

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 152.



SAINTS AT SEA.

And about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea. . . . And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased.—Mark vi., 48, 51.

OLD NICK.

This gentleman is of very ancient descent. His lineage dwarfs that of the proudest nobles and kings. English peers whose ancestors came in with the Conqueror, the Guelfs, Hapsburgs, and Hohenzollerns of our European thrones, are things of yesterday compared with his Highness the Devil. The Cæsars themselves, the more ancient rulers of Assyria, and even the Pharaohs of the first dynasty, are modern beside him. His origin is lost in the impenetrable obscurity of primitive times. Nay, there have been sages who maintained his eternity, who made him coeval with God, and placed upon his head the crown of a divided sovereignty of the infinite universe.

But time and change are lords of all, and the most durable things come to an end. Celestial and infernal, like earthly, powers are subject to the law of decay. Mutability touches them with her dissolving wand, and strong Necessity, the lord of gods and men, brings them to the inevitable stroke of Death. Senility falls on all beings and institutions—if they are allowed to perish naturally; and as our august Monarchy is the joke of wits, and our ancient House of Lords is an object of popular derision, so the high and mighty Devil in his palsied old age is the laughing-stock of those who once

trembled at the sound of his name. They omit the lofty titles he was once addressed by, and fearless of his fooble thunders and lightnings, they familiarly style him Old Nick. Alas, how are the mighty fallen! The potentate who was more terrible than an army with banners is now the sport of children and a common figure in melodrama. Even the genius of Milton, Goethe, and Byron, has not been able to save him from this miserable fate.

When this sobriquet of Old Nick first came into use is unknown. Macaulay, in his essay on Machiavelli, says that "Out of his surname they have coined an epithet for a knave, and out of his Christian name a synonym for the Devil." A couplet from *Hudibras* is cited to support this view.

"Nick Machiavel had ne'er a trick,
Tho' he gave his name to our old Nick."

"But we believe," adds Macaulay, "there is a schism on this subject among the antiquaries." The learned Zachary Gray's edition of *Hudibras* shows that "our English writers, before Machiavel's time, used the word Old Nick very commonly to signify the Devil," and that "it came from our Saxon ancestors, who called him Old Nicka." No doubt Butler, whose learning was so great that he "knew everything," was well acquainted with this fact. He probably meant the couplet as a broad stroke of humor. Yet there was perhaps a chronological basis for the joke. Our Saxon ancestors did not speak of Old Nicka in a spirit of

jest or levity. The bantering sense of our modern sobriquet for the Devil appears to have crept in during the decline of witchcraft. That frightful saturnalia of superstition was the Devil's heyday. He was almost omnipotent and omnipresent. But as witchcraft died out, partly through the growth of knowledge and partly through sheer weariness on the part of its devotees, the Devil began to lose his power. His agency in human affairs was seen to be less potent than was imagined. People called him Old Nick playfully, as they might talk of a toothless old mastiff whose bark was worse than his bite. At length he was regarded as a perfect fraud, and his sobriquet took a tinge of contempt. He is now utterly played out except in church and chapel, where the sky-pilots still represent him as a roaring lion. Yet, as a curious relic of old times, it may be noted that in the law-courts, where conservatism reigns in the cumbrous wig on the judge's head and in the cumbrous phraseology of indictments, criminals are still charged with being instigated by the Devil. Nearly all the judges look upon this as so much nonsense, but occasionally there is a pious fossil who treats it seriously. We then hear a Judge North regret that a prisoner has devoted the abilities God gave him to the Devil's service, and give the renegade a year's leisure to reconsider which master he ought to serve.

During the witch mania the world was treated to a great deal of curious information about Old Nick. What Robert Burns says of him in *Tam O'Shanter* is only a faint reminiscence of the wealth of demonology which existed a few generations earlier. Old Nick used to appear at the witches' Sabbaths in the form of a goat, or a brawny black man, who courted all the pretty young witches and made them submit to his embraces. Some of these crazy creatures, under examination or torture, gave the most circumstantial accounts of their intercourse with Satan; their revelations being of such an obscene character that they must be left under the veil of a dead tongue. It is, of course, absurd to suppose that anything of the kind occurred. Religious hysteria and lubricity are closely allied, as every physician knows, and the filthy fancies of a lively witch deserve no more attention than those of many females in our lunatic asylums.

Behind these tales of the Devil there was the pagan tradition of Pan, whose upper part was that of a man and his lower part that of a goat. The devils of one religion are generally the gods of its predecessor; and the great Pan, whose myth is so beautifully expounded by Bacon, was degraded by Christianity into a fiend. Representing, as he did, the nature which Christianity trampled under foot, he became a fit incarnation of the Devil. The horns and hooves and the goat thighs were preserved; and the emblems of strength, fecundity and wisdom in the god became the emblems of bestiality and cunning in the demon.

Heine's magnificent *Gods in Exile* shows how the deities of Olympus avenged themselves for this ill-treatment. They haunted the mountains and forests, beguiling knights and travellers from their allegiance to Christ. Venus wooed the men who were taught by an ascetic creed to despise sexual love; and Pan, appearing as the Devil, led the women a frightful dance to hell.

But as the Christian superstition declined, the gods of Paganism also disappeared. Their vengeance was completed, and they retired with the knowledge that the gods of Calvary were mortal like the gods of Olympus.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded).

MORITZ SAPHIR, a distinguished writer, and a Jew, died in 1858 at the age of sixty-four. He was a special favorite of King Ludwig-Carl (Louis-Charles) of Bavaria, who abdicated the throne in 1848 in consequence of an unholy alliance with Lola Montes. King Louis was a Catholic, and his wife a Protestant. This royal equation of religious profession was necessary to the maintenance of the equilibrium of the kingdom. Louis persuaded Saphir to become a Catholic. By-and-bye the queen induced the Catholic Jew to embrace Protestantism. His conversion in both cases was easy. But on a festive occasion, while in a convivial mood, he amused the king and his parasites by saying: "When I was a Jew my God saw me, but I didn't see him. When I became a Catholic I saw my God (pointing to Christ on a cross), but he didn't see me. When I became a Protestant my God didn't see me, and I didn't see him."

PROFESSOR HUXLEY ON THE EVOLUTION OF THEOLOGY.

