

# THE FREETHINKER.

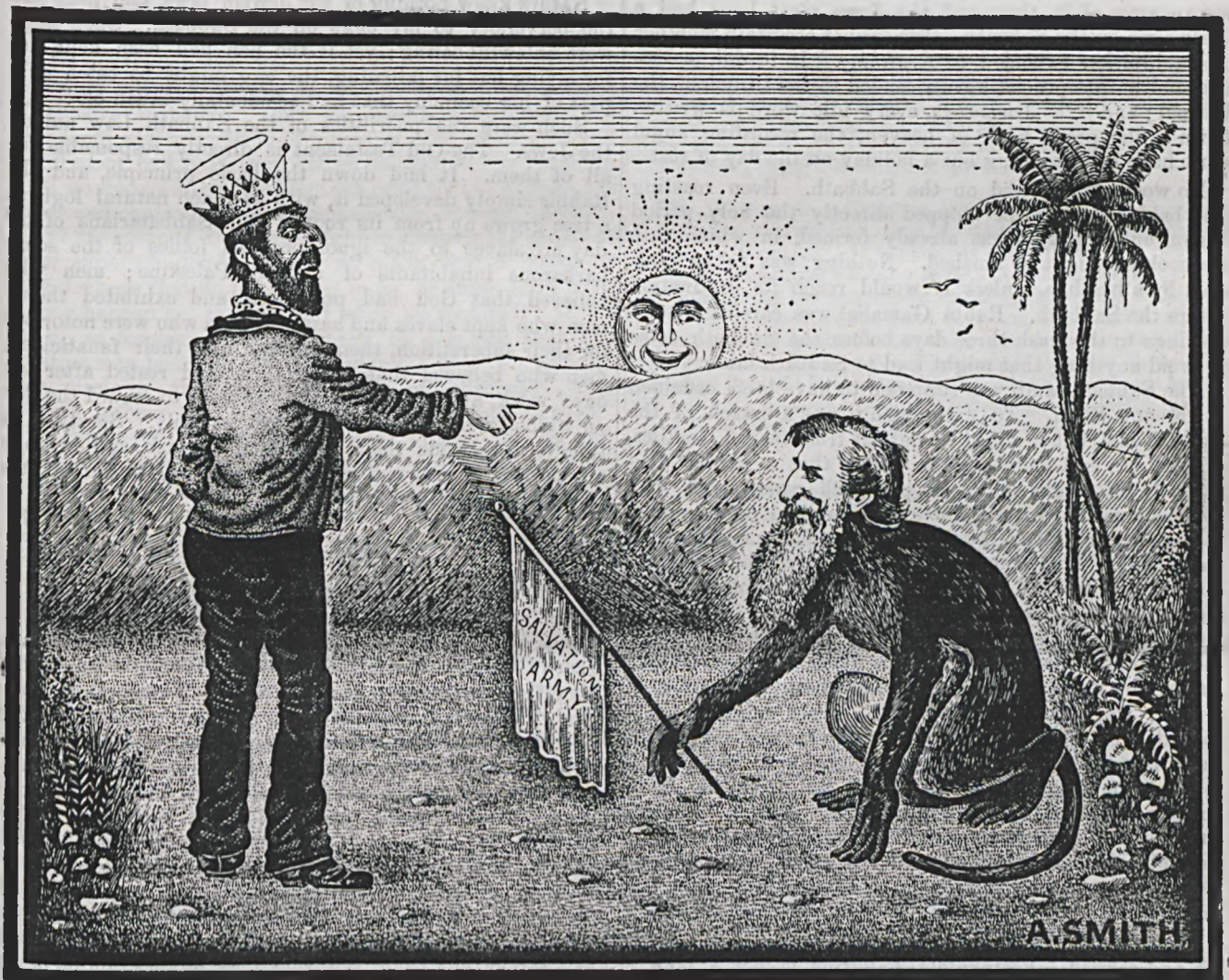
EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.  
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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G O D ' S   A   I   W O R K .

*I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him.—ISAIAH XLIII., 7.*

## THE JEWISH SABBATH.

DR. EDRSHEIM'S *Life of Jesus*, which we have reviewed at length in *Progress*, is a worthless book on the whole, but it contains a few interesting appendices on Jewish beliefs and ceremonies. One of these deals with the Sabbath laws of the chosen people, and we propose to cull from it a few curious illustrations of Jewish superstition.

The Mishnic tractate *Sabbath* stands at the head of twelve tractates on festivals. Another tractate treats of "commixtures," which are intended to make the Sabbath laws more bearable. The Jerusalem Talmud devotes 64½ folio columns, and the Babylon Talmud 156 double folio pages, to the serious discussion of the most minute and senseless regulations. It would be difficult to understand how any persons but maniacs or idiots could have concocted such elaborate imbecilities, if we did not remember that the priests of every religion have always bestowed their ability and leisure on matters of no earthly interest to anyone but themselves.

Travelling on the Sabbath was strictly forbidden, except for a distance of two thousand cubits (1,000 yards) from one's residence. Yet if a man deposited food for two meals

on the Friday at the boundary of that "journey," the spot became his dwelling-place, and he might do another two thousand cubits, without incurring God's wrath. If a Jewish traveller arrived at a place just as the Sabbath commenced, he could only remove from his beasts of burden such objects as it was lawful to handle on the Lord's day. He might also loosen their gear and let them tumble down of themselves, but stabling them was out of all question.

The Rabbis exercised their ingenuity on what was the smallest weight that constituted "a burden." This was fixed at "a dried fig," but it was a moot point whether the law was violated if half a fig were carried at two different times on the same Sabbath. The standard measure for forbidden food was the size of an olive. If a man swallowed forbidden food of the size of half an olive, and vomited it, and then ate another piece of the same size, he would be guilty because his palate had tasted food to the prohibited degree.

Throwing up an object, and catching it with the same hand was an undoubted sin; but it was a nice question whether he was guilty if he caught it with the other hand. Rain water might be caught and carried away, but if the rain had run down from a wall the act was sinful. Over-taken by the Sabbath with fruit in his hand, stretched



out from one "place" to another, the orthodox Jew would have to drop it, since shifting his full hand from one locality to another was carrying a burden.

Nothing could be killed on the Sabbath, not even insects. Speaking of the Christian monks, Jortin says that "Some of them, out of mortification, would not catch or kill the vermin which devoured them; in which they far surpassed the Jews, who only spared them upon the Sabbath day." This interesting fact is supported by the authority of a Rabbi, who is quoted in Latin to the effect that cracking a flea and killing a camel are equally guilty. Dr. Edersheim evidently refers to the same authority in a footnote. On the whole this regulation against the killing of vermin must have been very irksome, and if the fleas were aware of it, they and the Jews must have had a lively time on the Sabbath. We cannot ascertain whether the prohibition extended to *scratching*. If it did, curses not loud but deep must have ascended to the throne of the Eternal; and if, as Jesus says, every idle word is written down in the great book of heaven, the recording angel must have had anything but a holiday on the day of rest.

