

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. VI.—No. 14.]

APRIL 4, 1886.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 151.



A TAILOR GOD.

“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”—GEN. III., 21.

SALVATION.

SALVATION, oh the joyful sound! as the hymn says. Yes, it is a joyful sound, if you happen to be one of the elect; but how dreary, if you happen to be one of the unfortunate wretches predestined to be damned! In that case, your very righteousness is nothing but filthy rags, and will only assist your combustion when you go below. Salvation to such miserable wretches will only give a poignancy to their misery. The sound of it will be to them like the cooked meat in a shop window to the poor devils who are starving outside.

Salvation is a favorite word in the Bible. The Jews were very fond of it, and the Christians copied their taste. But the two parties resemble each other with a difference. The chosen people looked for salvation in this world. They expected a time when all their troubles would end, when the protracted family quarrel between themselves and Jehovah would cease, when they should be redeemed from bondage, when they should triumph over all their enemies and rule the world with a rod of iron, when Zion should be the seat of universal sovereignty, and when the desirable things of all nations, such as gold, silver, and

precious stones, should flow in the pockets of the circumcised children of Israel. Their carnal minds were not distracted by fantastic dreams about the dim and distant courses of a heavenly future. They were a shrewd, business people, with a keen eye for the main chance; and well knowing their practical character, their prophets always foretold a flourishing state of things on earth, a happy land of Canaan, if they faithfully worshipped Jehovah without sneaking after his rivals. Even holy Moses, whose power was unbounded, offered them temporal rewards for keeping the commandments. He held out the lure of long life in the land which the Lord their God gave them. They were sharp traders, and he knew they would refuse promissory notes payable forty days after death.

The Christians, on the other hand, being a simpler and more gullible set of people, were quite content with poverty, servitude, and suffering on earth, in consideration of the good things they were to enjoy in heaven. It was not in this world, says Gibbon, that they expected to be useful or happy. They dwelt fondly on the splendors of a new Jerusalem, and looked forward to the glories of a kingdom not made with hands. Salvation was to them “some far-off divine event.” It was to be realised in the sweet by-

and-bye. No wonder they and the Jews soon parted company. And to this day they are as far apart as ever. While the Christian snaps at the shadow the Jew eats the meat. He cannot understand the delights of heaven without a good taste of them on earth. He believes in making the best of this world, and if you bore him with sermons on kingdom-come, he eats his victuals with fresh zest, and says, Sufficient unto the day is the fortune thereof.

Ever since that unhappy young carpenter was crucified, the Christians have talked of Salvation, but it seems as far off as ever. It is always coming, but it never comes. Eighteen centuries ago the Redeemer came. Yes, said Louis Blanc, but when may we expect the Redemption? Except for the advances made by Science and Freethought during the last three centuries, the modern world is no improvement on the ancient. Civilisation was higher, and human happiness greater, in the best days of Greece and Rome than in the Middle Ages when Christianity was supreme.

The reason is obvious. Christianity pursued a wrong path towards a false goal. It neglected this life for another, forsook the known for the unknown, and aspired to a problematical salvation in heaven instead of achieving a real salvation on earth. Greece and Rome had their mythologies, but they put this world first, and thoroughly believed in making the most of it. Hence their science, art, philosophy and literature, their social customs and political institutions, infinitely excelled everything that Christianity produced. Modern civilisation dates from the Renaissance, when Europe, after the long dark night of Christian superstition, turned its dim eyes backwards, and kindled them anew by gazing on the immortal glories of Paganism.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved! The world tried it for a thousand years, and it proved a flagrant failure. Belief is not, never was, and never can be, the method of salvation. Thinking and acting are the right way. Far better than Jesus preaching faith is Hercules wrestling with the hydras, slaying the monsters, and cleansing the Augean stables of the world.

A mighty change is coming over Europe. Faith is nearly played out, and priestcraft is discredited. Let us save ourselves! is the general cry. Children are being educated, science is regarded as man's providence, secular welfare is made the criterion of law, and not only statesmen, but the very clergy themselves, are driven to admit that the problem of problems is how to improve the material condition of the people. Schools are supplanting churches, and happy homes are superseding heaven.

Salvation of the Christian sort is more and more falling into the hands of the Boothites. The heroes of the drum and the heroines of the tambourine are the true successors of the apostles. The last Salvation Army is twin-brother to the first. According to one of its shining lights, it is "God's last effort to convert the world." We are glad to hear it, and we hope it is true.

Converting the world to religion has always been folly or crime, and too often both. Progress heavenward is slow business. As *Punch* said, you never get any "farrarder." You are eternally occupied in marking time. But secular progress is certain and obvious. Schoolboys can perceive what advances we have made on our ancestors, and it is easy to see that our posterity will make great advances on ourselves. And this kind of Salvation is for the benefit of all, and is achieved without misery and strife, except when it is opposed by priests and kings, while the Salvation of Christianity has chiefly taught men, in the fine phrase of Landor, to "plant unthrifty thorns over bitter wells of blood."

G. W. FOOTE.

HE was a great sinner and he was dying. Sorrowing friends wept about his bedside. A minister of the gospel of forgiveness for the vilest sinners looked into his face, and asked: "Have you no consolation in the thought that Christ died for such as you?" The dying man shook his head sadly. A moment later a contented look came upon his face and his lips parted with a happy smile. "I have found consolation," he said, simply—"I feel resigned; yes, anxious to go." "Is it the consolation of salvation?" "No." There was a pause. Then the dying man said, in an explaining tone: "You know this has been a cold winter—the coldest since 1813." "Yes." "Well, the water-pipes don't freeze in Hades. I am resigned, consoled." He crossed his hands and expired without a struggle.

LOST BOOKS OF THE BIBLE.

A CONTEMPTIBLE little halfpenny monthly journal, edited by a man who trades upon his brother's name, assures its confiding readers that "there are *no* lost books of the Bible," adding "No man has proved, or can prove, that any portion of canonical Scripture has perished." This addition shows considerable disingenuousness. Of course no one ever thought of putting works which were not extant into any list of canonical books, but the writer ought to know that no such canon of scripture was formed until a very late period, and that the number of books included in the canon have differed at different dates, and among different sects. The Samaritans only admitted the Pentateuch. The Alexandrian Jews had a different canon from the Palestinian Jews, as is conclusively shown by the insertion of various apocryphal works in the Septuagint. The Catholics admit many books as the word of God which Protestants reject. Beyond this, certain books are appealed to in the Bible which are no longer in existence. No one knows for instance, what was the important "book of the covenant," which Moses read in the audience of the people before he and the elders went up and saw the God of Israel (Exodus xxiv., 7). Many works are recorded by name.

The book of the wars of the Lord (Numbers xxi., 14) is interesting as showing that the early Jewish wars were ascribed direct to Jahveh, and as probably celebrating his prowess and that of his banditti. A book with the Lord's name and cited as an authority must surely be as divine as the authority which cites it.

The book of Jasher. "The sun stood still and the moon stayed until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher?" (Joshua x., 13.) "He [David] bade them teach their children the use of the bow: behold it is written in the book of Jasher" (2 Samuel i., 18.) This work was evidently appealed to as authoritative. Jasher means the upright. From the character of the references, it has been plausibly conjectured that the book of Jasher was a collection of lyrics setting forth the deeds of the savage heroes of early Jewish history. Dr. Donaldson, who believes that many portions of this ancient work are incorporated in the Old Testament, scattered through the Pentateuch, historical books and even in the Psalms, has made an attempt to reconstruct the book of Jasher which many rabbis say was lost in the captivity.

