

# THE FREETHINKER.

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

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## ELISHA'S OLD BONES

*"And it came to pass, as they were burying a man, that, behold, they spied a band of men; and they cast the man into the sepulchre of Elisha: and when the man was let down, and touched the bones of Elisha, he revived, and stood up on his feet."*

—2 KINGS XIII., 21.

## GOD HELP US.

ACCORDING to the Psalmist, "God is a very present help in time of trouble." The statement may have been true when he wrote. We were not living then, and therefore we cannot contradict him. Yet, for all that, we venture to doubt it. The sweet Psalmist of Israel also alleges that God taught his hands to war and his fingers to fight, and as it appears to us not only incredible, but blasphemous, to say that the Almighty ever kept a boxing and fencing school, we do not scruple to suppose that the Jew-harpist was equally mistaken in other respects. Anyhow, God seems to help nobody nowadays. Religious cant may assert otherwise, but the popular instinct belies it; for is it not a fact that when people say "God help you" they mean it is all over with you? And what is the meaning of the proverb "God helps those who help themselves"? What can it mean except that our only reliance is on our own strength and skill; that what we are able to do is done, and everything else left undone? If God feeds us

when we find our own bread, shelters us when we rent a house, clothes us when we pay a tailor, instructs us when we hire a teacher, recovers us from sickness when we fee a doctor, lifts our coach out of the rut when we put our shoulders to the wheel, and fires off our gun when we keep our powder dry, is it not a farce to say that he helps us at all? Does he not become a metaphysical abstraction, like the famous meat-roasting power of the meat-jack, which was assumed to be necessary, as well as the fire, to the cooking of a joint?

How easily people can be misled on this subject by their religious training, and their natural selfishness, is exemplified in the following incident which recently occurred at a Southern watering-place. Two ladies, who happened to sit on the same bench, fell into conversation. One was a Christian and the other a Freethinker. Although it was winter the weather was extremely mild, and after a little chat about the pleasant climate of the place, the pious lady exclaimed "I do think it is so good of God to give us such a variety, you know. Some places are warm and others cold, and when one doesn't suit you, you can go to another,



"Yes," replied the sceptical lady, "but God doesn't pay your railway fare." It was a staggerer. The pious lady never reflected that, without a well-filled purse, those convenient varieties of climate were unavailable. *She* could go to Hastings or Torquay, but what is the use of telling an asthmatical tailor or a gouty shoemaker that he would feel ever so much better if he wintered at Madeira or followed Spurgeon to Mentone? It is like prescribing port wine to a pauper. There is the poor fellow's mouth, and there is the bottle of port, but unless he finds the three-and-sixpence God Almighty will never bring them together.

*In vino veritas.* A tipsy curate, the son of a very eminent churchman, once said in our presence, "I tell you you'll find prayer a scam. If you're ever so hungry, you may pray to God till you're black in the face, and he'll never send you a steak or a chop unless you go to the butcher's and pay tenpence." Probably nine-tenths of the clergy would make the same confession if they were as drunk as he was. At any rate, their *practice* shows their real belief. They leave nothing to God if they can help it. They insure their lives and their churches, and run up lightning conductors to preserve God's own house when he works up a thunderstorm and "goes it blind." They get good salaries, good houses, good clothes, and good everything, if they can manage it by hook or crook; and as for their constitutions, they trust so little in God, that you have only to visit a fashionable watering-place like Bath to see the streets black with them, in search of health and rich widows.

Lately the distress in London has been causing alarm. A large floating population of unemployed and starving men and women is a menace to society. At least it is a cancer in the body politic. Well, what do the clergy do? Do they ask the infinite ruler of the universe to redress the mischiefs of his own neglect? Do they ask him to come to the aid of the suffering poor, and create an extra supply of food as he used to in old times? Nothing of the kind. They join together in a sort of happy family, Cardinal Manning, the Bishop of London and Mr. Spurgeon sitting side by side; and they ask people with cash to spare to shell out for the relief of the wretched. What miserable hypocrisy! Society can manage its charity without the aid of priests. It is not their business to get money from Peter to help Paul. Their business is to get the Almighty to help mankind. If they cannot do that, they are arrant impostors, and the people should cashier them at once.

The late Bishop of Melbourne, now Bishop of Manchester, declined once to offer up prayers for rain until the people had done all that was possible in the way of reservoirs and irrigation. Such conduct would be very sensible in a layman, but it was sheer insolence in a Bishop. If his dupes had any common sense and courage, they would say to him "Very well then, we'll go on doing the best we can for ourselves without divine assistance; meanwhile we'll stop your screw, and we'll resume payment when we require your services."

Some sky-pilots say that if God were always helping us we should lose energy and initiative, and become mere children. Perhaps so, but how does this apply to cases in which human wisdom and strength are exhausted, and all that can be done is to silently await the stroke of destiny? An earthquake happens, a city is half demolished, and tender women and children have to camp out in the open. Why does not God divert the next shock in a harmless direction? Why does he allow it to demolish the rest of the city, and bring death to hundreds of innocent people? Cholera ravages a district, doctors and nurses are worn out, and the praying people die wholesale. Why does not God help them when they can no longer help themselves? A ship strikes on a reef in sight of shore. The captain and crew have done their utmost, fighting for dear life, but the storm is overwhelming. People on shore see their danger, but cannot help them; the lifeboat puts out, manned with brave fellows who risk their own lives to save others, but it is driven back by wind and tide. The ship breaks up, and all on board sink into the jaws of the ravening waves. Why does not God lend them a hand? Surely a being with power to save, who looked on and did nothing, would be worse than a devil.

Let the truth be spoken. God does not help us. If he exists, he minds his own business, and leaves us to mind ours. He never troubles his head about us, and we should

trouble as little about him; and as for his agents, the priests, who trade upon his false reputation for benevolence, let them be thrown on their own resources for a living, and try by actual experiment the value of "God help us!"

G. W. FOOTE.

## RECANTATIONS.

HOLDING that beliefs should be proportionate to evidence, Freethinkers necessarily consider that opinions should be changed whenever sufficient evidence is procured. The interrogation of our own beliefs is the condition of mental growth. Progress means change, and the man who boasts that he has never altered his views is probably an obstinate fool. As Emerson says, we have choice between truth and repose. Take which you please; you can't have both:

"He, in whom the love of repose predominates will accept the first creed, the first philosophy, the first political party he meets—most likely his father's. He gets rest, commodity and reputation; but he shuts the door of truth. He, in whom the love of truth predominates will keep himself aloof from all moorings and afloat. He will abstain from dogmatisms, and recognise all the opposite negations between which, as walls, his being is swung. He submits to the inconvenience of suspense and imperfect opinion, but he is a candidate for truth, as the other is not, and respects the highest law of his being."