No work was allowed on the Sabbath. Even roasting and baking had to be stopped directly the holy period began, unless a crust was already formed, in which case the cooking might be finished. Nothing was to be sent, even by a heathen, unless it would reach its destination before the Sabbath. Rabbi Gamaliel was careful to send his linen to the wash three days before the Sabbath, so as to avoid anything that might lead to Sabbath labor.

The Sabbath lamp was supposed to have been ordained on Mount Sinai. To extinguish it was a breach of the Sabbath law, but it might be put out from fear of Gentiles, robbers, or evil spirits, or in order that a person dangerously ill might go to sleep. Such concessions were obviously made by the Rabbis, as a means of accommodating their religious laws to the absolute necessities of secular life. They compensated themselves, however, by hinting that twofold guilt was incurred if, in blowing out one candle, its flame lit another.

According to the Mosaic law there was to be no fire on the Sabbath. Food might be kept warm, however, said the Rabbis, by wrapping it in non-conductors. The sin to be avoided was *increasing* the heat. Eggs might not be cooked, even in sand heated by the sun, nor might hot water be poured on cold. It was unlawful to put a vessel to catch the drops of oil that might fall from the lamp, but one might be put there to catch the sparks. Another concession to secular necessity! A father might also take his child in his arms, even if the child held a stone, although it was carrying things on the Sabbath; but this privilege was not yielded without a great deal of discussion.

Care should be taken that no article of apparel was taken off and carried. Fortunately Palestine is not a land of showers and sudden changes of temperature, or the Rabbis would have had to discuss the umbrella and overcoat question. Women were forbidden to wear necklaces, rings, or pins, on the Sabbath. Nose-rings are mentioned in the regulations, and the fact throws light on the social condition of the times. Women were also forbidden to look in the glass on the Sabbath, lest they should spy a white hair, and perform the sinful labor of pulling it out. Shoes might not be scraped with a knife, except perhaps with the back, but they might be touched up with oil or water. If a sandal tie broke on the Sabbath, the question of what should be done was so serious and profound that the Rabbis were never able to settle it. A plaster might be worn to keep a wound from getting worse, but not to make it better. False teeth were absolutely prohibited, for they might fall out, and replacing them involved labor. Elderly persons with a full artificial set must have cut a sorry figure on the Sabbath, plump-faced Mrs. Isaacs resolving herself periodically into a toothless hag.

Plucking a blade of grass was sinful. Spitting in a handkerchief was allowed by one Rabbi, but the whole tribe were at loggerheads about spitting on the ground. Cutting one's hair or nails was a mortal sin. In case of fire on the Sabbath, the utensils needed on that day might be saved, and as much clothes as was absolutely necessary. This severe regulation was modified by a fiction. A man might put on a dress, save it, go back and put on another, and so on *ad infinitum*. Watering the cattle might be done by the Gentile, like lighting a lamp, the fiction being that he did it for himself and not for the Jew.

Assistance might be given to an animal about to have young, or to a woman in childbirth, which are further concessions to property and humanity. All might be done on the Sabbath, too, needful for circumcision. On the other hand, bones might not be set, nor emetics given, nor any medical or surgical operation performed. Wine, oil, and bread might be borrowed, however, and one's upper garment left in pledge for it. No doubt it was found impossible to keep the Jews absolutely from pawnbroking even on the Sabbath. Another concession was made for the dead. Their bodies might be laid out, washed, and anointed. Priests of every creed are obliged to give way on such points, or life would become intolerable, and their victims would revolt in sheer despair.

Nature knew nothing of the Jewish laws, and hens had the perversity to lay eggs on the Sabbath. Such eggs were unlawful eating; yet if the hen had been kept, not for laying but for fattening, the egg might be eaten as a part of her economy that had accidentally fallen off!

Such were the puerilities of the Sabbath Law among the Jews. The Old Testament is directly responsible for all of them. It laid down the basic principle, and the Rabbis simply developed it, with as much natural logic as a tree grows up from its roots. Our Sabbatarians of today are slaves to the ignorance and follies of the semi-barbarous inhabitants of ancient Palestine; men who believed that God had posteriors, and exhibited them; men who kept slaves and harems; men who were notorious for their superstition, their bigotry, and their fanaticism; men who believed that the infinite God rested after six days' work, and ordered all his creatures to regard the day on which he recruited his strength as holy. Surely it is time to fling aside their antiquated rubbish, and arrange our periods of rest and recreation according to the dictates of science and common sense.

G. W. FOOTE

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#### CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE.

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JESUS CHRIST is extolled, even by some who do not admit his claims to divinity, as being a perfect example to mankind. We think the one notion as much a superstition as the other. To speak of any person being a complete pattern of excellence to humanity is folly. No one person can stand in all the complex relations in which human beings stand to each other. No man can be a perfect example to women. Daughters, wives, mothers, and widows, have duties peculiar to their sex and situations.

Jesus, according to the gospels, did not even sustain all the relations which men bear towards their fellows. He never stood in the important position of a lover, a husband, or a father, and could not, therefore, be an example of the peculiar virtues required by men in these relations. The child who should copy his behavior when his sorrowing parents sought him in the temple, would be pronounced disobedient and impertinent. For the important period of from twelve years of age to thirty—the whole time when the character is matured and the career made or marred for life—there is no record of any example left for our guidance. Suppose a young man entering on business: what example can he take from Jesus? Will he not encourage the dishonest if he gives to every one that asketh, or debase his character by following the contradictory advice to make to himself friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness? Shall he offer his cloak to whoever steals his coat, or shall he sell his garment and buy a sword? Shall he pay those who serve him one hour as much as those who serve the whole day? Shall he take to himself a mate or ought he not rather to be of those who are commended as making themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matthew xix., 12). Should he not give up, not only houses and lands, but also friends and relations for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. How many millions have resigned all secular duties, thinking that thereby they could more surely imitate their Savior. Suppose, as is usual, Nature is too strong and he decides for love, courtship and matrimony, what example can he find in Jesus? He cannot expect to find wealthy women who will minister to him of their substance, or wash his feet and wipe them with their hair. Nor, should one be so enamored of him as to pour on his head ointment so precious that if sold it might have



produced nearly ten pounds\* for the benefit of the poor, would he avoid a charge of vanity if he remarked "ye have the poor with you always, but me ye have not always."

Say he marries, what example in regard to that most important step can he find in Jesus? Shall he "increase and multiply" or regulate his progeny according to his means of subsistence? If the union is unhappy must the married be ever united, or must one commit adultery, since Jesus only permits divorce for this cause? To have lived with a Xantippe, like Socrates, would have been a far more profitable example and trying discipline than going through the farce of being tempted by the Devil.

