

THE FREETHINKER.

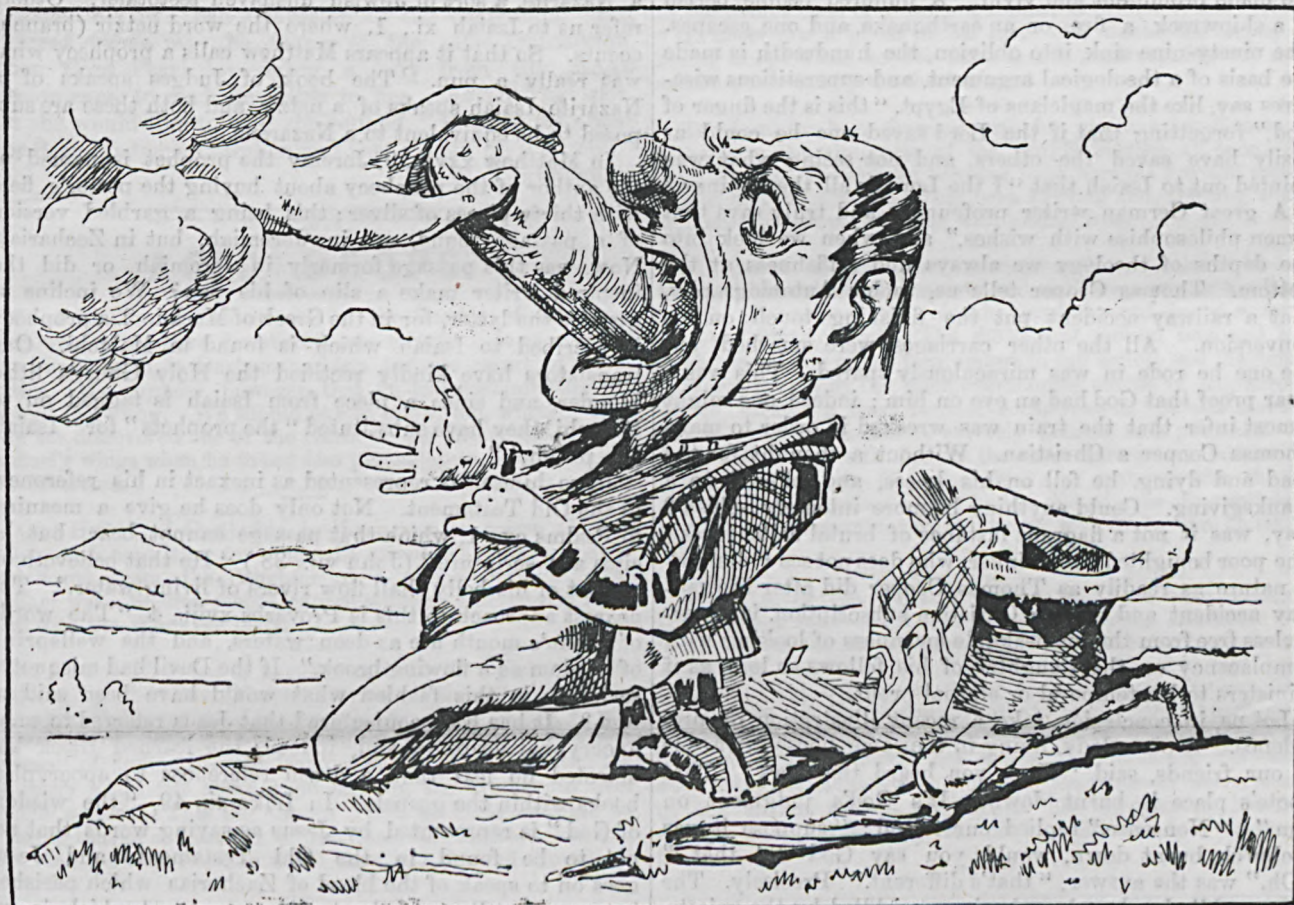
EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



EZEKIEL'S ROLL.

And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me. . . So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll.—EZEK. II, 9; III., 2.

PROVIDENCE.

"Bion, that was an Atheist, was showed in a port city, in a temple of Neptune, many tablos of pictures of such as had in tempests made their vows to Neptune, and were saved from shipwreck; and was asked, 'How say you now? Do you not acknowledge the power of the Gods?' But saith he, 'Ay; but where are they painted that have been drowned after their vows?'"
—BACON, *Aprophthegms*.

WHEN Bacon wrote, it was not safe to question the efficacy of prayer, or special providence, but the above extract shows that he, like many other wise men of the time, including Shakespeare, secretly doubted those doctrines. Marlowe, the glorious morning-star of the English drama, was openly accused of Atheism, and the charge is quite in keeping with his splendid and audacious genius. Shakespeare, the mighty master of all his tribe, the resplendent sun of the great day which Marlowe heralded, whose mind was not grandly sagacious like Bacon's, but a perfect mirror of the universe, gave many indications of his transcendent superiority to the superstitions of his age. He employed them, as a dramatist, to heighten the effect of his tragedies, and to produce that weird impression which is wrought by the supernatural, but he never allows them any essential interference with the natural development of his plots, which invariably follow the laws of moral causation. The student perceives what the superficial reader misses, that Shakespeare's ghosts and witches are purely scenic, being visible or invisible, audible or inaudible, precisely as he pleases, and to whom he pleases. And with what exuberant mockery his Harry Hotspur

treats the pretensions of "that great magician, bold Glendower," who boasted that he could "call spirits from the vasty deep." Why so can I, or any man, says Hotspur, but will they answer when we call? Glendower vaunts the wondrous portents that attended his birth, and Hotspur tells him that the same things would have happened had his mother's cat but kittened.

Since "the spacious times of great Elizabeth," science has done for the many what a prescient imagination did for the few in a less "knowing" age. It has shown that the universe is a vaster thing than was thought, that all her forces are interchangeable, and that irreversible order prevails everywhere, alike in the growth of a blade of grass and in the procession of the stars. A miracle—for that is what special providence means—is simply unimaginable to the scientific student. So intimately are all things related to each other, that any interference with a single one involves a disturbance of the whole; and, in fact, the true believer who prays to God for something that would not happen in the natural course of things—and if he does not mean that, why does he pray at all?—modestly asks for a total revolution in the universal economy for his infinitesimal and probably worthless self. The idea is insufferably ludicrous, and only fit to be treated with contemptuous laughter. "Shall gravitation cease, if you pass by?" asks Pope; and even Jesus Christ, in one of his lucid intervals, flatly repudiated the nonsense he generally taught, informed his disciples that good people as well as bad were killed by the falling of the tower of Siloam, and added that God sent his rain alike upon the just and the unjust; a dictum which means,

among other things, that a saint without an umbrella will get wet as well as a sinner.

