

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 160.



A DOUBLE DEITY.

"I and my Father are one."—JOHN x. 30.

## GOD AND THE ELECTIONS.

WE are often twitted with our "blasphemy." We are accused of handling sacred things in an irreverent spirit. Ghosts and gods of every description are the objects of our mirth. Not even the blessed Three-in-One of the Christian superstition is free from our incessant ridicule. We treat every article of religion, and every one of its holy personages with such abandoned levity, that there is no hope for us in this world or in the world to come; and the taste of hell we enjoyed in Holloway prison affords only a faint idea of the treat in store for us when we fall into the hands of the almighty gaoler of the universe, after a sterner trial and sentence than we received at the hands of Judge North.

Terrible as this prospect is, we are able to smile at it. If there be a God, we have simply used the reason he gave us, and he will never punish us for exercising it. Earthly governments are learning that thought should be free, and shall the monarch of heaven be less sensible? Surely he will not send us to Sheol for being what he made us. He is old enough to know better.

Far more blasphemous than we, are the pious folk who, as Mr. Arnold says, talk of God as though he were a man in the next street. We merely laugh at infantile myths and lying legends, and ridicule the monstrous impostures of priestcraft; while they trot the Almighty round like a boon acquaintance. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" asks Zophar in the Book of Job. "Oh, yes," reply the theologians, "here he is; walk round and feel his muscle, and see there is no delusion. He is a personal friend of ours, always handy in a mess; he backs our bills, acts as our general factotum, and listens to all our twaddle.

No. 259 ]

In return we act as advertising agents for his famous bread-of-life pills. O taste and see that the Lord is good."

Equally blasphemous are those who pretend that God's finger is always in their pie. In one of Landor's fine *Imaginary Conversations* between General Lacy and Cura Merino, the following occurs:

"Merino. It was God's will. As for those rebels, the finger of God —

"Lacy. Prythee, Senor Curedo, let God's finger alone. Very worthy men are apt to snatch at it upon too light occasions: they would stop their tobacco-pipes with it."

This witty passage may be commended to the attention of our pulpiteers, revivalists, professional philanthropists, all the red Salvation Army from Happy Eliza to General Booth, and all the black Salvation Army from the meanest curate to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Now let us fly at higher game. When we were vegetating in a Christian gaol Mr. Gladstone was appealed to on our behalf, and he "regretted that he could do nothing," which was a parliamentary way of saying he would see us rot before he would lift a finger to help us. Unfortunately we were only English; we were not Irish, nor even Bulgarian. We had never houghed cattle, cut off cows' tails, shot boycotted neighbors, or blown up cabmen and barmaids. Our crime was of a milder type, and it gave us no claim on the sympathy of a Christian statesman. Mr. Gladstone evidently concurred with his fat Home Secretary in thinking our punishment deserved; blasphemy being a mortal sin to his intensely theological mind, and not to be tolerated unless it could turn a division in the House of Commons or seriously affect a general election. In that case, of course, not even a Christian statesman would have stood to his conviction. Christianity and the Bible would have been left to defend themselves if protecting them stood in the way of place and power.

Well, it was Mr. Gladstone's turn then; it is ours now. He is the greatest rhetorician in our National Palaver. He never wrote or spoke a page which anybody will care to read when his magnetic personality is gone, but for all that he is a wonderful talker, and when he concludes a speech his auditors scarcely know whether they are standing on their heads or their heels. Knowing his public well, he makes a free use of religious shibboleths, and he generally drags God Almighty into his perorations. It serves to heighten the solemnity, like the ghost in *Hamlet* and the witches in *Macbeth*, and is just as much a piece of stage business. But whether a rhetorical trick, or a piece of personal presumption, it is equally blasphemous. If we deserved twelve months' imprisonment, Mr. Gladstone deserves twelve years; for we have no belief in the beings we deride, while he professes to believe in the deity he degrades. We simply denounce and ridicule the foul and foolish stories of God from Genesis to Revelation; Mr. Gladstone drags God about on his election tours as a political agent, and keeps him in the House of Commons as a superior party whip. During the recent crisis he has been very free with the Almighty in speeches, letters, and telegrams. He gave the public to understand, at least by implication, that the Lord was on his side, and approved if he did not inspire his two Bills. What does Mr. Gladstone say now? We ask the question without wishing to enter on a political controversy, which would be out of place here, but simply with an eye to religion. Mr. Gladstone is a Churchman, and he will continue so until he finds it politic to go in for Disestablishment. He reads the service in his parish church. He knows, therefore, or he believes, or he professes to believe, or he ought to believe—we don't care which—that "the High Court of Parliament" is under God's direction; and surely,

if God directs them when they take their seats, he also chooses who shall sit. Being the great "disposer" of all things, the Lord has decided against Mr. Gladstone in this struggle, and perhaps he has done so to rebuke a familiarity which bordered on contempt. According to our Premier's profession, he is bound to admit that God is against him, and he should repent in sackcloth and ashes. But of course he will do nothing of the kind. Profession is one thing, practice is another. Mr. Gladstone will not let his theology prejudice his politics; what is suitable in Hawarden church may be out of place elsewhere; and whether God is for or against him, he will continue to take the Lord's name in vain whenever it suits his purpose.

From Mr. Gladstone let us descend to Mr. Joseph Arch and Mr. Joseph Leicester. Both are worthy men in their way, though the first Joseph is too easily deceived, and the second Joseph is too fond of bombast and bad spelling. Before the elections they issued a joint appeal to the "horny-handed sons of toil," calling on them to vote for Gladstone, and adding that the voice of the people is the voice of God. The address was what the Yankees call "high falutin," every word of it probably coming from the pen of Mr. Joseph Leicester, to whom the more modest Mr. Joseph Arch said ditto. Neither of them had any special qualification for forming a sound judgment on the Irish question, so they took Gladstone's sherry and dashed it with brandy. Now for the sequel. Both these confident appellars have been rejected by the *vox populi*. Do they still hold that it is *vox Dei*, or is the voice of the people in this case the voice of the Devil? We have no desire to press to hardy on the fallen, and with respect to Mr Joseph Arch, we earnestly hope he will soon regain his seat in Parliament; but we trust that in future they will avoid religious clap-trap. They would do well to reflect that Providence is always on the side of big majorities as well as big battalions.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### CHRIST'S DISCIPLES.

"Then all the disciples forsook him and fled."—MATT. xxvi., 56.