By no means least among the many services of Professor Huxley in the cause of Science and Freethought is his latest "Anthropological Study" on the Evolution of Theology, contributed to the numbers of the *Nineteenth Century* for March and April, and soon, I trust, to be reprinted in book form. In tracing the many traits of similarity between the religious beliefs and observances of the early Jews and those described by Mariner in his interesting account of the Tonga Islands. Professor Huxley not only bears out the contention of my paper, "Were the Jews Savages?" in *Footsteps of the Past*, but he does so with a comprehensive grasp of detail, a lucidity of statement, and a precision of reasoning which the ordinary writer cannot affect to equal.

With theology as a code of dogmas to be believed, or at any rate repeated under penalty of present or future punishment, or as a storehouse of anæsthetics for those who find the pains of life too hard to bear, Professor Huxley professes no concern. But theology, like other arts, has a history, and the study of its evolution comes properly within the sphere of the anthropologist. In selecting the theological history of the Israelites for illustration, Professor Huxley throws down the gauntlet to the orthodox theologians with the advantage of having his readers tolerably familiar with the ground to be investigated, and of being himself familiar with the critical results obtained by Biblical scholars like Kuenen, Kalisch, Reuss, Tuch and Wellhausen.

While differing as to details in the evolution of theology, Professor Huxley is essentially at one with Dr. E. B. Tylor and Herbert Spencer in finding its origin in the fear of ghosts. He says:

"It is a matter of fact that, whether we direct our attention to the older conditions of civilised societies, in Japan, in China, in Hindustan, in Greece, or in Rome, we find, underlying all other theological notions, the belief in ghosts, with its inevitable concomitant, sorcery; and a primitive cult in the shape of a worship of ancestors, which is essentially an attempt to please, or appease, their ghosts. The same thing is true of old Mexico and Peru, and of every semi-civilised or savage people who have developed a definite cult; and in those who, like the natives of Australia, have not even a cult, the belief in, and fear of, ghosts is as strong as anywhere else."

Soiotheism, as our author calls the deification of ghosts, is yet the chief element in the theology of a large part of the human race, and I, like Professor Huxley, "see no reason to doubt that, like the rest of the world, the Israelites had passed through a period of mere ghost-worship, and had advanced through ancestor-worship and fetishism and totemism, to the theological level at which we find them in the books of Judges and Samuel."* A distinct trace of this is found in the instructive story of the visit of Saul to the witch at Endor, and the application by her of the name of Elohim (god or gods) to a ghost (1 Sam. xxviii., 13). The same term is also employed to denote the gods of the heathen (Jud. viii., 33; xi., 23, 24), angels (Gen. iii., 5; Judges xiii., 21, 22; Psalm viii., 5, Rev. Ver.), and even images. Laban says of his teraphim, "Wherefore hast thou stolen my Elohim" (Gen. xxxi., 29, 30); Jacob is not scandalised for the teraphim seem to have remained in his camp till he had hidden his strange gods under the sacred oak (Gen. xxxv., 4).† Micah calls the teraphim his Elohim (Jud. xviii., 18, 24), and it should be noticed that in the thirtieth verse of this chapter the word Manasseh has been substituted for that of Moses in order to conceal the fact that the direct descendants of Moses actually worshipped images "until the day of the captivity of the land."‡ The writer of the book of Samuel takes it as a matter of course that Michal, daughter of one royal Jahve-worshipper and wife of the man after God's own heart, should have her teraphim handy in her and David's chamber when she dresses them up in their bed into simulation of her pious husband, for the purpose of deceiving Saul's messengers (1 Sam. xix., 13).

Professor Huxley traces many instructive points of resemblance between the Elohim of the Israelites, and the

* These books present the most archaic and richest fossiliferous strata for the study of the early religion of Israel.

† See the articles "Bible Magic" and "Fetichism," *Freethinker*, Nov. 29 and Dec. 6, 1885.

‡ See *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 33.

Atuas, or gods of the Polynesians. The similarities of their theologies are shown to extend to their notions of ceremonial purity, the yearly feast, circumcision, and the methods of divination and of propitiating the gods by food and drink offerings and by human sacrifices. Nor are their ethical standards dissimilar.

"One may read from the beginning of the book of Judges to the end of the books of Samuel without discovering that the old Israelites had a moral standard which differed in any essential respect (except perhaps in regard to the chastity of unmarried women) from that of the Tongans. Gideon, Jephthah, Samson and David are strong-handed men, some of whom are not outdone by any Polynesian chieftain in the matter of murder and treachery; while Deborah's jubilation over Jael's violation of the primary duty of hospitality, preferred and accepted under circumstances which give a peculiarly atrocious character to the murder of the guest; and her witch-like gloating over the picture of the disappointment of the mother of the victim—

The mother of Sisera cried through the lattice,
Why is his chariot so long in coming? (Jud. v., 28)

—would not have been out of place in the choral service of the most sanguinary god in the Polynesian pantheon."

On the other hand, the ethical portions of the Decalogue are shown to have been anticipated in the "negative confession" of the Egyptian "Book of Redemption." "I have not blasphemed; I have not reviled the face of the king or my father; I have not murdered; I have not committed adultery; I have not stolen; I have not done fraud to man; I have not told falsehoods," etc. Nor is it easy to escape the conclusion that much of Jewish ethics as well as of Jewish ritual was taken boldly from the Egyptians, although it must be remembered that the influence of Egypt upon Israel may have been much later than the time assigned to the bondage.

In its earliest form theology is simply the belief in the existence, powers and disposition (usually malignant) of ghost-like entities, who may be propitiated or scared away. In this stage theology is wholly independent of ethics. As a cult arises, orders are ascribed to the gods and morality put under their patronage. At the same time they are conceived to be thoroughly human, and visit any disrespect to themselves even more severely than breaches of the moral law.

"Piety means minute attention to the due performance of all sacred rites, and covers any number of lapses in morality, just as cruelty, treachery, murder and adultery did not bar David's claim to the title of the man after God's own heart among the Israelites; crimes against men may be expiated, but blasphemy against the gods is an unpardonable sin. Men forgive all injuries but those which touch their self-esteem; and they make their gods after their own image, in their own image make they them."

Professor Huxley shows how the monolatry of the early Jews, who exalted their tribal god over the other divinities whose existence they did not deny, was changed into ethical monotheism by the elevation of conduct over ritual by the prophets of the eighth and succeeding centuries. He also notices how Judaism, brought to its logical consequence, agnostic theism, in Philo, has remained comparatively stationary, while Christianity took up a heap of dogmas and ritual practices "of which the primitive Nazarene knew nothing; and which he would probably have regarded as blasphemous if he could have been made to understand them." With the growth of civilisation in Europe came the criticism of theology, and Professor Huxley records his conviction that, "with the spread of true scientific culture, whatever may be the medium, historical, philological, philosophical, or physical, through which that culture is conveyed, and with its necessary concomitant, a constant elevation of the standard of veracity, the end of theology will be like its beginning, it will cease to have any relation to ethics." Personification of our intellectual conceptions may remain, and the ignorant and careless may take them for adequate expressions of reality.

