

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

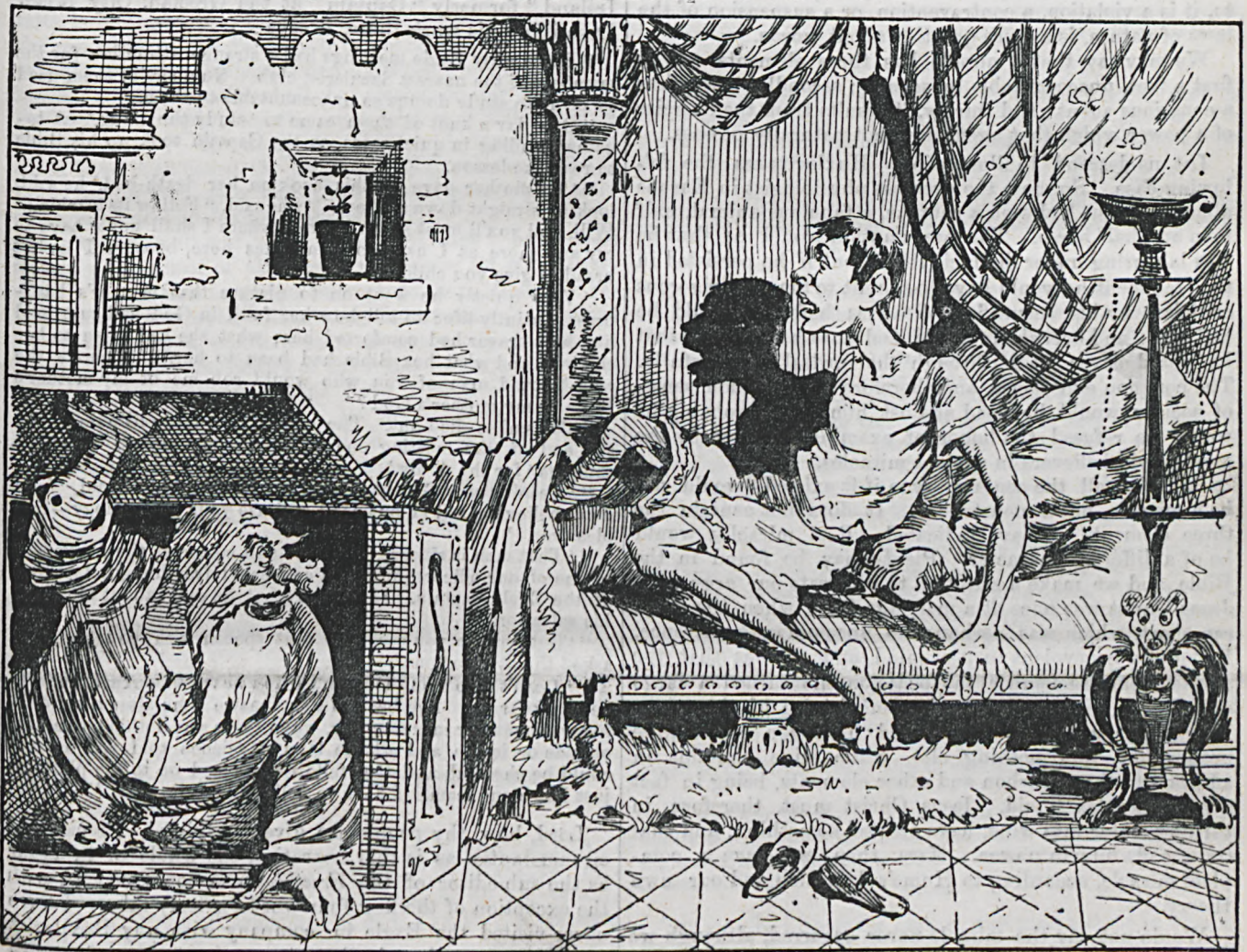
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 164.



THE CALLING OF SAMUEL.

"The Lord called Samuel; and he answered, Here am I. And he ran unto Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou calledst me. And he said, I called not; lie down again. And he went and lay down. And the Lord called yet again, Samuel. And Samuel arose and went to Eli, and said, Here am I; for thou didst call me. And he answered, I called not, my son; lie down again. . . . And the Lord called Samuel again the third time."—1 SAMUEL III., 4-8.

MIRACLES.

WHAT is a miracle? Some people would reply, an act of God. But this definition is far too wide. In the theistic sense, it would include everything that happens; and in the sense of our archaic bills of lading, it would include fire and shipwreck.

Others would reply, a miracle is a wonder. But this definition would include every new, or at least every surprising new fact. A black swan would have been a wonder before Australia was discovered, but it would have been no miracle. Railways, telegraphs, telephones, electric light, and even gas light, would be wonders to savages, yet neither are they miracles. One of the Mahdi's followers was astonished by an English officer, who pulled out his false eye, tossed it in the air, caught it, and replaced it; after which he asked the flabbergasted Arab, whether his miraculous Mahdi could do that. It was a greater wonder than the Mahdi could perform; still it was not a miracle. Ice was so great a wonder to the king of Siam that he refused to credit its existence. Yet it was not miraculous, but a natural product, existing in practically unlimited quantities in the polar regions. We might multiply these

illustrations *ad infinitum*, but what we have given will suffice. If not, let the reader spend an evening at Maske lyne and Cooke's, where he will see plenty of startling wonders and not a miracle amongst them.

Hume's definition of a miracle as a violation of a law of nature, is the best ever given, and it is really as perfect as such a definition can be. It has been carped at by Christian scribblers, and criticised by superior theologians like Mozley. But, to use Mr. Gladstone's phrase, it keeps the field. Even the criticisms of Mill and Huxley leave its merit unimpaired. The ground taken by these is, that to say a miracle is a violation of a law of nature is to pre-judge the question, and to rule out all future facts in the interest of a prepossession. Mill, however, allows that a miracle is a violation of a valid induction, and as a law of nature means nothing more it is difficult to understand why he takes any exception to Hume's statement of the case. It is perfectly obvious that Hume's argument is not metaphysical, but practical. He does not discuss the *possibility* but the *probability* of miracles. He reduces the dispute to a single point, namely, whether the person who relates a miracle (for to the world at large the question is necessarily one of testimony) is deceived or deceiving, or whether the otherwise universal experience of mankind is

to be disbelieved; in other words, whether he or the rest of the world is mistaken. One man may, of course, be right, and all the human race opposed to him wrong, but time will settle the difference between them. That *time*, however, simply means general experience through long ages; and that is precisely the tribunal which Hume's argument appeals to.

Quarrelling with Hume's definition is really giving up miracles altogether, for except as supernatural evidence, they are no more important than shooting stars. The very nature of a miracle, in whatever formula it may be expressed, is superhuman, and having a purpose, it is also supernatural; in other words, it is a special manifestation of divine power for a particular object. Whether, being so, it is a violation, a contravention, or a suspension of the laws of nature, is a mere question about words.