In one of Lucian's dialogues, magnificently translated by Mr. Froude, we see what an educated and intelligent Pagan thought of providence, as well as the other stock-in-trade of the theologians. Common sense, exercised upon the obvious facts of life, showed him what science shows the duller Christians of a later day. Bacon's apophthegm indicates also that many centuries before the time of Lucian sceptical philosophers saw that the doctrine of providence was supported by a "heads I win, tails you lose" kind of argument. All the facts on one side are dropped out of sight and forgotten, while the few facts on the other side are made prominent and vivid. A hundred people perish in a shipwreck, a fire, or an earthquake, and one escapes. The ninety-nine sink into oblivion, the hundredth is made the basis of a theological argument, and superstitious wiseacres say, like the magicians of Egypt, "this is the finger of God," forgetting that if the Lord saved one he could as easily have saved the others, and not seeing what was pointed out to Isaiah that "I the Lord do all these things."

A great German writer profoundly and truly says that "men philosophise with wishes," and when we look into the depths of theology we always find selfishness at the bottom. Thomas Cooper tells us, in his Autobiography, that a railway accident put the finishing touch on his conversion. All the other carriages were smashed, but the one he rode in was miraculously spared. This was a clear proof that God had an eye on him; indeed, one might almost infer that the train was wrecked in order to make Thomas Cooper a Christian. Without a thought for the dead and dying, he fell on his knees, and offered up a thanksgiving. Could anything be more intensely selfish? Nay, was it not a flagrant instance of brutal callousness? The poor benighted Freethinker, who does not see "design" in nature as readily as Thomas Cooper did after the railway accident and the big Christian subscription, is nevertheless free from the unspeakable meanness of looking with complacency on the slaughter of his fellows so long as it ministers to his temporal or eternal profit.

Let us, in conclusion, take a recent illustration of providence. A pious lady, living in the same house with one of our friends, said "Have you heard the news? That Foote's place is burnt down. It's God's judgment on him." "Nonsense," replied our friend; "suppose it was a church burnt down, would you say God did that?" "Oh," was the answer, "that's different." Precisely. The poor muddle-heads, whose brains are addled by the priests, can find nothing else to say but "that's different." In other words, what they wish to believe is true, and what they don't wish to believe is false. This is the life of religion and the death of logic, world without end. Amen.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE NEW.

Of all the authors we have read, the Holy Ghost seems to have been afflicted with the worst memory. With the usual predilection of writers for their own compositions, the Holy Ghost, in inspiring the New Testament, very frequently quotes from his earlier productions, but in hardly a single instance is the quotation given with accuracy.

The Gospel according to Matthew commences with a genealogy in many particulars not only at variance with that given in Luke, but also differing from particulars given in the Old Testament; thus we are told that Joram begat Ozias, whereas, in the Book of Kings, two generations intervene between Joram and Amaziah, who was the father of Uzziah or Ozias. In Matthew, Zorobabel is the son of Salathiel; in the Chronicles he is the son of Pedaiah.

Still more serious are the misquotations of prophecy in the account of the infancy of Jesus. Jesus is born without a father, in order to fulfil a sign given by Isaiah to Ahaz. The young woman of Isaiah is turned into a virgin to support the doctrine of the immaculate conception. Jesus is sent into Egypt "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet," or, as the Revised Version more correctly renders it, "by the Lord through the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son." What the prophet says is "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called my son out of Egypt." To apply this to Jesus is stretching matters a little, but the writer goes

further when he massacres all the children in Bethlehem and "all the coasts thereof, from two years and under," in order to fulfil a prophecy of Jeremiah about Rachel weeping for her children. He might have been saved from this historic inaccuracy had he reflected that Leah, and not Rachel, was the ancestress of the people of Judah.

The next quotation is one which has exercised the ingenuity of the commentators. Jesus is removed to Nazareth "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene." Now not one of the prophets says any thing of the sort. The commentators accordingly refer us to the book of Judges where the angel tells Manoah's wife that her child shall be a Nazarite, a sort of Jewish unshaven teetotaler. Others refer us to Isaiah xi., 1, where the word netzir (branch) occurs. So that it appears Matthew calls a prophecy what was really a pun. The book of Judges speaks of a Nazarite, Isaiah speaks of a netzir, and both these are supposed to be equivalent to a Nazarene.

In Matthew xxvii., 9, Jeremy the prophet is named as the author of the prophecy about buying the pottor's field with thirty pieces of silver; this being a garbled version of a passage found, not in Jeremiah, but in Zechariah. Now, was this passage formerly in Jeremiah, or did the inspired writer make a slip of his pen? We incline to surmise the latter, for in the Greek of Mark i., 2, a prophecy is ascribed to Isaiah which is found in Malachi. Our translators have kindly rectified the Holy Ghost's little blunder, and since a piece from Isaiah is tagged on to Malachi, they have substituted "the prophets" for "Isaiah the prophet."

Jesus himself is represented as inexact in his references to the Old Testament. Not only does he give a meaning to Psalms cx., 1, which that passage cannot bear, but he cites as "scripture" (John vii., 38.) "He that believeth on me out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." The nearest approach to this is Proverbs xviii., 4, "The words of a man's mouth are as deep waters, and the wellspring of wisdom as a flowing brook." If the Devil had misquoted scripture in this fashion what would have been said of him? It has been conjectured that Jesus referred to some apocryphal scripture and, indeed, the learned Bleek has detected no less than a dozen references to apocryphal books within the gospels. In Luke xi., 49, "the wisdom of God" is represented by Jesus as saying words that are not to be found in the Old Testament, and Jesus goes on to speak of the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple—an event which is recorded by Josephus as happening some time after the death of Jesus himself!

Paul is equally inaccurate in his references to what he calls the oracles of God. He does not scruple to treat the whole story of Abraham's concubine Hagar as an allegory, and declares "this Agar is Mount Sinai in Arabia (Gal. iv., 24-25). He quotes the words (Eph. iv., 8) "when he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men," whereas the Psalmist says (lxviii., 18) "thou hast received gifts for men." A little farther on he quotes "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." The passage referred to says "Arise, shine; for thy light is come and the glory of Jahveh is risen upon thee." Other misquotations may be traced in Rom. ii., 24; ix., 29, 33; x., 6., 11; xi., 3, 8, 26; xv., 3; 1 Cor. i., 31; xiv., 21; xv., 54, 55.

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews evidently had a very different Bible to our own. In the sixth verse of the first chapter it tells how God saith "And let all the angels of God worship him." Psalm xcvii., 7, is given as a reference, but that reads, "Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods." The quotation is indeed found in the Septuagint version of Deut. xxxii., 43, but that is considered an interpolation. If genuine, why is it not found in our version? In Heb. x., 5, a quotation is given, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me." The version found in Psalm xl., 6, is "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened." This again, it is contended, is like the Septuagint, but in verse 30 a citation is given which is not to be found in that version. It is evident that the author either had a Bible of his own or else did not scruple to manipulate the Word of God to suit himself. He says (vii., 2) that Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec, and that Levi paid tithes before he was born. Genesis (xiv., 20)

says that Melchisedec gave tithes to Abraham. He states (ix., 4) that the ark contained the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's blooming rod. According to 1 Kings viii., 9, "There was nothing in the ark save the two tables of stone." He calls Esau (xii., 16) a profane person who sold his birthright for a morsel of meat, and who found no place for repentance though he sought it with tears. The story in Genesis shows that Esau was obliged to sell his birthright, and so far from seeking repentance he justly lays the whole blame on his cheating brother. We do not say this shows the author of the epistle had another version of the story, for Christians continue to extol as saints many we consider as sorry scoundrels. Jahveh said, Jacob I have loved but Esau I have hated. We think he displayed his own bad character by the confession. But different views may be taken of the same transaction. When Cora Pearl lay dying, a lady from the McAll Mission came to read the Bible to her. Asked what portion she would like to hear she replied, "Read to me about poor dear Madame Potiphar and that villain of a Joseph."