The book of the manner (or constitution) of the kingdom, was written by Samuel, and "laid up before the Lord" (1 Samuel x., 25.) This careful method of treasuring did not ensure its preservation.

Solomon, we are told, wrote three thousand proverbs (1 Kings iv., 32) "and his songs were a thousand and five." In giving the number of Solomon's literary works the writer did not indicate that only one song and a small portion of the proverbs were inspired to the exclusion of the others, but brings them all under the same category. Judging by the extant Song of Solomon, decent Christians should raise up their hearts in thankfulness that a watchful Providence has carefully obliterated all trace of the remaining thousand and four.

Verse thirty-three of the same chapter gives indication of a natural history written by Solomon. "And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts and of fowl and of creeping things and of fishes." Such a work, we venture to say, would have been superior to the erotic poetry ascribed to Solomon, though we cannot help wondering, if like the other Bible writers, he believed in unicorns, dragons, satyrs, cockatrices and flying serpents. We heartily regret that Solomon's Natural History was not preserved in place of some of the canonical works.

"And the rest of the acts of Solomon, and all that he did, and his wisdom, are they not written in the book of the Acts of Solomon" (1 Kings xi., 41.) Perhaps they are, but where is that document now? Possibly the chronicles of the Kings of Israel, mentioned 1 Kings xiv., 19; xvi., 5, 20, 27; xxii., 39, and the chronicle of the Kings of Judah (1 Kings xv., 7), may be in part incorporated in the books of Chronicles, so we will pass them over.

It has also been contended that we may possess in other forms the substance of "the book of Nathan the

prophet, and the book of Gad the seer" (1 Chronicles xxix., 29; 2 Chronicles ix., 29); but if such works once existed with the names of their authors attached, why should they have been inserted among anonymous writings like the books of Kings and Chronicles? Surely the works of prophets and seers were as important as the chronicles of unknown historians. The same remark applies to the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer, mentioned 2 Chronicles ix., 29. Iddo is also mentioned as having written genealogies and history (2 Chron. xii., 15; xiii., 22.) The contention that we may have their substance, only supports the view of Dr. Davidson, who in his work on the Canon of the Bible, says that Ezra removed some things and modified others as unsuited to the altered circumstances of the people. The same writer declares (p. 47) that the successors of the prophet "redacted the national literature, excluding or sanctioning such portions of it as they saw fit," we presume with the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Among other books which are lost may be mentioned "the book of Shemaiah the prophet (2 Chronicles xii., 15), the book of Jehu concerning Jehoshaphat" (2 Chronicles xx., 34.) The acts of Uzziah, "first and last," written by Isaiah the prophet (2 Chronicles xxvi., 22,) and "the sayings of the seers" (2 Chronicles xxxiii., 19.) Nor is the book of Lamentations the same as that mentioned in 2 Chronicles xxxv., 25, since it contains no lament for Josiah.

Even in the New Testament we have some references to books no longer extant. When Paul told the disciples to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx., 35) he quoted either from tradition, or some apocryphal work, probably the Gospel according to the Hebrews, which contained the story mentioned by Paul of Jesus appearing to James. In 1 Corinthians ii., 9, a passage is quoted as scripture, which is not in the Bible, but which both Origen and Jerome say was taken from an apocryphal work, "The Revelation of Elias." Writing his "first epistle to the Corinthians," Paul alludes to a previous letter which is lost (1 Corinthians v., 9.) He also refers to an epistle from Laodicea (1 Col. iv., 16.) An epistle claiming to be the one referred to was in circulation in the second century, and from the sixth to the sixteenth century St. Paul's epistle to the Laodiceans was in the Bible of a large share of Christ's people; yet now we never hear of it, much less do we hear it called the word of God.

Matthew gives as from a prophet, the words, "He shall be called a Nazarene" (Matthew ii., 23) and says "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet. I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world" (Matthew xiii., 35.) No such prophecies are found in the Bible. If the writer was quoting correctly, he was quoting from works that are lost. It would take some time to give a list of all the gospels, epistles, acts and revelations, which in the early ages of Christianity were received as sacred and inspired, but it deserves notice that the book of Jude quotes the Assumption of Moses as authority for the fact that Michael the archangel contended with the Devil for the body of Moses, and expressly cites the book of Enoch as a prophecy by "the seventh from Adam." This book after having been supposed to have been lost, has been translated from the Ethiopic in the present century, and the work, instead of having been written by the seventh from Adam, is found to reflect the superstition and credulity which marked the period of the commencement of the Christian faith.

J. M. WIRELRI.

FERGUSON DEFENCE FUND.

In printing another list of subscriptions to this fund, we would draw attention to the fact that there is still a considerable deficit. It is highly necessary that the lawyer's bill should be settled soon, and the Freethinkers who have not yet subscribed, but intend to, are earnestly requested to remit at once. A brilliant victory was achieved for the Freethought party, and the cost of the battle should not be grudged. When the account is closed we shall publish a rough balance-sheet.

The following additional subscriptions have been received:—Wellingborough Branch N. S. S., 5s. 6d.; H. M. Ridgway, 5s.;

W. A. Cole, 2s.; H. B. Goff, 1s.; W. Dickinson, 2s.; Young Devon, 6d.; R. S. Hilton, £1; J. Hewitson, 1s.; J. Worster, 2s. 6d.; H. Harwood, 2s.; W. Clarkson, 15s.; T. Cussen, 6d.; F. Barnes, 6d.; A. Lewis, 1s.; — Sherbrook, 1s.; J. Chapman, 2s.

ACID DROPS.

CLARENCE J. SEARS, an eighty-year-old saint, had "some trouble with his wife upon the subject of religion" at Homer, near Ottawa, Illinois. In the evening he assaulted her with a hand-saw, and slashed her so fearfully that she died in two hours.

THE Rev. Dr. Hayman has petitioned Convocation not to sanction the Revised Version of the Bible, on the ground that it puts Sheol in capital letters, but changes Messiah into "the anointed one" in Daniel ix., 25. He also says that Isaiah vii., 14, should be "Behold, The Virgin shall conceive," instead of "a virgin," or as better suggested in the margin, "the maiden." Dr. Hayman is evidently disgusted to find that readers of the Revised Version can see for themselves how the so-called Messianic prophecies have been manipulated in order to make out the argument against the Jews.

THE great "kissing" controversy has, at any rate, proved two things to the general public: first, that religion has to be made very attractive indeed to induce young people to attend; next, that Sunday-school teachers experience great difficulty in telling the truth about the matter.

THE *Church Times* speaks of the *Christian Million* as representing one of "the more abject forms of Protestantism." This is the way in which Christians compliment each other.

A CORRESPONDENT informs us that, having heard from a missionary of a converted Atheist, he went with two Freethinking friends to see him at a mission hall in Nichol Street, Bethnal Green. Being permitted to ask him a question, he inquired what an Atheist was, to which the convert answered he did not know, but he had never believed the Bible. Another belonged to an infidel club, (the Commonwealth, and this glorious accession to the ranks of Christianity had been turned out of the club for misconducting himself. Let us hope such Christian converts will never return to "infidel" clubs.