"So it may be that the majority of mankind may find the practice of morality made easier by the use of theological symbols. And unless these are converted from symbols into idols, I do not see that Science has anything to say to that practice, except to give an occasional warning of its dangers. But, when such 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 fabrication of men's hands, the stocks and the stones, which they have replaced."

Thus does Professor Huxley conclude one of the most notable and powerful criticisms of theology which has appeared for some time. No doubt a number of the black

tribe will rush to the defence of their dogmatic idols whose savage and superstitious origin they find thus exposed and discredited.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

WHAT a happy family the Christians are. Mr. C. R. W. Offen, dating from the Baptist Church, Bethnal Green Road, writes to the *Christian Commonwealth* and asks how long the Christian Evidence Society is to drag Christianity through the mire of incompetence. It appears that Mr. Offen was present at the London Hall of Science when the Rev. Mr. Waterman read Mr. B. H. Cowper's lecture and made such a feeble reply to Mr. Foote's criticism, and he evidently thinks that if C. R. W. Offen had championed the Christian side he would have chopped Mr. Foote into mince-meat. This epistle provokes a reply from the Rev. C. J. Engstrom, one of the C. E. S. secretaries, who sneers at "the value of Mr. Offen's opinions," and says that Mr. Waterman, his own dear colleague, made "such replies as were suitable and sufficient." All we care to say is that Mr. Waterman did not seem to share Mr. Engstrom's opinion on this matter, while the audience laughed at the performance as a capital farce.

MR. ENGSTROM refers to the editor of this journal as "one Mr. Foote." This miserable piece of affectation is quite worthy of the man and his cause. Mr. Engstrom also asserts that Mr. Foote "is not a scholar at all," which is a pious opinion we cannot think of contesting, for it is well known that the blasphemous editor of the *Freethinker* is an ignoramus, who knows no language but his own, and speaks that like a coal-heaver. On the other hand, Mr. Cowper is "a scholar of European fame." Now we do venture to dispute this statement. Mr. Cowper is undoubtedly better up in Christian Evidences than any other C. E. S. lecturer; indeed he is the only one who has a tolerable acquaintance with the subject. But to put him up as an authority beside the great German, Dutch, and French critics, or even beside such orthodox English critics as Lightfoot, Westcott and Sanday, is a ghastly joke which nobody except a person like Mr. Engstrom, who is totally devoid of a sense of humor, would ever have perpetrated.

ANOTHER remark. The question is not one of the respective authorities of Mr. Cowper and Mr. Foote. There are certain indisputable facts, which Mr. Cowper admits as well as Mr. Foote; and the point at issue is, what do these facts prove? To cite one disputant as an "authority" against the other is on the face of it absurd; it puts an end at once to all discussion; and it is an intellectual indecency which Mr. Cowper, we believe, would not have committed himself.

A last word. Whenever Mr. Cowper is well enough, Mr. Foote is quite willing to discuss the evidences of Christianity with him on the platform or in the press.

THE Rev. J. Rogerson Colter, rector of St. Mary Magdalene, Colchester, at a meeting at Southsea, endeavored to excite prejudice against Mr. Gladstone by declaring that "the first object of the man at present at the helm of State was to root Protestantism out of Ireland." This is a specimen of the temperate way in which some of the clerical Conservatives are inclined to receive Mr. Gladstone's proposals.

THE *Cambria Daily Leader* prints a long letter from J. R. Gibbs, a Latter-Day Saint, to the Rev. W. Jones, asking why that reverend gentleman laughs at Joe Smith's tablets, when he believes in Moses' tables of stone. Isn't it as easy for God to write on one material as on another? And isn't Joe Smith, with half a dozen witnesses, to be credited as well as Moses with none?

IN the debate on the Scotch Disestablishment question, an allusion was made to Lord Chancellor Thurlow's reply to the Dissenters. When waited upon by a deputation urging the removal of Nonconformist grievances, his reply was: "Gentlemen, I am for the established religion. If you can only get your damned religion established, I will support that too."

THE late Rev. A. G. Graystone, of Tankerton Castle, Whitstable, paid great attention to his master's injunction to lay not up treasures on earth. He only contrived to accumulate property to the value of £4,000,000. He did not take it with him, in case it might melt.

THE *Unitarian Herald* prints a paragraph on Pasteur, likening him in some respects to Doctor Jesus as a "God-sent healer." Thereupon "a Minister" writes to the *Christian Life*, a more orthodox Unitarian paper, denouncing this coupling of Pasteur with Jesus as an insult to religious feeling and common sense, and calling it "trash fit for the journals of Secularism." The bare idea that some of the Palestine patients whom Jesus is said to have healed were suffering from a kind of rabies puts "A Minister" into such a towering rage that he seems almost a fit subject for Pasteur himself.

WHAT atrocity cannot be defended from the Bible? A dynamite circular (No 10) published by the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union, gives the utterance of one of "Joe Brady's Disciples" who declares that "in the book of Moses would be found a precedent for their policy. The Lord speaking of the imprisonment of his chosen people said he would smite their enemies, and so frighten them into freeing them. The book of Moses would make most excellent dynamite circulars." Like the Inquisitors, the witch-hunters and the persecutors of old, the dynamitards find their warrant for slaughter and destruction in the inspired word of God.

WARD BEECHER reckons his total income for the forty years of his pastorate at \$750,000. He reckons the laborer is worthy of his hire. No doubt. And he has got it.

A DARING couple went to church to get married the other day without any funds to pay the clergyman's fee. "No fee, no wedlock," said the parson, putting on his hat and walking homeward. He had not gone far when wild shouts and waving of handkerchiefs brought him back. After a gallant effort on the part of the bride, a subscription had been raised of 4s. 6d. On hearing these tidings of comfort and joy, benevolent smiles wreathed the parson's countenance, and the wedding proceeded.