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

WE said last week that the site of the Garden of Eden was unknown, but we have discovered our mistake. It is situated near Castle Eden, in Durham, and is a favorite resort of picnic parties. We suppose, however, that fig-leaf costumes are not allowed there now. We should like to know, too, whether anybody has discovered one of the feathers that Adam tore out of Raphael's wings when he found him preaching to Eve about the forbidden tree.

JAMES HENRY, of Castleside, has been sent to prison for two months with hard labor for criminally assaulting Barbara Lewis, aged seven years, the daughter of a police-constable. The prisoner was a Sunday-school superintendent, and closely identified with the Wesleyan body.

THE *Church Times* has a peculiar method of replying to the pamphlet by the Rev. Mercer Davies on the Wealth of the Bishops, recently reviewed in our columns. Mr. Davies, it will be remembered, looked up the records of the Probate Office, with the result of finding that the bishops who have died during the last thirty years left sums amounting on the average to over £54,000 a-piece. This the *Church Times* seeks to mitigate by declaring that in at least six of the cases the bishops had left more than the total revenue which they had derived from their bishoprics.

THUS Bishop Fraser, of Manchester, whose gross revenue only amounted to £63,000, bequeathed the sum of £85,000. Of course it may be possible that he and some of the others had an independent income, as suggested by the *C. T.*, but it is also possible that much was accumulated in the other high offices of the Church, held before the dignity of episcopacy was attained. It is also possible that a bishop having a number of livings at his disposal may find other sources of revenue besides the few thousands which he takes annually for overseeing the souls of his diocese.

THE *Church Times* altogether refuses to accept the standards of primitive Christianity as meeting the present requirements of the Church. Dr. Littledale, the editor, would not care to sell all that he has and give to the poor; nor would he think of going on a journey without providing either gold, silver or brass in his purse. All of which proves we have learnt something since the days of Jesus Christ.

THE *Church Reformer*, noticing the same pamphlet, remarks: "It looks as if, under our existing system, riches were an indispensable qualification in him who would desire the office of a Bishop in the Church of Jesus Christ: as if Mammon, having made and for long kept the election of members of Parliament so expensive that none but rich men could represent the workers, had also, still more fatally, made it impossible for any but wealthy men to become the representatives of the Church in each diocese, the successors of the Galilean peasants and fishers."

OUR readers may remember that, although Mr. Joseph Arch could not attend the South Place Demonstration in favor of Mr. Courtney Kenny's Bill for Repealing the Blasphemy Laws, he sent a very interesting letter denouncing the laws as iniquitous in themselves and a scandal to Christianity. Soon afterwards he was written to by the irrepressible J. Taylor of Stockton, who wanted to know what he meant by demanding fair play for infidels. Being a cautious and an economical man, Mr. Joseph Arch declined to be drawn by a perfect stranger, and saved his time and postage. Thereupon the irrepressible J. Taylor turned his attention to the Rev. W. Sharman. Unfortunately Mr. Sharman, not knowing his correspondent, sent a short reply, to which

of course the irrepressible J. Taylor sent another three times as long. Mr. Sharman replied again in four lines, whereupon the irrepressible J. Taylor rejoined with four pages. After another interchange of letters, Mr. Sharman cut the correspondence short, and expressed a hope that "you [the irrepressible J. T.] will manifest a more temperate treatment of persons who do not agree with you." The Stockton tub-thumper has of course published the correspondence, and added another to his numerous inflictions on a long-suffering public. The poor man suffers from *Freethinker* on the brain, and he is of opinion that liberty of thought will never be secure until all "blasphemers" are imprisoned. We should be very sorry to return the compliment. J. Taylor should not be sent to gaol; he should be sent to Pasteur to be treated for a new variety of rabies.

THE president of the Welsh Congregational Union, speaking of the poorer class of preachers, applied to them a Welsh saying, "He never saw a ghost in his life." No doubt the faculty of seeing things which do not exist is the most valuable one that can be possessed by the theologian.

THE Lord has been showing forth his glorious handiwork in two nearly opposite parts of the world's surface at once. In New Zealand he has been belching forth horrible fire and earthquake, and in Labrador he has been starving and freezing some thousands of people to death with pitiless frost.

ACCORDING to the latest news from New Zealand he has killed at least ninety-five natives and six Europeans in his fiery wrath. The noise of the volcanic eruptions was heard a hundred and fifty miles off. The showers of molten lava and hot mud, the roaring of the four craters in full action, and the dense darkness caused by the black overhanging clouds of sulphurous smoke, created a most terrible consternation. A mischievous boy who plays with fire is severely blamed and punished. A God who plays with fire in the most destructive fashion is privileged, and no Christian thinks of blaming him in the slightest degree, unless indeed he is a god of some other religion, in which case his actions would prove him to be the Devil in disguise.

JULY 19, in the midst of what should have been summer, God sent a snow-storm which buried Eastern Labrador. If the accounts are not exaggerated, fifteen thousand people are cut off in the snow, and three thousand five hundred have perished. The Indians are eating their dead companions. The whites who die are buried secretly to prevent the Christianised Esquimaux from getting their bodies. An immense mass of icebergs from the North has frozen together along the coast and blocks communication. Such are the inhuman amusements of the divine Father who dooms his children to horrible deaths while pretending to display infinite love towards them.

A LATER account says that thousands of bears, driven from their usual haunts by starvation, are attacking the scattered settlements and devouring the inhabitants. Evidently the gracious Lord placed the Christian settlers there to feed his poor bears in the time of famine. This is but a sample of the manner in which he commonly provides food for all his creatures.

WHETHER these accounts from Labrador are a hoax or not, one thing is certain. They are typical of the means by which the Christian God works his will. In India alone over 20,000 human beings are killed every year by serpents and wild beasts. Perhaps some Christians will defend the credit of their God by saying that the annual government reports are also a hoax.

THE Rev. Olmuis Morgan, of Sidmouth, aged about seventy, has been fined forty shillings for assaulting his wife, and his servant has been fined ten shillings for helping him. The reverend defendant and his wife appear to have lived a cat-and-dog life. One of his amusements in Christ was giving her black eyes. Another sacred recreation was pulling the hair out of her head, and chasing her round the room till she was afraid of being murdered. He says that she tried to murder him with the door key. Evidently they are a happy Christian couple.