Freethinkers, having almost invariably changed their opinions and given up the religion in which they were reared, can have no objection to those who have returned, always provided they are ready to give a statement of the reasons which have induced the change. An earnest sceptic of well-balanced mind who should gradually abate his scepticism and render to his friends an account of a change of opinion, which no explanation of theirs could mitigate, would command attention and respect. He should surely hold his returned faith on better grounds than when he relinquished it. I am bound to say that often as I have heard Christians boast of conversions, and though in cases coming within my own knowledge I have almost pestered the converts for some account of the new truth and the fresh arguments which remain to me unperceived or of unappreciated weight, I have never had this satisfaction.

Most readers are acquainted with a widely-circulated tract by the Rev. C. J. Whitmore, entitled *What Becomes of Infidel Leaders?* He gives a list of sixteen cases of conversion to Christianity. Of the sixteen, the names of several are unknown even to those best acquainted with the Freethought movement. Only four had talents which by any stretch of language could entitle them to be considered "Infidel leaders." The infidelity of one of these was never very pronounced, his lectures being nearly entirely political and literary; while the conversion of another is equally uncertain. Of the remaining two, the one—

"Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,  
Was everything by starts, and nothing long."

While of the other, I fear, it might with equal truth be said:

"It is not true that he has changed his creed;  
He never had but one, and that was greed."

J. H. Gordon, who is No. 4 on Whitmore's list, but who was never an "Infidel leader," also, after professing conversion at Leeds, wrote to a London Secular Society for an engagement as lecturer.

Of the remaining names on Mr. Whitmore's list, I had personal acquaintance with three. George Bishop, though now a Reverend, never gave any evidence of his possessing ability when member of the Young Men's Secular Association. Of the sincerity of his conversion I have no means of judging beyond the exceedingly unsatisfactory reasons he has since alleged.

With Epenetus Earwaker I was better acquainted, succeeding him as Secretary of the North London Secular Society, now almost twenty years ago. During a severe illness I visited him in St. Thomas's Hospital, taking to him, as I well remember, my copy of Shelley's *Queen Mab*, in which he declared he found "life and light." At this time he was near the point of death, yet without any indication of "recantation." The change came after a lengthened period of being out of employment. I was in Scotland at the time, and wrote to him for an explanation. In an answer he attributed his recantation to the reading of Butler's *Analogy*. I pointed out that that work is



directed against the difficulties of Deists, and while I could understand that it might convert a Deist either to orthodoxy or to Atheism, I could not see how it could convert an Atheist, since Butler assumes an Author and Governor of Nature, the very point in dispute. To this Epenetus gave no reply. Although, by continually putting himself in evidence, Earwaker assumed a little prominence in our obscure society, he was "very small potatoes indeed." There were at the same time in our humble and isolated organisation several gentlemen, such as Mr. W. Willis, who occasionally writes in the *Liberator* of Australia, Mr. Alfred Jackson, Mr. J. H. Carpenter, and others of greatly superior abilities to our secretary, whose posthumous fame in Christian journals is a surprise to all his former friends.\* Another converted "Infidel leader" of our society was John Horn, a navy of no education, but of some common sense and ability in speaking, whose reading of the Bible when a Methodist, led to his finding difficulties in considering that book the word of God. How his conversion came about I have no knowledge. Inquiries among his fellow-workmen only elicited the opinion that "it was for the sake of the big loaf."

A different case was that of Mr. Richard Slater, whose letter appeared in the *Freethinker* for October 31. My acquaintance with Mr. Slater only slightly preceded his conversion. I understood him to have been a Sunday-school teacher who had resigned because dissatisfied with religious dogmas. Some conversation showed that he was equally dissatisfied with the Froethought party, and rather inclined to religious reconstruction as attempted by the Positivists, though without adhering to their views and principles. Mr. Slater's account of his conversion was that it took place when attending a meeting of the Salvation Army, I believe, at the Hall, Oxford Circus. During the singing of the hymn "Just as I am without one plea," he felt irresistably impelled to go forward to the penitent form and seek for pardon. His conversion, in short, was by his own account, supernatural, though he admits he cannot draw the line between what is natural and what is supernatural. To me it presents a curious psychological problem, probably to be explained by the influence of music and old associations upon a sensitive emotional nature. My own illness, in which Mr Slater acted to me as a true friend, if it prevented close inquiry into his case, abundantly showed me how deep-seated superstitions may lie, even when we think reason has effectually disposed of them. During part of that time I was an ardent theosophist under the influence of a Hindu friend.

Recently Mr. Woffendale has boasted of other converts, or rather of the return of two of the lost lambs of his flock. Very black sheep they are, according to accounts—afraid to meet the faces of those who formerly assisted them in distress. Youths who do not know their own minds, or who wish to carry their convictions to the richest market, are better out of the ranks of Freethought. The thief on the cross or the scoundrel on the scaffold who is jerked to Jesus instantaneously, may excuse their rapidity of transition by the necessity of the occasion, but when a lad who is prevented from selling *Freethinkers* in Milton Hall, writes to say he has returned to the Christian faith, we can only wish the Christian faith joy of its retrovert. The Freethought cause requires the services of true, earnest men, prepared to make their life and work a protest against the hypocrisy around them. Those whose ardor will grow cold by the breath of unpopularity, or who will become dazzled by prospects of a more comfortable life within the churches are better there. Freethought, like any hardy plant, will thrive by losing its rotten leaves.

J. M. WHEELER.

THERE is a very religious restaurant in Boston, on the walls of which there is an odd jumble of texts of Scripture and items from the bill of fare, something as follows: "He shall Feed His Flock like a Shepherd—Hot Sausages, 10 cents." "If you be Obedient ye shall eat of the Fat of the Land—Hot Apple Sauce, 5 cents." "God Moves in a Mysterious Way—Hash, 10 cents." "Be Careful for Nothing—Coffee and Cakes, 10 cents."

\* The Rev. Z. B. Woffendale has given great prominence to the recantation of Earwaker. Yet Epenetus gave me his opinion that "Whitmore is a bully, but Woffendale is a sneak," a judgment I had occasion to remember when I heard that the latter gentleman entered the house in which I lodged and endeavored to force his way into my room at a time when I was lying delirious.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. R. B. Hull was sued at Northampton by his parlor-maid for a month's wages in lieu of notice. She had told her mistress that her conscience would not allow her to attend family prayers, and she was forthwith packed off without notice. The defence was that the girl was discharged because she refused to comply with a very reasonable order to attend prayers. This is how the clergy display the spirit of toleration and Christian love. They evangelise all they can by compulsion, and reserve persuasion for those whom they cannot tyrannise over. This shining light of grace was taught a little commonplace justice by the only method he understands, that of compulsion, for the judgment was against him. Probably he considers himself a persecuted saint.