THE *Christian* calls the London Working Men's Clubs, "London Drunkeries." It says "Some of these places have a theatrical performance on Sunday morning. Women are admitted on various occasions during the week and on Sundays," with the insinuation that something abominable goes on. Indeed it quotes a correspondent who says, "I am prepared to prove that one of these dens of boozing and gambling has destroyed the virtuous life of more young women, and brought into a mean and discontented Atheist life, more men than any hundred public houses in any part of London."

MORE seizures of hop-poles for extraordinary tithes at Marden, Kent. After the sales an indignation meeting was held. The Rev. T. A. Carr, who ordered the sales, had the impudence to offer to take the chair at this meeting, but his offer of course was rejected.

A DINNER was held at Biddenden in honor of Mr. George Cooper, the "Hero Friend," as the mottoes described him, of the farmers and laborers in their fight against extraordinary tithes. A testimonial from over 2,000 subscribers was presented to him. Three hundred sat down to dinner; and about 3,000 people assembled in the village. A band was playing, and an effigy of the minister astride a pocket of hops was drawn through the place amidst great excitement.

THE *Christian Herald* describes how a tongue of fire resembling "a drawn sword" was seen in the midnight sky. It thinks this indicates coming trouble, for some of the old soldiers, it says, saw similar swords just before the Crimean war and again before the Franco-Prussian war. If prophet Baxter was penning a new Bible these swords would go in like the sword in the sky that David saw when the destroying angel killed seventy thousand men because David had counted them.

THE *Christian Herald* talks of the "Christ-like" action of a boy who paid a shilling a week for a window which another boy had broken. But Christ never paid for breakages. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and attacked those that sold doves and carried vessels, but he offered no pecuniary compensation for all their losses and injuries. He simply evicted the tenants and declined to pay the piper. It was the boy who broke the window without paying for it whose action was "Christ-like."

THE Rev. R. Isherwood, curate in charge of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, has favored the public with his protest against the rotten state of the Church, which declines to recognise his invaluable services by promoting him to a vicarage. Mr. Isherwood does

not hesitate to blow his own trumpet. He says that for the last seventeen years he has "worked as hard and faithfully as any man could do," on a "miserable stipend" of £140 a year, besides money earned by "extra work" and "extra responsibilities." It is to be hoped, however, that he does not teach the poor, among whom he claims to have labored so arduously, that such an income as this is a "miserable" one.

THE bitter cry of this unpromoted curate arises because he cannot take the jump from his beggarly stipend to that of the vicar, who has £1,700. Failing to obtain this, the modest curate has applied in vain for a vicarage of £300 a year and a house. He has appealed to his bishop in vain, and "to the Crown in the person of the Premier," but nothing has come of it, and probably to God with a similar result. Poor devil! All the grand consolations of religious belief fade before the hopelessness of his pecuniary position. A small salary somehow crushes Christian hope. The contented parson who counted himself passing rich on forty pounds a year has died out—if he ever existed. The wretched curate who guarantees his own worthiness with an emphasis that carries conviction with it to the heart of every hearer, now shrieks aloud because he cannot get the larger share of loaves and fishes which he sees bestowed on younger and unworthier men, whose friends can put "great pressure" on the bishops and patrons. He now publicly appeals through the press, as a last desperate resource, to the right and fair feeling of Englishmen. How long, he cries, is this glaring iniquity in the Church to go on? The meek and humble teacher of the Gospel even threatens to turn to other work to obtain a livelihood, for he says he can never again submit to be curate to any man.

UNDOUBTEDLY there is a shameful amount of nepotism and corruption in the Church, but whether the complainant in this particular case is an example of modest merit neglected and despised admits of doubt. Hadn't he better give up a religion which supports "glaring iniquity" and fails to comfort him through the trials of impecuniosity? Let him leave the Church as he threatens and gain an honest living by work.

THE *Brighton Herald* gives a description of pretended "Faith Healing" by a Mr. Wood, that has been going on at the Young Men's Christian Institution in that city. Mr. Wood declares that before acquiring the power "he spent all night in prayer, being determined to attain holiness or die in the attempt." Suddenly he was changed, and "the glory of God streamed through him." Mr. Wood was corroborated by a Mr. Barry, who declared that the only requisite for faith-healing was complete faith. "If you feel sick," he said, "ask Christ to cure you, and thank him whether you feel better or not." He also explained that when persons had been healed by faith it was essential they should bear testimony to what had been done for them or they would become ill again "and serve them right." To illustrate this, Barry said that he had been cured himself, but omitting to tell his friends it was through faith, he became unwell again, and remained so until he confessed.

AN elderly gentleman, named Sadler, essayed to read a verse printed in small type to give the assembly proof of the results of a prayer for the restoration of the sight of his youth. The experiment was rather a failure. Having got through two lines Mr. Sadler came to a standstill, in consequence, he said, of a tear coming into his eye, the presence of which he attributed to the "adversary." Not being able to get on, Mr. Sadler called on the Lord to "rebuke Satan," but for some time no progress could be made, and at last he struggled through the remaining two lines with anything but accuracy.

TRULY Credulity dies hard. Another instance is the new sect of Jezreelites, who take the "Flying Roll" of James J. Jezreel as their gospel. Some *Extracts from the Flying Roll* are lying before us, and we should judge from them that James J. Jezreel exceeded any March hare in madness. Such a medley of Bible and Tommy Rot we have rarely read. Here's a specimen:

"We are, dear friends, living in the third day—or third dispensation—the eleventh and last hour of that day—the third and last watch, and the last minute of that watch and hour.—Do 'you' seek to be loosed and let go? do you seek to be made whole?—It is written: 'Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand, three hundred and five and thirty days.'—The days in which all the Scriptures from Genesis to Revelations will be fulfilled;—the time in which will be uttered the things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

Jezreel's doctrine as to God and Woman, is peculiar. He says:

"The female is one, and the male is the second, and God is the third—the last and first of the Trinity, three persons and yet one God. But while evil is in the city, it is of Satan, and while man takes of it, the body dies;—but when man ceases taking of it, then the body lives.—So there are three tabernacles on earth, (as shown on the mount of transfiguration) and three in heaven,—the tabernacle which is of God, which is male and female,—earthly and yet of heaven.—Now the woman is the tabernacle of Satan, for therein is the evil placed to be divided,—the good from the evil and the evil from the good."

What he means, however, perhaps Jezreel is unable to determine himself. He is certainly a capital theologian. He knows that for a modern prophet to succeed, he must excite curiosity and leave matters in a mist.

SKY-PILOTS always take a professional view of national questions. In a little pamphlet issued by a society for keeping up "the Lord's day," hailing from Bedford Street, Strand, it is distinctly admitted that if museums and picture galleries were opened on Sunday they would draw children from Sunday-school and adults from church and chapel. No doubt; but in a Free-Trade country why should sky-pilots have the benefit of protective laws? According to their own admission many people are forced into places of worship out of the wet, or for a little excitement, who would go elsewhere if they had an opportunity; and the sky-pilots would deny them the opportunity in order to maintain their own monopoly of business.

THE Rev. S. D. Headlam's *Church Reformer* for April is as readable as usual. In one paragraph he notes, we fancy with a little exaggeration, that "the Bethnal Green Secularists have lately been occupied for several evenings in discussing whether the Israelites crossed the Red Sea." According to Mr. Headlam, this fact (or fancy) shows that these men are profoundly spiritual. He pictures them "gaunt, pale and hungry, listening to arguments that have nothing to do with their material lot." We address at least as many Secular audiences as Mr. Headlam, but we have failed to notice the "gaunt, pale, and hungry" persons he refers to. Freethinkers do not appear to get into such miserable distress as their Christian neighbors. During the present period of depression extra demands are made on the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund, but they are not alarming, and the fund, although not a very large one, is more than sufficient for its purposes.