Jesus is never represented to us in any of those positions in which his example could meet our difficulties. He does not appear as a master or servant, a debtor or creditor, a capitalist or laborer, a landlord or tenant. As a guest who would venture to imitate his conduct? When invited to the house of a Pharisee he sat down to eat with unwashed hands, and upon the host naturally marvelling at this breach of salutary Oriental custom, he burst into a torrent of abusive invective. Dare we, like him denounce our opponents as a generation of vipers, whited sepulchres and children of hell? If they refuse to accept our teaching shall we shake off the dust from our feet; that is, express our anger and contempt and metaphorically consign them to divine vengeance? Have we a right to compare the people of other nations to dogs, and may we pluck ears of corn, or take donkeys that do not belong to us, or curse fruit trees if they happen not to bear fruit when we require it? If we set up as teachers shall we speak in parables that our auditors may hear and not understand? May we promise our disciples that they shall sit on thrones? If a modern teacher said "A greater than Solomon is here," if he spoke of all who came before him as thieves and robbers, if he dogmatically declared himself the way, the truth and the life, saying "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven," he would be deemed most absurdly arrogant if not insane.

I do not suppose that all these sayings ascribed to Jesus were really uttered by him. On the contrary, these last seem to bear the impress of a later age when the dogma of his divinity was already growing. Nor do I deny that some of the teachings ascribed to him were of an elevated character and calculated to improve the people of his time. But here again we can be by no means assured that the sayings attributed to him were ever uttered by him.

The effect of attempting to follow Jesus is seen at its very best in that beautiful book of a superior nature, the *Imitation of Christ*, ascribed to Thomas à Kempis. We have in that work not the lip service of a ceremonialist, but the heart's yearnings of a devotee. Yet the charm of the book remains to us Freethinkers, not only on account of its sincerity, but of its pathos. It depicts the struggles of a strong swimmer who has been wrecked on a false ideal. Home, family, country, humanity, are nothing. Christ is all. Human learning and secular progress are but worldly vanities. The soul's salvation is to be worked out in solitary retirement with anguish of heart and with meditation upon death, not with manful grappling of life's problems in the light of day. And this upon the whole is the highest result of taking Christ as an example. Christianity has held up as a universal model, a gory figure suffering on a cross—a fit emblem of its creed of gloom. Secularism would rather revert to the strenuous labors of a Hercules, the glad beauty and art of an Apollo.

J. M. WHEELER.

## ACID DROPS.

THE World's Women's Temperance Union has a good object but its methods are very questionable, if we may judge from its fixing October 16 as "a day of prayer for the cause of temperance and purity all over the world." Praying is to begin at 10 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. It seems also that each of the six hours is to be devoted to a special department, probably in order to save the Lord's intellect from confusion. We venture to suggest—if such omniscient ladies as Mrs. Lucas will take a suggestion—that one good, attractive coffee-tavern, not swamped with goody-goodyism, is of more use to the Temperance cause than all the prayers that will be offered up on October 16.

\* Three hundred pence (Mark xiv., 4.) The Roman penny was worth at least sevenpence-halfpenny.

WHILE they are praying, the ladies might ask the Lord to let the groggy passages in the Bible slide. "Thy kisses are better than wine," "Wine which cheereth the heart of God and man," and "Take a little wine for thy stomach's sake," are awkward texts for the Temperance folk, to say nothing of Jesus Christ's turning over a hundred and thirty-five gallons of water into wine to keep up the boozing at a wedding party.

AN arithmetical Christian has been working out the dimensions of heaven, according to the Book of Revelation, and he finds that if the human race lasts a hundred million years there would be a hundred rooms, sixteen feet square, for everybody in the New Jerusalem. This is on the assumption that heaven is a cube, twelve hundred miles each way. The houses, therefore, would be twelve hundred miles high. We pity the poor devils—we beg pardon, angels—who are skied on the top floor. Query, do they go up and down in lifts or fly in and out of the windows?

FANCY what gullies the streets would be with the houses four hundred leagues high. What system of ventilation is adopted? The system of lighting is well known. "The Lamb is the light thereof," and to shine down all those streets he must be fixed on a centre from which they all radiate, or else stationed at an enormous distance overhead. We are tempted to go on, but discretion says stop. The subject has turned many brains, and our own is getting a little mixed already.

MR. WATKINSON, a Christian lecturer, says of the Pompeians that "a few years before, they had crucified Christ, and had forgotten all about it." It is perfectly certain that the people of Pompeii had nothing whatever to do with the execution of Christ; and considering the remoteness and insignificance of Judæa, the frequency of executions in those days, and the absence of newspapers, it is not probable that they even heard anything whatever about it. Perhaps Mr. Watkinson's theory is that as God punished Pompeii in so exemplary a fashion by burying it beneath the ashes of a volcanic eruption, it follows that Pompeii must have been the wicked city that committed the great crime of crucifying Christ.

FRED. G. HELMORE is a choice sample of the Christian cadger. He puts out number one of a two-paged journal called *The Shepherd* without any date or any indication whether it is to appear daily, weekly, monthly or annually. The sheet is full of appeals for money. Shepherd Helmore says, "I want 200,000 Christians to undertake to subscribe one penny per week each for the term of one year," for a home and workshops which he proposes to build for lost sheep. He asks all Christians to become members of the "Association of Shepherds," and to send sixpence for certificate of membership to F. G. H.

SHEPHERD HELMORE says a gentleman has offered £500 toward the purchase money for a building site providing 20 more are disposed to give a like amount. He asks 1,000 young ladies to preside at money boxes in the streets of London. Another 1,000 ladies to undertake to collect £20 or £40 each for the fund, or to help him by insuring their property through his agency, and by giving him their orders for coals. Shepherd Helmore also advertises for a benevolent lady or gentleman to give him a freehold site in London for his home. He is evidently a smart business Christian, and could surely himself furnish all the brass required for his Home. The secretary of the Church Society for Providing Homes for Waifs and Strays, writes to the *Rock*, cautioning the public against Shepherd Helmore.

FATHER FAHY, the Roman Catholic curate concerning whom questions were continually asked in Parliament, is in gaol for six months, having declined to find sureties to keep the peace. He is convicted of threatening a landlord with death by blowing up his house with dynamite. An attempt was made to do this in December last, and the landlord believed Father Fahy would procure some one to do it again.

THE Rev. Field-Flowers Goe, rector of St. George's, Bloomsbury, has been appointed Bishop of Melbourne in the place of Dr. Moorhouse, translated to Manchester. The new bishop is an Evangelical who is reported to have a good deal of field and flowers and very little go.

QUITE recently Mr. Charles Powell, general secretary of a society calling itself the Church of England Working Men's Society, made an appeal for funds in the *Church Times*, which was powerfully endorsed by the editor of that High Ritualist organ. We commend to Dr. Littledale's attention an article in the *Church Reformer* for October, entitled "The Truth about the C. E. W. M. S., by a Member." The writer says: "No one who knew the general secretary ten years ago when he resided in a single room in Baldwin's Gardens and was known as 'Charley, the one-armed watchman,' could have imagined he would become the autocratic dictator of a Working Men's Society which could afford him a residence of about a dozen rooms in one of the highest rented districts of London, and the means of living at a higher rate than any curate without private means—or, than a majority of the benefited clergy"; and he insinuates that the Society is in fact one simply "for the maintenance of Charley."