WHAT a curious company it was Jesus collected around him and called to be his disciples. The divine discernment shown in selecting this particular twelve seems to have been exercised with a view to finding foils who would serve to show forth their Master's excellences. They are represented as supernaturally stupid. After three years of divine instruction they misunderstood the simplest sayings. We suppose their poor brains had got so confused in trying to find out obscure parables that even plain talk had become unintelligible to them. Although the chief priests and scribes are represented as asking for a guard as a precaution against Jesus fulfilling his declaration that he would rise again on the third day, we are told that his own disciples, whom he had endowed with miraculous powers, understood not this saying.

These disciples had been promised power to cast out devils and heal all manner of sickness and disease (Matt. x., 1), yet when a lunatic was brought to them "they could not cure him" (Matt. xvii., 16). Jesus called them the salt of the earth, yet they appear to have been continually quarrelling which should be greatest. Jesus declared "He that receiveth you receiveth me," yet they were not only for driving away the little children, but when the inhabitants of a village of Samaria did not receive Jesus "because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem," they wanted to call down fire from heaven and consume them "even as Elias did" (Luke ix., 54). For this they had some excuse, since Jesus, in giving them their commission, had told them to shake off the dust from their feet as they departed from any house or city which refused to receive them; adding that it should be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city.

Their Master had, moreover, promised them that the words they should speak should be given to them. "For," says he, "it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you." Yet Thomas, when Jesus declared "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," bluntly contradicted him saying, "We know not whither thou goest" (John xiv., 45). And Thomas appears to have been right. We wonder if it was the Spirit of the Father speaking when Judas asked the chief priests what they would give him to betray his master, or when Peter swore that he had never seen or known him.

It is, however, said that Judas was a devil and that Jesus knew he was going to betray him. This assertion involves a grave charge against Jesus. Knowing this man to be a mean wretch, he nevertheless selected him for the position of purse-bearer in preference to honest men, and in fact foreordained that he should commit a dastardly crime for which the punishment was so great that "it was better he had never been born." This was not the act of a god but of a devil. And poor Judas, to whom the world presumably owes its salvation, is represented as burst asunder, hanged and damned, all in order to fulfil the scriptures.

If Jesus had any idea that Judas would betray him, how came he, when on his way to Jerusalem, to unconditionally promise the twelve that they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? If one of them was a devil, we wonder which tribe he would judge. We suppose the tribe of Dan, since John omits that tribe from the number sealed in the book of life. Any way, it is rather lucky they were only going to judge the twelve tribes. We should not care to have our case tried before them. The court might be prejudiced.

Peter too, the foremost apostle, upon whom Jesus had founded his Church, giving him the keys of the kingdom of heaven that whatsoever he should bind on earth should be bound in heaven and whatsoever he loosed on earth should be loosed in heaven, was a nice disciple. Like the Church he is said to have founded, he relied considerably more upon the sword than upon the miraculous powers with which he had been endowed. He had been enjoined to turn his cheek to the smiter, yet when his Master was arrested he drew his sword and smote off the ear of the high priest's servant. How he escaped arrest himself is left unexplained. We shortly afterwards find him seated with these very servants and denying with an oath that he ever knew the man whom he had acknowledged to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. As for the rest of Christ's disciples, they all forsook him and fled. At a time when any brave man would have stood by his master, friend and companion till the very death, these men, selected as the foremost followers of the incarnate God and commissioned by him to rule over Israel, basely deserted him. Can they have had any real belief in his Messiahship? If he had really performed the wonderful works attributed to him—walked the waters, raised the dead, and restored Malchus's ear—how was it not one came forward as a witness on his behalf? How, in short, can the divine mission of Christ be reconciled with the desertion of Christ's disciples?

J. M. WHEELER.

#### THE SAILOR-BOY AT PRAYERS.

IN ships of war, on Sundays, prayers are given;  
For, though so wicked, sailors think of heaven,  
Particularly in a storm,

When, if they find no brandy to get drunk,  
Their souls are in a miserable funk;

Then vow they to the Almighty to reform  
If in his goodness only once, once more  
He'll suffer them to clap a foot on shore.

In calms, indeed, or gentle airs,  
They ne'er on week-days pester heaven with prayers,  
For 'tis among the Jacks a common saying,  
Where there's no danger, there's no need of praying.

One Sunday morning all were met  
To hear the parson preach and pray,  
All but a boy, who, willing to forget  
That prayers were handing out, had stolen away,  
And, thinking praying but a useless task,  
Had crawled, to take a nap, into a cask.

The boy was soon found missing, and full soon  
The boatswain's cat sagacious found him out,  
Gave him a clawing to some tune.

This cat's a cousin-germane to the knout.  
"Come out, you skulking dog," the boatswain cried,  
"And save your damned young sinful soul."  
He then the moral-mending cat applied,  
And turned him like a badger from his hole.

Sulky the boy marched on, and did not mind him,  
Although the boatswain flogging kept behind him.  
"Flog!" cried the boy, "Flog!—curse me, flog away.  
I'll go; but mind—God damn me if I'll pray."

W. TUCKER.

## ACID DROPS.

A PARTY of colored people, while returning from church, at Hinesville, U.S., disputed as to the language of the exhorter's text. Richard Perry, while trying to stop the quarrel, incurred the wrath of Sam Martin, who shot and killed him. A general fight followed, in which Sam Martin, Tom Mead, and Mrs. Alcinda Law were fatally wounded. There is nothing like religion for ensuring peace and harmony.

MRS. MARY CHUTE, of Elgin county, Ontario, claims to be "the wife of the Lamb, and a daughter of God," and has made a vow to starve herself to death. She has only taken six meals in four weeks. She means to have a good appetite for the Marriage Supper.

THE *Sunderland Herald* reports the elopement of a Warwickshire rector with his servant, a good-looking girl of about sixteen. The clergyman is a married man with three children. The pair went first to Warwick, but finding themselves too well known there, they removed to Leamington.

HENRY AUTON, an Exeter Salvationist, is committed for trial on the charge of indecently assaulting a little girl under five years of age.

TALMAGE says that "what we want is scientific Christians to capture the science." "A god-worshipping Silliman"—a very appropriate name by the bye—is to be put forward to annihilate such "infidel scientists of the day" as Huxley and Tyndall. All the scientific instruction is to be given by the children of God. A learned clergy are to discourse upon the human eye with "all its muscles, and nerves and bones, showing the infinite skill of an infinite God." Bones in the human eye! This is a sample of the idiotic rubbish we should have foisted upon us if Christian ministers were allowed to dictate our science for us.