THE *Church Times*, in an article on "Church Defence Work," suggests the painting of a number of historical cartoons illustrating the work of the Church, which could be photographed and reproduced on glass for exhibition in magic lantern entertainments. We beg to suggest a few subjects for pictures. First we might have Treatment of Heretics in 1160, when thirty were allowed to starve because no one would render them any assistance. Then we might have Scenes at Smithfield, from the burning of William Sawtre (1410) to the burning of Bartholomew Legate (1612). This might be followed with views of the expulsion and imprisonment of Nonconformist ministers (1662), The Flogging of Quakers, The Trial of Woolston, Annett in the Pillory, Bishop Gibson seizing the works of Servetus, The Sacheverell Mob, The Gordon Riots, Seizing Goods for Tithes, Refusing to Bury Dissenters, A Cell in Holloway (1883), etc.

JULIA SMETHERAN, of Cambourne, having "got religion," took it so hot that she became convinced she was on the road to the everlasting bonfire, so she jumped down a well, where perhaps the poor girl hoped she would get too wet to burn elsewhere. This is another instance of the benefits of religious revivalism.

It is a pity Mr. Edward Maitland or some of Dr. Anna Kingsford's spiritual guides do not prescribe a little beef or mutton for her, to be taken medicinally. Since she took to the vegetarian "Perfect Way in Diet," she has got more cranky than ever. Having discovered "How the World Came to an End in 1881," she has started an Hermetic Society for the Solution of Occult Mysteries, and is now bringing out a work with the title *Astrology Theologised*. We should say that theologising is about the only method to apply to discredited astrology, and astrological theology and theological astrology are all of a piece.

THE Bishop of Manchester says he dearly loves the Jewish race. They provided him with teachers, prophets, Savior and God. Bishop Moorhouse reminds us of the old lines:

"I dearly love the Jews, upon my word,  
They played the second part in our salvation;  
Had they refused to crucify the Lord,  
The Gentile race had not escaped damnation.  
So, having thanked his Savior, who'd refuse  
His thanks to Pontius Pilate and the Jews?"

MRS. MEAD, wife of a laborer, at Loyland, near Barnsley, has just demonstrated that true Christianity is only fit for lunatics. After what the newspapers call "morbid reading of the Bible," one of her eyes being sore and bloodshot through some injury, she said it "offended" her, and following the advice of gentle Jesus, she plucked it out and cast it from her. The offending organ was flung into the fire, which was probably selected as the fit receptacle owing to its suggestion of Hades. Mrs. Mead is now in the asylum. What a pity the Jewish revivalist, who taught the silly and pernicious doctrine of self-mutilation, was not put under medical treatment in a similar establishment! How much misery and stupidity might thus have been prevented.

JESUS of Nazareth hinted that sexual self-mutilation was an act of piety. Some, he said, were born eunuchs, and others made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. The great Christian father, Origen, took the Savior at his word, and performed the operation upon himself. Curiously, however, several Catholic authorities think he missed heaven after all, and went to hell on account of heresy.

So far from following Jesus Christ in this respect, the Catholic Church insists on all its priests being sexually perfect. With a deeper knowledge of human nature than J. C. possessed, it is well aware that emasculated priests would never proselytise successfully among the ladies, and the confessional would never be patronised if the fair sinners could only pour their confidences into the ears of eunuchs.

It seems likely that the upshot of the "Priest in the Family" case will be that Mrs. Carlisle will quit her family and take up her residence in a convent. This opens up another and equally important branch of the subject. Catholic priests hold, and say so to their devoted followers, that there is no true marriage except in the Catholic Church, and that if a Protestant marries a Catholic the marriage is null and void. Cardinal Manning



may not be ready to make public all the consequence of the fact that his Church does not recognise the validity of Protestant marriage, but Mr. Gladstone, in the preface to *Rome and the Newest Fashion in Religion* (Murray, 1875), furnishes evidence, mentioning a case which he declares was well known to Cardinal Manning.

A SIGNIFICANT sign of the progress of Popery in the Church of England was the celebration at St. Alban's, Holborn, last week, by the Romanising body of Anglican priests calling themselves the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, of a solemn Requiem Mass for the souls of its departed dead members. The Rev. F. J. Ponsonby, vicar of St. Mary Magdalene, Munster Square, who preached the sermon, said that if the Catholic Revival was slow in its advance "it was owing to their deep care and consideration for the susceptibilities of others."

THE Vicar of St. Michael's, Croydon, having announced a sale of fancy articles and Christmas cards, the profits to be given to the building fund of his church, a disgusted "Stationer" writes to the papers: "It is surely enough for the over-taxed shop-keeper to compete with the stores (at which most of the clergy spend their money) without having the parson trying to deprive them of their legitimate business by means of his bazaar."

READERS of the religious press get to see a little behind the scenes in regard to the manufacture of sermons. A prominent place in the leading Church papers is given to advertisements of Aids to Preachers. Thus there is *Plain Preaching for a Year*, third series, containing plain sermons for every Sunday and for the chief Holy Days. Then there is the *Preacher's Book*, "printed and bound in the form of a sermon case for actual use in the pulpit." It contains thirty-seven outlines of sermons from Advent to Whit-Sunday with their headings and sub-headings in clear, distinctive types, and the left hand page in blank writing paper for the preachers own MS. additions to the printed sermon." Vaux publishes several volumes of *Sermon Notes* and *Skeleton Sermons*, and complete lithographed sermons can be bought singly or by the dozen. The Rev. Baring-Gould publishes *One Hundred Sermon Sketches for Extempore Preachers* and *Handbooks of Illustration and Religious Anecdotes* are published almost in any quantity.

ZUBA BOSWELL, a gipsy-like woman residing in a tent, has been fined ten shillings and costs at Stoke-on-Trent for fortune-telling. Yet a Catholic priest is allowed to take money from people on account of the future prospects of their relatives' souls in purgatory. This fortune-teller gave Mary Ann Scott some powder to bring her young man to her feet. Yet the priests of all churches are permitted to palm off a little baked dough and bad wine as the body and blood of God Almighty.

A TEACHER in a Church school, Spitalfields, has been summoned to Worship Street for cruelly beating a little child aged six, whose hands were terribly swollen and the skin broken. There were several severe wheals on the backs of both hands. One reason for the hatred of the priestly schools in France was the cruel severities of which the religious teachers were often guilty towards the little children.