ONE of the auditors of this Society, it seems, is a traveller for a firm that supplies the stationery, an item that figures largely in its expenditure; another is contractor for furnishing the "Caledonian silver" ornaments for the decoration of members, which are sold in the office. £800 was expended beyond the income last year, and when the secretary was asked why this was done, "he replied superciliously, 'Ho! the public will subscribe plenty more.'" More than half the income goes for salaries, rent, and other office expenses, in addition to an item of £306 17s. 5½d. for general, mission and travelling expenses. Altogether the C. E. W. M. S. seems run mainly for the benefit of its secretary, but in this it does not differ from some larger if not more pretentious pious organisations.

SIR MONIER MONIER-WILLIAMS, who, like Dr. Legge, always shows the spirit of the missionary beneath the garb of the scholar, writes to the *Rock* to give his opinion that Christianity has a vastly larger population than Buddhism, whose numbers he would reduce to one hundred millions as a liberal estimate. Max Müller, in his *Chips from a German Workshop*, estimated the number of Buddhists at 455 millions. Prof. Rhys Davids gives his opinion that the Buddhists scattered throughout Asia amount in all to 500 millions, and Berghaus, in his *Atlas*, gives the following division of the human race according to religion: Buddhists, 31.2 per cent.; Christians, 30.7; Mahomedans, 15.7; Brahmanists, 13.4; Heathens, 8.7; and Jews, 0.3.

SIR M. MONIER-WILLIAMS contends that, instead of nearly all the Chinese being Buddhists, "the great majority are utterly without any religion except the worship of ancestors." When questioned, however, they always admit reverence for the name of Buddha, which is about all that can be said for the majority of the male inhabitants of so-called Christian countries. Sir M. Monier-Williams further alleges that "what are called *lay* Buddhists ought not to be regarded as *true* Buddhists, because all true Buddhists must be celibate monks, seeing that none but such monks can hope to attain the goal of Nirvana." This shows a complete misapprehension of Buddhism, which never indicates that the ultimate goal must be attained in one single life. Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, especially included householders (laymen and laywomen) among his disciples. It would be just as reasonable to deduct from the number of Christians all who do not act up to the Sermon on the Mount.

A CHICAGO paper estimates that sixty thousand gallons of wine are consumed every year in the churches of the United States for sacramental purposes alone. What a frightful quantity of the "blood of Christ!" Surely the poor lamb must be well drained by this time, and even at the very beginning he was a pale looking creature.

ALLUDING to the increase of expenditure for the keeping of the insane, the *Sunderland Echo* says it is melancholy to find that "at least one in every three of the lunatics lately sent to Sedgfield is the victim of religious excitement." You can't have Salvation howlers and religious revivalists without paying for the luxury.

THE Catholic papers delight to give a slap to their Ritualistic imitators. A correspondent of the *Weekly Register* tells with gusto how, in a West of England High Church he asked the attendant what he did with the altar, crucifix and candles if the bishop came. "Oh, we just put it backside foremost and he never notices," was the reverent reply.

THIS story is capped by the *English Churchman*, which declares that a certain Anglican prelate (it hints at Bishop King of Lincoln) has had his crozier made in pieces which screw together. When he visits a Low church he unscrews and leaves behind an elaborate portion of his pastoral staff whereon are carved the effigies of saints objectionable to the Evangelical mind.

THE disposition of the thrifty temperance farmers of Iowa to be willing to sell their corn to local distilleries, provided the whisky is sold outside the state, reminds one of the virtue of the woman who "experienced religion" at a revival. "Finding that my jewellery was dragging me down to hell," she remarked, "I took it off and gave it to my sister."

RECENTLY a serious disturbance arose over a religious procession in Naples. Christians are not alone in this kind of thing. News now comes from India of a much more serious religious conflict. The Hindoo and Mahomedan festivals clashed. A quarrel arose and the Mahomedans attacked the Hindoo procession. The police were helpless, and indeed refused to charge. The military were called out and had to charge the mob. The fanatics threw themselves on the Christian bayonets, and several men were seriously injured. But a reference to the ferocity of the Belfast Christians and the number of deaths will soon show that these Asiatic religions can claim no superiority over European Christianity in fostering hatred and outrage.

THE following advertisement appears under the heading "Births" in the *Belfast News Letter*: "VERRY, Sept. 2, at Easton Rectory, Stamford. The Rev. H. R. Verry of twins (son and daughter)." The immaculate conception is nothing to this. If

Mr. Verry had taken the business in hand he could have very well dispensed with the aid of the Virgin Mary, as he apparently has with that of Mrs. Verry.

THE Rev. Mr. Armitage, of Cheltenham, preaches the sacredness of Sunday in his church, while his brick-kilns are smoking lustily within eye-shot. When taken to task the reverend gentleman complains that he is only a shareholder. We believe the truth is that he owns four hundred and ninety out of five hundred shares, the other ten being owned by a member of his own family. A local paper hints that Mr. Armitage should at least be made to consume his own smoke, which is a nuisance to the neighborhood.

THE Duchess of Marlborough says that free education means "Godless education." Well, as free education is gradually prevailing throughout the civilised world, we are delighted to hear it.

MR. S. BRIGHOUSE, the County Coroner, who recently held an inquest at the Bootle Police Buildings on the body of Michael Burns, entertains queer notions on religion. A boy named Doran, who saw the deceased drowned in the canal and ran to give information, was cited as a witness. By way of testing his competency to take an oath, the Coroner asked him where boys went to when they died. "To the dead-house," said Doran. It was a very sensible answer, and went quite as far as the Coroner's information on the subject. But that august official pompously lectured the boy's mother, telling her that his ignorance was "a shame and a disgrace," and adding, "I must tell you that your first duty is to see that your son receives religious instruction, and that immediately." If Mrs. Doran obeys this peremptory order, and sets the boy reading the New Testament, he will find that the Coroner is talking nonsense about "the obligation of an oath," for Jesus Christ distinctly says, "Swear not at all."

THE Rev. A. R. Morrison Finlayson has filed a petition in the Bankruptcy Court. No particulars are given as to his assets or liabilities.

WILLIAM E. GOULD is a son-in-law of Neal Dow; he is ostentatiously pious, and has often preached the gospel in the churches. He was cashier of a bank in Portland, Me., and has embezzled \$87,000. The people in the community express great surprise that a man so pious could be such a rascal.—*Truthseeker* (N.Y.)

THE Rev. N. Ryder, of Chicago, has committed suicide by hanging.

A PIOUS Christian in Australia has been writing long letters to Mr. Collins, challenging him to put his principles to the test by fighting a duel with revolvers. If an Atheist wrote to a Christian advocate in this mad and criminal fashion we should never hear the last of such an undoubted proof of the brutalising effects of unbelief.

GOD has done over a million dollars' damage to the churches of Charleston by the recent earthquake. The *Winsted Press* thinks him a bungler at the business.

MISS VON FINKELSTEIN is lecturing in the Holy Land, which she has recently visited. According to the *Rock* she points out that "the habits" of the Bedouin Arabs "was" almost precisely the same now as described in the Old and New Testaments, a fact which, according to her, is "proof of the genuineness of the Bible." Does correct "local coloring" in a novel prove the historical accuracy of the plot?