THE anatomical clergyman is to wind up with the peroration: "He that formed the eye, shall he not see?" And after describing the human ear—the still longer and more perfect ear of the animal that conversed with Balaam would be more appropriate—the scientific child of God is to exclaim "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?" Are these questions to be asked of all the bodily organs? Shall the believer exclaim "He that made the teeth, shall he not bite?" and "He that made the stomach, shall he not digest?" If the argument applies to one organ, surely it logically applies to all.

TALMAGE says that "the debauched printing-press" is to be recaptured for Christ, and all the reporters, and type-setters, and editors, and publishers are to be "made to swear allegiance to the Lord God of truth,"—by which latter phrase of course he means the Christian God. If the great body of Christian men have not the faith and the courage to carry out this work, then some individual Christian is to climb up into the stronghold, and "In the name of the Lord God of Israel, slash to pieces those literary Philistines." "If these men will not be converted to God," continues the mountebank orator, "then they must be destroyed." This kind of language savors considerably of physical violence. The tone of its incitement is decidedly that of an intolerant bigotry, which, if times were favorable, would culminate in actual crime of the kind it delights to picture.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* acknowledges the mythical nature of the Christian story about the Queen and the Bible. It says: "At how many Bible society meetings, and in how many sermons and Sunday-school addresses, have we been told that when the Queen was asked 'What is the cause of England's greatness?' she replied 'The Bible!' A Sussex gentleman, of a most inquisitive temperament, has had the mischievous audacity to write to Sir Henry Ponsonby, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of this story. Alas! That the very elect should have been deceived! On the authority of Sir Henry, the whole story is a fraud, a delusion, and a sham." The *C.C.* however, forgets to condemn the pious zeal which concocted the "fraud." Its sentiment is rather one of regret at the exposed untruthfulness of the story, than of shame at its fraudulent invention and reckless circulation. The *English Churchman* remarks that all Bible believers must feel disappointed at reading the contradiction of the story, which ought to be true if it is not.

UNDER the heading "Important Discovery in Egypt," the *Rock* reports the discovery of some stones, which it suggests were the very stones hidden by Jeremiah. It says "Mr. Petrie dug diligently for Jeremiah's stones, and found some unbewn stones lying beneath the brickwork." After this, let scepticism be silent. Jeremiah's stones, and the letter of Mary Magdalene reported in our Summer Number, afford a perfect demonstration of the truth of holy writ.

A TRACT just published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, entitled *Flaws in the Church of Rome*, points out that wherever there is a mixed population, the ratio of Roman Catholic criminals is always far larger than that of Protestants. In London, for instance where the Roman Catholics are a little

over three per cent. of the population, they are more than sixteen per cent. of the convicts in prison. Yet the Roman Catholics are undoubtedly the most truly religious portion of the community, being far more devoted in their worship and brought into closer relationship with their clergy than any other sect.

IT is the same in Australia. In 1884 over 51 persons per thousand of Romanists were arrested, over 22 per thousand of Protestants, over 22 per thousand of Jews, over 15 per thousand of Pagans, and no infidels. Evidently the more religion there is the more crime accompanies it.

IN publicly celebrating the commencement of the People's Palace at Mile End, the Prince of Wales spread the mortar and laid the foundation-stone in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost. The Archbishop of Canterbury, who uttered the benediction, is also of course a Trinitarian. Mr. Beaumont, who left the original trust-money now being used for the scheme, was a Unitarian at a time when Unitarians were regarded by the orthodox as worse than open infidels. If he were alive now he would probably be advanced enough to figure as an Agnostic or a Secularist.

IN 1880 the Rev. Coleman Ivens received the living of Boynton, in Yorkshire, on condition of giving it up in four years' time to the patron's nephew. But the presentation was completed before the engagement to resign, and the parson now refuses to carry out his part of the bargain. He had no objection to act as "warming-pan" for Sir Charles Strickland's nephew, and he has no scruple in urging a technical objection to enable him to keep the loaves and fishes when he has once obtained them. But as unprincipled men can have their sins washed away by the blood of Christ, why should they strive to be honorable? We wonder what the parishioners think of their tricky parson.

IN the *Churchman* Dean Burgon writes on the "Six Days of Creation," defending the literal interpretation of the six days. In these times of clerical word-juggling it is quite refreshing to find one of the old school who will stick by his guns even when deserted by all his clerical comrades.

THE Rev. John Gritton, of the Lord's Day Society, has had the impudence to write to the Prince of Wales, complaining that a Sunday entertainment, enlivened with jugglery and other performances, was given at Marlborough House. The Rev. John Gritton only got snubbed for his pains.

WHEN "the Bradlaugh question" was raging, Lord Redesdale brought in a little Bill to render Atheists altogether incapable of sitting in Parliament. Bigoted as they were, and much as they hated Mr. Bradlaugh, the Peers quietly kicked the Bill out as too ridiculous for discussion. Lord Redesdale has now joined the majority, or in other words "gone home," although we will not undertake to decide what place Almighty Wisdom reserves for such persons in the other world. His lordship leaves behind him large landed properties, and personal estate to the amount of £195,000. Yet, rich as he was, this pious peer took £2,500 a year out of the taxpayer's pocket for acting as Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords, the duties of the office being of such a character that any honest man working for a living would have been glad to perform them for a tenth part of the sum. No wonder Lord Redesdale wanted to keep Atheists out of Parliament; no wonder, in particular, that he wished to exclude a Radical who sought to abolish aristocratic pensions.

IF the Gospel is to be believed, old Redesdale is now blazing in Hades. His fortune was big enough to sink him "deeper than plummet's sound." Sordid and bigoted as he was, however, his fate is to be deplored. We would gladly see him released, after a sufficient taste of brimstone; but we have no power in the matter, and we must leave him in the hands of his Maker.

A FRENCH lady of last century said that God would think twice before he damned a person of quality. The hope that she was right is the only consolation that can be offered to Lord Redesdale's surviving relatives, and we generously tender it to them, with profound regret that it is no better.

THE Bishop of Exeter, speaking at a meeting in support of the Western Counties Idiot Asylum, gave an instance of the appreciation of the mysteries of Christianity shown by an idiot boy known as "Silly Billy," who gave utterance to what the Lord Bishop calls this "great thought"—

"Oh! what does Silly Billy see?  
Three in One and One in Three,  
And One of Them has died for me."

Truly these sentiments are worthy of the utterer.

THE *English Churchman* is scandalised that tickets should be sold at a shilling and half-a-crown each, to hear Ward Beecher preach, and invites that orator to take as the subject of his discourse the sin of simony.