We may say that a miracle has three elements. It is first a fact, unaccountable by science; secondly, it requires a conscious agent; and thirdly, it results from the exercise of a power which that agent does not naturally possess.

Let us descend to illustration. Huxley takes the following case. Suppose the greatest physiologist in Europe alleged that he had seen a centaur, a fabulous animal, half man and half horse. The presumption would be that he was labouring under hallucination; but if he persisted in the statement he would have to submit to the most rigorous criticism by his scientific colleagues before it could be believed; and everybody would feel sure beforehand that he would never pass through the ordeal successfully. The common experience, and therefore the common sense, of society would be dead against him, and probably he would be refused the honor of examination even by the most fervid believers in ancient miracles.

But after all the centaur, even if it existed, would not be a miracle, but a monstrosity. It does not contain the three elements we have indicated. Real miracles would be of a different character. Plenty may be found in the Bible, and we make a selection to illustrate our argument. Jesus Christ was once at a marriage feast, when the wine ran short, which was perhaps no uncommon occurrence. Being of a benevolent turn of mind, and anxious that the guests should remember the occasion, he turned a large quantity of cold water into fermented juice of the grape. Now water contains oxygen and hydrogen in definite proportions, and nothing else, while wine contains in addition to these, carbon and other elements, being in fact a very complex liquid. Jesus Christ must, therefore, in turning water into wine, have created something, and that transcends human power. Here, then, we have a complete miracle, according to Hume's definition and our own theory.

We do not say the miracle never occurred, although we no more believe in it than we believe the moon is made of green cheese. We are willing to regard it as susceptible of proof. But does the proof exist? To answer this we must enquire what kind of proof is necessary. An extraordinary story should be supported by extraordinary evidence. It requires the concurrent and overwhelming testimony of eye-witnesses. We must be persuaded that there is no collusion between them, that none of them has anything to gain by deception, that they had no previous tendency to expect such a thing, and that it was practically impossible that they could be deluded. Now let any man or any Christian seriously ask himself whether the evidence for Jesus Christ's miracle is of this character. Four evangelists write his life, and only one mentions the occurrence. Even he was certainly not an eye-witness, nor does he pretend to be, and the weight of evidence is against his gospel having been written till long after the first disciples of Jesus were dead. But even if the writer distinctly declared himself an eye-witness, and if it were undeniable that he lived on the spot at the time, his single unsupported testimony would be absurdly inadequate to establish the truth of the miracle. Every reader will at once see that the necessary rules of evidence are not conformed to, and whoever accepts the miracle must eke out reason with faith.

So much for the evidence of miracles. Their intellectual or moral value is simply nil. The greatest miracle could not really convince a man of what his reason condemned, and if a prophet could turn water into wine it would not necessarily follow that all he said was true. In fact, truth does not require the support of miracles; it flourishes

better without their assistance. Universal history shows that miracles have always been employed to support falsehood and fraud, to promote superstition, and to enhance the profit and power of priests.

G. W. FOOTE.

A "WAR CRY" MYTH.

My attention has been directed, by a note in Mrs. Besant's "Daybreak" in the *National Reformer*, to a copy of the *War Cry* for July 31st, in which some curious sentiments are attributed to the sub-editor of the *Freethinker*. The article in question is upon "Major William Stoneshill, of Ireland," formerly "Captain" at the Grecian, City Road. Describing his work there, it says:

"Those early Eagle meetings had a strange attraction for the members of the nearest Secularist club. Numbers of them used to come to study doings so unaccountable to them.

"One day a knot of them came to 'study the thing,' sat together, smiling in quiet scorn, as the Captain took up his Bible to read the lesson.

"My mother gave me this book on her death-bed," he said, looking straight down at them. "She said, 'Follow its teachings Will, and you'll meet me in heaven, where I shall never have to cry any more as I used to sometimes here, because I hadn't bread to give you children.'"

"Very quietly he went on to picture that mother's hard-pressed saintly life; to tell how her faith in God had sustained her, how prayer had comforted her; what she had been to her children, and what her Bible had been to her. 'Where's the cold-hearted man of you who would rob me of my mother's Bible or my mother's God?'

"The smiles died out. The group sat quietly listening. At the end of the meeting one of them came up to offer ten shillings 'for the Army.'

"I can't say, 'God bless you,' as you would," he said, "for I don't believe in a God, but yet I will use your phraseology—God bless you!"

"That man is sincere," said the sub-editor of the *Freethinker* to one of our officers, himself a converted freethought lecturer, of the Eagle captain. "I believe what he said about God and his salvation."

"But how do you reconcile that speech with your belief?" asked the other astonished.

"I can't reconcile them, and I don't care to. All I know is he speaks truth. I've been in this theatre time after time, on a foggy November morning, say, when there was nothing cheerful outside or inside, and all the laws of science told you no one could be cheerful, and that fellow's bounced on to the platform just like a sunbeam. I have to believe what he says."

Lord, how thy people are given to lying! Precise and circumstantial as is this narrative, the whole of it, as far as the sub-editor of the *Freethinker* is concerned, is, with the exception of the first four words, utterly false. I have never visited the Eagle in company with any Secularist friends; never heard the story about the Captain's "mother's hard-pressed saintly life"; never made the preposterous speech attributed to me. So far from saying "I believe what he said about God and his salvation," I have never yet found anyone give me an intelligible idea of God, and have long since lost all regard for a salvation which does not prevent the saved from lying about those who differ from them in opinion. I have never been, nor said that I have been, in the Grecian theatre "time after time on a foggy November," or any other "morning." I never, that I remember, compared anybody except my wife to a sunbeam, and I am about the last person in the world to pretend to a knowledge of all the laws of science, or to affirm that they "told you no one could be cheerful" on a foggy November morning. Numbering among my personal friends a Brahmin, a Jew, a Catholic, and a Swedenborgian, I have never experienced any difficulty in reconciling sincerity with delusion.

Yet this bundle of falsities, which is doubtless received as gospel by the majority of the readers of the *War Cry*, contains one little grain of truth. I did visit the Grecian theatre one evening, about three years ago, and I did afterwards say to my friend, Mr. Richard Slater, the musical director of the Salvation Army, (whom I went to hear) that the Captain, who I think was Mr. Stoneshill, impressed me as being sincere. I have written to Mr. Slater (who as far as I am aware was never a Freethought lecturer, and who has been confounded with Mr. Thomas Slater of Bury) calling his attention to the mis-statements, and I have a letter in reply in which I have perfect confidence. He says:

"I cannot tell from what source the passage has come. For all I am responsible for is the phrase about Stonehill's sincerity which you acknowledge. It is evident the phrase has grown much bigger since leaving my lips."