THE *Christian Herald* reports the miraculous healing of a little boy who was a "helpless cripple." The mother says: "I put the child into the Lord's hands, and alone in my room said, 'Lord, if thou art willing for him to be healed, thou canst heal him without galvanism,' and he there and then started off walking. From that time he has been well and getting strong." And yet the bishops refuse to be converted. They cannot work these mighty works, and they quietly ignore the true believers who, as Christ promised, can do even greater works than himself (John xiv. 12). Why don't Spurgeon make off to Bethshan to have his gout cured? Is he an infidel? So far as Baxter's pretensions are concerned he evidently lacks faith and risks damnation.

THE *Christian Herald*, besides its weekly batch of miracles at Bethshan, reports a case of "prayer staying the plague" in China. An anonymous native preacher of Christianity asked the inhabitants of an anonymous plague-stricken "village" to leave "their gods" for once and try a prayer to the Christian God. They did so, "and God honored their faith, imperfect though it was, and the plague was stayed that day"—whereupon the whole "town" accepted the new religion of "the God who helped them." The Church should send out a commission to verify this and similar allegations, so that it might convert Huxley and Tyndall and the whole unbelieving world.

In a comment on Deut. xvii., 8, in an edition of the Douay Bible published in Ireland, we read: "Here we see what authority God was pleased to give the Church guides of the Old Testament, in deciding without appeal all controversies relating to the law, promising that they should not err therein and *punishing with death* such as proudly refused to obey their decisions, and surely he has not done less for the Church guides of the New Testament." Nice look-out for the Protestants of Ireland under Rome Rule.

A NEW rival to Jesus and Dr. Tanner, and one who is resolved to outdo them both, has turned up at St. Catherine's Hill, Guildford, Surrey, in the person of an old man of seventy-two, named Harris, who for the past month has been fasting day and night. He declares that he has been commanded to fast by an angel of the Lord, and that his appetite is in heaven. He, however, smokes an ounce and a half a day, and by the aid of tobacco and the Almighty, he hopes to worry along without food until the forty-second day, when he proposes a burst of mutton and turnips.

TALMAGE swallows the apple story in all its details. He fully believes—or rather preaches, which may be quite another matter—that eating an apple first brought evil and suffering and death into the world, which is the correct biblical doctrine, as we all know. He says: "After the calamity in Paradise, not only did the ox begin to gore, and the adder to sting, and the elephant to smite with the tusk, and the lion to put to bad use tooth and paw, but under the very tree from which the forbidden fruit was plucked were hatched out war and revenge and malice and envy and jealousy, and the whole brood of cockatrices."

GEOLOGY proves that this doctrine is an unmitigated falsehood, and that death and disease and mutual slaughter occurred among animals millions of years before the alleged appearance of Adam and Eve in a gardener's paradise. But why should Talmage notice truth except to condemn it when blatant falsehood pays so well both in this world and in the next?

THE Pope is said to be extremely vexed at the bill which has recently passed the French Senate, disqualifying monks and nuns from teaching in municipal schools, and, it is said, is contemplating issuing a protest against the anti-Christian—that is, secular—legislation of France. Mrs. Partington may flourish her broom as much as she will, but she will not sweep back the Atlantic.

THE Archbishop of Paris has issued a wail on his own account. After referring to the regulation which obliges the clergy to perform military service like other citizens, he adds that "We have Parliament discussing a Bill which is to completely deprive public education of all Christian character, and from the tribune of the Senate a Minister of Public Worship has been heard attacking the essential doctrines of Christianity."

THE Archbishop winds up by hoping that France will never be robbed of those sacred beliefs which have "assured her the first place among the nations of the earth." That is exactly what our Protestant sky-pilots say in England. It is evidently a trick of the trade.

MR. W. H. HARRISON, formerly editor of the *Spiritualist*, writes to the *Medium and Daybreak* upon the necessity of exposing the numerous Spiritist impostors. He mentions that Robert Dale Owen, Dr. E. Crowell and Dr. Childs, have been pelted with filth in America because of their exposures of fraudulent mediums, and declares "I know of five American mediums now 'wanted' by the English police."

SOME of the choicest specimens of blasphemy are to be found in old religious writers. Our readers may remember that from the book written by King James the First on *Demonology*, wherein that modern Solomon declared that the witches saluted the posterior of Satan because his black majesty had the ambition to emulate Jehovah, who showed his hinder parts to Moses. Here is another, given by John Alymer, Bishop of London in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, in his *Harborowe for Faithful and True Subjects*, written against John Knox. He declares that the vicar of Trumpington, when he came to the words "Eli, Eli, lama Sabachthani," in the lesson on Palm Sunday, stopped, and, calling the churchwardens aside, said: "Neighbors, this gear must be amended. Here is Eli twice in the book. I assure you if my Lord of Elie come thys veye to see it he will have the booke. Therefore by mine advice we shall scrape it out, and put in our owne town's name of Trumpington, Trumpington, lama Sabachthani. They consented and he did so."

A GENTLEMAN in the North of England having recently obtained a divorce from his wife, was soon after told by a clergyman that one of the most beautiful things in the Bible was the story of Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt. "Well," replied the layman, "I am very sorry he did not leave the recipe, for it would have saved me £35 for my divorce."

A FLYING squadron of Hallelujah lasses has been operating at Whitstable. Among them is a Swedish girl about eighteen years of age. She is of diminutive stature, wears her native costume, and sings in her native language. As nobody can understand her she is naturally a great "draw," and the Army is able to charge a penny admission when she performs.

A result of the excitement at Whitstable is reported to be the saving of twenty-nine souls. The lasses captured every one of them. How long they will remain saved is another question, but that is the Lord's concern. The lasses have done their part, and no doubt they will receive twenty-nine kisses from J. C. when they meet him.

A LIVELY meeting was recently held in the Bradford Chamber of Commerce to consider why working men do not attend public worship. Mr. S. P. Myers, the convener of the meeting stated that only one third of the inhabitants went to church or chapel. The general opinion of the working men present appears to have been that the clergy neglected the interests of the people and pandered to the upper classes. One sensible man protested against ten-mile sermons with as many repetitions in them as there were yards in the distance. After all nothing was done, and we venture to think nothing will be done.

ELIZABETH PITT tried to commit suicide at Earl's Court Station, Kensington. The engine was stopped within a few inches of her head. The poor women explained that "she had been worried about religion."

AT a meeting of the Whitechapel Board of Guardians the clerk referred to the large immigration of foreign Jews into East London caused by the recent decree of the Prussian government. Thereupon the Rev. C. R. Billing jumped up and said, "What we want is a Bismarck over here." We suggest that the best way to settle the difficulty would be to let sky-pilot Billing and half-a-dozen rabbis discuss the matter with closed doors, and Bismarck could ratify the decision. Of course it may seem unfair odds, but the Jews are so seldom in a majority.