MR. HEADLAM goes on to say that "if it were not for the Guild of St. Matthew's lecturers we doubt whether the Secularists would get much secular instruction at all." Being a clergyman, although a reformer, Mr. Headlam cannot be expected to understand "secular" teaching as Freethinkers do. Freeing men's minds from superstition is in our opinion the best kind of "secular" work. It is like freeing their bodies from disease. Without it no progress is possible, and with it progress is certain. Making a man a Freethinker is making him also a political and social reformer. We put it to Mr. Headlam whether, as a matter of fact, Freethinkers do not contribute, in proportion to their numbers, infinitely more assistance to progressive causes than Christians?

WE read in the *Church Reformer* that a new society has been formed "for the purpose of inculcating and putting into practice the plain practical principles of Christianity." It is to be called "The Kingdom of Christ Society," and its organiser is the Rev. Alexander H. Smith, M.A. This gentleman does not state what the plain practical principles of Christianity are. If he did the membership of the Kingdom of Christ Society would be very small.

THE Catholic Bishop of Nottingham is in a mess of his own making. Having warned his flock against joining the Primrose League, and threatening to withhold the communion in case of disobedience, he was met by a letter from Cardinal Manning, allowing Catholics to join the League, and describing its objects as laudable; and, now the Pope backs up the Cardinal, the poor Bishop of Nottingham is sitting in a corner eating humble pie. If, however, Cardinal Manning and the Pope had not come to the rescue of the Primrose League, every one of its members who happened to be a Catholic would have been liable to a bishop's ban. But that is not all. The whole affair shows the mental slavery in which Catholics are held by their spiritual directors. They must ask the priest whether the Church approves a society before they can join it. They have no will of their own, but are pulled to and fro like puppets by the priestly mummies.

THE Rev. W. Cariss, rector of St. Gabriel's, Pickford Street, Aston, Birmingham, has been summoned, for non-payment of poor rates. A committal order was made for payment in fourteen days.

THE *Scientific American* says that some one suggests the brilliant idea of chaining a bible to each telephone in the country, so that while waiting for replies the telephoner will have something to read of a nature to "repress profanity." This pious genius must mean to "excite profanity," surely. The Bible has more damning and swearing and cursing than any other book we know of, and more horrible doctrines.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* proposes that a Christian Parliament or Conference should be held, and that one of the subjects for discussion shall be, "Why do the Churches fail to interest the masses?" It is well that their failure should be acknowledged. Their right to domineer over the masses, to steal tithes and church-rates, and to be protected with special laws and exemptions and privileges, may then be enquired into.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 4, Public Hall, King Street, Wigan; at 11, "Bible Blunders;" at 3, "The Church in Danger;" at 6.30, "Why I am an Atheist."

Thursday, April 8, Hall of Science, Old Street, London.—Debate with the Rev. Dr. McCann on "Christianity or Secularism: which is True?"

APRIL 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.—J. Sanderson, A. Swinney.

E. J. PILCHER.—It was impossible to record all the crimes of missionaries in one number of *Crimes of Christianity*. The Puritans and Protestants in Ireland will have their turn.

AN ANXIOUS INQUIRER (Sheffield) asks if the builders of the Tower of Babel went home to their meals and what time was allowed to those who worked at the top. Apply to the Universal Information Office.

R. MORGAN.—Hardly up to the mark and a little too broad.

S. J. HANNAY.—Thanks for the verso, which will appear in our next number.

H. SMITHERS.—The *National Reformer* already publishes a Guide to the Sunday lectures in London and the provinces. There is no room for such a list in the *Freethinker*. If we published a weekly announcement of the lectures at the hall you mention we should have to do it for every other hall as well.

C. WEINAND.—You had better apply to Mr. Ramsey at 28 Stonecutter Street.

MARY ROSS.—We were tempted to print your interesting letter, but our space is too limited. It is pleasant to hear from so young a *Freethinker*, and we are delighted to find that your brothers and sisters as well as yourself derive so much satisfaction from reading the *Freethinker* and *Progress*.

E. COX.—Our letter must have shown you that we meant to act fairly. If you do not care to pursue the matter the fault is not ours. Knowing something of outdoor discussions we are not surprised at occasional heats and misunderstandings.

J. P. CHASE.—The drawing you refer to did not reproduce well. It was rather striking in the original.

AMICUS.—Thanks for the cutting. Mr. Foote will be happy to visit Bradford one of these days, and to lecture in Pullan's Music Hall or some other large building.

H. G. MARTIN.—Mr. Bradlaugh must defend himself, as he is quite able to. Charles Coborn, the vocal comedian, is not a very redoubtable antagonist.

INFIDEL.—Pleased to hear your opinion of *Prisoner for Blasphemy*. Still more pleased to hear of your success in distributing our pamphlets.

X. Y. Z. writes: "I notice you are to have a tilt with Dr. McCann, and I urge that the debate should be published. The polemics of two such champions would be representative, and as you are to have four nights of it, the matter would be fully discussed. I am sure it would do a world of good to the Freethought cause, as it would put the contrast of the two systems in a nutshell."—We are considering this matter. No doubt the Debate would sell, but in addition to printing, the cost of a good report would be a heavy item.

A. BEE.—It is no trouble. We also regret the misadventure.

S. N. (Bradford).—If the lectures you refer to have been delivered by Mr. Foote in several Yorkshire towns it is because they are new ones and have been selected by the Branches. You can hardly expect a lecturer to prepare three new lectures every Sunday. God Almighty might do it, but we doubt whether the wisest and the strongest of his children could imitate the feat. Besides a lecture improves by frequent delivery, and if Halifax enjoys it, why should not Leeds and Bradford enjoy it too? As a matter of fact, Mr. Foote has lectured on some forty different subjects during the last two years, but naturally the newest are the most in demand.—We are not in the habit of publishing our circulation, but your Christian friend's talk of a few hundreds is rubbish. It takes the sale of a good many thousand to pay our printing bill, to say nothing of other expenses.—We know nothing of Mr. Wilks' business. If he does not execute your order you should demand an explanation of him.

A. WALL.—The joke has already appeared. We do not like borrowing illustrations from our English contemporaries.

W. CLARKSON.—Your remittance has turned up after all and is acknowledged this week. Correspondents should notice that our address is 14 Clerkenwell Green, E.C., not 28 Stonecutter Street.

J. WATSON.—We hope your prediction will be realised. Mr. Foote will be glad of decent weather the next time he visits Liverpool. The Lord has been rather rough on him in that city.

F. MULVEY.—John does not say on which side Jesus was pierced. We are always glad of cuttings.

THE illustration announced on our contents-bill this week is unavoidably delayed till the next. We have provided a capital substitute.

CORRESPONDENCE should not reach us 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.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—South Australia Chronicle—Adelaide Observer—Weekly Dispatch—Halfpenny Weekly—Detroit Free Press—Liberator—North Wilts Herald—Burton and Derby Gazette—Western Times—Echoes of the Exe—Boston and Lincolnshire Mercury—Shields Daily News—Evening Standard—Brighton Herald—Church Reformer—Christian—People's News—Sower—West Sussex Gazette

SUGAR PLUMS.

