

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTER.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 153.



A WORKMAN GOD.

In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.—EXODUS xxxi., 17.

OLD NICK.—II.

DURING the last two centuries the Devil has gradually become a subject for joking. In Shakespeare's plays he is still a serious personage, although we fancy that the mighty bard had no belief himself in any such being. But, as a dramatist, he was obliged to suit himself to the current fashion of thought, and he refers to the Devil when it serves his purpose just as he introduces ghosts and witches. His Satanic Majesty not being then a comic figure, he is spoken of or alluded to with gravity. Even when Macbeth flies at the messenger in a towering rage, and cries "the Devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon," he does not lose his sense of the Devil's dignity. In Milton's great epic Satan is really the central figure, and he is always splendid and heroic. In fact, Shelley complained in his preface to *Prometheus Unbound* that "the character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry, which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure." Goethe's Mephistopheles is less dignified than Milton's Satan, but he is full of energy and intellect, and if Faust eventually escapes from his clutches it is only by a miracle. At any rate, Mephistopheles is not an object of derision on the

contrary, the laugh is generally on his own side. Still, Goethe is playing with the Devil all the time. He does not believe in the actual existence of the Prince of Evil, but simply uses the familiar old figure to work out a psychological drama. The same is true of Byron. Satan, in the *Vision of Judgment*, is a superb presence, moving with a princely splendor; but had it suited his purpose, Byron could have made him a very different character.

The Devil is, indeed, treated with much greater levity by Coleridge and Southey, and Shelley knocks him about a good deal in *Peter Bell the Third*—

"The Devil, I safely can aver,
Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting;
Nor is he, as some sages swear,
A spirit, neither here nor there,
In nothing—yet in everything.

He is—what we are! for sometimes
The Devil is a gentleman;
At others a bard bartering rhymes
For sack; a statesman spinning crimes;
A swindler, living as he can."

These and many other verses show what liberties Shelley took with the once formidable monarch of hell.

The Devil's treatment by the pulpiteers is instructive. Take up an old sermon and you will find the Devil all over

it. The smell of brimstone is on every page, and you see the whisk of his tail as you turn the leaf. But things are changed now. Satan is no longer a person, except in the vulgar circles of sheer illiteracy, where the preacher is as great an ignoramus as his congregation. If you take up any reputable volume of sermons by a church parson or a dissenting minister, you find the Devil either takes a back seat or disappears altogether in a metaphysical cloud. None of these subtle resolvers of ancient riddles, however, approaches grand old Donne, who said in one of his fine discourses that "the Devil himself is only concentrated stupidity." What a magnificent flash of insight! Yes, the great enemy of mankind is stupidity; and, alas, against that, as Schiller said, the gods themselves fight in vain. Yet time fights against it, and time is greater than the gods; so there is hope after all.

Gradually the Devil has dropped; until he has at last reached the lowest depth. He is now patronised by the Salvation Army. Booth exhibits him for a living, and all the Salvation Captains and Hallelujah Lassies parade him about to the terror of a few fools and the amusement of everyone else. Poor Devil! Belisarius begging an obolus was nothing to this. Surely the Lord himself might take pity on his old rival, and assist him out of this miserable plight.

Old Nick is now used to frighten children with, and by-and-bye he may be employed like the old garden-god to frighten away the crows. Even his scriptural reputation cannot save him from such a fate, for the Bible itself is falling into disbelief and contempt, and his adventures from Genesis to Revelation are become a subject of merriment. Talking to Mrs. Eve about apples in the form of a serpent; whispering in David's ear that a census would be a good thing, while Jehovah whispers a similar suggestion on the other side; asking Jesus to turn pebbles into penny loaves, lugging him through the air, perching him on a pinnacle, setting him on the top of a mountain whence both squinted round the globe, and playing for forty days and nights that preposterous pantomime of the temptation in the desert; getting miraculously multiplied, bewildering a herd of swine, and driving them into a watery grave; letting seven of himself occupy one lady called Magdalen, and others inhabit the bodies of lunatics; going about like a roaring lion, and then appearing in the new part of a dragon who lashes the stars with his tail; all these metamorphoses are ineffably ludicrous, and calculated to excite inextinguishable laughter. His one serious appearance in the history of Job is overwhelmed by this multitude of comic situations.

Poor Old Nick is on his last legs and cannot last much longer. May his end be peace! That is the least we can wish him. And when he is dead, let us hope he will receive a decent burial. Those to whom he has been the best friend should follow him to the grave. His obsequies, in that case, would be graced by the presence of all the clergy, and the Burial Service might be read by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Fancy them, burying their dear departed brother the Devil, in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection!

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRIST AND CAIAPHAS.

IN publishing our extraordinary illustrations of the life and adventures of Joshua Josephson, we stated that we had received from the artist a number of equally astonishing documents which we should endeavor to have translated and placed before a discerning public. One of these, a copy of the *Jerusalem Chronicle*, dated Tebeth 10, 3761, purporting to give the correct version of the birth of the hero was published in our Christmas Number with the title "A Bethlehem Scandal."

It is our pleasant duty to lay before our readers another extract from these documents. It purports to be an official report drawn up by the chief scribe of the Sanhedrim, Rabbi David ben Nashon, of the judgment delivered by Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest, in the case of the Galilean prophet of Nazareth. Critical readers will notice many striking corroborations of the gospel, though there is no mention of any such improbabilities, as the trial

of Jesus taking place by night or of grave and reverend judges spitting in the face of the accused.