"Much bigger!" Yes, something like the three black crows or the Welsh rare-bit that developed into three live cats. I have also written to "Major" Stonehill asking if he is responsible for the story, and to the editor of the *War Cry* requesting him to give my contradiction the same publicity as the misstatements. I have yet to find that these reasonable requests have been complied with.

It is idle to speculate as to the proportions of stupidity and unverity which have transformed an expression of belief in a man's sincerity into a conviction of the truth of his beliefs. But it may be profitable to note how utterly fictitious a contemporary record may be. If when pious faith is brought into requisition it is found credible that the sub-editor of the *Freethinker* is a believer in Christianity and his protests are disregarded by those who circulate the report, what credence shall be placed on far more unlikely *ex parte* reports of the credulous superstitionists of days gone by? No doubt if the Jewish story of Jesus could have been heard, the prophet of Nazareth would have been represented as a disreputable character who justly came to a bad end for his blasphemy.

My readers will not need to be told that I have been the only sub-editor of the *Freethinker* since its commencement. I am not sanguine enough to hope that my repudiation of the myth will prevent its repetition. A pious fraud that has a month's start is not easily run down, especially if the concoctors of the fraud refuse to notice its denial. Only by good fortune have I been able to contradict it here thus early. In many cases, however, myths of recantation have arisen after a man's death when he has no opportunities of refutation.

J. M. WHEELER.

"BURNT OUT" FUND.

WE are anxious to close this fund shortly, and we therefore venture to request that those who have intimated, or who entertain, an intention of sending us further loans, will do so as quickly as possible. Intending subscribers will, perhaps, also take the same hint. We are deeply grateful for the assistance rendered us in our necessity, and we are applying ourselves vigorously to the restoration of our publishing business.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—J. C. L., 1s.; H. Byshe, 10s.; Grimsby: H. Blakewell, 1s.; Herbert, 6d.; J. M., 1s.; G. L. Alward, 10s.; C. Beyton, 1s.; J. Chapman, 5s.; J. Alward, 2s. 6d.; J. Mosen-thal, £1 1s.; Mrs. O. Burton, 5s.; T. F. C., 2s. 6s.; A. Brooke, 5s.; James Gray, 1s.

LOANS.—T. F. C., £10; Thomas Sands, £10; John H. Powe, £50.

ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. G. H. Turner of Lowestoft, has been committed for trial on the charge of indecently assaulting Harriet White, his chapel-keeper. It was also asserted that he had similarly assaulted a Mrs. Pipe, but this part of the case was not entered into.

A MR. GROOM, who lectured outside our fire-stricken building on Sunday morning, told his audience that they could see before them evidence that God visited sins with judgment. He afterwards said that two fires and a bankruptcy would set any one up in business, and complained that Christians were sneered at. Mr. Groom might reflect that possibly the contempt he complains of is a judgment for uncharitable insinuations against those who differ from his opinions.

DR. WRIGHT in a newly-published volume of "Biblical Criticism," contends that the literal historical accuracy of the book of Jonah must be given up. Jonah means "dove" and a dove says Dr. Wright, was the symbol of Israel, therefore the story is a beautiful moral allegory. But when once you give up the literal interpretation, an allegory can be made to mean anything. A dove, as Dr. Inman would have informed Dr. Wright, is the symbol of something else besides Israel, and the meaning of the "allegory" may be something very different from that given by Dr. Wright. What is the use of a revelation which can be dealt with in this fashion? It is only as Luther said "a nose of wax."

CANON LIDDON has been lecturing on the Holy City. He describes Jerusalem, the chosen dwelling-place of the infinite God, as a one-horse town, round the walls of which one can walk easily before breakfast. In the days of Nebuchadnezzar it only held twenty thousand inhabitants, and though there were vastly more crowded into it from the country in the time of Titus, it was never as large as Islington.

A WOMAN in Pittsburg made a serious mistake the other day. She became greatly frightened when a terrible storm broke over the town, and ran for a vase of holy water with which to sprinkle herself. In the excitement of the moment she seized a bottle filled with sulphuric acid, and dashed the contents over her face and head. She will in all probability lose her eyesight, and her face may be disfigured, for the acid has eaten into the flesh.

MANKIND has made a similar mistake on a much larger scale in snatching at religion, which has blinded their eyes and disfigured their lives. The mistake has been found out, but it takes a long while to remedy it, and the scars will remain for many generations.

JOHN DOWDING, who shot himself at Chelsea, left a card on which he had written, "God Almighty have mercy upon me, for Jesus Christ's sake, amen." This shows how effectually religious belief supports the Christian through all his troubles.

CAPTAIN GEORGE GREENHAM fell dead at Ryde while singing in church. This special providence shows how God always sustains and protects his worshippers.

At Llantsilio in Wales, the vicar is determined to get rid of Mr. Jones, the schoolmaster, on account of his political opinions. The schoolmaster, however, being supported by the parishioners, refuses to resign as requested, and for a year past the vicar has been making things as uncomfortably hot as possible. He has kept Mr. Jones without his salary for nearly twelve months, and when a public meeting was called he had the door of the school-room padlocked. The parishioners emphatically say that if anyone is to go it shall be the vicar and not the schoolmaster. It is to be hoped the Education Department will interfere and teach this reverend village tyrant a lesson or two.

THE *English Churchman* is quite ready to credit the rumor that the Pope received poison at the hands of the Jesuits and an antidote when he issued the brief re-instating them. It says Pope Clement VIII. was poisoned just before giving a decision against the Jesuits in their quarrel with the Dominicans. It was known that the Pope would decide against the followers of Loyola; and Cardinal de Monte, in his *Life of Cardinal Bellarmine*, tells how that Jesuit cardinal prophesied that Pope Clement would die before giving his decision. The death of Pope Clement XIV., who published a bull suppressing the Jesuits, has also been attributed to the vindictive malice of that pious body of Christians.

FATHER ANDERDON, the Jesuit, says that Jesuits are pre-eminently the followers of Jesus. Like him, they are crucified to the world, and prepared to do and suffer for the Church, who is their beloved.

THE vicar of Llanarmon has met with such success in winning the love and respect of his parishioners by distraining for tithes that he has to be guarded on his way to church by policemen.

THE Bishop of Manchester, challenged by a correspondent as to his statement that the secular education in Victoria had a "desolating effect," replies in the *Daily News* that it is the crass and deplorable ignorance of Holy Scripture displayed by the children in Sunday schools that warrant his description of secular education as "a desolating system." If the children in the *Sunday schools* are deficient in religious knowledge the fault lies with the incompetent clergy and Sunday-school teachers. But as this healthy ignorance of scriptural nonsense is the only "desolating" effect mentioned, the Bishop is guilty of using strong words without facts to support them.