A SUBURBAN association who wanted an address by Mr. Beecher was informed that his terms for one lecture would be £100. Christian oratory appears to pay pretty well even when it isn't altogether orthodox.

MOSES HANLEY has been tried at Wexford for the murder of his child, apparently through religious madness. According to his own statement he put one of his children out of the window after returning from chapel and kneeling and praying at home. He then put an Agnus Dei (a religious medal) and a scapular down the other child's throat, under the impression that the death of the child would save himself. The jury found that he had committed murder while insane. If tried by a modern jury Abraham also would have been found insane for offering up Isaac, and Jephthah for sacrificing his daughter. Moses too could only be excused on the ground of insanity for ordering that all devoted persons should be put to death (Lev. xxvii., 29), and since he was but the mouthpiece of God it would follow that God

is a criminal lunatic who should be kept under lock and key during the pleasure of her Majesty.

AFTER two months' residence in London (writes *Truth*) the Dean of Bristol has returned to Clifton. Dr. Elliot never did much work, and for a very long time he has done absolutely none whatever. It is years since he has taken part in the services at Bristol Cathedral, his "duty" beginning and ending with the business of drawing his stipend of £1,400 a year. The dean, however, is a pertinacious obstructive, and although he never enters the Cathedral, he does everything in his power to limit its usefulness. If he possessed any sense of propriety, he would long ago have made way for a more capable successor.

It is said that during the past twenty years nearly £66,000 has been expended in the survey of the Holy Land by the Palestine Exploration Fund Committee. We cannot help thinking of the proverb relating to fools and their money.

COMMISSIONER CORBRIDGE, late of the Salvation Army, now explains that his differences with "General Booth" are of old standing. Seven or eight years ago Brother Corbridge objected to the General settling all the property upon himself and to their having military titles, but he was made a "Commissioner" and pocketed his scruples. He afterwards objected to the Army going into trade, but again the General carried the day, and went so far as to state that they would have their own mills, manufactures, trains and ships, and that "the time would come when anyone not belonging to the Salvation Army would have to be dependent upon it for a supply of goods." The Sunday selling of the *War Cry* was also a point of dispute; and, finally, he could never get from General Booth any account of money due to him for a book written by himself but printed and sold by the Army. This was the last straw that broke down Brother Corbridge's Christian forbearance, and he now intends denouncing the General throughout the length and breadth of the land.

THE *Truthseeker*, edited by the Rev. J. P. Hopps of Leicester, is a monthly organ of very mild heresy of the average Unitarian order, with a dash of tentative spiritism. The August number contains a brief review of the Foote-McCann debate, which is said to be "a decidedly good one of its class." Mr. Hopps does not, however, "believe much in the real utility of public discussions on religion." We can quite understand why. Many years ago, when he was stationed at Glasgow, he invited a young Freethinker, of exceptional culture and intelligence, to his house for an interchange of ideas. Before long the conversation turned on spiritism, and Mr. Hopps betrayed an utter want of ability to reason on the subject. He was all sentiment, and when he was pushed hard he evaded all the difficulties of his position by turning to the piano and saying "Let us have some music."

DISCUSSING Paul's views on marriage, in one part of the Debate, Mr. Foote pointed out the degrading absurdity of his saying "Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands in everything," and his stupid recommendation of celibacy to every man and woman. "The fact is," Mr. Foote said, "Paul was a crusty old bachelor. If he had been married, he would never have talked such nonsense." This plain expression of opinion shocks Mr. Hopps's superfine nerves, and he remarks that "The ablest and sincerest of men would damn their cause by such incongruous and silly utterances."

MR. HOPPS, it will be observed, is far severer on Mr. Foote than Mr. Foote is on Paul. It is very obvious that he is simply prejudiced. He reverences Paul as a Bible hero, and he inconsequentially expects everybody else to treat the great apostle with veneration. He forgets that his sentiments are not binding on others, and that Mr. Foote has as much right to call Paul's teaching on marriage "nonsense" as Mr. Hopps has to describe Mr. Foote's criticism on it as "silly."

PERHAPS Mr. Hopps is annoyed at "the crusty old bachelor." But Paul was a bachelor, and surely "crusty" is the very mildest epithet that could be applied to the man who wrote "It is good for a man not to touch a woman." We should be quite content to leave the matter in the hands of a jury of ladies.

Chamber's Journal has an interesting paper on Trial by Ordeal. It rightly considers such trials as the rude laws of a barbarous people not sufficiently advanced in civilisation to be able to enter into the elaborate investigation demanded by a court of law. It however omits to point out that one of the most barbarous trials by ordeal of which we have any record is given in the Bible (Numbers v.) as the direct command of God. A man who has a wife of whom he is jealous is enjoined to bring her before a priest, who makes her drink a water of cursing, which, if she has been unfaithful, kills her in a most horrible manner. This law in itself is sufficient proof that God's chosen people were little better than savages.

THE Rev. C. G. Foster, of St. Martin's, Scarborough, has gone over to Rome. The only difference between him and many others who seek re-union with Rome is that he thinks a desirable

thing should be done at once. They wish to wait till they can take their endowments with them.

THE Catholic and Protestant mobs in Belfast have been stoning each other and the police again. Several public-houses have been wrecked and plundered. The police had to charge the mob several times, and finally had to fire upon them. A boy was killed and many people were wounded.

MRS. JOHNSTONE, of Warrington, County Down, attended Plymouth Brethren meetings till her brain was turned. She then took her baby daughter, saying to her husband "Don't you see Christ in her face?" went into the garden, and cut the poor child's throat. After the ghastly tragedy, she returned indoors, with the knife in her hand, and told her eldest son that she had "killed the god of this world."

THE condition of the church of St. Mary Woolnoth, at the corner of Lombard Street, City, is a standing proof of the desirability of cremation. In consequence of complaints by parishioners and others as to bad smells emanating from the vaults of the church, an inspection has been made, resulting in the discovery that some hundreds of bodies in a state of decomposition, whose coffins are in a sad state of decay, lie under the floors. This in the very heart of the city of London.

TALMAGE has been lecturing on "The Genuine Hardships of the Working Classes." One of these is that Talmage preaches about them.

IF a man cannot behave himself without having the terrors of eternal torture dinned into his ears with a gospel gong every Sunday, he is not a citizen to be trusted where valuables are lying round loose.—*Ironclad Age*.

A woman has appeared in Cincinatti who claims to be Christ. She has a following of some thirty who believe her to be very god of very god and worship her accordingly. Like the early Christians, they conduct their worship in secret. This is quite an improvement on the previous incarnations. No doubt Jahveh thinks it high time woman had a show. We have not yet heard whether the Cincinatti Christ has been born of a virgin father without the intervention of any human mother or not, but we are glad to see old Jahveh showing a disposition to keep pace with the times.