"Joshua Josephson, *alias* ben Pandera, impiously and profanely styling yourself the Messiah and the Son of God, you stand here charged with the twin crimes of sedition and blasphemy. It is with the latter abominable crime this court is mainly concerned. It has been proved by your own partisans that you have proclaimed yourself, at first in secret and then more boldly, as the Messiah of God. You have chosen twelve men from among the scum of the earth, ignorant and disaffected fisher folk of Tiberias, and have promised them that they should sit on twelve thrones, judging the tribes of Israel. You have assembled crowds of excited people in Galilee. You have marched about the country as a rogue and a vagabond, encouraging your deluded followers to salute you with the most laudatory epithets. You enjoined those who had not swords to sell their garments and buy one, and you declared that those who followed not your teaching were in danger of everlasting fire. You entered our holy city upon a stolen ass, and, blasphemously proclaiming yourself the son of God, you overturned the stalls of the peaceable and indispensable money-changers and dove-sellers in the precincts of our holy temple, thus instigating riot and robbery, for which you are responsible. You have spoken publicly in disrespect of the priests and scribes, profaned the holy Sabbath, and protected harlots and adulteresses. Arrogantly styling yourself a greater than Solomon, and declaring that all who came before you were thieves and robbers, you have impudently set aside the laws of Moses and reviled our holy religion. Its priests and ministers you have held up to hatred and contempt, denouncing them as 'a generation of vipers,' styling them 'whited sepulchres,' 'children of hell,' and using other violent and abusive epithets calculated to provoke and incite the populace to a breach of the peace. You have called the ruler Herod a fox, and proclaimed woe to the rich. You are reported to have declared that 'those who would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before me.' You have sought to break up homes and destroy families by saying that none can be your disciples and inherit the kingdom of heaven unless they give up father and mother, wife and children, for your sake. You have denounced woe against the cities of Bethsaida and Chorazin. You have moreover pretended to be a prophet, and to predict the destruction of our temple, and indeed of the entire world. By the law of Moses you have incurred the punishment of death, since he declares that any prophet who seeketh to turn the people away from the law shall surely be put to death. The Sanhedrim, however, not taking upon themselves the power of life and death, remit you to the Procurator Pontius Pilate, by him to be judged upon the charge of sedition."

In a certain Australian town the local ragman, who commands the Salvation Army, and leads it on to victory, recently advertised for supplies of left-off clothing. He also unhitched a detachment of 'Lulah lasses to skirmish round and capture any stray garments they could find. One of the warriors, who was short-sighted, and wore green goggles, marched to the sea-shore, and there discovered a pair of tweed pants, a hat, coat, and some other things left deserted on the beach. She quickly shouted, "Glory Halleluyer!" seized the forsaken toggery and sped. The garments were the outer shell of a "respectable old gentleman," who was then on a swimming expedition a little way out. He did not notice the robbery till the lass was fading in the distance. Then he swam ashore, shouted "Stop thief," and all unencumbered as he was started in hot pursuit. The maiden was chaste enough before, but the old party evidently thought she should be chased again, at least, till he got his own, and so he followed, shouting and swearing all the time. The heroine of this shirt tale, however, was partially deaf, as well as ditto blind, and did not hear his cries. As the items she had appropriated had a faded and ancient look about them, she had kleptomania'd them under the delusion they were the discarded garments of some defunct scarecrow. She reached the barracks in safety, and was opening out and displaying the duds to the shemale brigade, when, horror of horrors, in rushed a strange creature, apparently of a pre-Adamite type, attired principally in the simple and inexpensive costume of that period. "Gimme my close, you bad woman," he yelled! "what the (Sheol) d'ye mean stealing my close? Want to wear them, do you, eh?" The female contingent gave a simultaneous shriek and fled headlong, leaving the enemy in full possession of his things. Then he departed seaward to look for his boots. He is still looking for them. (N.B.—The writer of this little par. was there before him.)—*Sydney Bulletin*.

THE BLASPHEMY BILL.

PROFESSOR COURTNEY KENNY'S Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill has been printed by order of the House of Commons. It proceeds on the lines of Sir James Stephen's Bill, which has several times been printed in our columns. While leaving untouched the law and jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts, it provides that "after the passing of this Act no criminal proceedings shall be instituted in any court against any person for schism, heresy, apostacy, blasphemous libel, blasphemy at common law, or Atheism." Among the Acts mentioned in the Schedule as repealed by this Bill is the famous Blasphemy Statute of William III., which Lord Coleridge and Sir James Stephen have both called "ferocious." Professor Kenny's Bill is backed by Mr. Bernard Coleridge, and it may be hoped that his father will support it in the House of Lords. The other backers are Mr. Crossley and Mr. Illingworth, who are representative Nonconformists. There is a fair prospect, we believe, of the Bill receiving a good deal of support in the House of Commons. To make this more certain, however, Freethinkers should bestir themselves at once and put all possible pressure on their parliamentary representatives. Petitions in favor of the Bill should be sent in every case to the local M.P. They have little effect upon the House as a whole, but they have more effect on individual members, who are always anxious not to lose the votes of any section of their constituencies. In conclusion, we beg to remind the London Freethinkers once more of the demonstration at South Place Institute on April 28. Further particulars will be found in our advertisement columns. The success of that demonstration will materially assist the success of the Bill.

THE FOOTE AND McCANN DEBATE.

THE large audience who had gathered outside the Hall of Science before the time announced for the opening of the doors last Thursday, and who thronged every portion of the building, were evidently for the most part already Freethinkers, and these at any rate thoroughly enjoyed the sport provided for them. In Dr. McCann Mr. Foote has certainly found an able and a courteous opponent. That in his opening speech he put forward a view of Christianity which might be termed Secularism in disguise, and which presented few points for opposition, I attribute rather to a shrewd suspicion that the historical and dogmatic elements of his religion, all in fact which, as his opponent noticed, differentiates Christianity from other religions, will not really hold water, than to any inability to grapple with the question. It was a careful presentation of the best aspect of Christianity, the ethical and human element. Mr. Foote, who was in splendid voice, scrupulously followed his opponent. It was easy to see that he carried far better guns and that he was more skilled in using them than the enemy, yet when Dr. McCann again took the floor, he did so smiling, and received the slight tokens of dissent from the audience in the good-humored manner of a man sure of his own cause. As the verbatim report of the first night's debate will soon be in the hands of all who are interested, I shall not enter into the merits of the discussion, but only express my conviction that it will deepen in interest as Dr. McCann follows Mr. Foote, and that the wide circulation of the verbatim report of the debate cannot fail to be of great service to the Freethought cause.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

READINGS from *Faust* are being given at a London church. The *Rock* thinks the introduction of secular legends on the subject of selling souls to the Devil is "a piece of scandalous levity," and it classes the incumbent in question as of "No Church" rather than Broad Church.

FATHER HYACINTHE'S "Lent Lectures" are proving much more attractive than the borrowed sermons of the orthodox clergy. Recently four highly-orthodox opponents attended his Gallican Church in Paris for the purpose of assailing him with foul abuse. The masculine part of the congregation rose against these pious brawlers, and the place of worship was converted into a temporary battle-field, with the final result of the forcible ejection of the four disturbers of the peace, who would have fared rather

badly at the hands of the people outside if the police had not protected them.