A NEW catchpenny journal has just come out with the title of the *Invisible World or Voice of the Stars*. In its opening address of course it appeals to the Bible as the great fountain-head of superstition, mentioning that "Three angels appeared to Abraham as men, and ate and drank with him; Satan appeared to Our Lord in human form at the temptation; and the spirit of Samuel appeared to Saul," etc. The story of Joseph is appealed to in confirmation of the truth of dreams.

TRULY credulity dies hard. The proprietors of *St. Stephen's Review* tout for new subscribers by promising that their horoscopes shall be read by a competent astrologer.

WE regret that a correspondent misled us last week as to the disturbances in Hyde Park. The Secularists were not mobbed by the Christian Evidence people. Mr. Dunn, who generally speaks there on behalf of the C. E. S., is not given to breaking up other people's meetings. The worst offender is a Mr. Mitchell, who although a very fervid Christian, is not connected with the C. E. S. He constantly interrupts, and shouts the most abusive epithets at the lecturer. Unfortunately the police will not give the least assistance in keeping order, even when directly appealed to, although they extend their aid to the orthodox gatherings, and recently gave a man seven days' imprisonment for a single interruption at a Christian meeting.

THE Archbishop of Canterbury, presiding at the annual meeting of the Additional Curates' Society, said that their object was to enable incumbents to "deal more successfully with the ignorant and the Atheistic population in our midst." His Grace appears to us a little mixed. The Church cannot deal more successfully with the ignorant, for it has every man Jack of them already. If the Church is to convert the Atheists, it will have to furnish up its rusty weapons of controversy. There are many Freethinking working men in London who could bowl over as many curates as like to stand up in debate.

HIS GRACE himself thinks there ought to be "a school of dialectics to train young clergy, so as to confute unbelievers." Good; but what a deal of training they will require! And after all the training they will want a little courage. At present, according to the Archbishop, the sucking doves of the pulpit "discuss most ably how to meet the delusions propagated among working men." Discussing amongst themselves is very easy and very safe. Let them try an hour's discussion with a few hard-headed sceptics, and if it crumples their dialectical linen, it will at least show them what they have to expect in fighting "infidelity."

THE Lambeth Vestry, having passed a resolution protesting against the excessive burial fees exacted, the Rev. Dr. Lee, of All Saints' Church, replies that he regards their motion "as merely wind and words." At the same time if Mr. Davis, the mover of the motion, should require a remission of the burial fee in his own case "Dr. Lee, as a Christian minister, would be extremely and particularly happy of having the opportunity of remitting it." This letter was rightly characterised at the next vestry meeting as a "disgrace to any denomination." Clerical insolence of this kind, however, only hastens the day when Christian ministers will no longer be permitted to enforce excessive charges and treat them as personal property.

CANON MCCOLL, being charged with Ritualistic practices, explains that he burns incense in church as a disinfectant, and not for religious purposes. This excuse is probably only a subterfuge. Ritualists will hardly be satisfied with so insulting an explanation of a sacred custom as a mere vulgar sanitary device for overpowering foul smells.

It may be objected to our picture of the Double Deity that it omits to give any representation of the Holy Ghost, unless he is ascending out of Jahveh's tobacco pipe. But the Holy Ghost was not yet (See John vii., 39). Moreover, the Trinity does not complete the godhead. There is God the devil—co-eternal and more powerful than his omnipotent fellows, and Mary the mother of God, not to mention Anne, God's grandmother. We have only been able to include the two most prominent members of this interesting family.

THE pastor of the Union Chapel, Rushden, has been quarrelling with some of his congregation. At a teachers' meeting a Mr. Freeman was appointed superintendent of the Sunday School, which is held in the chapel itself, but the minister came and turned the scholars out and declared there should be no service. Mr. Freeman and his friends, however, declined to leave the place, and the pastor then locked them in. The imprisoned teachers then barricaded the door with forms, and then, doubtless after duly praying to the Holy Ghost for divine guidance, they made their escape. When the pastor sent for his Bible for the evening service in the New Hall, his messenger could not enter in consequence of the barricading. The pastor sent him back again and being hoisted over a wall his emissary managed to enter the sacred edifice from the rear and bring out the necessary books in triumph. On the following Sunday the pastor pointed Mr. Freeman out as taking notes and

ordered him to be ejected. A desperate struggle ensued. Coats were torn off and chairs were broken. The police had to be called in to restore order. Nice Sabbath jinks these for leading Christians to be engaged in.

THE Dominican sisters of St. Rose's Convent, Stroud, Gloucestershire, are sturdy beggars, judging from a circular which lies before us and which promises that a daily memento is made in the choir for those who contribute.

#### THINGS I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW.

WHY God was six whole days at work  
On this terrestrial ball,  
And why he made the tempting fruits  
That cursed us, one and all.

And how he measured day and night  
Without the moon and sun;  
And what produced that ray of light  
By which the work was done.

Why did he let the Devil get  
"Over the garden-wall?"  
On Eve his eyes, entrancing, set  
That wooed her to the fall—

Led her to paths forbidden, where  
That "apple tree" did grow?  
And bade her pluck and eat and share  
With Adam—whence this woe!

Then when the world grew worse and worse,  
And Satan reigned with power,  
And God saw that to 'bate the curse,  
That blacker grew each hour,

Some one must die—must shed his blood  
To wash out all this evil,  
Instead of killing Christ, the good,  
Why not have killed the Devil? FANNIE.

#### QUESTIONS FOR THE ORTHODOX.

1. If God created an endless hell before he created man, did he know there would be any use for it?
2. If God knew there would be any use for an endless hell, must he not have created some men for endless misery?
3. If God created an endless hell, was it included in the works he pronounced very good?
4. If there be an endless hell, and it was not made before creation, when was it made?
5. If there be a personal devil, who made him, and for what purpose was he made?
6. Can there be any such thing as sin in heaven?
7. If there was sin in heaven, and angels were cast out, may there not be sin in heaven again? and may not the present inhabitants be cast out?
8. As sin presupposes temptation of some sort, who tempted a holy angel to sin?
9. If an angel could sin without a devil to tempt him, may we not sin without a devil to tempt us?
10. If a holy angel was tempted by surrounding evil, is heaven a holy place?
11. If an angel was tempted by evil passions, could he have been holy?
12. If an angel became a devil by sinning, was Adam's the original sin?

RECIPE FOR SERMON ON INFIDELITY.—Take a few rattling words such as miscreant monsters, scientific schismatics, shameless Secularism, Atheistic atrocities, and blasphemous ribaldry. Mix with suitable quotations from Holy Scripture. Stir together in a warm head, and after a little shaking, serve them out, scum and all. Season with a few references to the French Revolution and modern Socialism.