WE have been favored with a copy of the *Tribune*, a hodge podge catch-penny sort of journal published in the region of Soho Square. Its circulation cannot be very flourishing for we observe that the publisher offers a reward of £5 for information that will lead to the discovery of the person who circulated the report "that the *Tribune* had ceased to exist." An article on "The Unfettered Press" contains the outrageous and abominable statement that "Foote and Ramsey stood in the dock at the Old Bailey, for having perpetrated what was justly regarded as an outrage upon public decency." We are not going to waste powder and shot on the *Tribune*. Its publisher may not be worth a cent, and a Christian jury is an awkward body to appeal to in an action for libel. We happen to know who is the editor of this precious print; it is Cox, the pawnbroker of Wardour Street, whose devotion to the Salvation Army seems to have impaired the small faculty for accuracy with which Nature originally endowed him.

THERE is a nice little quarrel at Bristol between Mr. Hodges, who is doing the Booth game in that city, and Mr. Chalker, one of his supporters, who is described by a correspondent of ours as "a draper with money, a cute fellow in business, but, under the influence of religion, a complete fool, and one of the old hell-fire and brimstone sort." Mr. Chalker stops his supplies to his "dear Brother," and the Dear Brother poses as an injured man, puts his trust in the Lord, and shouts "Hallelujah." There is a pretty little squabble about the accounts, and Chalker rushes into print with a pamphlet addressed to "all lovers of righteousness." We gather that "Major" Hodges, of the Holiness Army, has had a keen eye to the main chance. The Glastonbury Hall seems to be his property, although it was paid for by others, and over and above the mortgage there is a clear balance of several hundred pounds' value.

AN Armenian rendering of the hymn "I am a wandering sheep" was recently translated into English as to its title by a native, for a traveller who heard some children singing it at Constantinople, thus—"I was a misled mutton."

THE *Rock* laments the "ever-increasing godlessness of the age," and it protests that when "the hideous fiend euphemistically denominated Freethought, or Democratic Socialism, rears its head without fear, but one effect can follow," namely, "impurity and depravity," which are the "natural and invariable concomitants of Atheism." If this pious utterance of the *Rock* be taken as a fair sample of the effect of the madness called religion it becomes evident that wholesale lying and venomous slander are the "natural and invariable concomitants" of the maudering piety of to-day, just as persecution, torture and death were the concomitants of piety plus power in the past.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 8, at the Theatre Royal, Whitty Street, West Hartlepool; at 11, "Will Christ Save Us?" at 3, "God's Mother;" at 7, "An Hour in Hell."

AUGUST 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.—A Friend, H. Jones, A. Smith.

W. C. HART.—The text "For the poor shall never cease out of the land," occurs in *Dout*, xv., 11. For the antiquity of man you should consult Lyell and Lubbock.

ANTEDILUVIAN.—Thanks for cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

R. TURNER (Edinburgh).—O. Nicholson, Roxburgh Hall, Drummond Street, sells this paper. Also Giffen, Chapel Street.

HAVING lost our bound volumes of the *Liberal* and *Secularist* in the fire, we shall be glad to hear from any friends who can supply us with the same.

A. W. FREER sends a subscription and adds: "I am sorry my purse is not so big as my heart; would that I were in a position to send you £100."

G. V. BALL, in sending a subscription, makes some uncomplimentary references to the insurance company.

POVERTY writes: "I am afraid you must feel very downcast in private despite your hopeful tone in public, but I sincerely and confidently hope you will rise superior to the emergency." We beg to assure our friend that he is quite mistaken in his surmise. We are full of health and energy, and till these fail us depression is an unknown feeling.

H. BLAKELOCK (Grimsby) writes: "We are extremely sorry here to learn of your disastrous fire. We hope you will find friends to help you over your difficulties, which must be very great. I shall send you something in a few days."

J. C. sends a remittance, adding "This you can repay, with interest, when we meet on that beautiful shore." Our correspondent thinks that Jahveh must be tired of demolishing churches, and that our flouts and jeers have nerved the old fellow to bare his strong right arm at last against our "blasphemy factory."

J. H. POWE sends subscription with the remark that "every Freethinker should give a helping hand."

E. A. JAGGER encloses a cheque, adding, "I do not require your voucher and should you send it, it will suffer the same fate as your literature. I feel sure the Freethought party will rally round you in this crisis for I know of no man more worthy their sympathy and support."

GAELIC SCEPTIC writes: "I cordially follow the example set by A. B. Moss, and herewith enclose you a postal order for ten shillings, trusting the remainder of the thousand readers will do likewise."

C. J. (Manchester)—We are obliged for the subscription and promise of loan.

A. LEWIS.—Thanks. You will see that the subscription is fairly started. We hope we shall justify your view of our service to the party.

R. MCINTYRE.—Numbers forwarded.

ADMIRER.—There is a work by Jay on the slave trade and another by Cheever, an American author.

J. H. STOKES.—Thanks for enclosure. Like you, we hope the Hall Company at Bristol will recover from the scare and allow the building to be used for Sunday lectures, with payment at the doors and discussion at the close, like hundreds of other halls in the kingdom.

ALPHA.—Of course, if there be a God, good and evil must both proceed from him, as Isaiah emphatically declares. So far we agree with you; but if you continue to read the *Freethinker* you will probably cease believing in gods and ghosts altogether.

H. G. MARTIN (Spennymoor), in reference to a paragraph in our last issue, says that the rifle corps were not "ordered" to church. They marched to the house of God, but those who did not like to enter were allowed to "fall out." Our correspondent adds: "I must take the opportunity to express my satisfaction at your decision about *Progress*. I have taken a copy for many months, and in future shall take two, and try to do some good with the spare one."

D. A. BECKETT, in sending a subscription, says: "I may inform you that I have taken four copies of *Progress* for something like two years, and I think of taking eight copies for the future, hoping many of your subscribers will do likewise."

W. C.—(1) We think not. Oath-taking was common long before the time of Jesus. Swearing, in the religious as well as in the cursing sense, appears to have been universal. (2) If Jesus did not mean himself the passage seems absurd. There can be little doubt that the words were concocted for him after the dogma of his divinity was established. (3) Baptism for the dead is a bit of a mystery, and we are afraid you will have to wait for the solution of it until you reach the other side of Jordan. Possibly your own theory is correct.

M. BLACKWELL.—Thanks for all your expressions of sympathy. You need not worry yourself, for we are in very good spirits.

We regret that we have made a mistake in our last number. The young man who bought the quarter's file of the *Freethinker* from the

Oakenshaw Colliery Reading-room is not a Secularist, but simply a lover of fair play who stands up for the right of the *Freethinker* to lie on the table.

J. B.—Your small subscription is as highly esteemed as the larger ones of richer Freethinkers. We did not need the subscription to assure us of your devotion to the cause.

A FREETHINKER, in sending "a mite," which is all he can afford, says, "I have to thank you for a new life; you have made me a new being."

J. G. W.—We have only printed your initials, thinking from the address that you would not like it in full.

DEVEREUX.—We have no other address than the one we gave. No doubt the *Weekly Dispatch* series of stories on Board Schools will be republished in a separate form.

J. CLAPPERTON.—We have printed a similar story before. Every Freethinker should withdraw his children from religious instruction.