THE *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, which is one of the most violent and unscrupulous Jingo organs in the kingdom, makes the efforts of the French Radicals to destroy the privileges of the priests the occasion for a long and foolish screed on Atheism. It even has the impudence to tell the Atheist that he knows quite well that if religion were removed mankind would "relapse into irretrievable selfishness, vice, and barbarism." Even therefore if Christianity be a myth, says the Tory screamer, "no Atheist would be justified in acting upon the aggressive towards religion." What on earth does the *S. D. T.* expect? Is it silly enough to suppose that Atheists will take their policy from Christians? If not, why does it waste its time in counselling Atheists at all, especially when it openly advocates their being deprived of political rights?

THE *St. Pancras Guardian*, in a long account of the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale, which is probably compiled from the reverend gentleman's own notes, mentions his debate with Mr. Foote at South Place Chapel, and says that the society he represented publicly thanked him for the victory he had achieved. Curiously enough, the society Mr. Foote represented passed a similar resolution. We should like to know whether there ever was a debate in which the Christians, according to their own account, did not get the best of it.

AN article in the *Rock* headed "Enough even for Sceptics," and professing to be quoted from the *Christian Globe*, turns out on examination to be a puffing advertisement of a St. Jacob's Oil. The reader is assured that "numerous surprising cures" are "so well authenticated as to leave no doubt of their absolute truthfulness," and the "immense value" and "astonishing efficacy" of the holy oil is guaranteed as on editorial authority. A whole column of this kind of thing is given without any hint or announcement that the matter is paid for as an advertisement. We suppose pious susceptibilities as to the look of such shameless puffery are squared by an extra premium.

PIOUS journals are noted for their quack advertisements. Their credulous readers furnish a rich harvest for the vendors of patent medicines, and the Christian proprietors are quite willing to help in deceiving the public for a price. For our own part we regard such conduct as shameful dishonesty, but as Christianity itself is a swindle and a profitable one, we suppose it is perfectly natural that minor swindles and their profits should also be participated in by journals founded on the great and profitable fraud called religion.

RESPECT for bishops, if not of the High Church, forms no part of the creed of the *Church Times*. In an article headed "Bishop Ryle again," it does not scruple to style that holy successor of the apostles "the Dunce of the English Episcopate." It goes further and declares that "The community at large is not so enamored of ignorance as Bishop Ryle." It concludes: "If the unfortunate Church of Liverpool is still to groan under Bishop Ryle's incumbency, the least we have a right to expect of him is that he shall hold his tongue. He had far better keep silence even from good words than run the risk of uttering such pernicious nonsense as he generally talks when he speaks at all." All this because Dr. Ryle places the preaching of the Gospel before the Sacraments. Vat a larks!

A WESLEYAN minister complains in the *Methodist Recorder* of the popular sing-songs that are now being used in Wesleyan gospel-shops. He declares it would be better to go backwards to Dr. Watts than downwards to Sankey's melodies and *War Cry* choruses. But something must be done to make the services attractive, for the people certainly won't attend chapel to hear the prayers and sermons.

ACCORDING to the *Christian World* the Queen, through the agency of Lady Dufferin, has inaugurated an Association for Supplying Medical Aid to the women of India. So far as the objects of such an association are purely philanthropical they are of course to be commended, though we cannot but regret that the movement does not take the shape of educating the native women to render medical aid to each other, instead of depending on assistance from an alien race, whose visits their male friends are sure to resent as an intrusion. But we read further that while Lady Dufferin pretends only to relieve physical disorders, she asks nobody who helps "to suppress his or her convictions or to refrain from inculcating them as opportunity offers." This hints that as usual the philanthropic motive may cover a mission of conversion. The Hindus, however, are too shrewd not to see through such pretences, and there is little doubt that, as is commonly the case, the religious element will frustrate the humanitarian.

A WRITER in the *Church Times* protests that the movement for the Disestablishment of the Church proceeds from the Dissenters' envy at the superior social position enjoyed by the clergy. He warns them, however, that the tendency of the times is not in the direction of chapel-going, and that those who leave the Church may become Agnostics or Romanists but "Dissent is nowhere

in the running." As culture advances the School Board pupil may become a votary of Herbert Spencer or of Newman, but he is little likely to be attracted by a Spurgeon.

THE age of miracles is not past. The *Christian World* has an article on Methodists in Motion.

PROFESSOR HUXLEY'S trenchant articles on the Evolution of Theology are evidently not to the *Christian World's* taste. The question of questions, it says, is after all not "what the roots and beginnings of inspiration were." Indeed! Every scientific student of theology knows it is the very question on which everything depends. If theology began in a mistaken interpretation of nature, its subsequent developments are all necessarily vitiated by its false origin.

THE question, according to the *C. W.*, is whether all the prophets, from Adam to Christ, were under hallucination when they called upon men to have faith in God. No doubt Professor Huxley has his own opinion on the subject, but he is too wary a controversialist to be drawn off his proper scent. Besides, he intimated pretty plainly, in the close of his articles, as he has often done before, that all theology is metaphysical moonshine. What more does the *C. W.* want?

SIR J. W. DAWSON, in the April number of the *Expositor*, fancies he disposes of Huxley's argument against the Creation Story by pointing out that there are carbon deposits in the old Laurentian strata, before the appearance of any animal life except the lowly eozoon. But Huxley's point was that Genesis gives, among the vegetation which preceded all animal life, herbs and fruit trees that are known to be much later than many animal species. Christians generally answer Freethinkers in this manner. Replying to what a man does not say is a very easy form of refutation.

A MAN at Bromley was fined two shillings and costs for using "profane language" to the annoyance of a neighbor. It is high time this nonsensical law was abolished. If a man is a nuisance, let him be fined as such; but dragging religion into the question only puts the punishment on a wrong basis, and brings the law into derision.

THE judgment of Lord Penzance in the Ritualist case is that the Rev. J. Bell Cox be suspended from office for six months and pay the costs of the case.

THE Bishop of Bath and Wells has caused inquiry as to certain reports respecting the Rev. Samuel Trueman, vicar of Newprett, Somerset, to be made. The allegations were that Mr. Trueman had resorted to taverns and alehouses, and been guilty of drunkenness, and had also been absent from his church. The Court, evidently bent on hushing up a scandal, decided that though the facts disclosed were only excusable on the ground of extraordinary eccentricity, there was no need for further proceedings.