ST BARTHOLOMEW'S DAY is noted not only for the murder of thousands of Huguenots in France, but for the expulsion of nearly two thousand nonconforming ministers in 1662 after the Restoration. The *Church Times* regards this as a matter for rejoicing, and says: "Next to the great anniversaries of the faith—Christmas Day, Holy Week, Easter, Ascension Day and Whitsuntide—there is really no day in the year which should fill the hearts of the English-speaking race with feelings of more devout thankfulness than St. Bartholomew's." It exhorts all the clergy to take the occasion of reminding their congregations of the blessings brought to the Church on the day which the Dissenters call Black Bartholomew.

ACCORDING to a Canterbury newspaper, religion seems in a bad way at a village not nine miles from the cathedral. On a recent Sunday morning two strangers entered the church five minutes before the time for commencing the morning service. They were the only occupants of the holy edifice until three children arrived. At twenty minutes to eleven the curate

looked in to see if the congregation had turned up. Ten minutes later he looked in again and began to read the service; but apparently thinking he was wasting time, he suddenly halted, and sent the sexton to ask if the strangers wished to receive the sacrament. They declined, and he went on again with the service. Presently he made another halt and they skedaddled. That curate ought to have something better to do.

THE *Protestant Times* for September laments "England's departure from God." Since the appointment of a Roman Catholic Home Secretary it discovers that Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury are alike under the fascination of Rome.

THE Rev. Father John Skeul, a good-looking Catholic priest of thirty, has run away with a Philadelphia girl and married her in that city. If he had only seduced her he might have had absolution on easy terms, but as it is he is excommunicated.

THE Rev. Mr. Ricketts, vicar of Hayfield, absents himself from the meeting of the School Board, in order to retard the erection of a school. The more openly the sky-pilots declare their opposition to education the better.

THE local authorities of Haughley, in Suffolk, have rated the village chapel as a shop, on the ground that the garments made at mothers' meetings are sold therein. Chapels ought to pay their honest share of taxation, independently of any petty excuse.

GLANCING at a reference Bible in very small type, and consequently with the reference letters and figures often almost indistinguishable in size from the rest of the letter-press, the effect in reading was somewhat peculiar. It was as if the Psalmist and other inspired writers occasionally swore in their wrath like their inspirer. Thus we read of "the *d* Midianites," and that the Lord is "*d* high above all the earth," and that "The *d* fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom," and "Thy *b* people shall be willing in the day of thy power." "Let his *d* prayer become sin" sounds profane as well as inhuman. "Let *f* his children be fatherless," "Let *i* his posterity be cut off," and "Let *k* the iniquity of his fathers be remembered," seems like the commencement of some curious mathematical demonstration of a moral (or immoral) problem. The interpolated reference figures are much larger than the type and also read curiously. There are plenty of passages like this—"All they 5 that do his commandments"; "The 1 mouth of the deceitful 2"; "The 8 trees of the Lord are full of sap"; "and 8 smote down the 9 chosen men of Israel." "They 3 stand fast for ever and ever" and "Be merciful unto me, O Lord; for I cry unto thee 3 daily," if so copied from some ancient manuscript, would have been excellent proofs and prophecies of the eternal Trinity. It is well known that many marginal remarks or explanations—glosses they are technically called—were so incorporated into the sacred text. Such passages as "2 many countries" and "thou hast been 2 favorable unto thy land" look like specimens of Artemus Ward's spelling.

A WIDOW named Leboi, who was commonly regarded as a witch, has been burnt alive by her sons at Selles St. Denis, in France. They sprinkled her with holy water the while, and attribute their horrible actions to religious motives. Probably they rely upon the texts in which God commands that all witches shall be put to death. This plentiful use of holy water evidently shows they were under religious influences, and if the human race in our time were as brutal and as religious as in ages gone by their unnatural murder of their mother would prove their deep piety as conclusively as Jephthah's and Abrahams' offerings proved theirs.

THE Dean of York is dissatisfied because the High Church party cannot have it all their own way in the Lower House of Convocation. He has published a remarkable letter which concludes as follows: "If the same lack of equity and courtesy is to be exhibited towards us as heretofore, I, and others I believe with me, will cease to waste on a useless and ungrateful task our time and energies, and will devote them to other things."

THERE has been another bank scare in one of the country towns. It arose from a rumor that gained currency to the effect that the manager of a local bank had begun to teach in the Sunday school. The next day there was a "run" on the place.—*Modern Society*.

WHAT relation has Christianity to coffee? There must be some relation, for "An experienced Christian" advertises for a situation as manager of a coffee tavern. He does not pretend to be an experienced manager, but an experienced Christian. Probably he wants to "boss" a place where the proprietor will put as much faith in him as the customers have to in the victuals and drink; and if the latter should object that the butter is butterine and the coffee all chicory, he will be able to explain, as an experienced Christian, that such compounds and concoctions are the correct thing, as according to Mark the true sign of faith is that the believer shall swallow deadly things without being hurt.

TALMAGE comes out in a new character. He is advertising Bradbury's pianos. With a flippancy which would be reckoned blasphemy in a Freethinker, he says that Bradbury is in heaven, and he hopes to find Bradbury's pianos there. We wonder how much Talmage got for the advertisement, and what they think of it in heaven. At any rate, it adds a new terror to the Christian heaven to think that Talmage will be there playing on a Bradbury, especially as he has to learn his notes and do his practice. The other saints will probably wish him in the place which is the general theme of his eloquence.

GOD has sent an earthquake to comfort the Greeks. At Filiatra three hundred people have perished. Seventy-three dead bodies have already been dug out of the ruins. Other towns have also suffered severely. Ought not God to be tried for murder or manslaughter in cases like these? Before the bar of morality is he not guilty, or must Christians plead that he is not a morally responsible being, although the Devil undoubtedly is?

THE following appeared at the head of the advertisements of the *Bristol Mirror* on Saturday: "Wanted, a Dean to occupy the Stall in Bristol Cathedral. A dean has not been seen there for many years.—R. D. Robjant, Bristol." The Very Rev. Gilbert Elliot was appointed to the deanery by Earl Russell in 1850.

THE United Presbyterian Synod have reported on the case of James Gallacher, one of the Synod's Evangelists accused of seducing Annie Thom, a member of the Presbyterian congregation of Frenchie.

AT Doncaster, the Rev. C. W. Manwaring, vicar of Stainton, has been fined £5 for assaulting a boy aged nine, with a knobbed stick. He had been previously convicted in 1877 of assaulting a boy. This doesn't in the least degree incapacitate him from taking a salary for showing forth the beauties of the Christian religion to the people who benefit so greatly by his preaching and example.

THE Rev. B. C. Kennicott, vicar of All Saints', Monkwearmouth, has died through excessive drinking.

