade I thought of this way to give work to two of the unemployed and a chance for their families to secure some of the lamented piggies before the owner appeared.

The miracle that seems to give most offence is the turning the water into wine after the guests at the Cana marriage-feast had lowered a considerable cargo, and concealed it well and surely about their persons. It is universally known to Christian chemists that a small quantity of bi-chromate of "Logwoodicum" and essence of *Saccharum officinarum* will convert large quantities of water into wine, with the grand alternative that if the partaker survives twenty minutes after the potation, he may consider his after life free from any desire to backslide with respect to the wine-cup. You will now see my motive was the curing of this wine-bibbing crew, and it did cure them. Blue ribbon was in every button-hole the next morning. Wine was abjured, and rum with milk was the almost universal beverage in Cana after this episode, at least as soon as the clergy of the West introduced it.

Great scoffing takes place when the feeding of the five thousand with the very small modicum of fish and bread is mentioned. You must always remember the attention of a large audience must be attracted to some side-play, else individual members learn too much. Well, the small dose of fish and bread to start the miracle on was stock in trade. Surely mankind has seen aerated bread-shops taking in the gas that is mixed with the bread to produce aeration. I had prepared a large reservoir of this same gas, and, in pretending to apply food to the poor people's mouths, made them inhale this same life-assisting gas, so that all got inflated with this pure gas, their lungs were built up, and I prevented them being subject to the hundred and one phthisical complaints so rife with poor underfed people. My motive was philanthropic. For days after all sorts and conditions of men, etc., were met, with the most rotund figures, looking happy, with their skins fitting them quite tightly. The twelve basketfuls taken up after the feast was the result of accident—too much inflation and sudden blowing to pieces of the over-inflated—these, sad to tell, were the twelve basketfuls collected.

My reputation had to be made by these powerful attractions—attractions that will only excite the unlettered. I admit this

thaumaturgic work was done by me, but if competent scribes had had my notes, all would have appeared natural, as they no doubt will after this explanation by the most interested party.

The walking on the sea appears incredible, but men appear mentally blind. Knowing the unclean habits of the natives, and also wishing to encourage the useful art of natation, I performed on this occasion to encourage the masses. Has humanity not heard of the swimmer treading water? My chronicler forgot to mention that previous to this feat I had stood a full hour with mouth wide open and allowed a stiff sou'-wester to blow down my trachea with such fury that my skin fitted me without a crease; in fact, I was drum-like, and am very thankful the Salvation Army drummer of that period did not secure me! Well, think! Where is the miracle? Where is the difficulty of keeping one's head above water, and this act of taking the water, no doubt inculcated that love for water, especially with lemon and a sugar-crusher, which is seen handed down amongst all nations that profess Christianity to this day.

I am nearly tired of writing such plain matters of fact to sensible beings, but cannot pass over my Ascension without shattering the sceptic doubts concerning it. Was I not omniscient? Did I not know all things? Was it reserved for a Dobkins to be the only one who knew the constituents of the Self-raising Flour? Was Deity not to be on a par with Dobkins? Was Dobkins's base sixteen-ounce brain to be the only brain that knew of levitation by eating bread made from Self-raising Flour? Every learned Christian philosopher knows to-day that by taking enough of the bread made from the Self-raising Flour, up you go; nothing can stop you, not even a promise of a Canterbury bishopric. But enough; if my eye gets better, and your Own Correspondent can secure me a situation, I shall be most happy to clear up further mysteries, or what are called so.

ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. R. A. Roberts, vicar of Barkham, committed suicide last Sunday by blowing out his brains in a plantation. We by no means rejoice over this tragedy, for even a parson is a man and a brother; but we chronicle it for the benefit of those who are always urging that there is some subtle and necessary connection between suicide and Freethought.

THE jury, of course, find all these reverend suicides to be of unsound mind. Perhaps it is necessary to emphasise the fact. Yet there are so many parsons and ministers of unsound mind, that if every one of them laid rash hands upon himself the newspapers would be miserable reading until the self-slaughter was ended.

THE Rev. Hely Smith is of opinion that the difficulties of the Bible are a proof of its divine origin. We suppose the more difficulties the stronger the proof, and should recommend the Christian Evidence Society to circulate our hand-books upon *Bible Contradictions* and *Bible Absurdities* as a sure means of proving the supernatural character of the precious book.

MR. HELY SMITH has his reasons, or rather Butler's. He declares that God's world is full of mysteries that are inscrutable, and we may surely expect to find the same difficulties in his word. This is like saying two blacks make an excellent white. What is the good of the Bible if instead of clearing up the difficulties of nature it adds a number of difficulties of its own. What an excellent defence of a man who had made a bungling machine to say that he had written a book explaining it, and the proof that he had written it was that the book was just as bungling as the machine!