SOME "kyind friend" has sent us a copy of the *Eastern Argus* in an understamped envelope. On opening it we find a big paragraph entitled "An Infidel burning his books." Where the books were burnt and who burnt them, and what the deuce it was he *did* burn, are not mentioned. The burner appears to have no name. He is a "young man"—very young, we should say; and he seems to be regarded as quite a godsend at the Nichol Street Temperance Society, Bethnal Green. We exposed this case in our columns recently, but Christian lies are very hard to kill. If they were not, Christianity itself would long ago have expired.

THE Bristol Secularists are trying hard to induce the Christians to discuss with them, but with very small success. Writing to the *Bristol Mercury*, a Christian who signs himself "P. C." (query, Police Constable, Pious Canter, or Poor Critic) says, "We have no desire to meet the Secularist upon his own or indeed any other ground, for the purpose of discussion." We dare say "P. C." and his pious cronies have good reason for this decision. Probably their best champion, after an hour's discussion with an average Secularist, would be as limp as a well-boiled rag.

MR. HALLIWELL is a member of the Wigan Watch Committee, and at the last meeting of that august body he "asked if any report had been made to the chief constable about the sale of a number of blasphemous pamphlets which were sold in the town on Sunday night last"—that is on the occasion of Mr. Foote's lectures in the Public Hall. The chief constable replied that he had not heard a word about it. Thereupon Mr. Halliwell said that a ratepayer had shown him one of those blasphemous pamphlets, and asked him to bring the matter before the Watch Committee. The pious Halliwell added that the police should be on the look-out when infidel lectures like Mr. Foote's were delivered in the Public Hall on Sunday night. According to the report this champion of the faith then subsided, and the committee passed to the next business. We dare say pious Halliwell and his real or hypothetical ratepayer are surprised that an earthquake did not swallow up the Public Hall when it was used by the infidels, but the police are probably a great deal too

sensible to trouble themselves about the business. The result of the Glasgow prosecution is not very encouraging to Bumbledom.

THE man Harris who is outdoing Jesus and Dr. Tanner at Guildford says it is about three weeks since he had an angel's visit and refuses to say what transpired between him and the angel. As however he complains of a want of tobacco we may surmise the angel brought some manna in the shape of birdseye, returns, or cut cavendish. Dr. Schollick (who has personally seen Harris) declares that he does not believe the old fellow's story about his abstemiousness, nor does he think it possible for a man to subsist on tobacco for so many days. There was no Dr. Schollick, and alas, no tobacco in the wilderness of Galilee.

THE *Paris Morning News* has made a discovery. It has found out that in all the different versions of the Bible, Ahaziah is declared to have been forty-two years old when he began to reign, and he immediately succeeded his father who was only forty years old when he died (1 Chronicles xxii, 2; and 1 Chronicles xxi, 17-20.) It cannot make out why this mistake should have been left by the translators of the revised version. It ought to have known that if Ahaziah was two years older than his father, Jesus Christ was far older than his mother. The revisers were not to blame, for forty-two are the words of the Hebrew text, and they of course would not venture to alter God's word although they do insert "thirty" in brackets where the Hebrew says that "Saul was a year old when he began to reign" (1 Samuel xiii, 1).

THE *Spectator* again criticises Professor Huxley's articles on "The Evolution of Theology." In objecting that the religion of the Tongas may have had as long a period in which to evolve as that of the Jews, and nevertheless it remained semi-savage, the *Spectator* betrays a gross ignorance of the conditions of development. The religion, like the arts of isolated South Sea Islanders, remained comparatively stagnant because they were not brought into competition with other races. The Jews owed their development to their contact with more civilised people both in Egypt and Babylon.

THE *Freeman*, writing anent the Society for Psychical Research and the Theosophists, rightly observes that "credulity, imperfect observation and exaggerated relation, are the factors of most mysterious stories current among us." But of course these causes had no play in producing the mysterious stories which were current eighteen hundred years ago in a less critical age and among a people still more given to superstition and romance?

THE *Tablet* groans over the deplorable state of religious ignorance in which French children are being brought up in the Secular schools, and at the risk of horrifying its pious readers tells of one child who when asked "Who is God?" made answer "I don't know him." "But you have heard of the bon Dieu surely?" "Oui, mais je ne le connais pas ce monsieur." "Yes, but I do not know the gentleman." Another who when questioned as to the number of persons in the Trinity answered "Seven." How can such children be expected to make useful citizens, or even to understand Christian arithmetic?

A *Catechism of the Christian Religion*, translated by the Rev. J. Fander, asks in regard to the confessional: "But could we not also receive forgiveness of our sins by confessing them to God alone?" The answer to which (p. 280) is "By no means."

THE *Tablet* protests vehemently against Mr. Gladstone's proposals and urges Catholics to oppose "with all their strength." The banishment of so many Catholic representatives from Westminster is of course the ground of offence.

WE believe that Romish processions in the streets are illegal, but availing themselves of the immunity accorded to the Salvationists, the priests of the East-end of London have been celebrating Lent by carrying the host, with crosses, banners, and other sacerdotal paraphernalia through the streets.

A CLERGYMAN whose name is not given, but who lived in "a neighborhood surrounded almost entirely with infidels," narrates a case of one of these infidels being "soundly converted." This infidel, as usual, is anonymous and he lived at some place or other not mentioned in some "State" or other of North America. Soon after his conversion he was killed by a falling tree. Probably this was a special providence to prevent any backsliding. Before he died the minister says he prayed; and he continues, "such a prayer I never heard from mortal lips." We think the minister speaks the truth—unintentionally. We quite believe that he "never heard" such a prayer, although he says that the effect was such upon the "infidel neighbors" that "all of them are happily converted to God."

FERGUSON DEFENCE FUND.

THE following additional subscriptions have been received:—Lady Sympathiser (Manchester), 2s.; Outcast, 2s. 6d. Walworth Freethought Institute: R. H. Side, 2s.; Mr. Cheicel, 6d.; Mr. Taylor, 6d.; A. Kendal, 6d. J. Vaughan, 3s.; C. Bentley, 1s. 6d.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 18, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town; at 7.30, "Father Abraham."

Thursday, April 22, Hall of Science, Old Street, London.—Debate with the Rev. Dr. McCann on "Christianity or Secularism: which is True?"—8 p.m.

APRIL 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. 3d.; 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.—Mack, R. Fox.