H. P. BOWDEN says: "I am glad of the change in *Progress*, and have just ordered it to be sent regularly to me."

J. THORNES.—Too late. Next week.

E. B. ROSE.—We can only trust that we deserve a tithe of your flattering remarks on our "indomitable courage," etc. By all means see us after the lecture at the Hall of Science. We wish you prosperity in Australia.

T. B. SMART informs us that our paragraph brought a strong muster of Freethinkers to the Walham Green open-air station last Sunday evening, and the pious roughs, who were there in strong force, decamped when they saw the altered aspect of affairs. Mr. Smart is pleased with the change in *Progress*, which he thinks will satisfy Freethinkers and largely increase the sale.

ATHEIST BLACKSMITH.—Thanks for words of sympathy from a brother martyr.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Rationalist—Liberty—Liberal—Devon Evening Express—Echoes of the Exe—South Wales Daily News—Liberal Home Ruler—Church Reformer—Daily Chronicle—Cambridge Express—Truthseeker—Women's Suffrage Journal—Hampshire Chronicle—New South Wales Freethinker—Thinker—Melbourne Herald—Boston Investigator—Tribune—Dorking Parish Magazine—St. Leonards News—Naval Brigade News—Devon Times.

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.

BURNT OUT.

THE list of remittances we publish below shows that the Freethought party is yielding a generous response to our appeal. Many loans are promised besides those acknowledged, but we prefer not to notify them until they are forwarded. Every lender will receive a proper voucher, which will entitle him to recall the amount at any time by giving six months' notice; and meanwhile interest will be paid at the rate of five per cent. per annum. This will afford a better security than debentures on the stock and periodicals, for it includes a lien on our income from all sources, while leaving us absolute freedom to conduct the publishing business in our own fashion. We venture to press this on the attention of our friends. In entrusting us with sufficient money to carry on our publishing business, which many consider a necessity to Freethought, they are running no more risk than if they invested in any ordinary security bearing the same rate of interest. We hope, therefore, that we shall be able to publish a much longer list next week. Preparations are already being made to print fresh editions of the best works destroyed in the fire, and during the next six months the printing establishment will be kept very busy. There will be a tremendous increase of work for ourselves and Messrs. Wheeler and Ball, but we shall be perfectly satisfied when we see the business rise phoenix-like from its ashes.

With respect to the Insurance we are not yet in a position to make a more precise statement. By next week we shall know the best and the worst. Meanwhile we entertain no rash expectations.

Mr. George Payne, the president of the Manchester Branch, who heads the list of loans, sends us the following letter:

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

I hope that contributions are coming in quickly, to make good your loss by the recent disastrous fire, or at any rate in the shape of loans, which will enable you to continue, without embarrassment, your invaluable work on behalf of Freethought. I have been troubled with misgiving, on account of so many being away from home at this season of the year and not caring to think of anything which savors of business. Will you therefore allow me, as one of the rank and file of our party who looks upon your efforts as amongst the most important and effective of any that are now being made on behalf of Secularism, to urge upon those who may be able to render a helping hand in the present emergency to do so *without delay*? The case is eminently one in which he gives twice who gives quickly; and the same remark will apply to those who may intend to advance you

money on loan. It will take time to get matters into good working order again, even if your loss were made good instantaneously. Fortunately, the Lord has chosen the summer time to afflict you and destroy your stock, and if your friends will only bestir themselves, you may be in full swing again by the commencement of the lecturing and reading season, and make him regret that he ever raised a finger against you.

20 Kennedy Street, Manchester,
August 2, 1886.

GEORGE PAYNE.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—A. B., 1s.; T. M., 1s.; J. C. (Cambridge), £1; Poverty, 2s.; G. V. Ball, £1; A. W. Freer, 5s.; J. H. Powe, 10s. 6d.; A. Lewis, 5s.; C. J., £1; Gaelic Sceptic, 10s.; E. A. Jagger, £1 1s.; Constance Howell, £25; A Freethinker, 1s.; J. B., 2s. 6d.; M. Blackwell, 1s.; J. Powley, 1s.; Sympathiser, 6d.; W. C. (Epping Forest), 10s. 6d.; D. A. Beckett, £1; J. Hissey, 2s.; J. Hemingway, £1; H. Taylor, 1s. 6d.; J. Kimberley, 1s.; Atheist Blacksmith, 1s.; W. Smith, 10s.; E. B. Rose, 2s. 6d.; J. L., 10s.; F. C., 2s. 6d.; A. B. Moss, 10s.

LOANS.—G. Payne, £10 10s.; F. Smallman, £20; G. J. W., £1.

SUGAR PLUMS.

WHILE our "blasphemy factory" was being burnt a local churchwarden surveyed the scene from the back of the crowd. "Ah!" said he, "I reckon they don't lose much over the job. Business is slack with 'em, and they're having a bonfire." Many persons around him regarded him as oracular and shook their heads accordingly. Both the churchwarden and his dupes, however, were mistaken. Our difference with the insurance company has at least this small consolation, that it gives the lie to these charitable Christians who judge Freethinkers by their own villainous standard.

"Ah," said another in the crowd, "I guess it will stop that damned paper." A prophecy which was applauded by some of the godly around him. But he also was mistaken. Perhaps the destroying angel thought that by burning us out he would destroy the root of the mischief, and so the fire was allowed to slacken before it reached the ground floor. On that floor was all the printing plant, and in the basement below it were the engine and machines. If these two floors had been served in the same way as the three above, the *Freethinker* might have been stopped for awhile. As it is, however, the mechanical appliances are left almost intact, and with the assistance of our many friends they are kept in full operation.

THE new number of *Progress* is now ready. It is excellently printed on good paper, and there is a change in the color of the cover for which we are also preparing a fresh design. The contents are numerous and varied. The editor opens with a slashing article on "Defending the Faith," in which he criticises the arguments of a new book by the Rev. J. M. Wilson. Then follows a bright and interesting paper by S. Britton on "The Praise of Books." Mr. Wheeler continues his "Historical Sketches of Freethought in England," dealing with the Deists of last century. These sketches are very valuable as well as deeply interesting, and should be read by every Freethinker. Dr. Maudsley's remarkable new book *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings* is reviewed by Hero E. Jewel, who makes a number of striking extracts. Philip Sydney gives an account of Mr. Swinburne's new volume of *Miscellanies*. In addition to other book reviews there are articles on "The Christian Miracles," "Epic-tetus," "Praise and Blame," and the second part of James Thomson's "The Lover's Return." Altogether it is an excellent threepennyworth, and we venture to think the magazine will satisfy the large number of readers into whose hands it will fall.

A WIDELY circulated tract entitled "Dr. Manning's Literature" opens an attack on some Catholic works with the following: "The *Freethinker*, June 20, 1886, says truly, 'The Priest is the greatest evil in Ireland.' And the same atheistic publication presents its readers with an engraving of the 'Iron Virgin' and a description of her services to the cause of *Religion*, copied from *Crimes of Christianity!*" Strangely enough it goes on to say that Atheism is always associated with Popery.