Two colored brothers fell out in the church about a small matter. The offending brother went to the offended one and said: "Brudder, the Lord has forgiven me, and won't you?" The offended brother replied: You go bring de Lord's certificate dat he has forgiven you, den I will see about de matter. John de Baptist required de Jews to bring a certificate of der repentance fore he would baptize um."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 11, Secular Hall, 13 Beck Street, Nottingham; at 11, 'An Hour in Heaven;' at 3, 'An Hour in Hell;' at 7, 'Crimes of Christianity.'

Thursday, April 15, Hall of Science, Old Street, London.—Debate with the Rev. Dr. McCann on "Christianity or Secularism: which is True?"

APRIL 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.

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

A. H.—Mr. Symes's pamphlet on Hospitals will serve your turn—price 1d.

A. GOLDBORTHY.—You will find most of what you refer to in Rousseau's *Emile* and *Le Contrat Social*. There are old translations of these works, but no recent ones, we believe. Try a second-hand bookseller if you don't read French.

W. H.—Thanks for the cuttings.

G. L.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

E. J. T.—There is no particular contradiction in the passages you point out. Day and night did not cease because Joshua stopped the sun. Provide yourself with a copy of *Bible Contradictions*. It gives all the principal cases. Your joke has appeared before. We have not the slightest doubt that Dr. McCann will get a fair hearing in the debate. He himself has no fear on that point.

F. ATTWOOD.—Shall appear in our Summer Number.

PETAH.—Shall appear.

DEVONPORT FREETHINKER.—Always glad to hear from converts. Thanks for cutting.

PARACLETE.—Whether adventuress or impostor, Mme. Blavatsky is a clever woman, but *Isis Unveiled* is not a work we should recommend as trustworthy. Her science we consider questionable, and some of her citations against the Church we have been unable to verify. Much of *Isis* is made up from such misty sources as the works of "Eliphaz Levi." Theosophy, like the Apocalypse, usually finds its students cracked or leaves them so.

A. MANNA.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

C. W. SCARR.—The verse is not bad, but we prefer something satirical.

T. MARTINDALE.—Thanks for the cutting, Mr. Ramsey will write you on the other matter.

J. WEBB.—We will write you on the subject.

J. COLE.—We expected there was some exaggeration. But after all, as Mr. Headlam believes in the Bible, and the Bible says the Israelites did cross the Red Sea, we don't see why he should object to Mr. Mortimer's lecturing on the subject. Perhaps Mr. Headlam laughs because he thinks the story a joke—rather a heavy one, like most Jewish witticisms.

F. N. CHARRINGTON, of the Tower Hamlets Mission, Mile End Road, writes: "Allow me to state that the man Beaumont committed for bigamy has never been connected with our Mission in any way whatever." We print Mr. Charrington's disclaimer, without seeing how it can be reconciled with the evidence in court.

L. W.—It is indeed laughable. The poor *Pall Mall Gazette* was soon frightened. First of all it dropped the announcement of N. S. S. lectures, then it omitted the Sunday lectures of every kind, and now it only announces Sunday sermons. Mr. Stead has found out who are the best customers for his wares.

J. SCHOFIELD.—Many thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. CABELL.—The suggestion is worth consideration, but we hardly see our way at present. To what article in Voltaire's *Philosophical Dictionary* do you refer? We suspect some mistranslation. Is the first reference Isaiah xlix., 26?

J. E. ROOSE.—We regret we have no room for your letter.

C. H. D.—We are always glad to receive cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

ANONYMOUS CORRESPONDENTS are again warned that no attention can be paid to their letters.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Cambria Daily Leader—Echo—Thinker—Pittsburgh Truth—Charleston Sunday News—Bristol Evening News—Baltimore American—Boston Investigator—Liberal—West Sussex Gazette—Republican—South Wales Daily News—St. Pancras Guardian.

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.

THE gathering at the London Hall of Science on Wednesday, March 31, was a complete success. It was, so to speak, a family party. The Freethinkers met to congratulate Mr. Bradlaugh on his taking his seat after five years of struggle against the Tories and bigots. Mr. Foote presided, and Mrs. Besant presented the guest of the evening with a trout-rod. Mr. Bradlaugh responded in a very affecting speech, his voice being broken, and sometimes inaudible with emotion. After the musical entertainment was over, the dancing began, and when it ended those who tripped it out

can tell. We can't. Editors don't dissipate like readers. You can read, but you can't write, with a headache and a sour stomach. And alas! few editors are as young as they were.

A GOOD portrait of old Robert Ferguson, the hero of the Glasgow prosecution, is now on sale, and any profits will be devoted to his benefit. The plucky veteran holds in his hand a copy of the prosecuted number of the *Freethinker*, and the photograph is well worth preserving as a memento of the latest tussle with the bigots. The cabinet size is 1s., and the *carte de visite* size 6d. Copies can be had of R. Wallace, 356 Cumberland Street, Glasgow. We advise Mr. Wallace to send a parcel of them to Mr. Ramsey. There is sure to be a good sale for them in London.

WE may mention, as a sign of the intense interest excited throughout the country in the Scotch prosecution, that an overwhelming majority of the Branches of the National Secular Society have voted in favor of holding the next Conference at Glasgow. The event takes place on Whit-Sunday, June 13. No doubt the canny Scots will make the most of it. Perhaps too, a few of the weak-kneed brethren, who skeddaddled from the prosecution, will quietly find their way back now the storm is over and the sky is clear.

THE second volume of *Crimes of Christianity* is now completed, and bound up like the first in an elegant wrapper. The third volume will not be published in fortnightly parts. Involving as it does a tremendous mass of fresh reading, it will require a longer time to prepare. The whole of the manuscript of the volume will be finished before any of it is published, and the parts will then be issued in weekly succession. The authors have hitherto spared no pains, nor will they spare any in the future, to make the *Crimes of Christianity* a standard work, which will be read and cited when they are dead and buried.

"BIBLE ABSURDITIES," Part II. of the *Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians*, is now ready, and we venture to prophesy for it a wide circulation. It contains more matter than *Bible Contradictions*, and was therefore advertised at a higher price. After all, however, it will be sold at *fourpence* instead of *sixpence*, in order to place it within the reach of as many readers as possible. Only a very large sale will cover the investment, but Part I. has been a success and continues to sell steadily. The old book has never been so disembowelled before, and when this Bible Handbook is completed it will provide what Freethinkers have long wanted. Armed with it, a single Freethinker will be able to annihilate legions of parsons.