THE *Young Churchman* is responsible for the statement that an American religious paper printed two editions of the issue in which a notice of General Grant's death appeared, one for the North and the other for the South. In the edition for the North it said: "Grant defeated Lee with ease by reason of his superior generalship," and in the edition for the South it said: "Grant defeated Lee only with great difficulty and by reason of his greatly superior numbers." Piety and lying mix as readily as whiskey and hot water.

THE "Dean and Chapter" of Rochester seized 50,000 hop poles at East Sutton for unpaid extraordinary tithe. This is the Christian method of giving to all who ask. A thousand people gathered at the sale, and the auctioneer found it safest to refuse to sell under the circumstances, whereupon he received three hearty cheers from the crowd. An indignation meeting was subsequently held.

MR. GEORGE COOPER, popularly known as the "Smarden Martyr," was triumphantly welcomed by a large assemblage of Maidstone people on his release from gaol after three weeks' imprisonment for taking part in a popular assault on the auctioneer conducting one of these sales of Christian plunder. The vehicle in which Mr. Cooper sat was profusely decorated, and banners with mottoes were carried by his friends. Every town and village through which he passed received him with

loud cheers from large numbers of farmers and laborers. Flags, mottoes and triumphant arches bore witness to the popular enthusiasm. A handsome testimonial is to be presented to Mr. Cooper at a dinner to be given close to the vicarage of the Rev. J. Peterson, who instituted the seizure and the sale that led to the assault.

MODERN prophets have fallen upon evil days. This is a hard and disbelieving generation, so H. P. Freund, the famous City prophet, is doing another turn in Holloway Gaol. He is inspired by the Lord (at least he says so, and there is as much reason to believe him as anybody else in the same line of business) to denounce woe to this great city. But this modern Jonah is not honored and rewarded like the ancient one, perhaps because he has not held a prayer-meeting in a whale. Two thousand years ago there might have been a Book of Freund; now the poor fellow's name figures periodically in the visitors' book of her Majesty's North London Hotel. On a recent Sunday he jumped up in chapel and shouted that Christ was soon coming to sweep away these hellish prisons. But, alas, he was immediately seized by a couple of warders, one of whom stopped his mouth while the other took him by the collar, saying "Go out, you d— fool." We understand that there is a widely prevalent feeling in the prison that the strongest proof of the poor fellow's madness is his ranting without pay. The chaplain rants a great deal more, but he is well paid.

A MR. GOULD has published a book on *Mythical Monsters*, in which he attempts to show that dragons and unicorns have actually existed. The best proofs are to be found in the Bible, and those are not of much account.

THE *Methodist Times* thinks there is no necessity for a Shelley Society. Shelley, it says, "was the eloquent apostle of Atheism and profligacy." "To wed the blasphemies of the pit to noble music, to clothe the foul vice with the most bewitching garb that ever poet's fancy wove—such was the fashion in which Shelley employed the splendid gifts with which his Maker had endowed him." This quotation alone would prove there is some need of a Shelley Society, though we doubt if it can be of service in curing the prejudices of the *Methodist Times*.

IN bringing forward his Parish Churches Bill, Bishop Magee told a story of a pew-owner who came to him complaining of some one who had entered his pew. He said: "I would not dare to disturb divine service by pulling him out of my pew, but I took the slight liberty of sitting upon his hat." By the laughter which greeted the bishop's speech it was evident the Upper House regarded church matters as specially humorous.

THE Lord has visited the Westboro' Methodist New Connection Chapel, Dewsbury, with a similar fate to Sodom and Gomorrah, totally destroying it by fire.

THE Lord showed his tender mercy to an old servant at service at the Congregational Church, Whitstable, where one of the deacons sank back painfully gasping for breath and dying in agony.

A NORTH country paper wonders why an Irishman who owes another Irishman a grudge should cut off his cows' tails, and asks "what have the cattle done that they should suffer?" If this writer is a Christian, as we presume he is, the Irishman could easily settle him by appealing to the blessed Book. Vicarious punishment is the very essence of Bible morality. What had the animals done to deserve drowning in the Flood? Nothing. We are expressly told that the Lord slaughtered them because men had offended him, and we really don't see why an Irishman should not imitate God Almighty on a smaller scale.

How about the cattle who were killed and re-killed and killed over again by the plagues in Egypt? How about the slaughter of Achan's cattle? How about the killing of all the beasts as well as men, women and children in the doomed cities of Canaan? How about all the animals who were slaughtered on Jehovah's altars, according to his directions? How about the poor pigs that Jesus Christ drowned to show his skill? Why should a man who worships the God who did or commanded these atrocities grumble because a sportive Irishman houghs a horse or docks a cow's tail?