EPENETUS EARWAKER, one of Mr. Whitmore's "converted infidel leaders," turns up in all the Christian papers. Every reason is given for his conversion but the right one. The fact is, as we happen to know, Epenetus was desperately hard up; and not being an infidel leader, but only one of the smaller fry, he was reconciled to Christianity for a consideration. The Christians seldom bag a convert worth having, so they are obliged to magnify their miserable captures. It is a curious, but a positive fact, that every one of these "converts" is always improved in finances immediately after he finds the Lord. We stated some months ago, and there is no fear of our being contradicted, that an aged London Freethinker, not long deceased, was more than once offered money by emissaries of the Christian Evidence Society if he would only recant; and similar offers from some quarter have been surreptitiously made to some of our out-door lecturers.

EPENETUS turns up in the *Naval Brigade News*, a pious paper whose object (apart from profit) is to make Jack sober and religious, and above all, a supporter of the Church. This time Epenetus's story blossoms into an illustration. From the look of the woodcut, we should judge it to have originally been a sailor boy praying before turning in. It does duty now for the conscience-stricken infidel. We wonder what will be its next adventure.

WHAT a time we are having! A bazaar was recently held at Leighton Buzzard for the benefit of a Wesleyan chapel. It was held in the grounds of a Quaker, who acted as chairman. He was supported by a Churchman, and the bazaar was opened by a Jew. How toleration is spreading! says the *Jewish Chronicle*. Yes, and perhaps in time we may arrive at the old Roman stage, where a common Pantheon was provided for all the religions of the Empire.

M. CLEMENT, the metropolitan of Sophia, who took part in the kidnapping business, announced that "God had delivered the Bulgarian people from Prince Battenberg." This is the same M. Clement who embezzled the Red Cross money during the war. Of such is the kingdom of heaven.

PAUL (who is permitted to ask the blessing): "God bless aunty and the girls, and me too, and bless all that is on this table, except the cookies, which are not very good."

OBITUARY.—Died, August 23, at Benwell, Margaret Allman, aged 29 years. She was educated in the Roman Catholic faith, but careful reading of the Douay Bible made her a Freethinker. She refused the appeal of her friends to have the "priest," saying, twenty minutes before death, "They are frauds, and I believe they know it." A secular funeral was performed on the 25th by Mr. W. Dodd.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 5, Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool. Morning afternoon, and evening (subjects cannot be announced, owing to no bill having been sent up to the time of our going to press).

SEPT. 12, Milton Hall; 19 and 26, Hall of Science.

OCT. 3, Ball's Pond; 10, Birmingham; 24, Manchester; 31, Leeds.

NOV. 7 and 21, Hall of Science.

CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 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.

J. KEAST.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

E. J. TIERNY.—Thursday is kept by Buddhists, Friday by Mohammedans, Saturday by the Jews, and Sunday by the Christians. Our books of reference were burnt in the fire, and we are unable to say anything for the other three days.

G. COLE.—All orders for literature should be sent to 28 Stonecutter Street.

OMEGA.—There is a translation of the Avesta into English, made by Bleek, from Prof. Spiegel's German version. For Buddhism and Brahmanism, read first Prof. David's *Buddhism*, published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (price 2s. 6d.), and S. Johnson's *Oriental Religions* (India), published by Trübner. These works will give you plenty of references to others. If you require further information, apply to us again.

W. CABELL.—Taylor was right as to the Gospel of Barnabas. You refer to the Epistle; hence the discrepancy. Robert Taylor does not appear in our *Infidel Death Beds*, owing to want of information about his death. There is a translation of the life of Apollonius of Tyana, by the Rev. Wm. Berwick. Blount's translation is very scarce, and had as much matter in the notes as in the text.

J. E. ROOSE.—Shall appear.

J. WADMORE, in sending subscription, says that "Sympathy without assistance is like horse-radish without beef."

W. A. SENIOR (Huddersfield) is thanked for cuttings. He writes: "I am sorry for your misfortune through the fire, and will show my sympathy practically in a week or two. Our Branch is getting up a subscription."

J. DODGE.—The matter has already been noticed.

J. C. T.—Our readers really assist us by sending us newspaper cuttings. In this case however we do not quite see how the reverend gentleman can be dealt with in our columns. He was only a witness, and we have a wholesome respect for the law of libel.

H. BLAKEWELL.—Please thank the Grimsby subscribers on our behalf. We hope to see them some day.

R. A. DEITH.—If the back numbers are consecutive we should be very glad to receive them, as our own file has suffered in the fire.

P. SPENCER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. MOSENTHAL, in sending a subscription from Germany, says: "I derive a great deal of pleasure and instruction from the perusal of your Freethought literature."

ABROAD, who sends a subscription and loan from Prussia, writes: "I was a strictly religious man for thirty years. I attended religious service always twice, and mostly three times, every Sunday; and the Sunday school, as teacher, twice. I was a communicant the whole of this time. I then left the district in which I had been brought up, and free from external influence, I began to think for myself: becoming, as every other man will who dares to reflect, a Freethinker. Now I only look back upon that time with disgust as positively lost, and worse than lost."

ARGUS.—Many thanks. Your batches of all-sorts are of great service.

E. BUTLER.—Shall appear.

R. MCINTYRE.—Your style is too hectoring, not to say foul-mouthed. We really cannot destroy our circulation by placing our columns at your disposal. Try one of the journals on your own side.

A. BOOKE.—It must have been an oversight. We have rectified it.

W. THOMPSON writes in reference to Mr. Waterman's letter of last week. Mr. Thompson admits that the Christian Evidence lecturer's audience did deny him a hearing, but Mr. Robert Forder was treated in the same way, and left the platform in disgust. With respect to the accusation against him of having threatened to throw the chairman off the stand, Mr. Thompson says: "It is ridiculous, for, as a matter of fact, I have been under the doctor for nearly four years (with slight intermission) for lumps in my throat, caused by excessive weakness."

W. KINES.—We are obliged for the articles from the *Christian Echo*, but as they are still "to be continued," and up to the present there is nothing in them, we refrain from criticism.

T. A. WILLIAMS.—George Eliot's death is included in *Infidel Death-Beds*. The only authority you can be referred to is *The Life and Letters of George Eliot*, by her second husband, Mr. Cross.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Christian Leader—Scarborough Mercury—Church Reformer—Northern Echo—Bath Daily Chronicle—Staffordshire Sentinel—Suffolk Times and Mercury—Devon and Exeter Daily Gazette—New South Wales Freethinker—Independent Pulpit—Lyttleton Times—Rationalist—Daily Chronicle—Liberal—Western Daily Press—Boston Investigator—Thinker—Truthseeker—Bedford Record—South Wales Daily News—Newcastle Herald—Eastern Argus.

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.

EDITORIAL.

MR. W. J. RAMSEY will henceforth devote himself entirely to his printing business. We have taken over the shop at 28 Stonecutter Street, which will in future be managed by Mr. Robert Forder. Most of our London and provincial customers have done business with Mr. Forder before, when he acted on our behalf during our imprisonment, and they will therefore need no assurance that every attention will be given to their requests. All orders for literature and all subscriptions for the *Freethinker* and *Progress* should be addressed to Mr. Forder *personally, at the shop*. A neglect of this precaution will involve trouble and delay.