SHE SHOCKED THE DIVINE.—A prominent divine was the invited guest of Mr. B. and family. Miss Alice, the charming daughter of the host, was gracing the festivity, and said impulsively: "Oh, mother, I've been roasting up in my room all the afternoon. It's hotter than—" "Alice!" said her father, sternly. "I say it's hotter than—" "Alice!" said the mother, excitedly, and the divine looked at her in alarm. "I say it's hotter than I ever saw it before," continued the young lady coolly, "and I just sat there without a thing on—" "Oh, Alice!" said her father, in alarm. This time the divine was thoroughly frightened. "I just sat there without a thing on—" "Oh, Alice!" said the mother, almost crying. "I say I just sat there," continued the girl, not noticing the interruption; "I just sat there without a thing on except my very lightest summer clothing, and read my Bible all the afternoon. Will you have some more soup, doctor?" *Elmira Gazette.*

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 18, Midland Arches, St. Pancras, at 11.15.

JULY 25, Battersea.  
AUGUST 8, West Hartlepool; 15, Milton Hall; 17, Walworth; 22 and 29, Hall of Science, London.  
SEPT. 5, Liverpool; 19 and 26, Hall of Science, London.  
OCT. 3, Ball's Pond; 10, Birmingham; 24, Manchester.

## 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.—J. T.

C. R. MALTBY.—The price of Wake's *Evolution of Morality* (two vols.) is one guinea. McLennan's *Primitive Marriage* is out of print, and very dear at second-hand.

J. BERNARD.—The phrase "The Lord is a man of war," occurs in Exodus xv., 3.

R. DUNN.—Your letter would fill a column. We cannot find room for such lengthy communications. You were not alluded to in our reference to the Hyde Park disturbances, as to which we print a correction elsewhere. We note your denial of having attacked Confucius. The extracts you give from Dr. Legge's *Religions of China* do not quite tally with the passage we quoted from his article in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, where he is obliged to speak simply as a scholar. It is not our fault if Dr. Legge speaks sometimes as a professor and sometimes as a missionary. Our informant states that you represented the Chinese sage's teaching of "reciprocity" as simply "retaliation."

G. BENSON.—The Ecclesiastical Commission is a State institution, and all the moneys paid by them to bishops and others are in the strictest sense State paid. So also are all army, navy, embassy and gaol chaplains. Workhouse chaplains are paid out of the rates, and the mass of clergy from State-enforced tithes.

J. ELSLIE says that "Eve's Diary," in our Summer Number, is delightfully cool this sultry weather.

J. MASON says: "I consider your picture of the Trinity in the Summer Number the best solution of that holy mystery since the days of Athanasius."

S. KNIGHT.—Received with thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. FARLEY, Winton Cottage, Chester Place, Southsea, a Freethinker who is nearly blind, will be pleased if any Secularist will call and read the Freethought papers to him.

PAN.—We are pleased to hear you say of this journal that "the only fault it has is that it is too small; but then such a *bonne bouche* as the *Freethinker* makes up for all shortcomings on this head by the pithiness of its contents." Your sketches show some vigor, but the drawing is a little crude and the subjects have been illustrated in our columns before.

M. BLACKWELL.—Pleased to hear of your adventures in distributing Freethought literature, though we regret that the bigots try to rob you of your living. We shall be happy to send you a packet of tracts if you are short of them.

T. HOLLIDAY.—We can scarcely make out from the newspaper cutting what the man means. We fancy he is not worth troubling about. When he talks of "Blasphemy" he simply means that you differ from him. No doubt it is very impudent on your part to do so, but it is equally impudent on his part to differ from you. That is a point you should put to him when an opportunity occurs.

E. POLLARD, on behalf of the Hackney Branch, tenders thanks for Mr. Foote's Victoria Park lecture, and states that £1 8s. 6d. was collected for the Benevolent Fund.

L. L. (Reading).—It is not surprising to hear that the local sky-pilots have threatened your newsagent for selling the *Freethinker*. He may rely on it, however, that their bark is a great deal worse than their bite. They cannot take any proceedings without the written fiat of the Public Prosecutor. Newsagents need not be under the slightest alarm. The French Comic Bible we believe is out of print, but you might obtain a copy from A. Roques, French Library, High Holborn. The Christmas Number for which we were prosecuted is not easily obtainable; you might get a copy by advertising.

H. R. COOPER.—It is quite true that the Comic Bible Sketches were discontinued during our imprisonment, but they were discontinued by our express order, for while we were prepared to run the risk ourselves, we were loth to impose it on others. Immediately on our release we resumed the Sketches, and they have been continued ever since. Surely the Christian you refer to is not such an irreclaimable idiot as to imagine that we could edit the *Freethinker* while under lock and key in a Christian gaol.

G. HARPER.—Your young friend shows promise, but he has much to learn, and he will require a great deal of practice before his verses are fit to print.

G. WILKINS says that he has collected for the Hospital Saturday Fund for several years, but if Christians imitate the *Echo* in railing at Freethinkers for their supposed lack of charity, he hardly knows whether he will continue collecting.

A. C.—Received with thanks. You omitted to send your full name and address, or we would have acknowledged by letter.

C. AMROSE.—Vote of thanks from the Bethnal Green Branch duly appreciated. We are always glad to help the branches.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—People's Friend—Liberal—Paris Morning News—Boston Investigator—Liberator—Truthseeker—Midland Free

Press—Ironclad Age—Sunderland Herald—Beacon Light—Women's Suffrage Journal—Thinker—Lucifer—Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette—Hampshire Chronicle—Western Times—Wellingborough and Kettering News—Northampton Daily Reporter.

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.