MIRACLES are continually occurring among Christians who believe in them. The *Christian Herald*, edited by a Church of England clergyman, gives a list of them every week, and further information is given in a fortnightly publication called *Thy Healer*. Mrs. Allen was anointed for deafness a fortnight ago and has "testified to instantaneous recovery." Another lady was restored by being anointed when "at the point of death," while Miss Brockless was "healed in a moment while dealing personally with the Lord about the matter." These faith-healing miracles are exactly what Christ promised, so far as they go. They should be a guarantee of the living truth of Christianity. Why don't the bishops believe and examine and prove? Why do they prefer a miracle of two thousand years ago,

reported on hearsay many years after the event, to one piping hot from the Creator here in England? "He that believeth not shall be damned." Does this refer only to God's ancient miracles? The bishops are as wicked sceptics as any of us concerning his modern interventions, and they will not even take the trouble to inquire into the cases. They laugh at them. Why should we not laugh at the ancient ones?

THE *Christian Herald* has two accounts of converted infidels. One of these converts was a member of an infidel club near Dalston, and he has been born again of the Holy Spirit, and has been earnestly working for his new-found Savior. Yet, well-known as he must have been, he seems to have had no name and address—such guarantees of good faith on the part of religious charlatans being unnecessary if not positively dangerous.

THE other "well-known infidel" had a "public recantation" read from a pulpit in the State of Maine, U.S., on February 14. He, too, had no name worth mentioning.

"FOUR sergeants," too, who, in a drunken bout, gathered all the Bibles in the barracks into a large heap and set fire to them and danced round the blaze with fiendish glee, were also anonymous. The evangelist who narrates the remarkable story says: "The work was done, and the justice of heaven must follow. All four within that year were still in death." One died in "fearful agony from *delirium tremens*." Another, seeing him writhing, went home and blew out his brains with a pistol. A third shot himself with his rifle, and the fourth was thrown from his horse and killed instantaneously. And all this lying and pandering to the superstition and credulity of degraded minds is Christianity!

THE *Christian Herald* also shows how the unemployed may obtain relief. "A good Christian woman," having a son out of work, "prayed simply and believingly" that the Lord would provide him with employment. The young man returned next day to tell his mother of the "speedy answer to her prayer." Those of us who are out of work are to go to the Lord and, in simple faith, make known our requests unto him. The Mansion House fund is a folly, then. The unemployed should be recommended to pray, and the whole difficulty would be solved, for God promises that believers shall receive all they ask.

It is not merely the poor and ignorant, however, whose troubles are made a means of bribing or frightening them into superstition. In the House of Commons Mr. Johnston solemnly called upon Mr. Gladstone as head of the Government to say "if, in consideration of the widespread destitution throughout the United Kingdom, and the hardships endured by the people, he would advise her Most Gracious Majesty to be pleased to appoint a day of humiliation and prayer as a national appeal to Almighty God." His question, we are pleased to see, was received with "some laughter," and Mr. Gladstone did not think the distress presented the particular characteristics that would warrant the appointment of such a day.

RUSKIN thinks we have gone back to "Totemism." He says he knows of "nothing that has been taught the youth of our time, except that their fathers were apes and their mothers winkles." The advantage of this diversity, according to totemism, is that the apes and winkles can intermarry, whereas if fathers and mothers were both of the same zoological name intermarriage would be unlawful.

RUSKIN also regrets that the children are taught that the world began in accident and will end in darkness. The *Daily News* asks if it would be more congenial to him to say that it began in darkness and will end in an accident.

G. R. BEAUMONT is a nice specimen of the evangelist. He has been connected with Mr. Charrington's Mission in Mile End, where he fell in with a woman with whom he went to live. He had deserted his wife and four children and had committed bigamy. He was arrested by the parochial authorities for neglecting to support his children since 1882, and has been sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labor. And of such is the kingdom of heaven.

THE Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, in the eleventh and last annual report of his Sommers' Town Presbyterian Church, says that among the serious difficulties which have beset his work have been the desperate efforts of "a band of infidels" at the Midland railway arches. This, he says, "led me to meet in argument at the Midland Arches all the prominent leaders of infidelity." He mentions Mr. C. Bradlaugh, Mr. George W. Foote, and others less known to fame, some of whom have been dead over a dozen years. If Mr. Bradlaugh or Mr. Foote ever met Mr. Woffendale in debate, it was not at the Midland Arches, but in a hall, and in Mr. Bradlaugh's case it is so long ago that Mr. Z. B. Woffendale was then a clerk in the Railway Clearing House, instead of a minister with £350 a year. Mr. Woffendale would have his readers believe that he is the great Paladin before whose sword all the infidels have hidden their diminished heads, whereas in his own district Freethought is as active and aggressive as ever.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, March 28, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, N., at 7.30, "Who Made God?"

Monday, March 29, Secular Hall, Henley Street, Battersea Park Road, at 8.