NEXT Thursday evening, at the London Hall of Science, the four nights' Debate will commence between the Rev. Dr. McCann and Mr. Foote. Mrs. Besant will occupy the chair. It is so difficult to bring a Christian minister into a public discussion, that another opportunity may not occur for years, and there is likely to be a crowded house.

BY THE WAY, the Christian Evidence Society does nothing to swell Dr. McCann's part of the audience. With an astuteness which is beyond all praise, the C. E. S. will not promote or countenance a public debate. Knowing that it has much to lose and little to gain by discussion, it goes on lecturing in an amateurish way, and is satisfied if at the end of the year it can cook a passable report for its subscribers.

HENLEY HALL, Battersea, was crowded last Monday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "An Hour in Hell." Some criticism was offered by two clerical gentlemen, who made the mistake of not adapting their remarks to the audience. What does in a Church will not do in a Secular hall. With respect to original sin, one of them observed that there was after all something in it, for babies very soon gave their mothers a good deal of trouble. The rest of his well-meant arguments were of a similar character.

HENLEY HALL is rented by the Battersea Branch of the N. S. S., and we regret to hear that the Society's finances are not too flourishing. A little more support from Freethinkers in the district would set it well on its legs, and we hope the support will be forthcoming. We advise the Branch to discontinue the *free* lectures. They are all right in theory but all wrong in practice. We have few wealthy men in our ranks, working men cannot give money as well as time, and the lectures should be made self-supporting, as they easily can be with proper management.

It is a gratifying sign when even Conservative journals report Secularist lectures. The *North Wilts Herald* contains a very good notice of three lectures by Mr. Arthur B. Moss, in which some of his most telling points against orthodoxy are given. Mr. Moss is an earnest and active worker, and we are pleased to see him pushing his way into merited notice.

AGAIN the *Nineteenth Century* gives the first place to Prof. Huxley's continuation of his able paper on the "Evolution of Theology," in which he shows the great similarity between the early beliefs of the Jews and those of Polynesian savages. Prof. Huxley thoroughly exposes the root of god worship in ghost fear, and declares that when theological symbols "are dealt with as real existences, I think the highest duty which is laid upon men of science is to show that these dogmatic idols have no greater value than the fabrications of men's hands, the stocks and stones which they have replaced." Both of Prof. Huxley's papers will be dealt with fully in our next number.

WHILE Professor Huxley has been explaining the evolution of Jewish theology, Ernest Rénan, in the *Revue de Deux Mondes* (March 1 and 15) has been publishing his views as to the date of the Jew books. With Professor Wellhausen and the advanced critical school he considers the legal portions of the Pentateuch in Leviticus and elsewhere as posterior to the captivity, that is to say, nearly a thousand years after Moses. Those laws are all connected with the worship of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle, M. Rénan holds, is a mere reflection of the later temple. He considers, however, that the Elohist portion of Genesis is old, and not as many German critics think, put together after the sojourn in Babylon; yet he refers the story of Creation to Babylonian tradition, of which the Elohist suppressed the worst absurdities. M. Rénan's literary eye discerns, embedded in the historical books, many fragments of early heroic ballads, such as those cited from the book of Jasher, and popular stories such as the *Romance of Joseph*, which, by the way, was almost certainly copied from an older Egyptian story yet extant.

In the April number of *Progress* politics is represented by Mr. Foote's "Three Acres and a Cow;" science by Dr. Aveling's "Theories of Heredity;" literature by James Thomson's account of "Flaubert's Temptation of St. Anthony;" and S. Britton's paper on Froude's *Oceana*: Freethought history by Mr. Wheeler's paper on Anthony Collins; criticism by Dr. Rose's able review of Professor Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*; humor by Mr. Standring's paper on the blaspheming "Dod Grile;" and

poetry by contributions from John M. Harvey and James Thomson. The number contains in addition reviews of recent important works, and some lively gossip.

THE *Saturday Review* has an article on "The Decay of Evangelicalism." It points out how all the leaders of the "Clapham sect" have died out, leaving no better successors than Earl Harrowby and Lord Ebury. The truth is the Evangelical movement is dying before the dissolvent action of scepticism, and the clericals are all taking to music, vestments and sensuous religion, in order to retain their hold upon the women.

MAX O'RELL'S lecture on "John Bull and Jacques Bonhomme" contains some good cuts at British piety. Here is a specimen: "If John conquered a nation it was to improve its condition in this world and to secure its welfare in the next. 'Give me your territory,' said John, 'and you shall have the Bible; exchange is no robbery.'"

ON Wednesday, April 28, the annual meeting of the Association for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws will be held at the South Place Institute, London. The Secretary, the Rev. W. Sharman, will travel up from Preston to be present. Mr. Bradlaugh, we believe, is prevented by other engagements from attending, but Mrs. Besant and Mr. Foote will be among the speakers. As the meeting will be of considerable importance, we hope the London Freethinkers will attend in large numbers. All members of the N. S. S. are also members of the Association with the right of speaking and voting at general meetings. Up to the present an introducer has not been found for Sir James Stephen's draught Bill, but it is hoped that something definite will be laid before the South Place meeting.

CHRISTIAN KISSES.

SOME men of God have practised the noble art of kissing as a pious duty, while others have abstained from it as an equally pious duty. The pious heroes of the Old Testament kissed each other as well as their neighbors' wives. Jacob, the most treacherous and cowardly of them, was the most given to kissing. He kissed his father while cheating him. He kissed Rachel and wept. He kissed Laban whom he had defrauded and Esau whose vengeance he feared. Moses kissed Aaron. The prophet Samuel kissed king Saul. Absalom kissed "any man that came nigh him to do him obeisance." Jonathan and David kissed each other.

Christ allowed ladies to kiss him, at least on the feet, and I suppose their kisses must have been thoroughly Christian kisses. A woman "which was a sinner" had all her sins forgiven her in return for her osculatory performances on his big toe; and Christ reproached his entertainer, Simon, saying, "Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet" (Luke vii., 45). Whether Christ approved of stolen kisses or not, we do not know, for his life from his boyhood to the age of thirty is, doubtless for the wisest of purposes, left a complete blank. He must have approved of some forms of kissing, however, or else Judas would never have ventured upon kissing him as the signal of his betrayal. How many pious kissings like Judas's have since taken place among "most Christian" monarchs and treacherous saints, I will not stop to inquire.

One common form of Christian kissing is seen in the clergyman's privilege of taking the first kiss of the bride—which Lacroix, who is no mere scandal-monger, contends is a relic of the *jus primæ noctis*. Ministers like the Rev. George Dyson who court rich men's wives during their life-time, exhibit another form of sanctified kissing which may be more common than congregations care to suspect.

The early Christians were noted for their kissings at their agapæ or love-feasts, which were often held at a late hour of the night. The scandals arising led at length to the suppression of these highly popular meetings. The Christian mind is now agitated with a revival of some scandals in the kissing line. The *Christian Million* called public attention to the matter, and the secular press has taken up the subject. But the *Christian Million* observes that "the silence of the religious press on this question is unaccountable." Evidently the religious journals wish to ignore the subject, as one calculated to bring ridicule on religion and condemnation upon its teachers. They cannot, however, escape the facts. One "Old Sunday-school Teacher," thanking the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* for attacking a "growing evil," says: "If you were to insert the names of all the Sunday-schools in which these kissing

games have been witnessed, the *Daily Telegraph* would be one huge catalogue of them. I could myself furnish a large list." And the *Christian Million* says, "So could we. So, we find, could many of those to whom we have spoken on the subject." A Birmingham schoolmaster sat down to write an indignant protest against the accusations, but was astonished to find his own servant-maid volunteering the statement, "We often play those games at our school." The *Christian Million* says it could have crowded its two last numbers with kissing incidents and details, and it could, moreover, have filled its columns with "accounts of unhappy women whose first step in vice was associated with the practices." As these promiscuous kissings prove a great attraction both to Sunday-school scholars and to Sunday-school teachers, managers are often compelled to allow them, on pain of losing both teachers and scholars, and the popularity resulting from the practice is duly credited to Christianity. One minister stopped these kissing games, but "the teachers and scholars never forgave him for it, and they never rested until they had driven him from that place."