MR. HILL, secretary of the Working Men's Lord's-day Rest Association, says that the trustees of the People's Palace are about to "outrage the religious sentiments of the people of East London" by opening the library and baths on Sundays. What would he say if we complained that the saints "outrage" our susceptibilities by opening churches on Sunday? Religious suppression of libraries would equally justify suppression of churches. The whole question would be which party had the greater power to tyrannise over the other.

THEY are going ahead out west in suppressing polygamy. We see that the Apostle and Elder John W. Taylor has been indicted for recommending men to follow biblical examples in their marital relations.

A MAN out west afflicted with corpulency, tried the faith cure and has reduced his weight seventy-five pounds. He had to attend service three times a day, and the church was two miles away.

THE "Table Talk" column of the *Birmingham Daily Mail* reports a dreadful shock received by the clergyman at Broad Street by a woman who had been urged by his parishioners to attend, and who went forward to communion, taking several pieces of the bread that was offered to her, together with a good deep draught from the chalice. She evidently loved her Jesus, but was not completely satisfied, for she looked up in the parson's face and inquired, "Where is the cheese?" One of the officials promptly removed her from the table.

WE have before us a bill and a book of tickets for a bazaar and "Grand Drawing of Prizes" in aid of the Mater Misericordiae Hospital in Dublin. Religious people start lotteries and teach people to gamble, and out of their ill-gotten winnings or pious swindlings as the case may be (for there is considerable scepticism both as to the reality and the fair distribution of the

prizes) they support religion or philanthropy and claim all the credit for Christianity. The first prize is "an exquisitely cut cameo set in fine gold" and presented by the Pope. The second prize is "a beautiful phaeton and splendid pair of horses," or £100 in cash if preferred. There are "several hundred other prizes" including "valuable" paintings, a gold watch worth £20, a casket of jewels worth £40, a piano worth £50, a suite of furniture worth £25, two shares in a tramway company worth £20, a five pound note, two fat sheep, £2, a guinea, a calf, various cases of sparkling champagne, ale, old port, brandy and other liquors, ladies' gold watches, and so forth.

To encourage the sale of these gambling tickets, those who sell them are rewarded with special "all-prize" tickets, which secure a chance of a carved oak money-box containing 2,000 shillings, or £100. Many other prizes are reserved for those who dispose of whole books of tickets, including a fat bullock and other tempting articles worth £10 or £20. Gambling of this character for ordinary secular purposes would soon be stopped by law. Religious bodies feel privileged to use such tempting appeals to covetousness. The moral influence of such transactions on the minds of young purchasers is entirely disregarded. Many receive their first lessons in gambling from such holy investments, and are lured on to permanent evil habits and ruin by the evil hope of dazzling success thus aroused and fostered. But it is an old Jesuitical practice to do evil that good may follow. Ignoble passions may be roused if employed for the benefit of the Church.

THE religious press is talking of a week of special prayer for foreign missions. Christians have been praying "thy kingdom come" for over eighteen hundred years, but the result has been so remarkably like a kingdom of the Devil, that it needs eyes of faith to discern the difference.

A CURIOUS story, or hoax, is inserted in the correspondence column of the *Tyldesley and Atherton Chronicle* for Nov. 26. It is entitled "A Warning to Atheists" and relates, as a warning to "those who assemble in the Drill Hall next Sunday to give their countenance to the principles of Atheism," that an Atheist who challenged God to strike him down, fell with a shriek to the ground. "When he was picked up it was found that the entire half of his body was dead. The challenged stroke had descended." Name, date, and place of this remarkable visitation of a loving Father upon his foolish son, are omitted. The writer does not give his name, but only signs himself J. He does not even say that he is personally acquainted with the facts, or name the vicar who he says was sent for and received the dying man's confession.

THE Rev. J. Guianess Rogers, who has got to be considered a leading spokesman of the Nonconformist party, is, of course, in favor of Disestablishment, but he leaves the more important matter of Disendowment in the background. This is unsatisfactory. Church property is national property, and Liberationists should be ready to say at once that tithes and other revenues should be applied so as to lessen the general burdens of the country.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE, when in Melbourne, only got the pitiful pittance of £1,500. This was more than doubled when he was translated to Manchester. The Rev. Field-Flowers Goe is, however, to have his salary increased to £2,000 when he takes the place vacated by Moorhouse.

SPIRITISM is not in a very thriving state. The London Spiritualist Alliance calls for a contribution of £600 to prevent one of their papers dying, and the other organ makes constant appeals for subsidies.

THE latest subject of dispute among spiritists is whether the spirit is re-incarnated or not. Some deny and some affirm the doctrine. Some spirit authorities declare that the spirits preserve their sexes, others that they are merged in a pure sexual neutrality. There is even more diversity of opinion on such momentous topics among spiritists than among those without the questionable advantages of spiritual intercourse.

THE ever-scheming Booth has devised a fresh dodge for raising the wind. He is getting up a Salvation Army Property League. All donors of £1 and upwards "will be enrolled as Builders"—we suppose of a new Babel. Nothing less than a shilling will be taken, for, as Booth remarks, with a fine eye of pity for the poor, that sam can hurt nobody. Besides promising "the salvation of thousands" if he gets the money, Booth undertakes that it shall all be "kept in a separate banking account." But as the banking account will probably be in Booth's name, it looks a very shadowy sort of security for the subscribers.

MURPHY, the York murderer, said he was going to "commence a new life in the next world." He forgot to say whether he was going to start afresh in Paradise or Gehenna. What a pity, by the way, he didn't lead a better life in this world. Perhaps he'll get hung again, and resolve to live a better life on his third tour.



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Dec. 5, The Circus, Bow Street, Landport, Portsmouth, at 11, "God's Mother" at 3, "Why Women should be Freethinkers;" at 7, "An Hour in Hell."

DEC. 12, Milton Hall; 19 and 26, Hall of Science, London.

JAN. 2, Milton Hall; 9, Manchester; 16, Milton Hall; 23, Liverpool.

## 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.—T. G. C., A. G. Lupton.

H. BOXALL.—The name of Jesus is not found in the Old Testament because it is the Greek form of the common Hebrew name Joshua. It occurs in the Old Testament Greek Apocrypha in 1 and 2 Esdras, 1 Maccabees, and in Ecclesiastics, which was written by Jesus, son of Sirach.

A. FREETHINKER.—The prophecy that "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever" is not fulfilled, since none of his descendants are known. There are many passages in the Bible in opposition to teetotalism. See Deut. xiv. 26, Proverbs xxxi. 7, Judges ix. 13, John ii. 10, and Mr. Wheeler's Tract "The Bible and Teetotalism."