## "PROGRESS."

WHEN I started *Progress* I thought it would find support among the liberal-minded public outside the Freethought party as well as among those within the party who at that time objected to the "tone" of the *Freethinker*. I have been disappointed. The prejudice against our party is still so strong that the general public will not touch a magazine edited by a leading "infidel"; and as for my domestic critics, I have found that they reserve to themselves the right of condemning what they disapprove without giving the least support to what they might be supposed to approve. Henceforth I shall adopt a different policy. Without lowering its literary character, I intend to make *Progress* more definite in aim. It will be a monthly magazine for the Freethought party only, and I shall take care that it contains what will interest and instruct them. If outsiders take it, well and good, but they will not be considered. I have spent much time, and, for a poor man, a frightful quantity of money on *Progress*. From this time whatever burden I bear shall be borne entirely for the Freethought party. Two years ago I reduced the price of the magazine; that step will now be repeated. The August number will be published at threepence, so as to place it within the reach of all. I do not apprehend that its present patrons will desert it, and I feel sure that their number will be largely increased. May I ask the readers of the *Freethinker* to make a special effort on behalf of what will now be their magazine? By taking a copy of the next number they will be able to see whether it merits their approbation; and by lending it to their friends, if it pleases them, they will be advertising it where it is likely to meet with supporters.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE addressed a great crowd in Victoria Park last Sunday afternoon, notwithstanding the counter attraction of the band. Speaking for an hour in the open air to such a concourse of people, besides answering two opponents, made him a little hoarse for the evening lecture at Milton Hall. The proceedings closed with a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Foote for coming down to the Park and addressing an out-door audience. From all appearances it seems that these *al fresco* discourses by the editor of the *Freethinker* are doing much good. Some folk think the work undignified, but that is all nonsense. Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Morley, and other statesmen have not thought it beneath them to address open-air meetings, and if they do it to catch votes, why may not others do it for a more disinterested object? Besides, all the great religions were founded by out-door preachers, and the sages of antiquity spoke for the most part under the canopy of heaven. Socrates held forth wherever he found hearers, and the forum was originally the market-place.

THIS morning (July 18) Mr. Foote will lecture at the Midland Arches. He will begin soon after eleven, so as to get done before the Woffendale singing party comes to drown all other voices in a godly hymn.

THE *Liberator* of Melbourne has completed its fourth volume. In entering upon his third year, Mr. Symes treats his readers to a supplement and a reproduction of our cartoon of Jesus Walking on the Sea.

WALT WHITMAN is about to issue a new volume of poems under the title of *November Boughs*. There is still plenty of sap in the good old grey poet.

LAST week was a festive time with the French Freethinkers. A bust of Rabelais was unveiled on Saturday at Meudon, where there was a Rabelaisian procession. On Tuesday the statue of Diderot was unveiled by M. Lockroy on the Place St. Germain des Prés at Paris. Mr. Bradlaugh was invited on behalf of the English Freethinkers.

THE *Quarterly Review* for July has an article on the series of "Sacred Books of the East," of which there are now twenty-eight volumes issued. Although written from the Christian standpoint, the paper shows the distinct advance which has been made in the appreciation of non-Christian religions.

Mr. A. B. Moss has been writing to the *Southwark Recorder*, with reference to Dr. Pankhurst, and arguing "that all men are Agnostics." Instead of raising a hornet's nest his letter elicits only one reply from W. Oakley French, who allows that Agnosticism cannot be regarded as a tremendous bogey since it has amongst its defenders such thinkers and scholars as Huxley, Spencer, Leslie Stephen and Proctor. After all Agnosticism is only our old friend Atheism in a dress suit.

A WEST COUNTRY correspondent writes: "I think the Summer Number for 1886 is the best *Freethinker* I have ever seen. The illustrations are far superior to any that have appeared before. I must also congratulate you on your answer to the invitation 'Come to Jesus.' I read it before a select circle of friends last Sunday evening, and it elicited roars of laughter."

## A N G E L S.

THE word Angel is simply the Greek *angelos*, a messenger, and angels were merely "messengers" of the Almighty. With the growth of the human imagination the hard bare originals became invested with varying qualities of grace or of malignity, and around Monotheism were developed whole mythologies of angels answering to the subordinate deities and nymphs of pagan belief. All manner of curious notions are held concerning angels, who are usually supposed to be spiritual and immortal beings furnished with wings. Moses gives no account of their creation. According to the Talmud "there is a daily creation of angels, who immediately sing an anthem, and then expire." Some angels are supposed to be made from fire, others from water, and others from wind. Rabbi Jonathan held "that there is an angel created by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." The Rabbinical notion was that every man had his guardian angel, who "prays for him, and imitates in heaven all that the man does upon earth." Three of the angels are employed in weaving garlands out of the prayers of the Jews if uttered in the Hebrew tongue.

Michael, Gabriel, Uriel and Raphael, were the rulers of four orders of angels. Michael, we know, contended with the leader of the angels of darkness for the coveted corpse of Moses (Jude 9). Gabriel was a favorite with Daniel and with the Virgin Mary, and also with Mahommed, whom he conducted through the seven heavens and led back to earth on his horse Alborac.

As there was no limit to the creation or invention of these fanciful beings it came to be believed that every object had its guardian angel, and that every man, woman and child had a good angel (Acts xii., 15; Matt. xviii., 10) and an evil angel in constant attendance. The Talmud says that if the eye had been capable of discerning, no man could subsist on account of these supernatural beings, and it continues:—

"There are more of them than of us; they stand about us as a fence. . . . Every Rabbi has a thousand on his left, and ten thousand on his right side. The thronging and squeezing on a Sabbath in our synagogues, where one would think there is room enough, yet each imagines he sits too close to another, is occasioned by them; for they come to hear the sermon."

The early Christians converted the heathen deities into good or bad angels, to whom they transferred the popular legends, with suitable alterations. The mediæval Christians discussed the nature of angels with great avidity. Even at seats of learning men gravely discussed whether angels could pass from one place to another without passing through the intermediate space, and whether ten thousand angels could dance upon the point of a needle. They should also have debated the question why Balaam's ass saw the angel that was invisible to her master, but some uneasy kind of fellow-feeling perhaps restrained them.

Instances of angels interfering in human affairs are frequently recorded in the Bible, and the Roman Catholics have no difficulty in scripturally justifying their reliance on angels and their invocations of their help. Protestants also take up the belief in ministering angels, though usually in a weaker form, the dogmatic certainties of Roman Catholicism becoming in this case, as in many others, only pious opinions to be reverentially smiled at by the partially enfranchised Episcopalian or Dissenter. Talmage, however, unhesitatingly welcomes the doctrine as suitable for producing a powerful impression on the feminine portion of his audience. He says:

"When a child is born angels fetch it, and when it dies angels

take it, and when an old man bends under the weight of years angels uphold him, and when a heart breaks angels soothe it. Angels in the hospital to take care of the sick. Angels in the cemetery to watch our dead. Angels in church ready to fly heavenward with the news of repentant souls. Angels above the world. Angels under the world. Angels all around the world. Rub the dust of human imperfection out of your eyes, and look into the heavens and see angels of pity, angels of mercy, angels of pardon, angels of help, angels crowned, angels charioted. The world defended by angels, girdled by angels, cohorted by angels—clouds of angels. Hear David cry out, 'The chariots of God are twenty thousand. Even thousands of angels.'"