THE Australian correspondent of the *Christian Commonwealth* notes the strong tendency to Secularism in the colonies, and says that "signs of it can be found even in the pulpit." Ministers have to advertise special sermons on the news of the day. "Some," he says, "go much farther and give up preaching sermons on Sunday evening, and instead institute a series of what they term 'lectures' on every conceivable subject." It appears that religious service alone will not bring a supply of worshippers. "Colonials will have something *special*, and if it is withheld the churches are invariably empty as a consequence." One Australian divine describes the state of affairs out there as being "a hard fight between Protestantism, Romanism, and Secularism."

No. 11 of the New South Wales *Freethinker* reaches us from Sydney. We are pleased to notice that Mr. Collins is continuing the Comic Bible Sketches and that he contemplates enlarging the paper very shortly. As this is only the second

number that has reached us we suspect some interference by the postal authorities.

THE *Thinker* of Madras reproduces Mr. Ball's article on "Ludicrous Aspects of Immortality" from our columns.

MR. J. E. REMSBURG, one of the ablest of the American Secular lecturers, is doing excellent work out in Nebraska. He lectures every day in the week and has delivered thirty-six lectures within the past month. Secular Societies are springing up in all parts of the States.

MR. MATTHEW ARNOLD relates the following incident in his new Report on Continental Education. It occurred in a French school. "A child was asked the question so common in the training of the young, to whom do you owe all that you are enjoying here, this fine schoolroom, these pictures, these books, this splendid city, all that gives security, comfort, and pleasure to your life; who gives it all to you? I listened languidly at first, but my interest awoke as it occurred to me; surely all this can be leading up to but one answer, the established answer, God, and that answer may not be given here. And it was not given; the answer at last to the question put to the child, 'Who is your benefactor?' was this: *Eh bien, c'est le pays*; 'Your benefactor is your country.'"

MR. ARNOLD puts in a good word for these French "infidels" who are the bugbear of British piety. He says that "The school expenditure of the Republican Government is not all due, as its enemies would have us believe, to a hatred of religion; it is due also to a belief in the value of sound and full popular instruction, which is one of the best articles of the democratic creed, and to a conviction that this sound and full instruction is not and cannot be given by the religious."

THE Bishop of Liverpool has said a true thing at last. He has taken a long time about it, but better late than never. "The Established Church," he says, "is in danger. There is no mistake about it. There is a current setting in towards the disestablishment of all National Churches, and we are already in it. We are gradually drifting downwards, though many perceive it not; but those who look at the old landmarks cannot fail to see that we move. We shall soon be in the rapids. A few, a very few years, and, unless we exert ourselves, we shall be over the falls." True, your lordship, and you will go over the falls whether you exert yourselves or not.

AN ATHEIST'S THOUGHTS.

'Tis easy, when the many cheer and rulers bless,
To serve a faith that some revere and all profess—
To cringe to cruel creeds, to laud the rich and strong,
To guard and honor thronéd fraud and wrong.

But when fair Truth would save a world despite its frowns,
Its poison'd javelins at her hurl'd, its thorny crowns,
Its onslaught as on leprous Crime from some foul den,
While Falsehood's mask seems truth sublime to men:

Then is the time for loyal hearts to dare true deeds,
To be such men and act such parts as shame the creeds.
Then should we fight for truth, for worth; and, strong of heart,
In this the noblest war on earth take part.

While Christian poison's vaunted still Earth's panacea,
While saints deluded strive to kill each new idea,
And seek by monstrous myths to climb to paradise,
Yet brand plain truth and duty crime or vice:

Arise! Unsheathe the sword of light: plain truth avow.
Against Religion's hordes unite: the time is now.
Ever she bars man's onward way, the tyrant's friend;
Her power to curse and rob and slay must end.

Mother of mischief, source of woe and fellest rage,
Of living truth the deadliest foe in every age,
Still her wild fears and hopes delude: many she binds,
Enslaving, as her Circe's brood, men's minds.

Strike hard for souls in prison pent; dare all her spite.
Until her giant force is spent, still smite and smite.
Spare not her frauds—God, priest, or pope—till thought be free;
Until their real, if humbled, hope, men see.

On earth's most precious triumphs bent, of moral might,
Smite prejudice with argument, smite wrong with right,
But brave men will not fear to fall in fiercer strife
If need be; they will give their all—their life.

Thus shall we speed each righteous cause, thus help earth's
throngs

To sweep away oppressive laws and cruel wrongs.
Man's war for men must never cease while one remains
To lift to light, or to release from chains.

Arm'd Science aids the war we wage ; she fills our ranks ;
Stoutly her legion'd facts engage the foe's turn'd flanks.
Earth's hope, man's moral sense, takes form more firm each hour,
Wakes from deception, and grows warm with power.

Dark Superstition's phantoms one by one shall pass away,
The lamp of Truth, a glowing sun, spread endless day.
Slave of that lamp, not of the creeds, Nature's caress
Our all-compelling pray'r of deed must bless ;

Till, harvested the fields hard won, due virtues met,
On happy realms of men the sun shall never set—
On men no longer fiercely blind, but wiser grown,
With war and want and all their kind unknown.

For sage and hero shall not cease to lead our race
Forth from its brutish miseries and all that's base ;
And man shall learn his onward way, nor turn aside,
But law well-fathomed shall obey as guide.

Be this a dream or what it may, come hope or fear,
Some simple duties of to-day at least are clear.
An inward impulse sure and strong demands that we
From tyranny and fraud and wrong be free.

Evolving law, stern lord of earth, compels our fight ;
His sons must follow foremost worth, must love the right,
Sowing the fields, for time's increase, with their best deeds,
Of joy deep-rooted and of peace sure seeds.

So may we work in Love's own might, so build and sow
That household joys and all delight may surely grow,
And spread afar one wide domain of glowing life,
Whose toil is sweet since purged of pain and strife.

Thus earth shall breathe an atmosphere of hope and love,
The splendor of a due career each soul shall prove.
We, for these ends so fair, so vast, on Truth rely ;
Misleading phantoms of the past must die.

Emotion waste on air we shun, vain love recall ;
E'en could God be, he needeth none ; man needs it all.
Reverence for Man, care for His fate well cherish'd, then
Lives all that's truly good and great in men.

We will not, cannot, help grand lies to keep us slaves
To ignorance and to mysteries that ignorance craves.
Ever would we, through earth's long youth aid the one plan
Of changing man to truth, not truth to man.

Nor need high thought and pure fare worse for Fiction's fall,
Wonder itself, the Universe, unfolds us all,
Heav'n's starry radiance sublime shines as it shone ;
Eternities of teeming time roll on.

Nor Nature's broad magnificence, sea, sky and field,
Nor Art's heart-music sweet, shall hence less rapture yield :
Nor childhood's charm, nor friendship's grasp, shall e'er grow old,
Or mother's kiss, or lovers' clasp, grow cold.