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

MAY 2, Manchester; 8, United Radical Club, Hackney; 9, Sheffield; 16, Milton Hall; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

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

CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

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

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—R. J. Bloxam.

C. W. SCARR.—Jokes and cuttings are always welcome.

C. P. WILSON.—You must be mistaken in supposing Ingersoll made the statement referred to. The Mosaic account of Creation was probably taken from the Assyrian account, but how long that had been in existence previously it is difficult to say.

R. FOX.—Dr. Giles's book is published at 10s. 6d.

W. CABRELL.—John i., 7, should be i., 1, which taken in connection with the eighth verse, is held to teach the pre-existence of Jesus.

W. MORTIMER.—The bill has already been printed.

W. E. LABORDE.—You have misread the passage, which is rightly printed Isaiah xlv., 7, in *Bible Contradictions*, not xiv., 7, as written by you.

E. COX.—You do not state in what particular Mr. Leekey's intimation was incorrect.

J. H. ROGERS.—Thanks. Mr. Bradlaugh can best answer the question relative to himself.

A. W. P.—*Crimes of Christianity* will be bound in a single volume ultimately, but it will take some time to complete the work.

T. PHILLIPS, 180 Palmerston Street, Ancoats, Manchester, supplies the *Freethinker* and all other Secular publications.

F. MULVEY.—It was the Mr. Dunn you heard railing at Mr. Foote at the Midland Arches who shouted "No" at the Hall of Science on the 18th inst. when Mr. Foote stated that there were five hundred million Buddhists and only three hundred million Christians. A gentleman who resents and contradicts statistics is only consistent when he calls scholarship bunkum.

L. TOULMIN.—There was a great delay at the binder's. But the cloth edition of Mr. Wheeler's *Footsteps of the Past* is now on sale. The essays it contains were published in this form at the desire of Mr. Foote, who has written a brief Preface. Mr. Foote thinks highly of the volume, and is certain that nowhere else in such a moderate compass can be found so many of the best results of Evolution as applied to religion, customs, and morals.

G. T. KITCHING writes:—"Allow me to congratulate you most heartily on the appearance of your *Prisoner for Blasphemy*. I have had the pleasure of reading several of your works, but this one excels them all. There is in it such a mixture of grave and gay, that it is perfectly impossible to help laughing at the one or crying at the other. I have lent the work to several friends, and the verdict in every case is that the Christians must be a bad lot to put a man like Foote in gaol for his opinions. . . I owe you many thanks, not only for the instruction and entertainment I have derived from your works, but also because it was from a stray copy of the *Freethinker* that I was induced to set out on the new Pilgrim's Progress from Christianity to Freethought."

A. T.—We should not have noticed your anonymous letter, but you inflicted on us a charge of twopenny for forgetting to stamp the envelope. We know nothing of the controversy, and we assuredly are not going to publish charges against Mr. Leekey on the authority of a nameless person who is absent-minded in the matter of stamps.

W. T. LEEKEY.—Thanks for the report.

S. H. W.—*Whitaker's Almanack* gives a list of over two hundred sects of Christians in England, but there are also many Continental varieties, in addition to numerous sects which have become extinct Blunt's *Dictionary of Sects and Heresies* catalogues over a hundred under the letter A only, without counting the rest of the alphabet.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—New York Beacon Light—Liberal—Judy—Cambria Daily Leader—Boston Investigator—Scarborough Mercury—Halfpenny Weekly—New York Herald—Sheffield Echo—Liberty—Truthseeker—Daylight.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

CONSIDERING the general depression, the audiences which enthusiastically greeted Mr. Foote at Leeds last Sunday were large. They were, in fact, larger than he has ever had in that city before, not even excepting his first visit after his imprisonment. The local Branch of the N. S. S. labored hard against many disadvantages, and deserves great credit for the success. During the day collections were made, with a good result, on

behalf of poor old Mr. Smith, the newsagent, who is in great bodily suffering and pecuniary distress. May we express a hope that more of our readers in Leeds will rally round the Branch, and make it what it might be, a real power? There is a hard-working committee, and Mr. Fisher is an exceptionally educated and intelligent secretary.

The public debate between the Rev. Dr. McCann and Mr. Foote will take place at the London Hall of Science on Thursday evenings, April 8, 15, 22 and 29. The subject is, "Christianity or Secularism: Which is the Truer?" Mrs. Besant has kindly consented to preside on three evenings. The chairman for the other has not been fixed up to the time of our going to press. There is much enthusiastic curiosity excited by the announcement of this debate, and a very large attendance is expected. Mr. Foote is no novice in discussion, and Dr. McCann is perhaps the ablest platform champion on the other side. Those who wish to avoid the crush at the door should secure reserved-seat tickets beforehand.