THE *Pittsburgh Truth*, an advanced Freethought monthly, the organ of the Pennsylvania Secular Union, has enlarged its columns, one of which is filled with "Pungent Paragraphs" clipped from our paper. We wish its conductors success in their crusade against superstition.

A CORRESPONDENT in the *Christian Commonwealth* finds fault with the editor of that journal for not discussing eternal punishment on the ground that no good would come of the discussion unless conducted by "nweaklaged scholars"—evidently the printer's devil's unrevised version of "acknowledged scholars." This correspondent thoroughly objects to "questions of theology" being "decided by scholarship." He says: "Scholarship has its function, but if the greatest scholar is the best theologian, as your language seems to imply, then it cannot be doubted that the champions of unbelief have the best of it."

PROFESSOR COURTNEY KENNY has introduced a Bill for the abolition of all criminal proceedings against laymen for schism, heresy, apostasy, blasphemy, or atheism. The Bill has been read a first time, and the second reading will probably take place in July. Among its backers are Mr. A. Illingworth, and Mr. Bernard Coleridge, son of the Lord Chief Justice. We shall write at greater length on this matter next week. In the meanwhile we urge upon all Freethinkers the necessity of supporting Professor Kenny's Bill with petitions, which should in every case be forwarded to the local M.P. for presentation. Mr. R. Forder, Secretary of the N. S. S., will forward petition forms on application. Any of our readers who choose to exert themselves in the matter can, if they prefer, apply to ourselves direct.

IT is an open secret that Professor Kenny's bill is largely owing to the exertions of Mr. Bradlaugh, who refrained from backing it lest his name should do it an injury. The Freethought party is deeply indebted to Mr. Bradlaugh in this matter.

THE meeting called by the Association for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, which will take place at South Place Institute on Wednesday, April 28, must be made a striking demonstration. Mrs. Besant and Mr. Foote will both be present, and the London Freethinkers should make a special effort to crowd the building. The N. S. S. has voted a sum of £5 for advertising the meeting, besides £10 towards the cost of petitions.

WITH respect to Professor Kenny's Bill, the *Manchester Examiner*, perhaps the most influential of English provincial papers,

writes: "It is not the business of the State to intervene for the purpose of adding a criminal penalty. It is not true, however, that the Acts in question are obsolete. They are still capable of being enforced, and have been enforced in our own days. There are some few persecutors still left, and it ought not to be in their power to disinter these ancient weapons of oppression for modern use."

Mr. W. W. COLLINS, writing from Sydney to an English friend, says: "I have just inaugurated a new movement here, viz., 'Hospital Sunday.' I am busily working the matter up, and have sent circulars to every clergyman and Nonconformist minister in the city, from the Bishop to the Salvation Army, and I shall leave no stone unturned to make it a success."

ON SOME CHRISTIAN COMMENTS.

A LITTLE while ago the *Christian Commonwealth* said that "Infidelity" had its "giants" in the days of Hume and Gibbon, but now "its day of dwarfs is upon us." A leading article of a later date, however, says: "Great writers, even literary women of genius as well as men, George Eliot as well as G. H. Lewes, and leading lights of science from Spencer to Harrison, have not spared their scorn for the religion that came out of Nazareth and Bethlehem, as a played-out pretence, that can no longer impose, at any rate, on lofty intellects." So that "great writers" and men and women of genius, and "leading lights of science," are identical with "dwarfs" in the opinion of the *Christian Commonwealth*. Secularists hold that these ideas are opposites. And they think that self-contradiction means self-stultification. But then no sensible man expects consistency of believers. They say one thing to prove or illustrate one point and the opposite to prove or illustrate another. It is only this looseness and subserviency of the intellect that enables them to retain their Christianity and their hostility to Freethought. The *Christian Commonwealth* of course expresses a very poor opinion of the *Freethinker*, but as the *C. C.* accuses it of supplementing "Ingersoll's comic labor," which it describes as "harder in its efforts than treadmill to physical muscles," this kind of Christian comment can be accepted with equanimity. Ingersoll's rich stores of pointed humor mingled with the finest and deepest poesy of the human nature whose touch makes all the world akin, are simply inimitable, and if Ingersoll's work is compared to the labor of a criminal on the treadmill, the *Freethinker* may rejoice in being described in such good company as "penny pictorial rubbish," or as containing "passionate abuse in which frantic efforts are made to push blasphemy to maddest extremes." Christians naturally run down that which they in vain endeavor to suppress by Christian crime. They feel no disgrace in imprisoning opponents now they can no longer glory in burning them alive. They do not care to repudiate shameful persecution till a majority has pronounced strongly against it. They pour forth Christian malignity or connive at it by their silence or by their penny editorial rubbish and general abuse and misrepresentation. They are usually destitute of the chivalrous feelings which might teach them how dastardly is their open advocacy of persecution or silent connivance in legalised violence. Of course they prefer to point out the mote of bad taste in our eye to extracting the huge beams of cowardly tyranny and legalised insult and theft from their own. "Maddest extremes," they think, applies very well to ridicule of eternal torture and condemnation of the Almighty Fiend who will inflict it, but there is no thought of applying such a term to the Christian doctrine itself or to the Christian practice of roasting or imprisoning the enemies who are so ardently loved in this realistic Christian fashion. Thorough Christians are utterly lost to the sense of shame in such matters. They brazen it out as if their creed were perfection and their history a stainless record of beneficence and virtue. Yet the *Christian Commonwealth* acknowledges that throughout the Dark Ages when Christianity was supreme "Romanism covered the intellectual manhood of Europe with chains, so that men dared not think but by permission of Popes; while the natural and carnal heart was left free for centuries to indulge the vilest passions at the price set by the priesthood." It gets over all difficulties by the ostrich policy of ignoring the fact that "Romanism" was Christianity and still is the more widely prevalent form of Christianity.

With an equally shameless blindness to its own tyranny and malignity, it taunts Freethinkers with having to call

on Christians if hospitals are to be built and supported. Christianity is the tenant in possession; it has the accumulated influence of the past at its back; it receives compulsory support to the tune of some £10,000,000 a year from the State in the shape of revenue and of remission of ordinary taxation, besides legalised rank and privilege; it has only gradually been compelled to drop its prey from its gory fangs, and it still occasionally worries its victims with mad bites that bring suffering and anguish to some hearts and fear and indignation to others; it still maintains laws that make us criminals at large; it still persecutes in a multitude of minor ways; and then it adds to its gentle courtesy by deriding the steadfast few who have scarcely escaped from its clutches because they are unable to carry out popular good works without asking in a brotherly fashion for the help of the Christian or semi-Christian majority.