J. CASPAR.—Thanks. We are always glad to receive cuttings. But in this case we can hardly do an "Acid Drop," for the poor sky-pilot is not responsible for the extravagance of his prodigal son.

C. BENTLEY.—Much obliged. The extract will be very interesting to our readers.

F. G. WILLATT asks us to give him a column a week for six weeks to prove that we are altogether wrong. Suppose he gets his six columns in a Christian paper. We can then see if it is worth replying to without running the risk of killing our own journal.

J. JAMESON.—One little paper cannot do everything. Our space is devoted to exposing Christianity. There is other work in the world, and we do our share of it, but not here.

J. STUBBS.—Hardly up to the mark, and we are full of copy at present.

J. FORRESTER.—The sketch is hardly up to the mark, and the subject is one of those not easily treated without coarseness. Mr. Foote will be in Glasgow on June 13, and will speak at the N. S. S. Conference.

FREETHINKING RADICAL.—We do not suppose the brimstone color suggested Shakespeare's "primrose way to the everlasting bonfire." The primrose is not an inappropriate emblem. With abundant leaves and flowers it bears no fruit and is neither fit for food nor physic. Its root has an acrid taste and if taken will make people sick. It is the symbol of wasted youth and early death.

R. B.—The Jews cannot have been dispersed for crucifying the Messiah, for they were scattered throughout Asia Minor and were even in Spain before the Christian era.

PETAL.—Received with thanks. Although you are too far off to attend the debate between Dr. McCann and Mr. Foote, you will be able to read it, as it will be published.

DEVEREUX.—Mr. Gladstone's articles on Genesis were published in the *Nineteenth Century*. Captain Burton's *Arabian Nights* is only privately circulated to subscribers. Any bookseller will procure the other volumes for you.

E. J. TIERNEY writes that he noticed in Messrs. Washbourne's window, Paternoster Row, Jesus Christ on the Cross wounded in his left side, and Jesus Christ lying down wounded in his right side. Of course the Bible does not say which side it was, and each artist would challenge the other to disprove his view.

O. W.—The sentiment is good, but you are not a poet.

UT PROSIM sends us a quotation from a recent educational work published by Collins and Sons, which is stated to be adapted to the requirements of the Science and Art Department, and in which the population of the globe is given as 1,215,000,000. Of these 355,000,000 are reckoned as Christians and 400,000,000 as Buddhists. "Ut Prosim" commends these figures to the attention of Mr. Dunn.

A. ANDRADE.—Good, but not quite satisfactory.

REV. C. J. ENGSTROM, Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society, informs us that he did not in his letter to the *Christian Commonwealth* refer to "one Mr. Foote." The one was inserted by the compositor, which we suppose means the editor. Mr. Engstrom says he meant the words "Mr. Foote is no scholar at all" in a Pickwickian—we beg pardon—in a technical sense. In proof of Mr. Cowper's "European fame" he quotes a laudatory reference to him from Tischendorf. We understand Tischendorf's eulogy, but that does not give Mr. Cowper a European fame. Mr. Cowper's distinctive merit, if it may be called so, is that he knows Syriac, a language which is about as valuable as Esquimaux. Perhaps Jesus Christ spoke in that lingo, but as his sayings only come to us through the Greek, it is hardly a matter of much importance. Evidently God Almighty, who dictated the New Testament, thought Syriac not worth troubling about.

H. P. BOWDEN.—We fancy you are mistaken. According to our recollection, the *Daily News* condemned Mr. Foote's imprisonment and censured Sir William Harcourt for declining to release him. Thanks for the cutting. It shall be dealt with next week.

SIGNALMAN writes that discussions on the Bible take place frequently on board his ship before as many as a hundred tars, and that the orthodox champions generally get the worst of it.

J. W. CROWTHER, 37 Gibbet Street, Halifax, informs us that he has been occupied on the last three Sundays in distributing back numbers of the *Freethinker*, which have given the lucky recipients a great deal of pleasure and amusement. J. W. C. wishes to know if any one can send him more back numbers for the same purpose.

D. BITCHENO, 18 Gibraltar Walk, is the culprit who sent us the under-stamped envelope. He runs the Temperance gospel-shop where

the Infidel young man is exhibited as a trophy, and he writes us that our correspondents did not tell the truth. The Infidel young man believed "the Bible was all a Romance," and, adds D. Bitcheno, "I think this is broad enough for any Atheist." D. Bitcheno is not aware that many people who are not Atheists believe the Bible is all romance. As for his Infidel young man, he appears to be of the usual sort figuring in conversion stories, having no name, residing nowhere, and being utterly unknown to other Freethinkers.

W. J. CRENNON.—Mr. Bradlaugh did debate with the Rev. Brewin Grant, but whether he was defeated or not is a question on which his and the Rev. Brewin's friends are most likely to have two different opinions.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Wexford Independent—Buxton Herald—South Wales Daily News—West Sussex Gazette—Daily Telegraph (Launceston, Tasmania)—Devon Herald—Islington News—Boston Investigator—Lucifer—Rationalist—Truthseeker—Beacon Light.

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.

WE are pleased to see that the Nottingham Secularists have at last a local habitation as well as a name. Their hall in Beck Street is not everything that could be desired, and it has to be reached by a rather narrow staircase; but it is the only place available at present, and Hobson's choice is after all better than none. There were good audiences last Sunday at Mr. Foote's lectures, as we dare say there will be to-day at Mrs. Besant's. If the Branch keeps pegging away, as Lincoln said, it will certainly make progress; and it is gratifying to hear that many new members have recently been enrolled.

IN response to many invitations, it has been decided to print the Debate between the Rev. Dr. McCann and Mr. Foote on Secularism and Christianity. The report of the first night's discussion is already in the printer's hands.

THE one item of Mr. Gladstone's "Magna Charta for Ireland" which affects us as Freethinkers is the declaration that the proposed Irish Parliament "shall not be competent to pass a law for the establishment or endowment of any particular religion." The warm cheers with which this announcement was received, not only from the Liberal benches but also from the Parnellites must prove disheartening to the Jesuit plotters who hoped the movement for Home Rule would play into the hands of the Church.