These Sunday-school managers are not so far wrong from the Christian point of view, for Christian kissing is a thoroughly biblical institution. The Christian kiss of love or charity was formerly practised by all believers. St. Paul says, "Salute one another with an holy kiss" (Rom. xvi., 16); "Greet ye one another with an holy kiss" (1 Cor. xvi., 20; 2 Cor. xiii., 12; 1 Thess. v., 26). St. Peter similarly says, "Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity" (1 Pet. v., 14). Of course, the difficulty will be to determine the amount of piety and charity there is in a Sunday-school kiss. When a married manager kisses and embraces all the big girls, this undoubtedly is a pious fulfilment of Paul's injunction, but when the young men and girls spend "nearly two hours" or "four or five hours" in the all-round kissings for which they attended the meeting, are they also only thinking of the pious texts they are obeying? Is sanctification of spirit the object of their romping, and is kissing a new and highly popular Christian sacrament? Is this the way in which Christian girls are to "kiss the Son lest he be angry"? Are they to show "the church's love to Christ" by repeating the inspired language of the Song of Solomon, "Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth" (i., 2)? If Christ had given definite instructions, or had told us his own early history, we might have had some trustworthy guidance in the matter. Did he play kiss-in-the-ring with the young maidens of Nazareth, and if not why not? Did he take his pay as postman at Galilean Christmas parties in the usual osculatory coin, or was he above playing forfeits? His miserably incompetent biographers really ought to have enlightened the people on these and many other points which they have left in total darkness, to the disgust of a curious and interested public, who might have learned so much from a full biography, or better still autobiography, of the great exemplar.

One Sunday-school teacher asks "what possible harm there can be in the amusements referred to." He may perhaps be as innocent as the old monk who, when he came across two people kissing in the dark, thanked God that there was so much Christian charity left in the world. But there are two sides to the question. Independently of the alleged fact that many girls have first gone wrong through the loss of modesty in such wholesale kissing and promiscuous embracing, or have been led into hasty and ill-assorted marriages, it is at least as well that parents should know what really takes place at pious entertainments. If, as at a certain Sunday-school in Salford, part of the customary religious attraction consists in the spectacle of the curate "chasing the teachers and scholars up and down the school with a piece of mistletoe" and "struggling with a teacher or elder scholar for a kiss in the middle of the school-room," the parents ought scarcely to be hoodwinked with the edifying pretence of sanctity and pious instruction. If they know that when all the Christian young men and married saints go down on their knees it is not for prayer but for the purpose of hugging and kissing the nearest girls to the word of order, judicious parents will be able to exercise their own discretion in sending or not sending their daughters to take part in such godly exercises. Scepticism is growing, and many Christian parents when they are acquainted with the facts will strongly disapprove of these indiscriminate greetings with

holy kisses fired in repeated "volleys." They do not feel sure where the matter will end. About a year ago the American papers were reporting the kissings and courtings and mock marriages which were then the rage at "church sociables." Several of these mock weddings, according to the papers, were legally performed by members of the party who had forgotten for the moment that they were legally qualified ministers. A similar incident occurred in Scotland. Perhaps if this playing at matrimony is super-added to the kissing games, the Sunday-school will become still more popular, and discreet parents will have to send their daughters to the Hall of Science as the only way of keeping them out of mischief on Sundays.

W. P. BALL.

A SUNDAY SERVICE IN AUSTRALIA.

THE Town Hall clock was striking eleven on Sunday evening, when an intellectual-looking man, who appeared as if fasting for a wager, might be observed at the junction of Park and Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

It was we.

The afternoon had been spent by us in the Domain, absorbing information from the peripatetic but highly-cultivated lecturers who hebdomadally treat the public to a series of well-digested views on the political and religious subjects of the day. At these gatherings, every shade of opinion finds its admirers. From one knoll, an intelligent shoemaker proclaims in trumpet tones his entire disbelief in the personality of the Devil, and secures considerable applause. He is succeeded by a little bald-headed, spindle-shanked orator, who pipes his opinion that although Satan might have existed, still overwork and loose living have long since killed him. A third speaker, anxious to divert the current of thought from a sacerdotal into a political channel, breaks fresh ground by asserting that there is but one Monarch in the world at present and he is a stick—of dynamite. This uncomprising lecturer was of foreign aspect, and so much resembled the welcome persons who, by merely turning a handle, keep our streets alive with polkas and profanity, that a person beside us with a mouth like a torn gunny-bag, asked "Where's the monkey, mate?" This thoughtful query caused such unbecoming levity that the iconoclast retired with a cruel sneer on his dark face.

At the corner named there was a band of evangelists formed in a circle, and singing hymns in a half-hearted way. The entrance to the Gaiety Theatre was but a short distance off, and as crowds struggled for admission to a Freethought lecture the cause of the thread of melancholy running through the Salvationists' music became apparent. It was a gruesome sight to see people paying for the privilege of being burned when, for nothing, they could be saved, and choose their own temperature. A demure-looking female invited us to share her book, pointed out the hymn, and trusted we would join. We did. But the bitter experiences resulting from the occupancy of a seat in front of the corner-men at Hiscock's minstrel show, on Saturday night, caused us to compromise ourselves too deeply to be forgiven. By a sort of unconscious cerebration we fatuously demanded from the leading disciple solutions of a number of childish conundrums. We're not quite certain that we didn't put to him, "S'pose you was a-boatin' with your wife and moder an' they fell in, which on 'em would you save?" It was only when a huge rustic, with a powerful breath and a truculent hat, gave us a slap like a railway buffer, and remarked, "Hi, Mister. Ask 'im 'bout Jonar an' the whale an' I'll see fair play," that we saw what a spectacle we were making of ourselves.