H. FROST.—Not bad, but you can hardly expect a "first attempt" to be successful. Composition, like every other art, requires long practice before any proficiency can be reached.

G. COCKMAN.—Thanks. Always glad to receive cuttings.

W. CARTER.—Pleased to see the Sunderland Freethinkers are moving at last. If you all work with a will you will soon have one of the best societies in the kingdom.

A. BEADLE.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. STEWART.—We haven't the least idea what you refer to. We will speak to Mr. Forder on the subject. Thanks for the cuttings.

J. F. HENLEY sends us a copy of further correspondence with the Rev. T. T. Waterman, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. Mr. Waterman confesses that "the truth of Christianity is not bound up with the existence and welfare of this Society." Christianity may congratulate itself on the fact. Mr. Waterman repeats that "there are unanswerable objections to Christianity, just as there are to any scientific or philosophical beliefs." Perhaps Mr. Waterman will point out the unanswerable objections to the multiplication table and the law of gravitation. We dare say he will try, for a man who believes that three times one are one should stick at nothing.

R. W. writes: "I derive much pleasure and instruction from your *Bible Romances*. Inquiring Christians, after carefully perusing them, will find the foundation of their faith subverted, and their 'noble edifice' crumbling to dust."

H. P. BOWDEN.—Always pleased to receive your cuttings. See "Acid Drops" and Mr. Ball's article.

SUPPORTER.—We think the price of the new edition of Buchner's *Force and Matter* is 6s. You can order through Mr. Forder. It will take some time to prepare the new and complete edition of *Crimes of Christianity*.

H. T. BAILEY.—There is nothing wonderful in it. Voltaire was a professed theist. So was Thomas Paine. You will find in other parts of Voltaire's writings, however, that he saw the difficulties of theism, and felt their staggering force. See in particular his ode on the Lisbon earthquake.

E. L. ANDREWS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." Mr. Foote is fortunately better, though not yet perfectly well.

J. THORNTON.—We are obliged for the jokes.

A. WHEELER.—We have no volumes of *Progress* left. They were all destroyed in the fire.

A. W. MORAN.—We gave the right text under last week's cartoon. You must have turned to the wrong chapter or to the wrong Book of Kings.

EX-RITUALIST, whose verses must from time to time have given pleasure to many of our readers, writes: "It is only since I rejected the idiotic teachings of my earlier years that I have known what this world is. Up to the age of nineteen I was an ardent Ritualist. A year's course in a training college, where we went to chapel usually fifteen times a week, laid the foundation for better things. At the end of the second year's training I had mentally resolved to renounce Christianity. Since your paper was brought under my notice through your trials for Blasphemy, I have been a constant reader. My copy usually goes on a long journey, passing from reader to reader, and never coming back."

A. BROWN.—The edition of the Bible in which the seventh commandment was printed "Thou shalt commit adultery" was issued by authority in 1632.—An old Gorman Bible has the same reading.

A. COLLETT.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Hastings and St. Leonards Times—Liberty—Witness for Truth—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Beacon Light—Deseret News—Salt Lake Tribune—Pudsey District Advertiser—Menschentum—Northampton Daily Reporter—Bedford Record—New York Sun—Oxford Times—Good Tidings—Tyldesley and Atherton Chronicle—Bolton Chronicle.

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.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Roman Catholic press has been triumphantly announcing the news of the baptism of Manlio Garibaldi. The vaunted conversion turns out to be a pure invention. The widow of Garibaldi writes to the editor of the *Turin Gazette*, contradicting the "scandal." She says: "No such baptism has taken place, nor ever will take place, because we are all determined to hold the traditions of the family intact, and to respect the will of my ever-to-be-deplored husband." Most of the ordinary Italian journals refused to insert the report, the strong anti-clerical opinion of the Garibaldis being too well known to allow of belief in the genuineness of the pious fabrication.

At a large meeting of the Anti-clerical party at Milan, the following programme was put forward and approved: 1, Abrogation of Section 1 of the Constitution, which declares the Catholic religion to be the religion of the State; 2, Separation of Church and State; 3, Compulsory elementary education, given by lay teachers, national in character and free; 4, Appropriation of ecclesiastical revenues and administration by lay bodies; 5, Better organisation of national education; 6, Political and civil emancipation of women; 7, Economical reform and improvement of the condition of the working classes.

THE late Robert Brough was asked, "Which do you consider the best book in the world?" "The Bible, of course," he replied. "And the next best?" pursued his tormentor, anxious for something smart. Brough's eye caught sight of a pile of railway time-tables, and, without a moment's hesitation, he answered, "Bradshaw's Guide." "Oh, indeed!" went on the questioner; "and why 'Bradshaw's Guide'?" "Well, you see," said the wit, "the Bible tells you the way to heaven, and 'Bradshaw's Guide' tells you what time the train starts."

THE parsons are having to submit to a reduction in their tithes. The rector of Llanwest, Denbighshire, has consented to a reduction of 19½ per cent. In Kent a number of clergy have allowed deductions varying from 10 to 20 per cent. The Rev. T. R. Mayhew has offered 50 per cent. off the extraordinary tithe, or 25 per cent. off that and 12½ per cent off the ordinary.

THE paper on "The Origin of the New Testament Canon" in the December number of *Progress* deserves the careful attention of Freethinkers. Its author, T. L., is an excellent authority upon the subject. He is the writer of "Our First Century," "Primitive Church History," "Irenæus," and other works issued in Thomas Scott's controversial series. He applies to New Testament literature the same method which the Rev. F. A. Paley applies to the Homeric literature, with the result of showing how untrustworthy are the early Christian writings and how unsettled the Canon of Scripture was before the Council of Laodicea.

*Progress* contains a good portrait of Paul Bert, the great French Atheist, with a critical biography from the pen of Mr. Foote. Readers who can afford the threepence would do well to possess themselves of a copy.

OUR Christmas Number will be ready in a few days. People with a sound mind in a sound body will naturally enjoy it, and others should give it a trial, for its medicinal virtues are unparalleled. Beecham and Holloway, and even Thwaites, are out of the running when it enters the field. It is good for men and women, and, unlike the Bible, it is fit for children. Johnson said that Garrick's death eclipsed the gaiety of nations, but our Christmas Number will brighten the geniality of thousands in all parts of the world, for the *Freethinker* goes everywhere. Laughter is an excellent cordial, especially when it is in the service of truth; it helps digestion, clarifies the mind, and fills it with fresh hope. If the Life Assurance Companies knew their own interests they would subsidise us with a big cheque every time we bring out a Special Number.