The last of the Christian Evidence Society's course of lectures was delivered at the London Hall of Science on the 18th inst. Mr. B. H. Cowper was too unwell to attend, but he sent a written lecture, which was read by the Rev. Mr. Waterman, one of the C. E. S. secretaries. The lecture contained several references to Mr. Foote, who replied in two ten-minutes' speeches. Mr. Waterman was obviously not well up in the subject. For instance, Mr. Foote complained that no mention had been made of Papias, the most important of all the early "witnesses to Christ," whereupon Mr. Waterman naively remarked that as the lecture was long and the time was short he had skipped the parts referring to Papias! We regret that Mr. Cowper was unable to defend his own lecture. He is at any rate conversant with the subject. His dexterous evasions of the critical points are sufficient proof of this even if there were no other.

BILLS were distributed announcing that Mr. Foote would reply fully to the C. E. S. lectures on Thursdays, March 25 and April 1.

MRS. MORTIMER COLLINS, the novelist's widow, died on the 16th inst., and her corpse was cremated at Woking on the following Saturday. It is to be presumed this was done at her desire, and we trust other ladies will have the courage to imitate her example.

The debate between Mr. W. J. Ramsey and Mr. Chandler was adjourned till next Monday evening, when at the Monarch Coffee-house, Bethnal Green Road, Mr. Chandler will maintain that the Gospels were written by the men whose names they bear.

MR. EVERETT, M.P. for Suffolk, has given notice of the following resolution: "That in the opinion of this House the time has come to reconsider the appropriation of enormous sums raised annually in the shape of tithes out of the agricultural produce of this country, and to give the different localities control over the glebe lands, church graveyards, parsonages and other ecclesiastical property."

Bible Absurdities, the second Part of the Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians, will be published next week. Purchasers of the first part, *Bible Contradictions*, will know what to expect. Others may be informed that the work has been done with unparalleled thoroughness. The "blessed book" has been steadily gone through from the first chapter of Genesis to the last chapter of Revelation. Multitudes of Absurdities have been extracted, and these have been sifted for publication. Those sent to the press have been carefully arranged for convenience and effect; and the point of each absurdity, or group of absurdities, is expressed in an appropriate head-line. We venture to think that *Bible Absurdities* will be boon to Freethinkers, and an extraordinary eye-opener to Christians.

WE take the last opportunity to remind our London readers of the gathering at the Hall of Science next Wednesday evening to commemorate Mr. Bradlaugh's accession to his seat. The proceedings commence at eight, and we hope to see the Hall filled from the platform to the door.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Pittsburgh *Dispatch* writes to his paper: "Ingersoll is the kindest-hearted man I ever saw. Riding all day with him between Omaha and Chicago I saw a little incident that will illustrate this. On the train was a pale, sickly-looking woman, with a fretful baby. The woman was in shabby mourning, and was almost worn out with the crying and worrying of her little one. The passengers were very much annoyed, and kept looking around and frowning at the woman, who was evidently doing her best to quiet the child. Finally Mr. Ingersoll, who had been reading, noticed it. Getting up, he stepped across to the woman and took the babe, telling her to take a little rest, and he would take care of the child. The little one stopped crying at once, played with his watch and chain awhile, and finally nestled its little head down on his arm and went to sleep. The tired mother also dropped to sleep, and the colonel cared for the baby for upward of a hundred miles before the mother awakened and relieved him."

IS BLOOD A REMEDY FOR SIN?

THE Christian who believes his Bible must confess, nay must rejoice, that blood *is* a remedy for sin, and that it is a remedy appointed by the all-wise and all-gracious Sovereign of the Universe. The Christian must not reason on the matter; he must simply accept his Lord's decision reverently and undoubtingly.

The Old Testament bases its religion on blood, as the one great means of washing away sins and attaining God's favor. We continually read how Aaron is to make atonement with blood of the sin-offering (Ex. xxx., 10), and how Moses, or the priest, is to sprinkle blood on Aaron, on the altar, on the door-posts, and on the people. When the sin for which atonement was to be made was committed in ignorance, the priest dipped his finger in blood and sprinkled it "seven times before the Lord" (Lev. iv., 6, 17), and after the due performance of this and various other equally divine requirements, such as burning the bullock's dung (Lev. iv., 11), the offender, or the whole congregation as the case may be, was duly forgiven (Lev. iv., 20, 26, 31, 35). The atoning blood thus shed was so sacred that a garment on which any drops of it happened to fall could only be washed in the holy place, and the earthen pot in which the garment was cleansed had to be broken, apparently to prevent subsequent defilement after so high an honor (Lev. vi., 27, 28). According to Lev. xvii., 11, the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, "The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." The Old Testament thus offers conclusive testimony that blood is a remedy for sin.