But if angels watch over babies and invalids, and bear up God's children lest at any time they dash their feet against a stone, how is it that there is so much misfortune and so much pain? Hundreds of children are run over in the streets every year, yet no angel interferes. Thousands suffer agonies in hospitals, and no angel equal to chloroform for soothing their pain has yet appeared on the scene. Surely if angels were watching they would save little children from being burnt to death. Angels, Gods and Devils, like their relatives the fays and fairies and elves and gnomes and pixies, are never to be relied on in anything real and practical. Fictions can only influence facts by their subjective action on the human mind. Life-boats and fire-escapes save more lives than all the angels in the universe.

Although the Bible expressly declares that Jesus "took not on him the nature of angels" (Heb. ii., 16), Talmage holds that Jesus Christ is the "mightiest angel" of all, and he thus describes how the other angels were affected by the birth of this "Angel of the new covenant" that "lay among the cattle" at Bethlehem:

"As the clean white linen was being wrapped around the little form of that Child Emperor, not a cherub, not a seraph, not an angel, not a world but wept and thrilled and shouted. Oh, yes, our world has plenty of sympathisers! Our world is only a silver rung of a great ladder, at the top of which is our Father's house. No more stellar solitariness for our world, no other friendless planets spun out into space to freeze, but a world in the bosom of divine maternity. *A star harnessed to a manger.*"

If Talmage talks about "divine maternity" in this way he will be falling into Theodore Parker's dreadful but natural heresy of saying "Our Mother which art in heaven." But Talmage knows so much more than God and his Bible, and is so sure of the perfect accuracy of all his wild assertions or inspirations, that I will leave him alone in his glory without further comment.

W. P. BALL.

## ENGLAND'S FESTIVE SUNDAY.

### A RETROSPECT.

THE Sabbath of my youth is losing its gruesome hold of the rising generation, and becoming, I hope, in the near future a day to look forward to with pleasure, both by adults and juveniles, when the former will for one day have something brighter to think of than his mill-horse monotony of the week, and the latter will hail it as a day of pleasure. My experience of Sunday is extremely dreary. The first performance on these, my evil Sabbath mornings, was the putting a polish on my face with some kind of soap that had the power of producing a smarting sensation, after which I was bound up in my "go-to-meeting" clothes, with a four-inch white buckram collar, and strict injunctions as to the care to be taken respecting this Sunday war-paint, also a slight intimation of the fate awaiting me should the aforesaid clothes be soiled; and then came the dreary procession to Sabbath-school, the very sparrows looking at us with pity, and their heads on one side, seeming to say: "Ain't you going to catch it! Cheep! cheep! Chuck a stone at us, do. You can't hit us; you're too dull!" until, in sheer desperation, we obliged them, and were at once detected by our teacher, who followed the ennobling profession, on week days, of purveyor of vegetables! We were told God was looking, and had entered our poor little peccadillo in his ledger to our debit. And then to school with this lively teacher, whom we sat around whilst he told us such cheerful tidings of great joy as that all of us who had called our brothers fools were in danger of Number One furnace in eternity; also that if we had not paid proper attention to his previous exhortations, and believed what he had told us, we could never enter the holy menagerie; and if we did not say our prayers night and morning and subscribe our poor little half-pennies to the missionary society for providing plump and tender preachers to the poor cannibalistic blacks, he could scarcely tell us what a dreadful hereafter awaited us. His natural history was wonderful. The donkey—I mean the quadruped—was marked with a cross, not because his ancestors were zebras, but in consequence of our blessed Lord and Savior, the carpenter God, having ridden into Jerusalem outside him. The rainbow was

not due to natural causes, but to show that the old man would no more go into the damping business. The plaice was marked because J. C. once held one between his thumb and finger. After this rich intellectual treat, we were baled off to conventicle to sit two weary hours listening to a Rev. Jemmy Bells, or Squills (or some name like that), who held forth somewhere off the Borough Road. This maniac had a happy knack of generally taking his text from Revelation and telling us about some respected female clothed with that curious drapery the sun. Great excitement was caused in this man's chapel by the pitch-pipe of the leader of the singing. We boys looked for this performance as a bright oasis in this infernal Sunday desert; its screele made us poor, wretched youths laugh, but after this small relief, our lives were a mere blank. The poor drone in the pulpit got quite excited about some beast mentioned in Revelation, whose number corresponded with some imaginary number he had worked out to his own satisfaction, showing the days of this poor planet were numbered, and then amidst a volcanic cataclysm all the elect and those who had paid their pew-rent would go up aloft somewhere and, I suppose, listen for ever to the Rev. Jemmy spouting his trash.

I remember him once telling us boys he had been a charity boy, and ever after I used to clothe him in the pulpit of a Sunday in muslin cap and yellow smalls. He used to get violent and wrestle with the front board of his box. I then used to lay enormous wagers with myself that he would either break in half or come out of his pulpit head first—a consummation I devoutly wished. I lost part of my awe of this pious maniac by once seeing him in the vestry taking great interest in the counting of the metallic discs his asinine congregation had dropped in the plate. I used to glare at him so long, his face used to get all eye and discharge sparks. How devoutly I wished he had always remained a charity boy, and how I should like to drown him, or set fire to his preaching box, especially after some imbecile jocosity levelled at us boys with a kind of intimation that should we laugh he would preach on and on for ever. Sunday afternoon brought more school. The evening, though, was the most dreaded infliction. A respected relative took me into custody and got to this particular chapel early, so that, if possible, the Rev. Jemmy might speak words of "wisdom" to me and try my reclamation from the sure and certain fate awaiting me if I did not regularly put the threepenny-piece in the plate, as I had been detected spending this sacred coin on a Monday following, having appropriated it. Mentally I used to put this hateful imbecile through all the tortures of the Inquisition—rack him, thumb-screw him, give him sultry lead for a drinking potion, and when on my knees I used to ask the Lord, please let me go to—well Hades and be damned, if this terrible fellow was going to occupy a front seat up above. The emptying of this man's conventicle was a very painful episode. My respected relative shook hands with about a score of imbeciles who had listened to the Gospel according to St. Jemmy, and I was lectured on the awful sin of going to sleep whilst the good man was pouring forth his vials of drivel, and the terrible future awaiting me should I not profit by the erudite and intellectual treat I'd been deluged with, my poor little mind being more with some waifs of humanity, playing "touch" in the immediate vicinity. Oh! how I wished I was a cannibal with the Rev. Jemmy in my power—how I'd cook him, season him and dish him up. My respected relative took me again in custody, and on the way home indulged in cheerful conversation respecting "original sin" and the "elect," and how I ought to "thank the goodness and the grace that on my birth had smiled" in making me a free-born English child, of course forgetting the antithesis that I ought to curse the goodness and the grace had the old dotard made me black and a native of Cuba. The movement now on foot for Secular Sunday Schools will I trust make the first day of the week a bright and cheerful outlook for the children of our time and for future generations of children, especially if simple amusements and gymnastics are given a very prominent position in the programme, together with plenty of bright and cheerful music, not forgetting to make the school-rooms and meeting-places veritable conservatories—flowers are so cheap, and add such glints of loveliness to the lives of the poor, whose six days' life is spent with such forbidding and ungentle surroundings.