SUGAR PLUMS.

CONSIDERING the wonderfully fine weather there was an excellent audience at the London Hall of Science last Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's new lecture on "Mansions in the Sky."

DURING the next month or two Mr. Foote will devote most of his Sundays to lecturing in London, in order to give as much time as possible to the resuscitation of the publishing business. After Christmas he will give more attention to the provinces. By the way, some correspondents have not noticed the announcement that all unanswered letters were destroyed in the fire, and the request that they would renew their communications.

THE September number of *Progress* is now ready, and as our readers will see by the advertisement it contains a good variety of articles. The magazine is the only one in England devoted to Freethought, and its new policy appears to give universal satisfaction.

Letters to *Jesus Christ* will be ready next week. It will include the two letters that have appeared in the *Freethinker* and several others in a similar vein. This *brochure* will be a novelty in Freethought literature.

THE *Church Reformer* for September, has a short article on Sir John Ramsden's refusal to allow the Huddersfield Secularists a piece of land whereon to build a hall. It says: "That Sir John may be well-meaning enough in thus setting himself up as a 'Defender of the Faith' we are not prepared to deny: we do deny his right to the monstrous power which he possesses over the people of Huddersfield. His reason for refusing the Secularists a place of meeting, was that he did not agree with their views. But neither do the Secularists agree with Sir John's views, and the legal power which enables Sir John to monopolise the land of Huddersfield and to exclude Secularists therefrom, might be used by a Secularist landowner to prevent the erection of all places of religious worship and instruction."

WE are pleased to hear a first-rate report of the Hall of Science Schools at 63 Fleet Street. The 1886-7 session begins on Sept. 27, and it is hoped there will be a large attendance of students. Prospectuses can be obtained of Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, 19 Avenue Road, St. John's Wood. Among the teachers are Mrs. Besant, Mrs. Bonner, Miss Bradlaugh, Mrs. Sowden, Mr. W. H. Utley and Mr. John Robertson.

EX-REV. C. B. REYNOLDS has again visited Boonton, the pious New Jersey town where he was recently arrested for blasphemy. We are glad to see that Freethinkers in America, as well as in Australia and at home, are not easily to be daunted.

COLONEL INGERSOLL writes to the editor of the *Truthseeker*: "My Dear Mr. Macdonald,—Mr. Backer has handed me your letter asking whether I would have anything to do with the Reynolds case. Of course I shall help Mr. Reynolds. If I cannot be there in person, I am perfectly willing to pay somebody who can be. I believe in doing what little I can in defence of the liberty of speech, and I think it the duty of all Freethinkers to do what they can to teach the world better than to decide metaphysical questions by brute force."

A FREETHINKERS' CONGRESS will be held in New York city in November. Mr. S. Putnam, ex-Congregational minister, the energetic Secretary of the American Secular Union, thinks that what has been done in 1886 will make the best year's work on record.

OUR Hindu contemporary, the *Thinker*, makes good use of our columns. The last number to hand reprints from the *Freethinker*

some verses by Mr. Deane, and two articles by Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler. We are pleased to know that our writings find readers in the Indian peninsula.

MR. EDWIN ARNOLD, the author of the *Light of Asia*, who has been revisiting India, thinks that Bishop Heber's liver must have been out of order when he wrote of Ceylon—

"Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

Mr. Arnold's testimony of the heathen population is that "manners more noble and gentle, learning more modest and profound, loyalty more sincere, refinement more natural, and simplicities of life, love and duty, exist more in the length and breadth of British Asia than even I had gathered from my old experiences, before India was 'revisited.'" Bishop Heber was a well-meaning man, but his creed made him vilify its rejectors.

MR. COTSFORD DICK, who is well known as a composer of songs, has just published a volume of verse entitled *The Model, and other poems*. Many of the pieces are of a decided Freethought cast.

THE *Jewish Chronicle* of August 17 reports a lecture delivered by M. Rénan before the Société des Etudes Juives on "The Original Identity and Gradual Separation of Judaism and Christianity." M. Rénan declares that the prophets who taught a religion of pure morality were the true founders of Christianity.

WE cull the following items from the London letter of J. D. in the *Truthseeker*;—"It is gratifying to the Freethought party that Charles Bradlaugh is once more in the field as a lecturer and writer against religious superstition. His political career has hitherto absorbed the greater portion of his time, so much so, indeed, that he has apparently drifted quite away from the pursuit of his earlier days. But now that his parliamentary troubles, with the exception of the appeal yet to be heard before the Lords, are well over, he no doubt finds himself more at liberty to resume his attacks on clerical error." . . . "Messrs. Foote and Ramsey have met with a slice of bad luck. A fire which broke out in an adjoining building caught their premises, and did a great amount of damage, and I hear just at the critical time they were uninsured. There will be great joy in the Christian community in consequence, and it will do doubt be attributed to the just anger of the Lord, though in such case it was rather clumsily managed, as so much property belonging to others, who are not Atheists, has also been destroyed."

THE New York *Truthseeker*, in an article entitled "What Ireland needs," says, "The Orangemen do not want Home Rule, and they hate Catholics. So they commit murder. The Catholics hate the Protestants, and they kill them. These two religious bodies have been at this business off and on ever since Luther's time, and the Belfast riots show their readiness to resume it whenever the occasion offers. English troops will be able to temporarily control these savages, but the only permanent cure for their bloodthirstiness is a complete eradication of their religious principles and a substitution therefore of an educated desire to serve humanity. Until this is accomplished, there is no security for Ireland. She needs the schoolmaster much more than she needs Home Rule."

THE *Independent Pulpit*, of Texas, speaks thus of the *Freethinker*. "We have received several numbers of this journal and find them very interesting. Mr. Foote is an able writer himself and is assisted by several others, all of whom write with ability. The *Freethinker* will ever be welcomed among our exchanges and we hope for it a long and useful career." We on our part sincerely wish the *Independent Pulpit* every success, for it is a well-conducted magazine full of thoughtful and outspoken articles. One of these—Mr. J. M. Wheeler's article on Judas Iscariot—is reprinted from the *Freethinker*. We quote the two following paragraphs from our American contemporary as brief samples of its contents.

"WHILE noting admissions we give the following from a Scotch Presbyterian minister, who, in a lecture to the Young Men's Christian Association, said: 'The great, the wise, the mighty are not with us. . . . The best thought, the widest knowledge, and the deepest philosophy have discarded our Church. They detest what they call the inhumanities of our creed. . . . They step out into speculative Atheism, for they can breathe freer there. . . . They are instinctively religious, despite their renunciation of our theological creed. They are big with faith in the ultimate salvation of man—a faith that inspires them to toil, and shames our whining cant. And yet these men—the master minds and imperial leaders among men—the Comtes, the Carlyles, the Goethes, the Emersons, the Humboldts, the Tyndalls, and Huxleys, if you will—are called Atheists by us, are pilloried in our Presbyterian orthodoxy as heretics before God and man. Why are such as these outside the pale of the Christian Church? Not that they are unfit, we own that, but we are unworthy of them, and by the mob force of our ignorant numbers have driven them out.'