The New Testament is equally decisive. It represents the blood atonements of the Old Testament as culminating in the still more efficacious blood atonement of a human being who was at the same time God. It assures us that "the blood of Jesus Christ . . . cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John i., 7). Peter confirms the ancient practices when he speaks of the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (i., 2). Christ himself says that his blood is "shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matt. xxvi., 28), and he tells us that he has not come to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil them. Rev. i., 5, refers to Christ as having "washed us from our sins in his own blood." Some Christians will say that this is only figurative. The washing is evidently the figurative counterpart of cleansing, removing, or forgiving. The sins are certainly not figurative, and if the entire removal of the guilt and responsibility incurred in their commission is not a fact, then Christianity has been trading on a huge deception. The blood which Christ shed on the cross was scarcely figurative, if the gospel narratives speak truth. No consistent Christian—if there is such a being—can maintain that Christ redeemed the world by a mere *figurative* shedding of his blood, or by a mere figurative sacrifice of himself to appease the Father's wrath. Paul, in the ninth chapter of his Epistle to the Hebrews, shows distinctly that Christ was a sin-offering like the bullocks and goats of old, but of greater worth and consequently of so far greater power that his atoning blood was perpetual and universal in its magical or theological virtue of removing guilt. Paul says plainly that "without shedding of blood is no remission" (verse 22) and that "it was therefore necessary" that Christ as the new high priest should not merely enter into the holy place with the blood of others, but once for all should "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (verse 26), thus purging all sin, just as "almost all things are by the law purged by blood" (verse 22). Paul argues thus (verses 11 to 15):

"Christ being come an high priest of good things to come . . . Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance."

Paul, however, had partially emancipated himself from the horrible fetishistic belief in blood as a cure for sin,

and he consequently contradicts himself and the earlier inspired writers by declaring that "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins" (Hebrew x., 4.) But he retained the savage idea sufficiently to rely upon "the blood of Jesus" as perfecting for ever those who are sanctified by it (Hebrews x., 19, 14). The "man" Jesus by offering up his body as a sacrifice once for all has provided the one true remedy for sin (Hebrews x., 12, 10).

As Paul had progressed so far as to see that Moses was wrong, why cannot we advance a little further and see that Paul too was wrong? Christians can agree with Paul that it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins. Why cannot they see that it is just as impossible that the blood of a man or of a god can take away sins? There is really quite as much superstition in the new Christian belief as in the old Jewish one of which it is a development. The bribe, however, as a rule, is too great to allow the believer liberty of thought, and if he is compelled to deal with the subject he will often endeavor to accommodate the horrors of religion to modern thought by teaching them, as far as possible, as symbolical or figurative. Christians forget that they undermine religion by this insidious process of interpretation. If Christ's blood only figuratively washes away sin and Christ's sacrifice of himself once for all only symbolically saves the world, religion must lose its hold on mankind as fast as the new interpretation demolishes the old strongly-sensational biblical beliefs and consolations.

The only connection that common sense can see between blood and sin is, that the former is often a result of the latter. Bloodshed, individual and national, is a consequence of the sin which it often punishes and sometimes ends. Beyond this, blood has no more to do with sin or curing it than has the water of baptism which regenerates human nature, or the cow-dung with which Hindoos smear their faces for its sanctifying and sin-removing properties. Water, indeed, whose sin-removing virtues in baptism are well known, has some moral efficacy if applied in sufficient abundance. It certainly cures one undoubted evil, and thus inaugurates what may prove to be a progressive moral reformation. But blood has only associations of horror and disgust, and the idea of washing in it, or wallowing in it as some spiritual pigs seem to delight in doing, is as absolutely repulsive an idea as can well be conceived. It is only fit for savages, and only tenable while we retain, however unsuspected, a large amount of innate savagery in our natures.

There is one question that may as well be asked and answered. How *could* men as intelligent as Paul and Moses believe that blood removed sin, and how do some modern Christians still succeed in retaining that belief? The theory that justified, and is still held to justify such a monstrous absurdity, is that sin is only sin because it is an offence against God, and that God can therefore wipe it away as easily and as thoroughly as a creditor can forgive a debt, on the satisfactory performance of any little condition he may require of the debtor in sign of thankful acknowledgment. This pernicious superstition entirely overlooks the real and only evil of sin, that it causes suffering. It blinds men to the true nature of moral responsibility, and it plunges them into the immoralities and crimes of theological virtue.

W. P. BALL.

LONG-HAIRED SAMSON.

THE book of Judges is a curious production. In one respect it is like many of the other inspired pamphlets, which, when stitched together, constitute the Holy Bible. Nobody knows when, where, or by whom it was written, but whoever it was he drew very largely upon his imagination for his facts. In some important respects it differs from the books of the Pentateuch. It lays down no moral principles, good, bad, or indifferent, but limits itself exclusively to stories of bloodshed and folly. After reading it carefully, one is disposed to ask what the writers of it were judges of? They could scarcely have held the dignified position of adjudicators on questions of law or justice. Still less could they have been referees in pugilistic encounters, or judges of a man's capability single-handed and unarmed to confront lions and bears.