CRITICISM of the Old Testament has made a decided advance during the past month by the articles of Professor Huxley and Ernest Rénan, in the *Nineteenth Century* and the *Revue des Deux Mondes* respectively. From the time of Astruc and Spinoza, the work of examining the different documents of the Old Testament has gone on, until now one can, with the aid of such guides as Reuss and Wellhausen, map out a Bible with different washes of color to indicate the separate strata of the various Elohist and Jahveh writers. The important contribution of M. Rénan lies in the fact that his keen literary taste enables him to detect the fragments of earlier popular ballads and romances which the later writers interwove with their works, while Professor Huxley shows that the evolution of theology among the Jews was on exactly the same lines as among the semi-savage races of Polynesia, and furnishes a guide for the one work remaining for the critic, viz., the separation as far as possible of the early traditional legends, myths and customs from the later written accounts and explanations of them.

"THERE has lately occurred in Glasgow a disgraceful prosecution of an aged Freethinker, a Mr. Ferguson, for selling Mr. Foote's excellent paper, the *Freethinker*. Mr. Ferguson was sentenced to imprisonment, but appealed. We do not yet know the result. And still people declare, in face of facts like this, that religious persecution is defunct. We have no hesitation in saying that there are bigots extant in all Christian countries who would, had they the power, celebrate an *auto-da-fé* to-morrow."—*Rationalist*, Auckland, New Zealand.

IN an article on the Socialists' trial, the *Daily News* says: "We hope and believe that the Old Bailey will never again witness such a scene as that which shocked all fair-minded men when Mr. Justice North presided over the first trial of Mr. Foote for blasphemy."

A MONUMENT to Schopenhauer is to be erected at Frankfort. Most of the contributions have come from Europe and America, England being very poorly represented. The German professors, with the exception of a few illustrious names, have kept aloof; no doubt remembering Schopenhauer's bitter sneer at the poor devils who philosophise for bread. Freethinkers owe Schopenhauer at least one debt of gratitude. It was he who uttered the remarkably fine sentence: "Religions are like glow-worms, they require darkness to shine in."

SOME CURIOUS TEXTS.

In hunting up *Bible Absurdities*, I collected some strange passages which were excluded from that work on account of the exigencies of space and of their relative unimportance. As some of these divinely-inspired texts are rather curious, I present them to the reader in the columns of the *Freethinker*.

And the children of Israel went up harnessed out of the land of Egypt. Exodus xiii. 18.

The prophet is a fool, the spiritual man is mad. Hosea ix. 7.

Then the priest shall command that they take away the stones in which the plague is. Leviticus xiv. 40.

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses. Deut. xvii. 16.

And the Lord shall make thee the head, and not the tail. Deut. xxviii. 13.

Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his cause. Exodus xxiii. 3.

And when ye shall come into the land, and shall have planted all manner of trees for food, then ye shall count the fruit thereof as uncircumcised: three years shall it be as uncircumcised unto you: it shall not be eaten of. But in the fourth year all the fruit thereof shall be holy to praise the Lord withal. Leviticus xix. 23, 24.

Ye shall not . . . observe times. Leviticus xix. 26.

Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you. Zech. viii. 23.

Ye shall not tempt the Lord your God, as ye tempted him in Massah. Deut. vi. 16.

Thy navel is like a round goblet. Song of Solomon vii. 2.

For by thee I have run through a troop: by my God have I leaped over a wall. 2 Samuel xxii. 30.

My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou sewest up mine iniquity. Job xiv. 17.

Who can stay the bottles of heaven? Job xxxviii. 37.

Wherefore my bowels shall sound like an harp for Moab, and mine inward parts for Kir-haresh. Isaiah xvi. 11.

Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent; it is ready to burst like new bottles. Job xxxii. 19.

And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross, and take away all thy tin. Isaiah i. 25.

The blueness of a wound cleanseth away evil: so do stripes the inward parts of the belly. Proverbs xx. 30.

They are all grievous revolters, walking with slanders: they are brass and iron. . . . The bellows are burned. . . . Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them. Jeremiah vi. 28-30.

Very naughty figs. Jeremiah xxiv. 2.

Thus saith the Lord God: Woe to the women that sew pillows to all armholes, and make kerchiefs upon the head of every stature to hunt souls! Ezekiel xiii. 18.

Ephraim is a cake not turned. Hosea vii. 8.

Ephraim feedeth on wind. Hosea xii. 1.

The Lord God hath sworn by his holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that he will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks. And ye shall go out at the breaches, every cow at that which is before her; and ye shall cast them into the palace, saith the Lord. Amos iv. 2, 3.

The Lord . . . will famish all the gods of the earth. Zeph. ii. 11.

And thou shalt cut the ram in pieces, and wash the inwards of him, and his legs, and put them unto his pieces, and unto his head. . . . Also thou shalt take of the ram the fat and the rump, and the fat that covereth the inwards, and the caul above the liver, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, and the right shoulder; for it is a ram of consecration. Exodus xxix. 17, 22.

A golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe round about. And it shall be upon Aaron to minister: and his sound shall be heard when he goeth in unto the holy place before the Lord, and when he cometh out, that he die not.* Exodus xxviii. 34, 35.

And thou shalt embroider the coat of fine linen, and thou shalt make the mitre of fine linen, and thou shalt make the girdle of needlework. Exodus xxviii. 39.

And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them. Numbers x. 1.

Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together. Thou shalt make thee fringes upon the

four quarters of thy vesture, wherewith thou coverest thyself. Deut. xxii. 9-12.

Thou shalt not bring . . . the price of a dog, into the house of the Lord thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the Lord thy God. Deut. xxiii. 18.

Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Lev. xix. 27.

Then shall his brother's wife . . . spit in his face. Deut. xxv. 9.

Does the Christian believe that God commanded a woman to spit in her brother-in-law's face because he refused to marry her? Does he believe that God troubled to issue the sanitary instructions given in Deut. xxiii., 13, and that he excluded mutilated persons from the congregation? (Deut. xxiii., 1.) How will the Christian explain why his God should solemnly and carefully enlighten his benighted children with an enormous amount of trivial and puerile instruction or information such as fetishistic savages and priest-ridden simpletons usually imagine for themselves, while at the same time this omniscient and infinitely wise God totally omitted to reveal to us many most important matters which we have had to discover for ourselves?

W. P. BALL.

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

JESUS IN LONDON.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

APRIL 13, 1886.