#### TWO SOULS SAVED—ONE DAMNED.

You ask me why I hate this Christianity? I'll tell you, and you can judge between me and its professors. Fourteen years ago I was twenty-two years of age. You may well stare; if I had said forty-two you would have thought it under the mark. It was then I married; yes, married. I am rather dilapidated in my looks now, but I was not then. I stood six feet in my boots; I did not stoop as I do now. The woman I married was a dear little thing—soft, loving, and winning. I loved her warmly, and she returned my affection.

It was strange how we mated. I suppose it was the strong contrast that drew us together. I was brought up to think that an honest action was the noblest thing on earth, and that doing good to others was the truest way to happiness and the best religion. She thought all these availed nothing without a continual adoration of the Deity, shown by church-going, prayer, praise,

offertories, etc. I used to interpret that as begging, flattery, and bribery; what else is it? Well, women always had that way.

Her people were very much against our marriage. They were Presbyterians, and mine were Episcopals. She had been trained from the earliest to think that the teachings of John Knox and John Calvin had superseded the exploded ideas of Jesus and Paul. She soon fell into a more easy way of thinking, but the hankering after the old ways showed up now and again.

"Oh, George," she would say, "I am getting very bad; just think, it is three Sundays (or Sabbaths, as she called them) since I went to kirk! What will the minister say?"

"Oh, bother him! You are better off in the fields enjoying the sunshine. Where did you ever read of Jesus of Nazareth preaching in a church on Sunday?"

These happy days, however, were not to last long. About three years after our marriage, a *thing*, who professed to be an evangelist, came to the peaceful settlement where we lived, and set up a howl of "Holiness to the Lord," "Come to Jesus," and the usual black-bird drivel. It is positively wonderful what a little music, and a little howling, and a little excitement, and a little indefatigable urging will do to cause women and weak-minded men to make fools of themselves!

Well, my poor little wife—used to revivals at home—thought she would go to hear this evangelist preach. When she came home I noticed she had been crying a good deal; but I concluded not to say anything about it. She, however, was not in the house a minute before she flopped down on her knees, and prayed for my regeneration, and for that of our two children, aged one and two respectively.

"Oh! George," she cried, "you are on the road to destruction. Fly from the wrath to come," etc. You know how they rave.

I had great difficulty in pacifying her; in fact it was morning before she gave up, thoroughly exhausted. I had not any particular business, so I stayed at home and watched her; and would not allow her to go out again. I heard during the day that several had gone mad the previous evening. I was tired with watching, and towards evening I dropped into a sound sleep. When I awoke it was about twelve o'clock at night, and I found that my wife had gone out again. Just as I was getting my hat to follow, she returned. I was quite surprised at the change which had taken place. She looked twenty years older; her mouth was drawn, her eyes like living coals, but she was as pale as death, and perfectly calm. She gave a ghastly smile and said:

"It is all right, George; I am so happy; and you—you will be happy too, George? Oh, say you will. You will come to Jesus; Doddy and baby, and I, are all for Jesus; and you too? Oh, say you will."

I noticed she was not quite right, so I said, "All right, dear; now it is late, we'll go to bed." She went quietly and lay down, and was soon fast asleep to all appearances, and I went to sleep too. I had not been asleep more than an hour, when I was awakened by fearful shrieks, and on rushing out I saw the nurse-girl crouching horror-stricken in a corner of the nursery, my two dear little children lying dead with their tiny night-dresses stained with their own blood, and my wife with a great gash in the side of her throat, a gibbering idiot, laughing frantically and muttering, "Oh, the precious blood of the lamb!" She fell down and soon gave up her miserable life.

At the inquest it came out that the evangelist, curse him, had told her, when she asked him, that it was better her children should die than live to grow up careless of their souls. "I would sooner," he said, "see my little ones lying dead before me than that they should grow up to deny their Redeemer. Oh, wives and husbands, who are married to careless partners, think of it, think of it, think of the risk your little ones are running. Save them from it. Save them now."

"Oh sir!" she cried before all, "surely my two innocents, not two years old, are not yet lost?"

"No, sister; but another day and it may be too late! Better dead than lost!"

She rose directly; and you know what followed. Do you now wonder?

I never had any "religious" thoughts previous to that; since then I have studied this religion, and I have come to the conclusion that: 1st, If Christianity is a fact, my poor wife did quite right, as she made sure of those two souls going to heaven; 2nd, that by so doing she made a greater sacrifice than Jesus Christ, because he only damned his soul for two nights and a day, and she to all eternity, for the sake of her two children; 3rd, that to either die young or be an idiot all one's life is better than to be the most enlightened thinker; 4th, that Christianity is the most abominable religion ever conceived if such be the case. Christians, what say you?—*Rationalist*.

## REVIEW.

*The Republican* for July. G. Standing, 8 Finsbury Street.—The number for this month is adorned with a portrait of Dr. Drysdale, accompanied by a slight sketch of some of the points in that gentleman's career. The editor also gives some account of the Fabian Conference, and brings his "History of the English Aristocracy" towards a conclusion.

PROFANE JOKES.

A YOUNG lady who was rebuked by her mother for kissing her intended, justified herself by quoting the passage: "Whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them."

MINISTER: "How do you like our new organist?" Deacon: "First rate. He is a real gospel organist." Minister: "Gospel organist. What do you mean by that?" Deacon: "Why, he obeys the gospel injunction. He does not let his left hand know what his right hand doeth."

Two countrymen, observing the female figures, with pitchers in their hands, which support the porticoes of St. Pancras Church, wondered what they represented. "They must be the foolish virgins," said one. "They can't be, either," said the other; "there is only four of them." "Oh, it is all right," replied his friend; "the other one is gone for the oil, you may depend on it."

"I THOUGHT you said the Rev. T. Dewitt Talmage was such a great preacher," said a visitor to Brooklyn; "I heard him yesterday, and cannot agree with you." "My dear sir, Talmage is the finest pulpit orator in America. You ought to hear him preach when he isn't wearing new boots." "Why so?" "Because new boots hurt his corns so badly that he cannot gesticulate with his legs."

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