Perhaps, however, they were called judges on the same principle that a chemist is sometimes dignified by the term doctor. It looks well, and sounds better in ignorant ears than the correct description. The book of Judges contains the account of several horrible tragedies, and an account of something that was without doubt intended as a tragedy, but in its working-out becomes the most extravagant of burlesques.

To read without a shudder how Jael, the wife of Heber, in cold blood, hammered a nail through the temples of Sisera while he slept would show alike a want of sympathy with innocent helplessness, and a complete absence of human feelings. But to read the numerous stories of butchery by the Israelites, and the sacrifice by Jephthah of his beautiful daughter in fulfilment of a promise to Jahveh, without a feeling of detestation for the deity who sanctioned such barbarities, and the loathing for people who committed them, would be to render ourselves worthy of the severest censure of all right-minded men and women.

It is not my purpose, however, to harrow up the feelings of my readers; the tragedies of real life are quite sufficient for ordinary mortals without the addition of the fictitious narratives of the Bible. But when there is a chance of getting a hearty laugh out of a sacred burlesque, I believe in making the most of the opportunity. Only the mind that is perfectly free can appreciate the fun of the Bible; and to those with a keen sense of the ridiculous or grotesque, no book offers more suitable themes for treatment.

Take for instance the life of Samson of long hair and muscular celebrity. Setting aside the idea of Samson as a Sun-god—the view taken by some learned Hebrew scholars—and taking the plain unvarnished narrative of Judges, we have a story full in turns of solemn fun and extravagant humor. Samson is born; his boyhood being we presume, uneventful is not recorded, the narrative therefore beginning with an account of how Samson going into Timnath saw a young woman among the Philistines and immediately fell in love with her. Not having the boldness to woo her personally, Samson returned to his parents and requested them to send down and procure the young lady for him, that she might become his wife. The old people, however, objected to Samson taking a wife from among what they in rather strong language described as “the daughters of uncircumcised Philistines.” Not knowing that their son had an ulterior motive in his mind, involving a quarrel with the Philistines, Samson’s parents hesitated some time before they yielded to his desire. At length having given their consent to the union of their son with the daughter of an alien race, they journeyed with Samson to Timnath.

On their road a young lion impudently reared his head and roared at Samson—perhaps as an indication of his approval or censure on the proposed union. Samson was annoyed at such unseemly conduct on the part of the young beast; and the “Spirit of God” coming strongly upon him, he grappled with the animal, took him by the two jaws and rent him in twain, “as he would have rent a kid” (Judges xiv., 6). Of this great achievement Samson did not inform his parents, lest perhaps they might have patted him on the head and said “what a brave boy you are,” or perhaps, what is more likely, knowing him better than anybody else, they might have winked and said “tell that to the marines.” Boldly continuing his journey Samson came into the presence of his betrothed, and when he had talked with her he found that she “pleased him well,” and so matters were pleasantly arranged.

Before returning home Samson paid a return visit to the carcass of the lion he had slain; and to his astonishment found that a swarm of bees had taken up their abode therein, and deposited a goodly amount of honey. Like the modern school-boy Samson took a good dip into the lucky bag, I mean the honey, and extracted a good mouthful, and the bees with an innate consciousness that he was really their benefactor in having provided them with suitable lodgings by slaying the lion, touched him not, or if they did the writers of Judges forgot to mention it.

The marriage-feast followed in due course. At this Samson, instead of proposing a toast preferred to follow the example of “Bones” at the Christy’s, and “axed the company a riddle.” Lord Dundreary used to put to the public a “widdle,” and supply the answer himself for their

edification. Samson did not exactly do this. He put forth a riddle, and gave his hearers three days in which to guess the answer. To stimulate their sluggish intellects he offered to him who should rightly expound the riddle what might be termed a useful reward—viz., “thirty sheets and thirty changes of garments” (Judges xiv., 13), and what, no doubt, many of his guests were greatly in need of. The three days elapsed and the riddle remained unanswered. On the seventh day, so hard up for the change of linen were the Philistines, that they came to Delilah—Samson’s wife—and persuaded her to wheedle it out of him. This the lovely creature consented to do, and, approaching her herculean husband, took all the pluck out of him in a few minutes by a few loving smiles, and by chiding him for hiding the answer to the riddle even from his “better half.” This was, indeed, too much. Samson therefore quietly divulged the answer, and the lady, unable to bear the weight of so mighty a secret, went straightway to her brethren and told them the answer to the conundrum.