THERE is a Catholic monastery in West Hoboken where all manner of diseases are claimed to be cured by faith and the application of a bit of bone which was once a portion of the anatomy of Paul the Apostle. There is also a Chinese theologian on Mott Street, in this city, who accomplishes equally surprising cures by burning paper and killing fowls.—*New York Truthseeker*.

#### "BURNT OUT" FUND.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—Members of the Kensington Branch, N. S. S. (per T. B. Smart): R. Lancaster, 1s.; G. W. F., 2s. 6d.; H. Towers, 1s.; J. Hill, 6d.; T. B. Smart, 1s. West Ham Branch, N. S. S.: G. Carter, 3s.; — Perry, 2s. 6d.; — Courtney, 1s.; F. Jones, 1s.; A. Munroe, 6d. Unknown, 2s. 6d.; T. C. Sanders, 5s.; A. Roques, £1 1s.; C. W. Scarr, 6d. Westminster Branch, N. S. S.: G. Rout, 2s. 6d.; W. Wheeler, 1s.; J. Buzzard, 1s.; J. Ritchie, 1s.; G. Twoart, 1s.; Mrs. Twoart, 1s.; J. Vipone, 1s.; J. Thomson, 1s.; J. Burrell, 1s.; W. A. Efford, 1s.; G. Johnson, 2s. 6d.; S. Rous, 1s.; A. G. C., 6d.; G. W. C., 6d.; W. C. Smith, 6d.; F. C. Cullimore, 6d.; J. Beecroft, 1s.; Mrs. Beecroft, 6d.; W. A. White, 1s.; F. W. Thomas, 1s.; C. Williams, 6d.; H. Hudson, 6d.; J. W. Weekes, 1s.; W. Collings, 6d.; F. C. Sawyer, 1s.; G. A. R., 6d.; J. A. G., 1s. H. Hunderdown, 2s. 6d.; W. J. Ford, 2s. 6d.; A. Shaw, 1s.



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Oct. 10, Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street, Birmingham; at 11, "God's Mother"; at 3, "Infidel Death-Beds"; at 7, "An Hour in Hell."

Tuesday, Oct. 12, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, N., at 8, "Is the Foundation of Christianity Sound?" (Admission free.)

OCT. 17, Nottingham; 24, Manchester; 31, Leeds.

NOV. 7, Hall of Science, London; 14, Milton Hall; 21, South Shields; 28, Hall of Science, London.

DEC. 19 and 26, Hall of Science, London.

## 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.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—EX-ANIMO.

E. J. HUDD.—What do you mean by "self-conception"? Do you refer to the theory of spontaneous generation, or to androgynous organizations that generate from themselves? Thanks for enclosures.

UNKNOWN.—You ask what would have happened if Eve had not eaten the apple. Answer: God wouldn't have lost his temper and made an exhibition of himself. The Trinity should have hushed the matter up, for the family's sake.

W. B. THOMPSON.—The *Almanack* was not out then; at least it had not reached us. We meant no harm. Sorry you feel hurt.

G. E. SANDERS.—Shall be glad to hear again from you. Pleased to hear you were delighted with *Crimes of Christianity*. We have a new and complete edition on the stocks. Thanks for your good wishes.

PHILOMATH.—We hardly care to re-open the matter. Thanks all the same.

W. ROBINSON.—Thanks for the cuttings.

ARGUS.—Much obliged. Your watchful eyes save our own some trouble.

MAIDSTONE.—Mr. B. Coates, 11 Upper Stone Street, will supply the *Freethinker* and all Secular publications.

C. GRIFFITH.—Papers when dealt with go into the waste-paper basket.

R. FOX.—The Gladstone-Huxley controversy on the Mosaic cosmogony will be found in the numbers of the *Nineteenth Century* for Nov. and Dec. 1885, and Jan. 1886.

S. ROUS.—We are obliged to the subscribers in your Branch, which is young enough to make the donation a generous one.

J. P.—There is no Branch of the N. S. S. in New York. You will learn all you require at the office of the *Truthseeker*, 33 Clinton Place.

C. W. SCARR.—The verse is scarcely up to the mark. Glad to hear your wife was "highly delighted" with our lecture on "Why Women should be Freethinkers." We are not surprised at your mother's ridiculing the idea of Samson's adventures with the foxes being in the Bible, for it is a book which Christians seldom read. She called the story "an old-fashioned lie," and that is a capital description of most of the contents of the sacred volume.

J. KEAST (Dorchester) reports that he is lending *Infidel Death-Beds* and *Letters to Jesus Christ* with great effect among his friends and acquaintances, and wishes other Freethinkers would try the experiment.

W. CARTER.—Always pleased to hear from you.

J. SAUNDERS.—There must be some mistake. The gentleman who passes as "Staff-Captain" Slater in the Salvation Army at Reading, is not to our knowledge a converted Atheist, and certainly he never lectured on Atheism for ten years in London parks and halls. Mr. Slater is probably quite sincere, but logic is not his strong point, and we are afraid his memory is occasionally defective.

G. W. DAVEY.—You require more practice in versification.

A. R. L.—We don't know where the man who came out of hell with his night-cap on procured the incombustible article, but as he figures on a Salvation Army bill, you should apply to "General" Booth for the information.

SYKO.—There will be a Sunday band on Southend pier some day. We hope you will live to hear it.

T. CARWARDINE, in renewing his subscription to this journal, writes: "I find I cannot do without the *Freethinker*. I always indulge in a quiet perusal of the little blasphemous on Sunday afternoon, and with a pipe of tobacco included it is about the nearest approach to paradise I can imagine."

H. PYWELL, 185 Holloway Road, Islington, is pained at our Comic Bible Sketches, and sends us five foolscap pages of pious warning. He winds up thusly: "I took the liberty to forward a copy of your paper to Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria. It is not wise to push a case too far, so I trust you will withdraw your woodcuts, and so prevent any further correspondence on the subject." We have shrunk six inches since receiving this formidable epistle, and have had to get measured for a new outfit.

HUMBLE MEMBER OF THE N. S. S.—You quite mistake us. We can see defects in Sir John Lubbock's Bill without thinking that shop assistants should work so many hours daily.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Lucifer—Shepherd—Daily News—Southend Standard—East London Press—No Religion—Sporting Chronicle—Devon Evening Express—Liberal—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Liberty—Sunderland Echo—Kettering Observer—Dalton News—Estates Roll—Financial News—Figaro—Boulogne Independent—Pullon's Kont Argus.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Metropolitan Radical Federation's demonstration in favor of Free Education, last Sunday afternoon, was a grand success. Trafalgar Square was crowded with people, and their orderliness was so great that the police had nothing to do but look on. The newspapers gave long reports, and the *Daily Telegraph* devoted a leader to the subject. Perhaps the best report was in the *Daily News*. Mr. Foote was one of the speakers on the platform for which the reporters all made, and the newspapers admit the warmth of his reception. Evidently being a Freethinker is no disadvantage in the eyes of Radical working men. Mr. William Morris spoke from the same platform, and was well cheered. The resolutions were carried unanimously.