Life's course, life's joys, remain the same, but conscience, freed
From prison chains, can teach true fame, true thought, true deed.
And when life fades and joy and strife, can he repent
Who looks back on an honest life well spent ?

The war of progress and good sense for ever glows
With feeling far, far more intense than "pleasure" knows ;
And Thought's resolve and calm deep care and earnest gaze
Shall well replace the beggar's pray'r and praise.

We are no lawless mutineers. We smile at those
Who in their foolish hates and fears deem us their foes.
Nay, could pure Truth and Justice be a god most real,
To such in reverence deep would we appeal.

But since there is no living God, then Man, alone,
Set free to shape his fate, must plod towards the throne
Of ideal Good on earth by ways that earnest wills
Shall find or make through each rough maze of ills.

The passing losses of to-day we do not scorn ;
But be they bitter as they may they must be borne,
Old thoughts die hard. They linger still. Their influence blinds,
Till new thoughts grow and form and fill new minds.

On conquering Fate by valiant skill, man is resolv'd ;
And step by step the means, the will, shall be evol'd.
We are content to pioneer for paths ahead
Where shadow-smitten men yet fear to tread.

To win true hearts, Omnipotence should show on earth
Not blood-stained skill, but innocence, not might, but worth.
In vain invent your guiltless God and blame the laws
He never by his slightest nod bids pause.

Oh, who that had almighty power could hear earth's cry
Of pain and wrong yet hour by hour stand idly by ?
Oh, such a God, of whom men dream, should first atone
Not for men's sins but sin supreme, his own.

Are men rank cowards, to be shock'd that some should dare
To judge Omnipotence, lest mock'd by semblance fair ?
A just and wise Omnipotence, if such could be,
Would smile well pleased such honest sense to see.

And could almighty Love make hell? But nay, his own
Revolt from half the tale they tell but have outgrown.
The pleasant only they would fain find true at last,
Yet wish the crowd to dread hell's pain aghast.

O brave and true, whom cruel foes have made to feel
Fast bleeding wounds and savage blows that yet shall heal,
Suffer and fight, till shameful wrong shall hide its head,
Till, pierced with earnest pen and tongue, 'tis dead.

Fight on by precious truths impell'd where war resounds,
Fighting with mighty passion held in wisdom's bounds :
Resolute beyond all words for man's great gain,
Your deeds are true, your words as swords not vain.

Love shall be yours, and peace that comes to eyes that see
The promised land of happy homes of souls set free,
Whose joy shall soothe your grief to rest and nerve your will :
Your heart with music of the blest shall thrill.

W. P. BALL.

HOW THE DEACON WAS TRICKED.

A FIRST Baptist Church in America has been fighting the Devil with his own weapons. Numbered commutation tickets, good for ten admissions to its prayer-meetings, were prepared and issued gratuitously to the young people of its flock. The deacons took turns at the door, and punched out a number for each attendance. When the ten numbers had been thus cancelled, the punched ticket was exchanged for a ticket to the skating-rink, and a new one issued in its place. This scheme worked admirably, from a spiritual point of view, giving odds of ten to one against the Devil, and, regarded as a purely business scheme, it was a great success and resulted in full houses. One night, however, certain unscrupulous members of the congregation put into effect a plan to break the bank, as it were. Deacon Fatling was at the door that night. The deacon was the proprietor of the skating-rink, and the inspired author of the whole scheme. He was also near-sighted to a degree. Consequently he punched away at the attendance tickets as they were presented without penetrating the identity of the bearers. The doors had been opened at seven o'clock, and at eight the deacon was still wearily punching. The church only held about three hundred people, and yet "a steady stream of humanity" had been pouring into "the sacred edifice" for a good hour. The deacon figured that if they were corded up inside—and he could see no other way of disposing of them—they must fill the room up about even with the chandelier. The unwonted success of his plan surprised him somewhat, but flattered him still more, and so he went on blindly punching and peddling out skating-rink tickets, mentally totting up the probable amount of the collection he proposed to spring upon this large and no doubt enthusiastic assemblage later on. At a quarter past eight the steady stream that still flowed past the door began to wear upon the deacon's patience. At eight thirty his patience and his skating-rink tickets gave out together. He had had five hundred of these at seven o'clock and now they were all gone. The temporal aspect of this unwonted boom rather worried the skating-rink proprietor, but its spiritual side filled the deacon with joy. Leaving another man at the door, he started off for a fresh supply of tickets. As he rounded the corner of the church he had a revelation. It consisted of a procession of shadowy figures emerging in an unbroken sequence from a side window. The deacon returned sadly to the door, and passed into the body of the church. It was almost empty. The Devil had won against odds.

A BAGGY pair of pants is no evidence that a man pesters heaven with too much praying.

SLEEPING IN CHURCH.—In olden times many pious individuals considered it a good work to set apart some of their worldly wealth for keeping the members of the congregation from sleeping during divine service. On April 17, 1725, John Rudge bequeathed to the parish of Trysull, in Shropshire, twenty shillings a year, that a poor man might be employed to go about the church during the sermon and keep the people awake. A bequest of Richard Doyery, of Farmcote, dated 1659, had in view the payment of eight shillings in the church at Claverley, in Shropshire, for a similar purpose. At Acton Church, in Cheshire, about thirty years ago, one of the churchwardens or the apparitor used to go round in the church during service with a large wand in his hand ; and if any of the congregation were asleep they were instantly awoken by a tap on the head. At Dunchurch, in Warwickshire, a similar custom existed. A person bearing a stout wand, shaped like a hay-fork at the end, stopped stealthily up and down the nave and aisles, and whenever he saw an individual asleep he touched him so effectually that the spell was broken ; this being sometimes done by fitting the fork to the nape of the neck. A more playful method is said to have been used in another church, where the boadle went round the edifice during the service carrying a long staff, at one end of which was a fox's brush, and at the other end a knob. With the former he gently tickled the face of the female sleepers, while on the heads of their male compeers he bestowed with the knob a sensible rap.

PROFANE JOKES.

A LITTLE York, Penn., girl, while lisping her childish prayer at her mother's knee before retiring, stopped in the midst of her devotions and said: "O Lord! please wait a minute until I scratch my toe."

"Did you pass the hat?" the pastor of a Texas congregation asked his deacon after the morning service. "Yes, I did," said the deacon; and then looking into the vacant interior of a hat that wanted nothing but lining, he added gloomily, "So did every body else."

A FACT.—Boy, seven years old, learning piano.—Boy to mother: "I don't want to learn the piano any more." Mother: "Why, Tom?" Boy: "I want to learn the harp." Mother: "Why, Tom?" Boy: "Because if I was to die how awkward it would be if I could only play the piano and not the harp."

AGAINST HER CONSCIENCE. Scene—Highlands. Sunday. Tourist: "Can you sell us threepennyworth of milk, Missus?" Mrs. McJob: "Whit did ye say? Losh me! Sell mulk on the Saubath day? Na, na! I couldna' dae that; but as ye seem dacent boys, I'll jist gie ye thripence worth for naethin', an' ye'll jist mak' me a present o' a shullin'."

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