"RELIGIOUS beliefs are transforming themselves; they lose their symbolic envelope, which is only a hindrance, and have no longer need for superstition. But the philosophical mind is not moved by these necessary evolutions. The true, the beautiful, the good have in themselves sufficient attractions to require neither an authority to command them, nor a recompense to be thereto attached."—E. Renan's Preface to *L'Abbesse de Jouarre*.

MR. N. B. BILLANY writes a capital letter to the *Hull Daily Mail* about the Rev. E. A. Steuart's allegation that "a leading London infidel had congratulated him on his mission work in South Islington." On being pressed Mr. Steuart can only remember that the leading London infidel lived "somewhere" in Hackney, and was called Williamson "or something like that."

THERE are many Freethinkers in and around Sunderland, but they want organisation. We are glad to see that a step is being taken in that direction. A meeting will be held this evening (Dec. 5) at 7 o'clock, at the Waverley Dining Rooms, opposite the Central Station, High Street. We hope to hear a good report of the result.



A NEW edition of Professor Clifford's *Essays and Lectures* edited by Leslie Stephen and Frederick Pollock, is issued by Messrs. Macmillan.

THE *New York Weekly Sun* says: "The Buddhist faith is gaining ground in New York and Brooklyn to an extent not dreamed of by the average Christian. In New York there are two organisations and any number of people who are admirers of and believers in its teachings. In Brooklyn there is as yet no regular organisation, but two or more gatherings are held regularly, which are attended by numerous students." It notices the great additions that are continually being made in the publication of Buddhist literature, and even speaks of the likelihood of a temple being erected in New York in the course of another year.

THE Tenth Annual Congress of the American Secular Union held at Chickering Hall, New York on Nov. 11th, 12th, 13th, and 14th, under the presidency of Colonel Ingersoll, appears to have been eminently successful. The secretary, Mr. Samuel P. Putnam, reported efforts made for the opening of museums on Sunday, and for church taxation. The lecture work has been extensive over the entire United States, and sixteen new societies have been formed during the past year. The report stated "It is the destructive work of to-day that is the vital force of the constructive work of the future. For constructive work to ignore the destructive work is for the child to be ignorant of its mother."

RESOLUTIONS re-affirming the Nine Demands of American Liberalism were passed, as were also special resolutions against the Blasphemy Laws evoked against Mr. Reynolds, and in favor of the complete secularisation of government, universal education as the basis of universal suffrage, and the enfranchisement of women.

COLONEL INGERSOLL would have been re-elected President, but he declined on the ground that he wanted a rotation in office. Evidently the Colonel doesn't believe in one-man government. We gather from the report that Courtlandt Palmer succeeds Ingersoll in the president's chair.

At the Sunday sitting Colonel Ingersoll, who has been quiet for some time through ill health, delivered a splendid address on Freethought and its relation to political and social problems. We have issued this address in a pamphlet form at a penny, under the title of *Social Salvation*. Every Freethinker should read it and hand it about.

### OBEYING THE BIBLE.

A PECULIARLY horrible murder which has lately been committed by four French peasants illustrates forcibly the evil effects of religion. An aged woman, named Lebon, was in her dotage and was believed to be a witch. As she squinted she was believed to have an "evil eye" capable of causing misfortune to all it gazed upon. As she had red hair it was obvious she held communication with the Devil. When left a widow she had to quit her village in consequence of being regarded as a sorceress who had caused cows to run dry and pigs to be attacked by measles. The Bible says "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (Exodus xxii., 18). The widow's two sons and her daughter and son-in-law were "habitually religious." At a sort of family council they came to the conclusion that they must "burn the old witch." They felt that this was not altogether an unnatural act, for the Bible has, unfortunately, confirmed and spread this hateful idea of witch-killing everywhere it has penetrated, and civilisation has not yet been able to remove belief in witchcraft, ghosts, enchantments, etc., in rural districts where the teachings of the Word of God are still unchallenged. The four murderers had really decided to obey the Bible. The fact that the old "witch" had about £40, supplied a stimulus and reward for their pious obedience to the sacred injunction. They first took care to have their victim duly confessed and absolved for the benefit of her soul. They then drenched their aged mother with petroleum, dragged her from her bed, set her on fire with a wisp of straw, and thrust her shrieking into the kitchen fire. The grandchildren who saw this and who were told to pray for the old woman's soul the while, describe how Uncle Alexis and Uncle Alexander carried grandma into the fire which mamma and papa had prepared. They say that grandma screamed a great deal at first, but after a while she did not cry so loud. As the poor creature struggled desperately one of the murderers held her down on the fire with a hay rake, while another pressed his foot on her chest. While she was burning, the pious family recited

the Litany for the dying and the "De Profundis." Immediately the murder was completed the culprits went straight to the curé to confess their action and be absolved. He heard them and was horrified, but as they had made clean breasts he had to shrive them and to keep their secret. Next morning they all attended mass. On their way they bought some yards of white ribbon, known as Blessed Virgin's ribbon. This they cut in pieces and fastened round their necks, after having it blessed by the priest. Having discharged their responsibilities to heaven by a true confession followed by a gracious remission of sins as promised by Christ, they felt no scruple in deceiving earthly authorities, who, they felt, would not pardon them so easily. A declaration was made that the death occurred through an accidental fall into the fire. Suspicion, however, being excited, the murderers were promptly arrested. The woman and her husband have been sentenced to death, and the two brothers to penal servitude.

The newspapers rightly enough describe these people as monsters and their crime as so revoltingly atrocious that "language entirely fails to do justice to the horror of it." In commenting on the iniquity and superstition of the act, none of these journals, so far as I have noticed, dare to quote God's words—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." To do so in this connection, or to merely refer to the actual damning fact, would be too powerful an impeachment of the fetish books and gree-gree charms held in repute by their Christian readers, who would feel that such a reference, when *à propos* of a genuine modern illustration of its atrocity, would be an outrage upon their religious feelings. They insist upon a convenient oblivion of awkward facts, but the *Freethinker* can fully expose them to the light of day and insist on their significance. The *Daily News* says:

"There is no moral in such an awful recital against individuals, against society, or against a nation. France happens, by an unfortunate accident, to have bred four of the worst monsters of the time—that is all we can say about it."