THE chairman at No. 1. Platform was Mr. James Hart, a member of the London School Board. Mr. Hart is an opponent of the clerical policy of the majority of his colleagues. He belongs to the Hackney Radical Club, and goes in for the free, secular and compulsory ticket. Mr. Hart will sit on the next School Board, but many of the present members will be sent to the right-about. London is waking up on the subject.

A CONFERENCE of the various Cremation Societies of Europe has been held at Gotha. The delegates inspected the Crematorium at work in the churchyard in that city, and they were assured by the Burgomaster that the repugnance of many to this form of burial had been overcome by the sight of the decorous and befitting manner in which the bodies are rapidly reduced to dust, and then inurned.

CREMATION is detested by the clergy. It is a Pagan practice, and quite destroys the notion of the resurrection of the body, which is one of the chief doctrines of Christianity. The Bishop of Lincoln openly opposes it on this ground. People leave the graveside, and go on fancying (often against knowledge) that the corpse they have buried lies as they laid it, and will continue to lie thus until the archangel's trumpet rouses up the dearest sleepers. They go to church therefore, and half believe the parson's nonsense. But this will be impossible when they see the process of dissolution completed before their eyes. From that moment the doctrine of the resurrection of the body will be as dead as a door-nail, and with it, in the long run, will go the Day of Judgment, Heaven and Hell, and even a Future Life; for the mass of mankind never did and never will conceive of a future existence without their dearly beloved bodies.

OLD Barnum, the American showman, has been appearing in a new character. He delivered an address of welcome to the Connecticut Universalists' State Convention, and congratulated them on the almost incredible change in religious teaching since he was a boy. Sixty years ago the ministers preached "that a good God had foreordained and fixed unalterably the doom or salvation of all men without reference to what had been done by the persons so doomed or saved," but Barnum is glad to see all that is changed now.

QUERY for Barnum. If the clergy were all wrong in their theology sixty years ago, how does anybody know they are right now? Sixty years hence there will probably be another change just as great.

ANOTHER query for Barnum. How much would you give for one of the four-headed cherubim, Balaam's loquacious moke, and the seven-eyed lamb? Would half a million dollars be a cent too much?

MR. A. B. MOSS begins a series of articles on "Freethought in England" in the *New York Truthseeker*, which will probably be of great interest to Freethinkers in the States.

THE Sabbatarian prosecution of Mrs. Sykes at Southend does not seem to have daunted that lady. We notice in the *Southend Standard* an advertisement that "Sykes's in future will open all the year round for refreshments, apartments, newspapers, etc.

WE see from the *Devon Evening Express* that Sir Edmund Hornby has been delivering a very broad-minded lecture on "Freethought" to the Newton Constitutional Club.

In an interesting account of Eugene Sue, the French novelist, by Dr. Bouvier, which occupies the whole of the first page of the *Paris Figaro* for October 2, an account is given of his death. Two days before the event he said to Colonel Charras, who was beside him, "My friend, I wish to die as I have lived, a Freethinker." His wish was respected, and he was buried without clerical assistance.

FREETHOUGHT lectures are delightfully frequent in America now. Ingersoll has been reposing lately, but other speakers have been very active. Mr. J. E. Remsburg, for instance, has just delivered thirty lectures in Minnesota and Wisconsin, and is gone on a fresh tour in Iowa. Mr. S. P. Putnam is as lively as ever. We fancy he must be a good-looking man, for he seems a favorite with the ladies.



THERE are probably three hundred of Shelley's letters extant which are still unprinted. Many of them must be of considerable biographical interest, and it is welcome news that the Shelley Society hopes to publish some of them before long.

HERE is another glad announcement. Messrs. Trübner and Company will publish this season their long-expected *Life and Works of Giordano Bruno*.

THE *Century* for October has a capital portrait of the Norwegian novelist and poet, Bjornsterne Bjornson, with an interesting sketch of him, written by H. L. Brækstad. Bjornsterne Bjornson is not only a man of genius; he is a thorough Freethinker, and takes great interest in the Freethought movement throughout Europe.

THE *Saturday Review*, in an article on "The New Papal Hierarchy in India," points out that the conversion of India was said to have been attempted by St. Thomas in the apostolic age, and that in the sixteenth century St. Francis Xavier converted almost as many Christians as now. According to the census returns there are 192,600,000 Brahmans, 50,000,000 Mohammedans, 6,628,000 nature worshippers, 4,640,000 Buddhists and Jews, and 1,860,000 Christians. Of these the Catholic Church claims over a million and a half.

ON Tuesday evening next the series of six free propagandist lectures will commence at Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town. Mr. Foote opens the ball with a discourse on "Is the Foundation of Christianity Sound?" Discussion is expected, and we hope the Freethinkers of the district will try to fill the Hall with Christians.

#### ANSWERING INFIDELS.

AT a meeting of the Hereford Branch of the Clerical and Lay Association the Rev. Prebendary Anderson delivered an address entitled "My Experience during the London Mission in Answering Infidel Objections."

This Prebendary evidently likes to figure before his brothers in Christ as a great infidel-slayer, and he makes the most of his trifling achievements in that direction among "congregations" of working men in the East of London. "Many of them," he says, "raised particular objections against the Christian doctrine," whereupon he of course proceeded to "refute" them, although he owns that there is great difficulty in the "apparent" antagonism of science to religion. His triumphant refutation, however, was not attempted in public so that the congregations or audiences might be strengthened in the faith; for sky-pilots know better than to attempt so foolish and unprofitable a championship of the faith as this. He merely invited any who wished to ask questions to meet him privately in the vestry. On one occasion—and so far as the narrative distinctly says to the contrary this was the only occasion of the kind—a number of "infidels" came into the vestry and their spokesman gave him a list of questions, which, according to this Goliath's account of his own doughty deeds, "were all easily answered."

The first question was "Didn't the Bible sanction persecution?" To this he replied that they would not find any such passage in the Bible. He says that the only text the infidels could bring forward was "Have no fellowship with unbelievers." They should have referred to Deut. xiii., 6-10, 14, 15; xviii., 20; Ex. xxii., 20; xxxi., 14, 15; and similar passages, when they would see that God commanded men to slay even their own wives and daughters for religious differences. Perhaps the questioners *did* refer to inconvenient texts like these and the reverend defender of the faith may have forgotten to notice them in his subsequent discourse. Such a policy is far from being unknown to sky-pilots.

Respecting the alternative of evolution or creation, the Prebendary "replied by asking, as against the Darwinian theory, where did the miraculous beginning of life. . . come from." This foolish question implies an ignorant rejection of a well-established scientific theory and assumes a "miraculous beginning," which is the very matter in dispute. Yet the clerical mind appears to regard it as a perfectly satisfactory reply to a sensible and scientific inquiry. If the further question is asked "Where did God come from?" clergymen have no answer to give except pious rebukes for impertinent curiosity and irrelevance.