On the self-same day the men of the city came down to Samson and tried to earn the reward; but Samson perceived that the secret had been mysteriously communicated to these ardent competitors for clean linen, and made the sagacious but rather vulgar remark, “If ye had not plowed with my heifer, ye had not found out my riddle.” By way of exercise he went out and slew thirty of these men, took their spoil, but gave the change of garment to those who had answered the riddle, though they were only four days after date.

Here is the wonderful riddle: “Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness.” And here, my readers, is the still more wonderful answer: “What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?” If you cannot perceive the joke take a few weeks for reflection, or try it as a conundrum at the next Sunday-school soiree, between the “kissing games,” and, if it doesn’t answer, write to the editor of the *Daily Telephone*—the readers of that journal will soon find whose skull needs a surgical operation to make the entrance wide enough to admit a pious joke.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

In *Our Corner*, which reaches us as we go to press and will be noticed next week, Mrs. Besant questions the accuracy of Mr. Foote’s statement in *Prisoner for Blasphemy* that he suffered “the heaviest punishment inflicted on a Freethinker for a hundred and twenty years.” Sentences as long and longer are cited since Peter Annet’s imprisonment in 1763, but Mr. Foote does not assert that his sentence was longest, only that his punishment was heaviest. Under the old prison system even in “terrible Newgate,” as Mrs. Besant calls it, there was a good deal of liberty within the gaol precincts. Solitary confinement and the silent system were not then in vogue, and these have been, not without some justice, described in a parliamentary debate as the worst torture ever devised by human ingenuity. So terrible is it that in the convict establishments some relaxations are found necessary to prevent the prisoners from going insane. Mrs. Besant does, however, catch Mr. Foote tripping on one point. He refers to himself, Mr. Ramsey and Mr. Kemp as the only three living Englishmen to whom the experiences of a prisoner for blasphemy are known. This is incorrect, as Mr. G. J. Holyoake is still alive. But Mr. Holyoake has been so long dead to Freethought that, perhaps not unnaturally, he escaped Mr. Foote’s memory.

SELF-RELIANCE.—In one of the old Norse Sagas there is a saying which has always impressed me greatly. An aged warrior, when asked what he thought of the new religion, replied: “I have heard a great deal of talk of the old Odin and of the new Christ, but whenever things have come to a real pinch, I have always found that my surest trust was in my own right arm and good sword.”—Samuel Laing, *Modern Science and Modern Thought*, p. 288.

THE SOUL.—By some we are told that the soul is immaterial, and that, by reason of its immateriality, it cannot die. How can human beings, professing to have cultivated their understandings, be content to repeat, and rest in, such wretched inanities as these, at best but the convulsive floundering of an intellect out of its depths, deluding itself into the belief that it has grasped an idea, when it has only got hold of a word? That the immaterial must of necessity be immortal seems to us an unmeaning assertion on a matter of which we know nothing. Of the nature of the soul, science has taught us indeed little—far too little to allow us to decide and dogmatise; but honesty must admit that the little it has taught us all points to an opposite conclusion. Alas! for the spirit’s immortal trust, if it rested on such scholastic technicalities as these.—W. R. Greg.

PROFANE JOKES.

"WHAT great blessing do we enjoy that the heathens knew nothing about?" "Seap!" was the answer that came like the crack of a pistol from a small boy at the foot of the class.

A CURIOUS metal box was recently uncarthed in a cathedral town. Its purpose was unknown until, being opened, there were found inside three buttons, a piece of tin, and a scrap of paper. Then they knew that it was an ancient contribution box.

A WELL-KNOWN member of the Established Kirk in a small Scotch village lately put a shilling into the plate, and coolly helped himself to elevenpence-halfpenny, remarking to the attending elder, "I forgot tae get change yest'reen, Maister Broon; sae I'll just put in a shullin'an' tak' out the elevenpence-ha'penny. Ye'll be gayen gled tae get rid o' the coppers, nae doot."

"BROTHER IKE," said a gentleman of color to another darkey yesterday, "yer orter been to de pra'r meeting las' night. We prayed fur yer." "Am dat a fac'?" "Hit am." "Den I'se got faith in pra'r. Dat pra'r was answered." "Sure nuff?" "Fo' God hit wus." "Tell me 'bout hit, Brudder Ike." "Wall, 'Zekiel, I'ze got de fattos' turkey at my house yer ober seed. An' he wus roostin' low las' night—bery low."

Public Debate

BETWEEN THE
REV. DR. JAMES McCANN
AND
MR. G. W. FOOTE,
AT THE
HALL OF SCIENCE, 142 Old St., E.C.,
ON
Thursdays, April 8, 15, 22, & 29.

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EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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Flaubert's "Temptation of Saint Anthony." By James Thomson (B.V.)
Anthony Collins. By J. M. Wheeler.
Corruptela. (A Poem.) By John M. Harvey.
"Natural Law in the Spiritual World." (A Criticism.) By James Rose, M.R.C.S., L.R.O.P.
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