JESUS has got his eye back to its natural color, and he thought, before commencing his duties as waiter, he would make another trial to induce the ministers of Christianity to look with more favor on his mission. So, arraying himself in a toga made from cheap calico he purchased at a drapery sale, and putting on a pair of second-hand sandals from some theatrical wardrobe shop (I lent him a gingham, the rain having commenced), he presented himself at St. Paul's, a large crowd following, cheering him, no doubt expecting some fun. By some means he eluded the police and got inside, when I found he had provided himself with a whip of knotted cords. His desire, he said, was to drive out the money-changers, but, finding no money-changers there, he hid the whip up his back surreptitiously and hurried towards the bishop who was preaching. Poor fellow! he has again suffered. Two stalwart vergers seized him, treading on those poor feet of his, making Jesus howl with anguish. But the man of peace summoned up courage enough to fight manfully. Of course he was overpowered, his calico torn off his back, and poor Jesus, in dilapidated raiment, bootless or sandal-less, was hauled off to Guildhall. At my intercession, the magistrate let him off with a caution and a nominal fine, treating the case as a practical joke by one who had dined not wisely but too well. Jesus says he will make one more trial, and, if not successful, will forego his mission, and either try another planet or stop, at least for some time, on this earth, with which he is more satisfied than with that dreary life of his up above. In the meantime he has written another paper, which will clear up much nonsense the Christians are continually writing about heaven, of which they know a trifle less than nothing.

CHRIST ON "HEAVEN."

There are many false notions concerning Heaven, the principal one being the easy manner in which people departing from this earth arrive there. It is a long journey, and the first arrivals—Adam, Abel, etc.—were in a terribly dilapidated condition. Noah, I am sorry to say, true to his proclivities, arrived at the entrance in a sorry state of "four half." He had found out a half-way house. He said the muscular action necessary for skittles had done the mischief, but the gatekeeper, smelling his breath, told the local police to keep him outside, at least until he was sober. Adam crept out and tried to hoist the old man over the garden wall, but he was too far gone to make good his grip, and only cut his hands with the broken bottles on top. He was admitted next morning, and Jehovah sentenced him to a long term of water diet, a cruel sentence no doubt, as the old fellow had had rather a good dose of that liquid whilst on earth. David and Joshua had to be stopped in their expeditions and sports, one of which was young angel shooting, no doubt they thinking it as good sport as young rook shooting; but the mothers made such a fuss, it had to be severely stopped. David next opened a cheap dancing-saloon, with Rahab, but they had to be indicted—the nuisance was too great; besides, Dad was becoming a constant visitor, and his morals, never very strong, were gradually becoming a thing of the past. "Mo" is quite a character; he's gone in for making a book on young angel flying. It's quite a sight to see him with his box of "homing" angels, tramping off to throw them up some twelve or fifteen miles from the New Jerusalem, of course backing them on their time. He sometimes loses, but very seldom. Jacob traps them now and then, but delivers them up if he is only threatened with Joshua. Jacob's a great cur.

* Huxley in his *Evolution of Theology* points out that these bells are to give notice to the Hebrew God, who would mortally resent being intruded on in a sudden or surreptitious manner. In New Zealand the priest pulled a string to arouse his god's attention, which string was fastened round the neck of the image. In the Kami temples in Japan the worshippers ring bells to attract the attention of their ancestor-gods.

The night that is most full of business is Saturday, for then the angels' white robes come home from the wash. Poor Mary Magdalen has volunteered to see that all the buttons and strings are intact, and I think there is no more homely sight than the miles of clothes-lines full of angels' gaberlines drying in the wind on a breezy common. The female angels are very particular about their white robes. They take as their guide Gustave Doré's pictures as to how an angel should be dressed. The starching and getting up of these white robes is ageing mother very much.

The local police had to be engaged from Hades. Dad found he had admitted such a precious set of rascals that no applicants in Heaven dared be engaged; but the Hades police are thoroughly trustworthy, and have detected and punished Charles Peace for breaking into the house of many mansions, and caught Jacob filing bits off the golden throne.

Samson has to have his hair kept quite close, for by accident it was allowed to get rather long, and he immediately commenced performing fearful feats of strength, finishing up by carrying Jehovah, throne and all, right round the throne-room. The old man trembled very much, and said, "If you do drop me, Samson, drop me on those four-and-twenty elders, and shut them up; their incessant 'holy, holy, holies' are enough to send any sane being to drink." By the bye, the larrikins play those four-and-twenty fearful larks; their life must be a very busy one, looking out for fresh surprises.

David has told me he never wrote those Psalms. Why, he's only equal to poetical advertisements respecting patent medicines or somebody's soap for making feathers grow on bald backs; and as for his playing on the harp—well, he makes a good corner man with the bones, but a harp would want a handle before he could play it.

Solomon has been prohibited from publishing any more of his erotic songs, and has gone into partnership with Madame Tussaud with a waxwork show, but Jehovah votes it very slow; he wants some mechanism put into the figures, so that they will fight. He still likes to be called a "God of War," and if he cannot get real fighting men, thinks that waxwork dummies would make a good show. The only fighting the old man ever gets is a friendly bout with the gloves with Sayers, but it is not dignified to see the old 'un knocked into a heap of old clothes, and besides, he makes such a row over a discolored optic.

You will learn by my discursive tittle-tattle that Heaven is not the bed of roses ranting Spurgeons would have you believe; the bishops, popes and smaller fry will find that out when they arrive. There's the throne to be polished every morning, all the planets to be started, the clouds to be shoved along; and all this work has to be done by those who have led the most lazy lives on earth—no £16,000 a year hanging to it, no collections after the service—all for love. Male voices are badly wanted in Heaven for the choir. Mephisto seems to secure them. Female voices we have in abundance, but the ladies are always so erratic; and besides, Handel seems rather thin without basses and baritones. Handel's name reminds me that he has done more for latter-day Christianity than all the ministers that have ever existed since his day. Impressionable females attend his oratorios on earth, thinking they are worshipping and pleasing Dad, whereas if they only knew the music he really appreciates, it would astonish them. Even Offenbach he doesn't understand; something in the music-ball line seems to suit him best. The Salvationists in Heaven are a great nuisance. They prance around the throne, making life a hideous torture, each one making his own special noise on his own special instrument. Jehovah has at last ordered a thousand-gallon-a-minute fire-engine, with strict orders to the performer thereon to direct his hose on them with precision, so they and the four-and-twenty elders are nearly always in a chronic state of rheumatism, besides having the light of their nimbuses put out. Uriah has to be closely watched, for he's always on the track of David. That little matter of Bathsheba and the forefront of the battle still rankles in his bosom, but there's no doubt one day he'll go for him and stop his hallelujah business for some time.