To the third question respecting the Flood, this servant of the Lord, evidently presuming on the ignorance of his hearers, replied that "the latest scientific *notion* pointed to the existence of a very extended flood." This is either

thick-headed stupidity or Jesuitic dishonesty. The biblical flood was a *universal* one, and science is most distinctly hostile to any such hypothesis.

The "fourth difficulty" respecting the fall of man Prebendary Anderson boasts of having "also refuted;" but he does not say how, and he acknowledges that it was "mysterious and could not be wholly accounted for." He holds that the fall of man is scientifically a truth because "otherwise God would be the author of evil." Thus the Christian mind begs the question at issue and thinks that by doing so it has effectively demolished all objections.

The next question was "What about the words of Joshua when he said, 'Sun, stand thou still,' where the sun did not stand still?" To this the parson only replied that "the object of the Bible was not to teach science, and that people in common parlance always spoke of the sun's rising and setting." He is as muddle-headed in his answer as in his report of the question. The only thing worth noticing is that his tacit acknowledgement that God's Word is contradicted by science is an acknowledgment that God spoke untruly.

The six day's creation is next explained by the allegation that a day does not always mean twenty-four hours, and that whether the creation took one day or a thousand does not matter (!). He forgets that the truth or falsehood of God's word is at stake.

The next question related to the 6,000 years assigned by the Bible as the period elapsing since the creation. The old goose of a parson audaciously replied that "the Bible was silent" on this question (!). How then did Christian commentators ascertain that 4,004 B.C. was the date of the creation? Was it wild guess-work, or wilful falsehood?

The creation of light before the sun is explained by the existence of "luminous atmosphere" which "subsequently" condensed into sun, moon, stars and planets. But as the earth is one of the planets, this would postpone the formation of the earth till after the first day's work, and would contradict the Bible, which commences by saying distinctly that the earth was created "in the beginning." If light, too, was created in the form of "luminous atmosphere" how could this account for the phenomena of day and night when there was no solid matter to cast a shadow?

The next question is evidently misquoted. The infidel deputation is made to ask: "Does not the Bible say that God made two great lights . . . whereas the moon is part of the sun?" The source of this absurd misrepresentation is evident when we see that the reverend Prebendary replied: "Well, every one knew that was correct, but . . . they seemed different." He has simply transferred his own folly into the mouth of the questioner. Yet he declares that he has not drawn on his imagination but has given the questions just as they were put to him.

That Christ really died before his alleged resurrection is supposed to be settled by the reported testimony of the Roman soldier, and also by the water and blood "which was evidence of death." But water and blood flowing from a wound would only be evidence of dropsy, or more probably of the mythical nature of St. John's narrative.

To the gravest question of all, the existence of evil, suffering and sin, and the moral explanation of such phenomena as "earthquakes and avalanches," the Prebendary replies that sin originated with man, not with God; and that so long as sin is committed by man there will be punishment. So earthquakes, famines, plagues and floods are caused by man's sin, and the whole animal creation suffers with him to satisfy God's sense of justice.

Heaven is to be believed in because we have God's word for it, and the question of its whereabouts is to be left with the Ruler of the universe.

These replies to "infidels" are set forth by the reverend replier himself. He is evidently very proud of them, and he and his audience seemed to consider that they thoroughly annihilated the carping infidels who were so boldly permitted to ask questions in private after a public discourse. I think, however, I might safely say that it would not be easy to find a weaker or more imbecile set of answers to Freethought objections. Self-satisfied incompetence crows loudly and safely among its own friends. Why does not the champion come forth and do a little of his infidel-slaying on a public platform face to face with the foe whom he so "easily" answers in private? Probably he has an uneasy suspicion that a far more



powerful defence of Christianity is needed if the sceptical workers of East London are to be convinced of the truth of the Bible. He does not relish the prospect of a forcible exposure of his imbecilities in public argument amid the laughter and contempt of an intelligent audience.

W. P. BALL.

### LECTURE ON THE "SKY-PILOT."

[REPORTED BY G. E. C. NAEWIGER.]

PROFESSOR FREETHAWT delivered an instructive and interesting lecture in the Stravon-on-Atford Lecture Hall on the "Sky-Pilot;" and, notwithstanding the inclement weather, there was a large, attentive and appreciative audience. The mayor (Mr. Biffkins) occupied the chair, and, in introducing the lecturer, said, that as the Professor was well known, he did not see the necessity of lauding him to the skies—as is generally done at meetings—but would at once call upon him to deliver his lecture.

Professor Freethawt (who was received with round upon round of applause) then began as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen,—The subject that I have come here to lecture upon is the "Sky-Pilot." This word may seem very strange to some of my audience, but I believe all will agree with me when this lecture is concluded that the word sky-pilot is rightly applied. This word may also be rather puzzling to the uninitiated, so I consider it my duty to give you a definition of it. Sky—the aerial regions; and Pilot—one who guides. Therefore the idea will at once be conveyed to you that "somebody guides, by direction or otherwise, something or somebody else through the aerial regions." We know that the Great Human Family is divided into two principal classes, namely, Workers and Non-Workers; the last mentioned class having again several sub-divisions—in one of which the sky-pilot is placed. Although I have now given you a definition of the word sky-pilot, I believe I can still improve on it by giving you an illustration of it. (Here the lecturer unrolled a piece of canvas, on which was painted a full-blown, smooth-shaven, well-dressed parson in the church pulpit, in the act of preaching.) Now, ladies and gentlemen, whilst you are observing this excellent and remarkably life-like painting of a specimen of humanity belonging to the class of non-workers (sub-division Idler and Superstition-monger), you will excuse me for a few seconds while I recite a few lines of poetry, which I composed off-hand as I gazed on this picture for the first time:—

Under the roof of the chapel or church,  
The smug sky-pilot stands;  
The holy Bible he pompously holds  
In his large and flabby hands;  
And the muscles of his chasm-like mouth,  
Are strong as iron bands.  
His hair is oiled, and lank and long,  
His face looks pale and wan,  
His brow is wet with clammy sweat,  
He spouts whate'er he can,  
And stares the whole church in its face,  
For he's trusted by no man.

These few lines will express to you the general appearance of a sky-pilot. Ladies and gentlemen, I will now acquaint you with the mode of life, manner, use, and description of this particular specimen of humanity, so that when you come into contact with one—which is, no doubt, often the case—you will give him his due, as he richly deserves. The sky-pilots, like other useless creatures, can be found almost everywhere, without any particular search being made for them. They can be met with at the seaside resorts; at the theatre; at the churches and chapels; and at political meetings. You can see them drive past you with splendid carriages and horses, and sometimes footmen to boot. Some have their palaces with some hundreds, and in some cases thousands of pounds sterling annually each. I say this particularly to you, gentlemen, that when you are away from home, these sky-pilots go to your wives and daughters, and in a soft and winning voice inquire about their spiritual condition, and being, perhaps, satisfactorily answered, they then ask for a donation for building a new chapel, or making an improvement in the old one; or perhaps they ask for some of your linen or handkerchiefs, which are supposed to be sent to savages as primary marks of civilisation. Gentlemen, if you should accidentally meet one at your house, prepare to make your boot-maker acquainted with his tailor, or as we would vulgarly say, to kick him out! No good can be expected in a home when once a sky-pilot is a regular visitor. When he is not in clerical garb, he can generally be recognised by his watery and shifty eyes, cat-like tread, and a continual cherubimical sort of smile on his countenance. These smiles are generally taken as genuine by the gentler sex: hence their reason for perpetual church and chapel going.