"As an illustration of how the objects of religious worship often stand in the way of human happiness, Mr. H. K. Washburn refers to the story of a man who had a wooden God which he worshipped day after day. The man was very poor, and when in distress he would pray to his God for wealth, but as is usual with all others who pray, he got no response. After doing this for a long time without his prayers being answered, he became disappointed, and one day while in a passion of anger against the impotency or obstinacy of his deity in refusing to heed his petition, he seized the God by the legs, knocked him against the floor, and broke him to pieces, when to his surprise a large quantity of money which had been inside the God was scattered around the room. Superstition is hiding from the deluded worshipper many blessings he might enjoy were it destroyed."

JONAH TO THE RESCUE.

CHRISTIANS are apt to boast of their missions to the poor. They forget that benevolence springs eternal in the human breast, and that Christianity perverts and misguides the good feelings of which it so charitably assumes the sole prerogative and credit. The Christianity of to-day seldom dares to study facts faithfully or to teach unpopular lessons. For truth and science and their hopeful certainties, it substitutes the baneful quackery of delusive superstition. Its everlasting remedy for great evils, which are largely caused by religion, is simply more religion. The poor are to take a hair of the dog that has bitten them so badly in the past.

The *Christian Commonwealth* has a series of articles entitled "Among the City Toilers." The one now before me illustrates the absurd kind of consolation and inspiration which well-meaning Christians try to pour into the hearts of the deluded poor. The article commences thus:—"We continue our readings this noon, dear sisters, from the prophet Jonah." The cure, it appears, for the sufferings of the London poor is to be a firm conviction that the whale swallowed Jonah and afterwards evicted him alive! Christians who feel the force of Freethought ridicule of this antiquated story grow ashamed of it, and think the pertinacity of our attacks on so vulnerable a portion of their holy Bible indicates a disposition at once cruelly malicious and hopelessly blasphemous. They are quite willing, however, to tell the silly story with all the solemnity imaginable to poor ignorant people, who can safely be taught that belief in the Bible narrative is the great panacea for all their woes. One would have thought that so childish a tale as that of Jonah and the whale would be avoided now-a-days. But it is not so. The *Christian Commonwealth*, after speaking of the "monster of the deep" prepared of God as a prison-house for the runaway prophet, gravely continues thus:

"Those who disbelieve the Word of God venture to doubt, and even ridicule, this miracle, . . . I feel about this miracle very much as the old lady did, who said she found the account in her Bible, and therefore she was sure that it must be true; indeed, if the Book had said that Jonah had swallowed the whale instead of the whale swallowing him, she should believe it. This idea may raise a smile, but after all that dear old lady was right. Faith laughs at impossibilities and says, 'It shall be done.' The same power which preserved the three Hebrew young men in the fire, as we read in the prophet Daniel, could cause Jonah to live in his strange prison."

The Christian writer goes on to expound verse after verse to the "dear girls," the biblical history of the runaway prophet in his curious submarine residence. The tenant of these eligible unfurnished apartments is depicted as being necessarily in "great bodily discomfort," the ideas of the exponent of God's saving truth being as realistic though not as plainly expressed as those of the pious writer of the versified Bible which describes how Jonah lived in the whale's belly

For three days and three nights without fire or candle,
With nothing but cold fish-guts to handle.*

No Christian anatomist has endeavoured to fix the precise spot honored by the prophet's sojourn. So whether he swam about in the whale's stomach, or curled himself up in the duodenum, or crawled about in the lower intestines, or stuck fast in the œsophagus, or wandered at

* Christians who find fault with me for quoting the inelegant language of a Christian should object still more strenuously to the Bible itself, seeing that it contains infinitely more objectionable words and ideas, and is placed in the hands of children throughout the length and breadth of the land.

large through the whole internal economy of the poor whale, must be left to pious conjecture. All street Arabs and city toilers must know, however, on peril of perishing everlastingly, that it was the "whale's belly" in which the prophet resided, because Christ assures us of the fact, although Jonah says it was a great fish, and we now know as a scientific fact that whales are no more fishes than seals and otters are. As a stray whale, some eighty feet long, was recently cast ashore near Alexandria, it is evidently possible that a whale may have disported itself in the Mediterranean in ancient times, though whether it could have swallowed Jonah down its narrow gullet is quite another matter.

The "dear girls" are duly taught how Jonah crying "out of the belly of hell," that is of the fish, resolved to "look again towards the Lord's holy temple." How he could perceive the direction of the temple without light or compass, whether his limited cabin was illuminated with a window or transparency so that he could study a chart of the voyage, and how the ventilation was managed, are impious questions with which the "dear girls" are not troubled. All they have to do is to believe. The faithful inculcation of old women's tales and priests' fables will redeem them from their ignorance and misery. Credulity is the one sovereign remedy for poverty. So Christianity teaches, and so long as its childish falsehoods deceive people and prejudice them against positive truths, so long will progress be delayed at the expense of the general welfare of the toilers.

The benighted factory hands and dwellers in slums receive light in their troubles by the example of the undigested prophet, who, being still undissolved by the whale's gastric juice and feeling himself in a terrible plight, composes and recites a poetical prayer, and ends by vowing to "sacrifice to the Lord," because he "knew quite well that there was but *one way* in which an unholy sinner can find acceptance with the holy God." The workers are not however to imitate this only way and sacrifice burnt offerings to the Lord. They are to do something else. They are to rely on the sacrifice of Christ, which will prove as efficacious as Jonah's vow. What a pity it is that the devouring monster called poverty so obstinately refuses to disgorge its human prey notwithstanding all these prayers and pretensions.

The tedious but very pious commentary on the successive verses of the inspired narrative finishes up with remarks on the text, "The Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." This shows the city toilers "what a wonderful God ours is!" Disgusting incidents like that of a sea-sick monster spueing forth an indigestible prophet under the influence of the Lord's words acting as a powerful emetic, are glorious illustrations of the sublime power of the wonderful God who works by such dignified means. "Who would not fear and tremble before him?" says the teacher to his circle of toiling girls, and he finishes up with the lesson that "the way of transgressors is hard." But this fairly sound moral appendix is endangered rather than enforced by the falsehood and absurdity with which it is associated. What relevance has such a cock-and-bull story to the hardships and temptations of city toilers? If honesty and virtue are to be founded on silly legends, the intrinsic incredibility of the stories and the probable ultimate exposure of the deception will weaken, and may shipwreck, the whole moral nature. Morality will seem a laughing-stock, like the tales with which it has been solemnly identified. The great effort will be to believe the story which is to be the basis of morality; and both may easily be rejected together, especially in some time of temptation and trouble, when the hollowness of the teaching becomes only too apparent, and the pillars of morality fade into shadowy mists, laden with the malaria of neglected marshes, and illumined only by the flickering will-o'-the-wisp of unguided human passion.