The word "Freethinker" is evidently becoming more popular, and even in some respects enviable, for the *Christian Commonwealth*, like many other Christian disputants, claims that we are "blunderers" in calling ourselves by such a name. It is Christianity that is the true Freethought. "It claps no fetters on thought, limiting it only by allegiance to the laws of the Divine kingdom of Reason." Texts like "he that believeth not shall be damned" and "the unbelieving . . . shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone," clap no fetters on thought, oh dear no, for they are only laws of the Divine kingdom of Reason. The Christian "is free"—free to be a Christian and nothing else on pain of eternal torture—and he "rejoices" in this Christian liberty which is exactly identical with Christian compulsion. The *C. C.* continues:

"He is free to reason, think, speak, act, work, play; but each of these processes has right lines of guidance drawn by an infallible Master. A steam-engine has magnificent freedom of movement on the right line of locomotion; but who wants it to expatiate in its might off the rails? Not the 'freethinker'; he would not admire the freaks of the monster minus the engineer, and would execute a rapid strategic movement in the direction of personal security."

Being compelled to travel along a fixed line is liberty—of the Christian kind. The Christian locomotive must start from the Fall and arrive at Redemption, passing through the intermediate stations of Election, Conversion, Divine Grace, and Baptism; and all this is liberty—the mechanical liberty of a Christian slave who is forced to travel a certain road whether he likes it or not. When the Christian locomotive runs off the line the Freethinker rejoices at the swiftly approaching end of its mischievous career, though it is perfectly true that he does "not admire the freaks of the monster" either on the line or off it. The "rapid strategic movement" which the Freethinker has too often had to make, has its comic aspect in the eyes of the Christian, but the devastation effected by the Christian "monster," a Juggernaut on the line and a raging but dying dragon when off it, has a serious aspect of infinitely greater importance. Christianity has been crushing human liberty and happiness for nearly two thousand years; and the chief interest the typical Christian takes in the matter is to laugh at the amusing spectacle of the Freethinker endeavoring to avoid being mangled beneath its pitiless wheels.

The *C. C.* holds that "False Christianities" have been the great hindrance to the true Christianity, which is "the religion of Jesus Christ," and "cannot be hurt, injured or suppressed." It cannot be realised, or even agreed upon. It is a vague, self-contradictory ideal, and being non-existent as a reality, of course it cannot easily be hurt. But the *C. C.*, taking an historical retrospect, says that this Christianity "has no fear of Atheism or idolatry. It has overthrown their most awful hosts and hurled them back on the wreck of their own thrones." When did Christianity overthrow any Atheistic hosts? Christians evidently imagine history as they want it, and are not conscious of the moral disgrace involved in employing such means of glorifying their creed. W. P. BALL.

A SPRINGFIELD evangelist announced recently that he would preach on the following Sunday upon the subject,—“Ought a Methodist to dance?” It might be well to add to the series, thus: “Ought a Baptist to lie?” “Should a Presbyterian steal?” “Is it right for an Episcopalian to attend horse races?” “Should a Congregationalist love his neighbor's wife better than he does his own?”

CORRESPONDENCE.

WHO AND WHAT IS GOD?
TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—That your reviewer of my book, *Who and What is God?* should be sarcastic in his remarks is not a thing I should care to notice, but in his impetuosity to strike me down he has snatched hold of wrong weapons, which I trust you will do me the justice to correct. Mr. Ball says "this discovery of hydrogen gas in the atmosphere and of its effect on vegetation, shows a happy imbecility of intellect." Is Mr. Ball a practical chemist, and does he know the gases that constitute water, as well and as perfectly as he knows the gases that constitute the atmosphere? Can there be water, vapor, clouds and dew, without hydrogen gas? And is it not this hydrogen, which the air contains, that supplies all vegetation with its chief nourishment?

Mr. Ball asserts that I "have not yet heard that the primary colors are red, green and violet," which is false, for I have heard and read such statements. They are modern opinions differing from other opinions. Mr. Ball charges me with "taking no notice of the great scientific theory which treats light, heat, sound and electricity, as only varying and interchangeable modes of motion." I have not disputed these modes of motion, and am glad that Mr. Ball believes in them; but I have accounted for them. There is and must be a cause for all and every motion of matter, and that cause is and must be, and cannot be anything else than, heat; and heat is the spirit of the universe.—I am, Sir, yours truly,
J. LONGLAND.

Devonport, March 21, 1886.

[There is no "hydrogen gas" in the air, which is a mechanical mixture of free nitrogen and oxygen gases. The water in the air in the shape of clouds and vapor is a firmly-united compound, a chemical compound, of hydrogen and oxygen. It contains no free uncombined hydrogen whatever. Water affects plants as water, just as it quenches thirst as water. To say that hydrogen gas colors the flowers is as absurd as to say that hydrogen gas satisfies thirst or floats ironclads. The distinction is perfectly clear and all-important to the chemical student, but I cannot stay to give lessons in elementary chemistry. I regret having said that Mr. Longland had "not yet heard" of the true primary colors. I should have said that he adhered to the old exploded doctrine, and gave no sign whatever that he had heard of the true modern theory. But he should not have misled me by his silence. Heat is merely one form of motion—not the cause of all motion.—W. P. B.]

BUDDHISTS AND CHRISTIANS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My attention has been called to a paragraph in your issue of last week. It was me who twice called out "No" when you spoke of the number of Buddhists and Christians; and I again contradict the statement. The mistake is Dr. Rhys Davids', not yours, though he, like yourself, has been misled by the authority upon whom he relied. The source of the discrepancy lies with Dr. Berghaus whom Rhys Davids quotes, as you will see if you refer to the latter gentleman's authority for the 300,000,000 Christians and the 500,000,000 Buddhists. Dr. Davids ranks very high as a Buddhist scholar; but he is by no means the greatest authority on Buddhism, though there is no doubt he is an authority of the "first water." As he is so great a Buddhist scholar, it is to be greatly regretted that he did not pause before he accepted other men's figures. Prof. Davids would be one of the very first men to acknowledge the authority of Prof. Max Müller, who, it must be admitted, has the preference over Rhys Davids on such a subject as the numbers of religious people in the world. Prof. Max Müller deals with that very point, and shows where Berghaus was mistaken. After quoting Berghaus's figures, Max Müller states, "As Berghaus does not distinguish the Buddhists in China from the followers of Confucius and Laotze, the first place in the scale belongs really to Christianity. It is difficult in China to say to what religion a man belongs, as the same person may profess two or three. The emperor himself, after sacrificing according to the ritual of Confucius, visits a Laotze temple, and afterwards bows before an image of Fo in a Buddhist Chapel" (*Chips*, 2nd edition, 1880; p. 216, note.)