This is far from being *all* we can say about it. Their act is in harmony with the teachings of the Bible, with the commands of a God whose guidance we are reverently and unquestioningly to obey. Those who are willing to learn can observe that there is a very serious moral to be derived from the manner in which individuals and society and nations have strengthened foul superstitions and hindered the free progress of civilisation and morality by means of the Bible and Christianity. These "monsters" of peasants had been taught a superabundance of religion: they ought to have been taught morality instead. If belief in the supernatural had been swept from their minds, if the priest had taught them that there was no such thing as witchcraft, and consequently no justification or excuse for killing a supposed witch, if their remarkable reliance on religion had been corrected by the knowledge that the religious assurance of forgiveness of sin and an easy entry to paradise by faith and confession was a falsehood and a fraud, they could not possibly have been made worse, and they might have been made better. Their minds, left free from religious delusions, would at least have been more open to secular considerations of right and wrong, and the voice of humanity, no longer stifled by the fetishisms and superstitions of Christianity, would have whispered more audibly in their hearts.

Some Christians may say that God did not command children to kill their *parents* for witchcraft, nor order death by fire. He ordered fathers to slay their children or wives with their own hands for serving other gods than himself (Deut. xiii., 6-9)—and of these other gods surely Satan, the very arch-enemy himself, was the worst. The manner of death he left open in his original command (Ex. xxii., 18), although a subsequent command (Lev. xx., 27) says that wizards and witches shall be stoned to death. On several occasions he ordered death by fire as the punishment for offences (Josh. vii., 15; Lev. xxi., 9; xx., 14). The hell he has prepared for unbelievers is an infinitely worse atrocity than that perpetrated by the Lebon family in conformity with his commands as expressed in the Bible.

Christians often laugh away the Freethinker's objection to this divine command by observing that there are no witches. Then why did the Bible fool men by solemnly making believe that there are? Why does God make laws against an impossible sin (Deut. xviii. 10, 11; Lev. xix.,



31; xx., 6)? Why is it said that "rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft" (1 Sam. xv., 23)? Why does God inform us that king Manasseh "used enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizards" (2 Chron. xxxiii., 6)? Why does he relate the story of the witch of Endor, who raised Samuel's ghost before king Saul (1 Sam. xxviii.)? Why does the New Testament continue the fraud, and class "witchcraft" with idolatries, murders, seditions, adultery, etc., as a manifest work of the flesh (Gal. v., 19-21)? It remains indisputably evident that the belief in witchcraft is taught by God, and that he commanded the slaughter of all witches and wizards. He and his Bible stand responsible for the murder of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of innocent people, hung, drowned and burned in all good faith and in pious obedience to the divine will. No Christian laughter at the now recognised impossibility of the supposed crime can wash away the real undoubted historic crime of which God and his servants have been guilty in slaying helpless and aged women for offences whose unreality is now a subject for derision even among Christians who believe they believe in the Bible that caused such atrocious punishment of an impossible offence. Their laughter at the hollowness of their God's solemn plea for wholesale murder of the innocent is either shallow and thoughtless in the extreme, or it is as heartless and infamous as the pious insensibility displayed by the Lebon murderers and the Christian witchfinders concerning the suffering they inflicted in conformity with God's fiendish laws.

W. P. BALL.

#### CHRISTIAN AND FREETHOUGHT ETHICS.

ARCHBISHOP PURCELL, Catholic, of Cincinnati, O., took charge of some 4,000,000 dols. belonging to the dupes of his diocese. This sum he was supposed to hold in trust, instead of which he applied it to the building of churches and parochial schools. When his embezzlement became known he went into bankruptcy, and one Mannix was chosen as the assignee of such property as could be saved from the wreck. This amounted to several hundred thousand dollars. Mannix's bondsmen were John Holland, Charles Stewart, Michael Walsh, and George Hoadly, the Freethinking governor of Ohio. It now appears that Mannix is a defaulter to the extent of 250,000 dols., and Judge Hoadly is the first among the bondsmen to tender his share of the loss from Mannix's rascality, amounting to 62,500 dols. The trustees of the Purcell estate accept the sacrifice, and a Freethinker pays the penalty of trusting in Christian morality. The affair is made all the more execrable by the fact that the Catholic Church owns millions upon millions of untaxed property, and could indemnify Judge Hoadly without feeling it. But will the Church do that act of justice? There is no reason for believing that it will. The Church of Rome never disgorge its ill-gotten gains. To save this six thousand dollars it will doubtless be satisfied to let the case stand on record as illustrating the difference between Christian morality and the ethics of Freethought. No illustration of this difference was needed, but if it shall open the eyes of a few dupes of Rome, Judge Hoadly's sacrifice may do some good. But if Hoadly had been the Catholic and Purcell the Freethinker, how it would have made Rome howl!

—*Truthseeker.*

CUI BONO?—Let me conclude by asking why you took so much trouble to such little purpose. You were born of a virgin, your career was full of miracles, you allowed yourself to be crucified with thieves, you rose from your tomb, and you ascended to heaven. You did all this to redeem the world. Eighteen centuries have elapsed, yet the world is not redeemed. Poverty and vice, misery and disease, imposture and superstition, tyranny and slavery, still afflict the earth. Churches are built for your worship, while poor men die in garrets and hovels; and your priests live in honor and luxury, while the genius which is to enlighten and purify the world too often languishes under penury and reproach. Civilisation advances slowly from the impulsion of science and humanity; and while it moves forward, where are the watchdogs of religion? Biting in front or barking behind, filling the earth with persecution and slander, and showing their love of God by their hatred of Man. Can any good come out of Nazareth? was asked long ago. With all sincerity I repeat the question and await the answer.—G. W. FOOTE, *Letters to Jesus Christ.*

#### REVIEW.

*Bible Words: Human, not Divine.* By JULIAN. London: Watts and Co., 17 Johnson Court, E.C. Price Threepence.—Although this little pamphlet does not contain anything likely to be new to Freethinkers, its careful statements render it useful for propagandist purposes.

#### CLERICAL ANECDOTES.

(From "Truth.")

IN Somerset there is a hamlet called Hatch. The clergyman's name in an adjoining parish happened to be Duck. His congregation were assembled for service one Sunday morning, awaiting his arrival, and wondering at his non-appearance, when up spake the clerk, and said: "I hereby give notice that there will be no church to-day, as Mr. Duck is gone to Hatch."

AT an evening service in a Scotch kirk near Edinburgh, the minister who was much given to metaphor, in the course of an eloquent sermon thundered forth the words "What is that I hear?" Upon which his old clerk, starting up from a surreptitious nap, called out in a very audible voice, "Deed, sir, it's naethen' but the clock chappin' eight."

ROGERS (the poet) was observing one day to Sydney Smith that he should not sit again for his portrait unless he was taken in an attitude of prayer. "Yes," said Sydney, "yes, with your face in your hat."