Now, the question is naturally asked by many, "What are these sky-pilots for?" That is a hard nut to crack. No one can see any particular use for them; they are not worth their salt, and they only sow discord and strife in this world. They preach or spout—both words mean the same—about an imaginary heaven with bliss to match, which you are to receive after death, if you are saved—"saved" means keeping the parsons in plenty. Yet they do not like to leave our earth, because when seriously ill,

they obtain the best doctors to attend them, to prevent them dying if possible. If they are so sure about this heaven, why don't they die respectably without the aid of doctors, and go to the celestial abode where they can wave the palms of victory, wear crowns of glory, twang their harps to their hearts' content, and shout hallelujah to the best of their ability. But they seem to know it is all a sham. We have to keep them in plenty while our neighbors are starving. They are dressed in broadcloth, while honest men are ragged. They idle about, and receive money from dupes. They are against truth, and preach hateful dogmas; therefore it is our duty to extirpate this black-beetle of superstition, by putting our Foote on it, as we would on an ordinary cockroach.

Here the speaker sat down, and the proceedings came to an end, everybody seeming to be highly pleased with the lecture.

### SINFUL SAINTS.

(A WEEK'S RECORD.)

JAMES GROVES, a teacher in the Milverton Sunday School, has been charged under the Criminal Law Amendment Act with assaulting Clara Paul, aged twelve, one of the pupils in his class.

THE Rev. F. W. Dryer, Vicar of Grayrigg, Westmoreland, is another man of God charged with improper conduct with a girl in his employ.

COLOR-BEARER Kern, of the New Brunswick Contingent of the Salvation Army, is arrested on a charge of debauching a half-witted female convert. His wife is said to be equally free with the soldiers of Christ.

MRS. STAUNTON, of Brooklyn, seeks a divorce from the Rev. B. Staunton, on the ground of his "undue familiarity" with Mrs. Laidlaw, a member of his church choir. Mr. Staunton denies the charges, and says he has treated Mrs. Laidlaw as he would any other member of his congregation. Rather ambiguous, eh?

FRANCIS H. MOON, keeper of a coffee tavern at Yeovil, was on Friday committed for trial charged with having criminally assaulted a girl named Ware, aged thirteen, who had been in his service. The defendant is a prominent member of the Salvation Army, and a married man.

THOMAS BONDY, the son of a Baptist minister at Graysville, Tennessee, attempted to whip John Davis, a young farmer, for visiting his sister. Davis beat Bondy to death, crushing his skull with a stone. At this juncture the father of Bondy interfered. He and Davis fought with knives. The minister is dead and Davis is dying.

THE Rev. A. P. Thurston, pastor of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Tiffin, Ohio, is a humble follower in the track of Solomon. For some time rumors had been circulated of undue familiarity with the women of his congregations, and at last Angeline Campbell, fearing disgrace, made the exposure. It is now learned that Thurston has at least twelve paramours in the pastorate that he fills. His wife has taken her children and gone to live with her father at Plymouth.

THE Rev. H. B. Robinson has suddenly resigned his pastorate of Fuller Baptist Chapel, Kettering, and the *Kettering Observer* gives the reason. It appears that the minister often had a string of young lady visitors waiting for him outside the vestry or "inquiry room," and one of the female inquirers has made a charge of gross immorality. Mr. Robinson was taxed by the deacons and declined to have the charge investigated. The *Observer* says, "Among the inquirers were some who were mere children, and, from what we know of at least two cases, instead of pointing them to the Lamb of God, this minister of Christ's Gospel listened to the innocent prattle of these children, whom he took upon his knee, and his conduct was suggestive of anything but pure and holy thoughts." Probably the Rev. H. B. Robinson is seeking fresh fields and pastures new.

## REVIEWS.

*No Religion*, No. 1. A monthly Review for Young Freethinkers. The object of this new venture is very laudable, but the editor, who appropriately calls himself "Learner," has a good deal to learn before he can hope to succeed. What he provides at present is an unfortunate mixture, not simple enough for children, and not solid enough for adults. We hope to be better pleased with the second number. If conducted on right lines the venture should be fairly successful, unless its name is an insurmountable obstacle.

*The National Secular Society's Almanack for 1887*. Edited by C. Bradlaugh and A. Besant, 63 Fleet Street. Sixpence.—In accordance with the custom which provides a crop of calendars for the ensuing year almost as soon as summer is over, the N. S. S. has issued its eighteenth annual Almanack. In addition to the usual features there are interesting articles by both the editors, and by Mr. Foote, Mrs. Bonner, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Standing and Miss Alice Bradlaugh. We notice a few misprints of *b* for *d* as in the case of Maréchal (Jan. 17) Hetterington (Aug 24) and A. Collins (Dec. 13). Bentham's date of birth should be Feb. 15, 1748.



PROFANE JOKES.

Mr. Jags and Mr. Cags were talking about religious matters. "It is a great pity that Noah's Ark could not have been preserved," said Mr. Cags, "it would have materially assisted in educating the masses in religion."

In a household in which the "Mikado" is a favorite composition, a little girl came down stairs the other day and asked her aunt what dreadful things she supposed her still younger sister put in her prayers?

A miss of less than five summers, who was playing in the yard and observing the works of nature, surprised her father the other day with the following questions and original conclusions: "Papa, does God make the worms?" "Yes, daughter."

A CHRISTIAN COMMONWEALTH.

THE principal theme of the Orthodox pulpit is the importance of establishing what it calls a thorough Christian Commonwealth. But this was tried by the first settlers of Massachusetts, and it proved to be a religious despotism throughout.

Here is one of their laws of 1649:—"Any one denying the Scripture to be the word of God, shall pay not exceeding £50, and be severely whipped, not exceeding forty strokes, unless he publicly recant, in which case he shall not pay above £10, or be whipped in case he pay not the fine."

That law is copied from an old volume entitled "Book of General Laws and Liberties, concerning the inhabitants of the Massachusetts, published at Boston, 1649." This book mentions a number of so-called "damnable heresies" (what are now regarded as rather Liberal views), and the believers in them were punished, but unless they recanted they were banished.

"There is no power but of God, the powers that be are ordained of God."

"Whoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

NO RELIGION.

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PROGRESS

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Mr. Save-his-Soul-Alive, O! (A Poem) By James Thomson (B.V.)
A Christian Jew. By G. W. Foote.
Caged Birds. (A Poem) By W. P. Ball.
Buchner's "Force and Matter." By G. W. Foote.
Marlowe the Atheist. By S. Britton.
Shelley's Prose Works. By Phillip Sidney.
Reviews.
Brief Freethought Biographies. By J. M. W.

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