You will understand it is not I who dispute Rhys Davids, but that gentleman's superior—Max Müller.—Yours etc.

R. DUNN.

[We print the substantial part of Mr. Dunn's letter, omitting the impertinences. Prof. Rhys Davids was of course quite aware of Max Müller's reference to Berghaus, and he appears to consider, as we do, that it proves nothing, being a two-edged criticism that cuts both ways. Confucians in China can also be Buddhists, as Max Müller admits. If, however, deductions are to be made, they must be made all round. All the inhabitants of Christian countries are reckoned as Christians, although in France alone over seven millions of people returned themselves at the last census as of "no religion." All the Freethinkers, all the Atheists (Earl Russell at a meeting of the Christian Evidence Society said there were millions of them in England), all the Theists, all the nothingarians, all the people who quietly laugh in their sleeve, are included among the Christians. We therefore hold that if there are three hundred million Christians there are five hundred million Buddhists.]

SAMSON'S RIDDLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your esteemed contributor, Mr. A. B. Moss, finds an exquisite joke in the fact that Samson's riddle, "Out of the eater

came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness," has as answer "What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?" It looks as if the Holy Ghost was playing comic corner man, and that the only thing to be said to the riddle's enigmatic answer was "Give him up, Bones!" Mr. Moss, however, should know that all theological "widdles" end in other "widdles"; so that Samson's conundrum has the true marks of a divine revelation. After profound prayer for the space of three days, I think I can, if not exactly solve the conundrum, offer some hints for its solution.

In the first place, be it remembered that ancient riddles did not, like modern ones, depend on the double meanings of a word, but upon the double symbols used for natural facts. The famous Sphinx riddle is an illustration. What animal goes on four legs in the morning, on two through the day, and three at night? (Edipus rightly answered, Man, who crawls in infancy and has a staff in old age. Still more to the point are the children's riddles, relics of more primitive conundrums, such as—Over the water, under the water, and yet never touch water? An egg inside a duck. If I had the predilection of the Holy Ghost for making confusion more confounded, I should say that the answer to Samson's riddle is Samson himself. Readers of Mr. Foote's eighteenth *Bible Romance* would guess my meaning. "Bully Samson" is, as his name indicates, a sun myth. The sun is the eater that brings forth meat and the strong whence cometh sweetness. Samson is related to have slain the lion, the strong eater, and to have found in its carcase the sweet food, honey. Again a "widdle." The lion is not a real but a mythological one. Bees are far too cleanly to ever store their honey in a carcase. But it is when the sun is in *Leo*, the lion of the zodiac, that honey is most abundantly made. The lion's color, mane, power and rage made him the symbol of the summer's heat. How then, if Samson is the sun and the lion is the sun, does the sun slay the sun? Another "widdle." Samson and Hercules both begin by slaying lions and end by committing suicide, because the sun's sinking out of sight and re-appearance was described as death and resurrection. If Mr. Moss is not satisfied with this solution, let him read Professor Steindhal's essay on Samson in Goldziher's *Mythology among the Hebrews*, and he will see there is more to say for it than has been said by EDIPUS II.

THE MODERN PREACHER.
BY RICHARD HOWITT.

- [Stranger: What pile is that, I pray you tell,
Round which clamor the stalling and daw?
Villager: Gothic and dark, with a monkish bell,
Intended the people to overawe:
A place where the flock is fleec'd right well,
And made religious according to law.
Stranger: I see how it is—I do not doubt it—
The priest there preaches one day in seven:
I see the dead are buried about it;
They trusted in him and hoped for heaven.
Villager: A merciful God must be their boot,
Or fearful thoughts we must have for them;
For where there's rottenness at the root
But little good can come of the stem.
Stranger: But teaches he not—has he no school
Whereby to better the next generation?
Villager: Yes! yes! he canes the back of the fool,
And hopes, through pious flagellation,
To raise in him by regular rule,
For Church and priest, great veneration.
Stranger: The flock is ruined by such as he—
Who o'er the wall leap into the fold:
Pastors that porters were meant to be,
But changed to priests by the power of Gold.
Good respectable men of straw,
Strong with musk and proud gentility;
Men correct in the moral law
And able to preach with neat ability.
Good friend—good friend—time out of mind,
Pastors were fat and sleek and rich:
And it seems "the blind will lead the blind"—
Till Church and priest fall into the ditch.

REVIEW.

Christianity. My Apology for Renouncing it. By CHARLES EDMUND FORD.—This is a little pamphlet printed for private distribution. It is sent to us from Brighton. Mr. Ford is evidently a man who thinks for himself, and who can put his thoughts in clear fashion. He shows the untrustworthy character of Christian evidences and the dubious benefits and direct evils occasioned by its dogmas. George III. is said to have remarked of Bishop Watson's two apologies for Christianity and the Bible that they needed no apology. Taking the word in its common meaning, we think Mr. Ford shows that his rejection of them needs no apology.

NOAH was the original poker-player. We are told that he had a pair of everything in the pack, and it is recorded that he heaved ace high as he hauled in the gang plank.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Don't you think," said a husband, in a mild form of rebuke to his wife, "that women are possessed by the devil?" "Yes," was the answer, "as soon as they are married."

"How does the new pastor impress you, Miss Spinster?" "Law sakes, how did you know he impressed me at all? I didn't suppose anybody saw us; I thought the blind was down."

"My dear sir, I am sorry to inform you that you cannot live more than a few hours." "Is that so, doctor? Please call a district telegraph boy." "To send for a minister?" "No; I want the latest quotation on coals."

A WOMAN called at one of the bookstores the other day, and said she would like to look at some "chromos," as she wanted to find something to please young Harry, who has worked on the farm all summer, and should be rewarded. "Anything religious?" asked the clerk, as he ran over a lot of such chromos and engravings, "Wall, no, not exactly religious. Some of it might be solemn like, but down in the corner there ought to be a dog-fight, or a man falling off a barn, or sumthin' to kinder interest the young mind"

Public Debate

BETWEEN THE

REV. DR. JAMES McCANN

AND

MR. G. W. FOOTE,

AT THE

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ON

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