The transgression of Jonah has no relation to the realities of life. He tried to escape from the presence of an omnipresent God. God therefore sent a storm—and the city toilers will thus see that storms and other disasters are sent by God on mankind at large in order to punish particular individuals. Belief in miracles, special providences, the subservience of natural laws to prayer, and various other mischievous and immoral doctrines will be instilled into the minds of the poor. All this is wretched misguidance, perpetuating misery instead of preparing the way for escape. More Jonah is the pious

prescription, and present-day reformers, who really could do much towards exorcising poverty, are kept out in the cold. Ancient superstition is preferred to the lessons of modern thought and modern science. Myth and miracle are enthroned, while truth and reason are trampled under foot. So it must necessarily continue to be while the Bible is regarded as the word of God and the inspired rule of human conduct.

W. P. BALL.

DISSENTING POPE S.

How these Christians love each other
When they see there's half a chance
For some other pious brother
His religion to advance.
With their own emancipation
Made secure, then here they stop;
We ask in wonder "what it means,"
And echo answers "Shop."

Oh Religion! Oh Religion!
What is done in thy great name
Is enough to make the Master,
Whom they worship, blush with shame.
Priests are priests the wide world over,
Blind, intolerant and small;
And they'd all be popes to-morrow,
Could they only get the "Call."

Echoes of the Exe.

DEVIL HUNTING.

THE police-sergeant in a small village in the Tyrol, tells the following story. "The good, honest peasants reported to me that his Satanic Majesty had taken up his abode in a neighboring chapel, and performed sundry capers therein; they begged me to chase him away. I laughed, and armed myself with sword and gun to exterminate the mischief-maker. On my way to the chapel, I met crowds of peasants, and they told me the most blood-curdling stories of the tricks played by the Devil; they were especially frightened by the noise, the humming, buzzing, and shrieking against the small windows of the chapel. When I arrived at the place, a crowd was assembled in the neighborhood, armed with flails, pitch-forks, fence-rails, and the like, but remained at a respectful distance. The door of the chapel was open, and to my surprise I found the priest there, clad in his canonicals, who was exorcising the Devil in regular style. There was nothing further for me to do, and I went to a neighboring inn to take in a supply of courage (strengthening spirits), in case my services should be required later on, after the retirement of the priest from the battle-field. I was not there but a few minutes when the peasants came running with the cry: 'The Devil is there yet!' So I proceeded once more to the chapel, the door of which was now closed. I took a lantern from one of the peasants, and boldly stepped into the church, a number of villagers, with chattering teeth and blanched faces, following me. I threw the light of the lantern in every direction, but could discern nothing. I finally became impatient, and stamping my foot hard upon the floor, I exclaimed, 'Devil, where are you?' when a buzzing noise was heard above our head, which turned out to come from a poor innocent—bat. The holy water had no effect upon it, but a blow from my stick finished the career of that devil."—*Jewish Reformer.*

AN American paper describes one of those absurdities of musical arrangement which so often occur in church and chapel singing. The psalm read from the pulpit to be sung by the choir was the following—

True love is like that precious oil
Which, poured on Aaron's head,
Ran down his beard, and o'er his robes
Its costly moisture shed.

It was performed in parts with such celerity of voice and violent contortion of the body as would indicate the fact that each performer was striving to outstrip the others on the choral racecourse. It was in this manner that the performance was concluded—

Ran down his beard and o'er his head—
Ran down his beard—
————— his robes
And o'er his robes
Ran down his beard—ran down his
————— o'er his robes
His robes, his robes, ran down his beard.
Ran down his—
————— o'er his robes.
Its costly moist—
Ran down his beard—
his robes—its costly moist—his beard
I-t-s c-o-s-t-l-y moisture shed.

A bishop who was present at this church service was asked at its conclusion for his opinion of it. His reply was that he paid no attention to the music, because his sympathies were so excited for poor Aaron in his shampooing by the choir, that he was afraid he would not have a single hair left—if indeed he came out alive.

THE SAINTS' PRAYER.
(Respectfully Dedicated to the Editor of the "Christian World.")

Oh, tell us not, in numbers sad,
That hell is but a myth;
Oh, take not from our simple creed
The marrow and the pith.

Say not that there's no dreadful place
The earth's thin crust beneath,
Where sinners play the castanets
For ever with their teeth.

Say not that, when in white we stand
Beneath the Heavenly Arch—
In robes "got up" with heavenly blue,
Celestial soap and starch—

And with our golden harps "chip in"
The Anthem loud to swell,
We shall not hear a shriek or two,
Sometimes, ascend from Hell.

What makes Salvation such a boon,
What makes it, oh! so sweet
To own half-acre "lots" which front
Upon the golden street?

What makes the cheek of many a saint
With eager rapture glow?
Why, just comparing his safe bliss
With some one else's woe!

Would Abram's breast for Lazarus such
Luxurious quarters make
Were Dives' tongue unblistered in
The pyrotechnic Lake?

Would sheep have such a jolly time
In heavenly folds—h'm well—
Unless the goats were feeding on
Chain-lightning down in Hell!

If there's no sulphur-reeking pit,
Upon our word, it ain't
Worth while to be a spotless-robed
Certificated saint.

And heaven itself would merely be
A grand celestial sell,
If all might share its joys alike
And no one go to hell.

Take all that makes life dear unto
Each creditor, each friend;
Bid us our solitary way
Along Life's pathway wend,

Take every comfort, every joy,
Our wife, our eldest son;
Take all our poor relations from
Our circle one by one;

Take all our hopes of earthly bliss,
Our chance of heaven as well,
But spare, oh! spare our simple creed
Of griddles, flames and hell!

We care not if all other creeds
To tattered shreds are torn;
Leave us but this and we can face
Heav'n's wrath, and earth's proud
scorn.

And Gabriel's blast will sound as sweet
As any dinner-bell,
If it but call the few above,
The multitude to hell.

PROFANE JOKES.

A MINISTER, referring to a liberal collection taken in his church said, "A few did well many did ill, most did nil."

"Isn't it heavenly?" ejaculated Miss Gush, in reference to Miss Pedal's performances on the piano. "Yes," replied Fogg, "it is indeed heavenly; it sounds like thunder."

"To-morrow is Sunday, isn't it, mamma?" "Yes, dear." "Mayn't I play with the cards and build castles with them?" "Certainly not, dear." "But, mamma, mightn't I play with the prayer-books, you know, if I build a church with them?"

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