THE gravedigger of Trawden, Lancashire, after refreshing himself at the village inn, went to the churchyard to pursue his vocation. Being overcome by drowsiness, he lay down in the grave he had dug, and was soon fast asleep. There was a brass band contest that day in the village. The instruments sounded suddenly, and awakened the sexton. Finding himself in his grave, he imagined he heard the trumpet sound for the general resurrection. He hastened to rise. Looking round, expecting other graves to give up their dead, and seeing nobody but himself, he exclaimed, "It's a poor show for Trawden."

SCENE, a "three-decker." A flea settles on parson's book, which he flicks off as he reads: "Forty years long have I been grieved with this generation." The flea falls on the clerk's book, and he, flicking it off, says: "Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest."

THE following anecdote has at least the merit of being true: "During a long season of drought, the vicar of a remote church in the Lake District whispered to his clerk one Sunday, at the proper occasion in the service, 'John, don't you think we ought to pray for rain?' John replied in peremptory tones, audible to the whole congregation: 'What's t' use to pray for rain when my wedder-glass is stannin' at set-fair.'"

A PARISH clerk who was showing a visitor over the church, directed his attendant to a two-light, stained-glass window, that had recently been placed there in memory of a deceased couple. The figures were those of Moses and Aaron. "There they be, sir; but they don't much 'fature' (feature) the old couple," said the clerk, who regarded the figures as likenesses of the deceased lady and gentleman.

JEREMY ADAMS, parish clerk, formerly ratcatcher, of B —, Staffordshire, still retained a love for his old occupation, and frequently indulged in it with the vicar, who kept terriers. One week day, before service, Jemmy was in the church with the vicar, and, happening to see a rat, called loudly across the church, "Measter, measter, here be a rot, I see his teal now; a big grey un' summat loike th' owd d—l as give us the slip last night round Bakewell's pigstyes!" The vicar raised his hand, and Jemmy, looking round, was awfully abashed to see several people in the church.

THE sermon of the Rev. Drontone brought peace to the bosom of his church clerk, and he slept the sleep of the just, much to the delight of boys and yokels in the free seats, until a pause between "thirdly" and "fourthly" roused him to a sense of his duties, when his clear "Amen" resounded through the aisles. Perceiving his mistake in the astonished looks of the congregation, he continued, with a stern look at the occupants of the free seats, "Aye, men! men! must ye misbehave yourselves so that I have to rebuke ye, even in the House of God?"

A RICH Scotch elder of the kirk put half-a-crown by mistake one Sunday into the plate, instead of his usual penny—the plate was at the kirk door, guarded by his brother elders. He afterwards thus described his conduct: "I said, Gentlemen! it's down noo', and it will no be lifted; but I boo'ed (bowed) to them for twenty-nine Sawbaths after that!"

WAT TIMLIN, the half-crazy beadle of Hawick parish, got so tired of the long sermon of a strange minister, officiating one day in the incumbent's absence, that he left the church, and wandering in the direction of the river Teviot, saw the worshippers from the adjoining parish of Wilton crossing the bridge on their way home. Returning to the church and finding the preacher still thundering away, he shouted out, to the amusement and relief of the exhausted audience, "Say amen, ye cuddy; Wulton kirk's comin' ower Tayet brig."

THE officious wife of a rector thus addressed a clerk of the old style: "I wish, Mr. Jones, you wouldn't shout the responses, and that you would read your verses of the Psalms a little more quietly, like the rector does. And, oh, please, in the Litany, do not say, 'Spear us, good Lord.' It does make the people laugh." "Never you trouble yourself about the Litany, ma'am," replied Jones, "If I reads like the rector, every soul in the church will be asleep long afore we gets there."

"BURNT OUT" FUND.—W. Whitney, 1s.; Mr. Hunt, £1 1s.—This fund is now closed.



**PROFANE JOKES.**

**A PROFANE UPSTART.**—The man who sits on a tack.

The *Albany Express* is afraid that a good many people go to church simply for the purpose of keeping up a bowing acquaintance with the Almighty.

OLD Mr. Bentley (reading the paper)—I see that Solomon has been indicted for bigamy. Old Mrs. Bentley—Well, it's 'bout time. The idea of a man having 700 wives!

FIRST DEACON—"I see the Rev. Joseph Cook is down on every kind of speculation." SECOND DEACON—"Glad to hear he has improved." "Improved?" "Yes, his religion is mostly speculation."

FAMILIAR with history: Wife—"I do wish you would join the church, Sam." Wicked Sceptic—"Good heavens! we quarrel enough as it is. If I were to become a Christian we should be fighting all the time."

A TIRED little girl of four, hurrying through her bed-time prayers, was chidden by her mother, who said, "I am afraid God will not be very well pleased with such a prayer." "Well," answered the child petulantly, as she lifted her head from her mother's lap and pushed back the curls from her sleepy blue eyes, "it's all he'll get out of me to-night."

"EVERY one gona smash," sobs the Italian image man, "me broka all up! "What did you have on your board?" "What I have? Oh, I have one Gladstone, two Dickens, tree Garibaldi, tree Pio Nono, four St. Joseph, five St. Peter, six Virgin Mary—all gona hella 'gedder!"

A LITTLE girl and her mamma occupied seats in a railway carriage. On board was a reverend gentleman—a very fat, sleek man—attired in a black coat, buttoned stiffly in front, and a white choker. Of course he had to strike up a conversation with the mamma—by means of the little girl. Of missy he inquired if she attended Sunday-school, what lessons she remembered, and so on. In this way he learned that she had some curiosity concerning the ascension of the old patriarch in a chariot of clouds. "And now, my little girl," he inquired "why couldn't I be taken bodily to heaven in a cloud as Elijah was?" "B—because," the little one rejoined, with her big eyes looking over the round and well-fed form of her questioner, "because you are not built that way."

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See "PROGRESS" for DECEMBER. PRICE THREEPENCE.

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List of Freethinkers dealt with—

- |                     |                   |
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| Lord Bolingbroke    | Anstin Holyoake;  |
| Giordano Bruno      | Victor Hugo       |
| Henry Thomas Buckle | Hume              |
| Lord Byron          | Littré            |
| Richard Carlile     | Harriet Martineau |
| Professor Clifford  | J. S. Mill        |
| Anthony Collins     | Mirabeau          |
| Condorcet           | Robert Owen       |
| Robert Cooper       | Thomas Paine      |
| Danton              | Shelley           |
| Diderot             | Spinoza           |
| George Eliot        | D. F. Strauss     |
| Frederick the Great | John Toland       |
| Gambetta            | Vanini            |
| Isaac Gendre        | Volney            |
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| Thomas Woolston     |                   |

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