The Gaiety remained. Joseph Symes was to lecture. The first thing we saw on entering was Nick Feuillade tuning his fiddle. Then we were for going out and getting our money back, but the passage was blocked. From reading the Melbourne papers, particularly the *Telegraph* and the *Southern Cross*, we knew all about Symes—that he was a vulgar, ignorant person, who, in pigeon English, and with an accent savoring of Seven Dials, poured out buckets of blasphemy. Why the house was so packed appeared to us but an illustration of the depraved taste of the people. After some airs from "Lucia" had been treated with wanton vindictiveness, Joseph arose, but had to fall back on bowing for about five minutes till silence was restored. Then, for nearly an hour and a half, he simply played upon the great audience. Silence, laughter, and cheers of approval or of indignation followed almost every sentence. It was singular. Here in front of us was a man who, but the other day, stood in a dock behind rows of iron spikes, and defied the bitter bigotry of a great city to gag him—stood there to defend not himself alone, but every man who prizes the right to act and speak as he likes—provided that, by so doing, he does not encroach on the rights of others. Instead of ribald twaddle, he gave us peeps into vistas of thought—nervous, cultivated English, instead of uncouth *patois*. And all this without a note of any kind or the least hesitation. Through the whole "service" ran little threads of humor which kept the "congregation's" mouths stretched to an abnormal extent. Persons who use false teeth and are ashamed to own it should avoid

Symes. Teeth are proverbially hard to digest. And yet we almost regret having gone. His visit has spoilt our ideal ogre. While Joseph appeared to us as the modern raw-head-and-bloody-bones we were happy. Now, it is clear that somebody must have been telling stories, and (the thought is maddening) if it should turn out to be the pious newspapers! But, no. They never lie. The Archimedean lever that—[Give it a rest. No more Sunday reporting for you.—Ed. B.] Well, at any rate, room might be given us to say that Joe issued a challenge to anyone to meet him in fair argument on any subject. We were disposed to take it up before the lecture commenced. By the time it was finished we thought it was well to let Cardinal Moran, Bishop Barry, or some other hierophant have the first go. We've no doubt they could knock this aggressive sceptic over the ropes in the first round, and it is a duty they owe the public to do so without delay.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

REVIEWS.

Two Revelations. By A. B. MOSS. London: Watts and Co.—Mr. Moss is an indefatigable pamphleteer. His latest publication compares the Bible with Science, shows their incompatibility, and how the stupendous verities of revelation of nature transcend the myths and fables of the revelation of the Jews.

Our Corner. April. Freethought Publishing Co.—Mr. Bradlaugh opens with the first part of an article on "Compulsory Land Cultivation." Mr. J. S. Stuart Glennie follows with a striking paper on "The Crofters' Revolt." Mrs. Besant continues her exposition of Modern Socialism, dealing with Land and Capital. Mr. Robertson gives another instalment of his learned and thoughtful essay on Evolution in Drama; in which, however, he ventures the singular opinion that the Elizabethan dramatists, with the single exception of Shakespeare, are of "mainly antiquarian" interest.

Autobiographical Sketches. By ANNIE BESANT. London: Freethought Publishing Co.—There is, and probably always will be, difference of opinion as to whether autobiographies should be written at all; still more as to whether they should be published in the writers' lifetime, unless they are so old as to be practically aloof from the world. Mrs. Besant has anticipated this reflection. She explains that she publishes these Sketches in response to many inquiries after some outline of her life, and "in some measure as defence against unfair attacks." Those who read them as they appeared in *Our Corner* know already what they are like. Others, however—and they, of course, are the vast majority even of the Freethought party—may be told that the volume is well and vividly written, sometimes pathetic though seldom humorous, and occasionally fascinating. Mrs. Besant's life has been eventful. A clergyman's wife, separated from him for heterodox conviction, a colleague of a notorious Atheist and Radical, prosecuted with him for publishing an "obscene" pamphlet on the population question, narrowly escaping imprisonment, and finally robbed of her child by the Christian male law; she has plenty of stirring incidents to write about, and she does so with a skilful pen. Her later public history is the most important, but her earlier private history is the most interesting. A few *naïve* touches show the woman in the writer; but what eye can remain unmoistened at the natural language of real grief, when the Atheist mother, bereaved of her child without the numbing opiate of death, says "at night I could not sleep, missing in the darkness the soft breathing of the little child?" One shudders at these things, as before a momentarily unveiled mystery of life, tragic beyond words. Mrs. Besant's living martyrdom is appalling, but her sorrow is turned to labor, and her childless home is no gain to "the Infamous." We wish Christians would read this volume as well as Freethinkers; perhaps curiosity about a notorious woman will induce some of them to dip into it. Prefixed to the title-page is a very fine cabinet portrait.

OBITUARY.—We regret to hear of the death of James Pitt, on Wednesday, March 24, at his residence, Grove Road, Old Ford. He was an old and highly-esteemed member of the Central London Branch of the National Secular Society. The interment took place at Bow Cemetery, Mile End Road, on Wednesday, March 31. He was an earnest supporter of the cause and a great advocate for all measures of reform, always taking an active part in aiding his fellow men.—F. G. STONELEY.

ON Saturday last Mr. Adamson, of Plymouth, officiated at the funeral of Ophelia Norah, infant daughter of Joshua Widdicombe, of Chudleigh, which took place at the Higher Cemetery, Exeter. This is the first Secular funeral that has taken place in the cathedral city of Exeter. The service was taken from the late Austin Holyoake's *Manual of Secularist Songs and Ceremonies*, a considerable extract from which is given in the report in the *Western Times*.

THE *Shields Daily News*, under the heading "A Secular Burial Service," also gives a report of a funeral of a Secularist, which took place at South Shields on Tuesday week, at which there was a large attendance. It gives in full the funeral service, which in this case was, we believe, extracted from Ingersoll.

PROFANE JOKES.

A FRENCH milliner has invented a bonnet trimmed with asses' ears. It probably signifies when worn in church, "Let us bray."

"SAY MA, I dess Dod's puttin' up fly screens" said a little girl, who saw a tangled mass of telephone wires overhead for the first time.

A PARISHIONER asked his pastor the meaning of this line of Scripture: "He was clothed with curses as with a garment." "It signifies," replied the divine "that the individual had a habit of swearing."

"WHAT is your name, little girl?" asked the Sunday school teacher of a new scholar. "Sheolen Miller, Miss," was the answer. "Sheolen?" repeated the teacher, somewhat surprised; "isn't that rather a queer name?" "Yes, Miss, but before the Revised Version came out it wasn't so queer." Then the teacher fell to thinking of spiritual matters.

SOME remarkable answers on Scriptural matters were given in a recent examination. It was "Daniel in the lions' den" who said "It is not good for man to be alone;" and why the Israelites made a golden calf was "because they hadn't enough silver to make a cow." Another instance of these logical conclusions was when a pupil was asked, "What did the Israelites do when they came out of the Red Sea?" The answer was, "They dried themselves."

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.

SUBJECT:

CHRISTIANITY OR SECULARISM WHICH IS THE TRUER?

Admission, 3d. and 6d. Front Seats, 1s. Tickets admitting to Front Seats by private entrance, to avoid the crush, 4s. for the four nights. Obtainable at the Hall of Science Club; at 28 Stonecutter Street; or at 14 Clerkenwell Green.

Doors open at 7.30. Debate from 8 to 10.

READY NEXT WEEK.

BIBLE ABSURDITIES

PART II. OF THE BIBLE HANDBOOK FOR FREETHINKERS AND INQUIRING CHRISTIANS.

EDITED BY

G. W. Foote and W. P. Ball, Containing all the chief absurdities from Genesis to Revelation, conveniently and strikingly arranged, with appropriate headlines, giving the point of each absurdity in a sentence.

In Wrapper, Price Sixpence.

TWO REVELATIONS

AND

MAN & THE LOWER ANIMALS.

Two New Pamphlets

By ARTHUR B. MOSS.

SIXTEEN PAGES. ONE PENNY EACH.

The NATIONAL REFORMER says: "Mr. Arthur Moss issues another pamphlet, 'Two Revelations.' He puts natural revelation in contrast with Gonesaic revelation. He claims to write for the instruction of younger Freethinkers, but older ones may find his pen serviceable in propagandist work."

RUBBER STAMPS.

National Secular Society Monogram ... 1 0
Any two-letter Monogram ... 1 0
Name in full ... 1 4
Postage to any part of England 2d. extra. Agents Wanted.