If I do get up aloft once more, it will only be to know how the old girl is getting on with Dad, and to try and tempt both her and Mary Magdalen to pay a visit to this planet. The last-named Mary is rather good to the juvenile cherubims, each one being provided with one of her pictorial handkerchiefs to wipe its little nose. My paper is a trifle more lengthy than at first intended, but it's really a pleasure to describe Heaven as it really is, so as to destroy that metallic heaven described by John in Revelation. He was very mad when that was written; the particular mansion in which he resides up aloft has thickly-padded rooms.

CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS.—When the doctrine of exclusive salvation is generally believed and realised, habits of thought will be formed around it that are diametrically opposed to the spirit of inquiry, and absolutely incompatible with human progress. An indifference to truth, a spirit of blind, and at the same time wilful, credulity will be encouraged, which will multiply fictions of every kind, will associate inquiry with the ideas of danger and of guilt, will make men esteem the impartiality of judgment and study, which is the very soul of truth, an unholy thing, and will so emasculate their faculties as to produce a general torpor on every subject.—W. E. H. Lecky, *History of Rationalism in Europe*, Vol. I, p. 407; 1870.

INGERSOLL AND BEECHER.

THE New York correspondent of the *Boston Herald* says: "Colonel Ingersoll is living in New York now-a-days, and his mansion on Fifth Avenue is one of the handsome dwellings of the stylish part of the great metropolis. Mrs. Ingersoll, the Colonel's two daughters, and his sister, all live here together, and a happy and lively family they make, too, according to my information. The town is of course more or less full of stories of the Ingersolls, as any town where they lived would be. One story I heard to-day isn't bad. A while ago a friend of the Colonel was over here from England, and desired to go to Brooklyn to hear Mr. Beecher speak. It was arranged, and the two young ladies, Colonel Ingersoll's sister, and the guest, went over. After the meeting was closed, they were all taken up and introduced to the preacher, who was very much struck with the eldest of the Ingersoll girls, and who told her she was the most beautiful heathen he had ever seen! The conversation went on for some time in a spirit of gentle pleasantry, and Miss Ingersoll held her own against the practised wits of the clergyman. Mr. Beecher finally asked why Mrs. Ingersoll never came near him, and the young lady frankly replied that her mother objected to him because he had said something offensive of her father. 'But,' said Mr. Beecher, 'I like your father very much, personally. Besides, he is a very belligerent kind of a man, and he ought not to mind being taken up with his own tongs occasionally.' 'I know he is given to saying sharp things as well as you are,' responded the young lady, quickly, 'but there is this difference between you—he attacks a cause without being personal, while you attack a person and let the cause take care of itself.' Mr. Beecher heartily joined in the laugh which followed this spirited rejoinder, which he greatly enjoyed, and he sent a message of an amicable nature to Mrs. Ingersoll, inviting her to come over and visit himself and his wife in Brooklyn."

WESLEYAN ATHEISTS.

THE Wesleyan Conference at Melbourne has voted £75 to the Rev. E. C. de Garis to aid him in promoting irrigation works for the arid districts of the colony. Mr. Symes writes a pungent article on the matter, showing how the Wesleyans have "turned Atheists" by defying God's will, and relying on good Secular work instead of Christian prayer. He gives the following dialogue in proof of his point.

- Q.—Who created Australia?
A.—Almighty God, who is infinite in wisdom and goodness.
Q.—Why did he create it?
A.—For his own glory.
Q.—Did not almighty God, at the close of his creation, survey all that he had made, and pronounce it very good?
A.—He did (Gen. i, 31).
Q.—Did God know what he was about when he made the deserts and arid lands of Australia?
A.—Most certainly; and "in wisdom he created them all."
Q.—Had he intended those places to be watered and fruitful, would he have made them so?
A.—Certainly, for he "doeth according to his will."
Q.—Then is it not very great presumption to put water where God never put it, and to turn his arid wastes into fruitful fields?
A.—It is, for such conduct is opposed to God's will.
Q.—If we want water, is it not the proper thing to pray for it?
A.—Such was the conduct of Elijah and others, and they are our exemplars.
Q.—Then ought we not to pray instead of working?
A.—Yes, certainly; and to take thought for food and raiment is contrary to the express commands of our blessed Savior.

A CONFESSION.

DEDICATED TO H— V—.

I ONCE was a butcher, a knight of the blade,
But hard was the work and the neighborhood poor,
So said I to myself, "Religion's my trade;
It's all profit that comes by the box at the door."

There's nothing goes down like scripture and cant—
No chink is required, of that I am sure.
My brethren oft' told me I always could rant,
And I've found their words true by the box at the door.

At Evangelists' meeting I ask them to stop.
"Oh, come to the Lord and take of his store;
Fly quickly, my friends, from the evil to come,
And don't pass the box that hangs by the door."

"Feed my lambs," saith the scripture, but that I reverse;
My lambs feed me better than those as of yore.
That my flock have for many years well filled my purse
I've found from the box that hangs by the door.

A. ANDRADE.

THE *Christian* has an article on "An Ebony Saint." Is it written by an ivory editor?

PROFANE JOKES.

WHEN a young lady goes to church to exhibit her new sealskin, she certainly might be called sack-religious.

A YOUNG English girl in India has become a Buddhist. When asked why she did so, she replied: "I know on which side my bread is buttered."

"Who are you that knows so much more than the rest of us?" "Who am I?" said his aged opponent, with his face covered with soap lather. "Why, I am a humble, praying Christian, you d— conceited heathen, you!"

"Say, Spook, what makes you go to church rainy Sundays and stay at home when it is pleasant?" "Greater inducements rainy Sundays." "Greater incentives to spiritual meditation, or to see the ankles?" "Well, hardly that, exactly." "Pray thou, what is the nature of the inducement of which you speak?" "A fine assortment of umbrellas to choose from, you know."

DEACON JONES: I am deputed to learn, Mr. Goodman, if a "call" from our church would likely be favorably entertained by you? Minister: H'm. It would depend somewhat, I think, Mr. Jones, upon—er—circumstances. Deacon: Ah, yes, I see. We discussed the matter in rather an informal way, and the sense of the majority seemed to be that—er—about £200— Minister: H'm! Yes. I am afraid, Mr. Jones, that the good people whom you represent will have to "call" a little louder than that.

Public Debate

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AND
MR. G. W. FOOTE,
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