I RETON AND CO
92 GRACECHURCH ST., E.C.



Prisoner for Blasphemy.

By G. W. FOOTE.

Preface on the Blasphemy Laws, discussing the views of Lord Coleridge, Sir James Stephen, Judge North, Dr. Blake Odgers, and others.

- Chapter 1.—The Storm Brewing.
- " 2.—Our First Summons.
- " 3.—Mr. Bradlaugh Included.
- " 4.—Our Indictment.
- " 5.—Another Prosecution.
- " 6.—Preparing for Trial.
- " 7.—At the Old Bailey.
- " 8.—Newgate.
- " 9.—The Second Trial.
- " 10.—"Black Maria."
- " 11.—Holloway Gaol.
- " 12.—Prison Life.
- " 13.—Parson Plaford.
- " 14.—The Third Trial.
- " 15.—Loss and Gain.
- " 16.—A Long Night.
- " 17.—Daylight.

"Altogether apart from the theological opinions of its author, it is an interesting record of prison life, and will make many who do not sympathise with his views, regret the scandal caused by their own injudicious partizans."—*Weekly Times*.

"An important Preface."—*National Reformer*.
"The book is valuable just now, but it will be much more valuable by-and-by. . . Mr. Foote relates in a quiet, manly way, without any sensational or hysterical shrieking, how he was subjected to gross injustice and indignity."—*Secular Review*.

"Well written. . . The book must have a certain value as associated with a case that will be historical."—*Western Daily Mercury*.

"This interesting, and in some parts very humorous, description of a prisoner's life in Holloway Gaol."—*Reynolds's Newspaper*.

"Seeing what ample excuse Mr. Foote has for being angry, his narrative is very temperately written, and should be not only interesting to readers now, but also, as he says, 'of service to the future historian of our time.'"—*Weekly Dispatch*.

"Among the books which have a value for many a long year after the author has passed away."—*Our Corner*.

Cheap Edition, in Paper Covers ... 1s. 6d.
Superior Edition, in Cloth ... 2s. 6d.

FOOTSTEPS OF THE PAST.

A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS ON Human Evolution, Oriental Religions, and European Customs and Superstitions.

BY

J. M. WHEELER.

With an Introduction by G. W. FOOTE.

In Paper Wrapper, 1s.

Bound in Limp Cloth, 1s. 4d.

Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter Street.

CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.

BY

G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler.

In parts of 16 pp. Price One Penny each:—
I. Christ to Constantine—II. Constantine to Jovian—III. Athanasius to Hypatia—IV. Monks—V. Pious Frauds—VI. Pious Frauds (concluded)—VII. The Rise of the Papacy—VIII. The Crimes of the Popes—IX. Ignorance, Vices and Quarrels of the Early Clergy—X. The Jew Hunt—XI. The Jew Hunt (concluded)—XII. The Crusades—XIII. The Crusades (concluded)—XIV. Witchcraft—XV. The Inquisition—XVI. The Inquisition (concluded)—XVII. Protestant Persecutions in Europe.

Now Ready.

PART XVIII.—CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.

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

VOL. I., including Parts I. to IX. Price One Shilling.

144 pp. Bound in handsome wrapper.

NOW READY.

VOL. II., containing Parts X. to XVIII. Price One Shilling.

144 pp., in handsome wrapper, similar to Vol. I.

Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter St.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall,

36 NEWINGTON GREEN ROAD, N.

SUNDAY EVENING LECTURES.

April 4.—MR. F. FERROZA. Subject: "Indian Civilisation."

April 11.—MR. T. EVAN JACOBS, B.A. (Cantab). Subject: "Lady Macbeth."

Mr. Eyre's String Band Every Sunday Evening at 7.

Price Sixpence.

PROGRESS

A Monthly Magazine,

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

The APRIL NUMBER contains—

- Three Acres and a Cow. By G. W. Foote.
- Theories of Heredity. By Edward Aveling.
- 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.C.P.
- American Humorists: Dod Grile. By George Standring.
- Mr. Froude Goes Round. By S. Britton.
- Reviews Gossip, etc.

Manchester Secular Hall Company (LIMITED).

Registered Offices—20 Kennedy Street, Manchester. Hon. Sec., GEORGE PAYNE.

SPECIAL APPEAL.

In order that the £500 left by the late Mr. Spencer to aid in erecting or purchasing a Manchester Secular Hall may not be lost through that sum not being sufficiently supplemented by other contributions, it is exceedingly important that those who contemplate taking shares or making donations should do so without delay. Three friends have now promised to take 100 shares each, conditionally on a further 700 shares, to make up 1,000, being subscribed for during the next three months. It is hoped that the Secularists of Manchester and the vicinity will not fail to respond promptly to this friendly challenge.

The shares are £1 each payable in one sum or in monthly subscriptions of one shilling per share. Prospectuses with forms of application for shares and any further information may be obtained from the Hon. Secretary.

THE FREETHINKER'S

COMIC BIBLE

Comic Sketches, Part I. ... 4d.
Comic Sketches, Part II. ... 4d.

Part III. in preparation.

Each part contains 48 pages of illustrations on special paper, stitched in a handsome wrapper. The collection includes all the illustrations for which Sir Henry Tyler unsuccessfully prosecuted Messrs. Bradlaugh, Foote and Ramsey. It is a perennial source of amusement, and Freethinkers should put it into the hands of their children as an antidote to the Christian poison they may imbibe at school or elsewhere.

TO FREETHINKERS, Etc.

A TRIAL SOLICITED. BEST STYLE, FIT AND VALUE.

H. HAMPTON,

TAILOR, 14 Gt. Castle Street, W.
A FEW DOORS FROM REGENT CIRCUS.

Thwaites' Liver Pills.

Are acknowledged to be the best Family Medicine in the World by the many thousands that are using them in preference to all others. It is almost impossible to enumerate in an advertisement what they are good for; it would take up too much of your time to read it, and after you had read it you might say it was only advertising puff; but I ask One Trial of the LIVER PILLS: if not better than any you have tried before, I cannot expect a continuance of your custom. I recommend them for INDIGESTION, LOSS OF APETITE, DIZZINESS, BILIOUSNESS, COSTIVENESS, NERVOUSNESS, PALPITATION OF THE HEART, PILES, ETC., all of which are, in many cases, caused by the Liver being inactive, or what we call a sluggish Liver. Try some of the LIVER PILLS as soon as you can, as they are PURE HERB PILLS, and may be used at any time by anyone without any change of diet or danger of taking cold. Prepared only by GEORGE THWAITES, 2 Church Bow, Stockton-on-Tees. Sold at 1s. 1d. and 2s. 9d per box, or by post for 15 or 24 Penny Stamps. A Price List of Herbs free.

TEETH, 2s. 6d. each, on vulcanite; upper or lower set, £1. Best quality, on vulcanite, 4s a tooth, upper or lower set, £2. No extras. Completed in four hours when required. Best teeth on Platinum, 7s. 6d. each; on 14-carat gold, 15s. Painless extraction daily with gas, 6s.; without, 1s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.—MR. STANTON, B.D., 123 Strand, London. Hours nine to eight.

J. WORSTER, WINE AND SPIRIT MERCHANT, "Duke of Ormand," Princes Street, Westminster, The "National Reformer," "Freethinker," and other Freethought Journals at the bar.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE, at 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, London E.C.