

THE FREETHINKER

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

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CHRISTIAN WARFARE.

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.—MATT. V., 39.

MELCHIZEDEK.

MELCHIZEDEK is the most extraordinary person of whom we have any record. Christ was born and Adam was made, but Melchizedek never began to be and will never cease to exist. If the Bible were not such an intensely serious book without a gleam of humor, except of the unconscious Hibernian kind, we might conclude that Melchizedek was *nobody*, for the description admirably suits that character. But the Bible does not play and must not be played with. All its personages are *bonâ fide* realities, from the Ancient of Days with white woolly hair on the throne of heaven to the prophet Jonah who took three days' lodging in the belly of a whale.

The name Melchizedek means *king* of justice, being derived from *melec*, a king, and *zedec*, justice. When the gentleman bearing this name is introduced to us in the fourteenth of Genesis, he is king of Salem, which means peace. Salem was a city on the site of Zion. Originally it was called Jebus, then Zadek, then Salem, and finally Jerusalem. So says Rabbi Joseph Ben-Gorion. But other writers, no doubt just as well informed, differ from him; and while the doctors disagree, simple laymen may well hold their judgment in suspense; or, better still, dismiss

Jebus, Zadek, Salem, and Jerusalem, to the limbo of learned trivialities. Counting the spots on a leopard, the quills on a porcupine, or the hairs in a cat's whiskers, is just as amusing and quite as edifying as most of the problems of divines and commentators.

When Abraham returned from a successful campaign, in which he defeated five kings and their armies with three hundred and eighteen raw recruits, Melchizedek came out to meet him with victuals and drink. These two friends joined in the friendly office of *scratching* each other. They were, in fact, a small mutual admiration society. Abraham, although at other times a rank coward, was on this occasion a bold warrior laden with spoil; and Melchizedek besides being King of Salem, was "the priest of the most high God." "Bully for you, Abraham," said Melchizedek. "Bully for you, Melchizedek," said Abraham. As usual, however, the priest got the best of it, for the patriarch paid him tithes, which were a capital return for his compliments. Genesis is a little confused, indeed; and what Scripture is not? "And he gave him tithes of all" is not very clear. It reminds one of the West of England yokel, who gave his evidence on a case of homicide in this way:

"He had a stick, and he had a stick; and he hit he, and he hit he. And if he'd only hit he as hard as he hit he, he'd a' killed he, and not he he."

But we must not be too hard on Bibles and yokels. So long as we can get a scintillation of their meaning we must be satisfied. Scripture, we may take it, means that the *he* who paid tithes was Abraham, and the *him* who received them was Melchizedek.

Now the book of Genesis is not an early, but a very late portion of the Jewish scriptures, dating only a few centuries before Christ. And we may depend on it that this little sentence about *tithes*, and perhaps the whole story that leads up to it, was got up by the priests, to give the authority of Abraham's name and the sanction of antiquity to an institution which kept them in luxury at the expense of their neighbors.

Our view of the case is supported by the fact that Melchizedek's name does not appear again in the whole of the Old Testament, except in the hundred and tenth Psalm, where somebody or other (the parsons of course say Christ) is called "a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." Paul, or whoever wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews, works up this hint in fine style. It would puzzle a lunatic, or a fortune teller, or the Archbishop of Canterbury, or God Almighty himself, to say what the seventh of Hebrews means. We give it up as an insoluble conundrum, and we observe that every commentator with a grain of sense and honesty does the same. But there is one luminous flash in the jumble of metaphysical darkness. Melchizedek is described as "without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life." It will be easy to recognise a gentleman of that description when you meet him. When we *do* meet him we shall readily acknowledge him as our king and priest, and pay him an income tax of two shillings in the pound; but until then we warn all kings and priests off our doorsteps.

Jewish traditions say that Melchizedek was the son of Shem, and set apart for the purpose of watching and burying Adam's carcass when it was unshipped from the Ark. Some, however, maintain that he was of a celestial race; while other (Christian) speculators have held that he was no less than Jesus Christ himself, who put in an early appearance in Abraham's days to keep the Jewish pot boiling. St. Athanasius tells a long-winded story of Melchizedek and Abraham, which shows what stuff the early Christians believed. According to the Talmud, Melchizedek composed the hundred and tenth Psalm himself; and although he is without end of days, his tomb was shown at Jerusalem in the time of Gemelli Carrere the traveller.

There was an heretical sect called the *Melchizedekians* in the third century. They held that Jesus Christ was, according to Hebrews, only of the order of Melchizedek, and therefore that Melchizedek himself was the more venerable. This heresy revived in Egypt after its suppression elsewhere, and its adherents claimed that Melchizedek was the Holy Ghost. The last time Melchizedek was heard of he was a London costermonger's donkey, but whether this was a real incarnation of the original Melchizedek no one is able to decide, unless the Lord should again, as in the case of Balaam's companion, "open the mouth of the ass" and inform the world of the things that belong unto its peace.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE MYTHICAL CHRIST.

THE article on "The Beginning of Christianity" with which Mr. R. A. Proctor opens the 1887 volume of *Knowledge*, is sufficiently outspoken to earn the warm commendation of Freethinkers. Mr. Proctor believes that "early in the first century a teacher of great power and of singularly earnest character, who was called Jesus, and early known as the Christ or the Anointed, arose among the Jews." He, however, points out that not one of the writers who might be expected to record the events associated with the life of Jesus, makes any mention of them; and that in the four genuine letters of Paul (the first four) and in the Revelation of John—the only books really written by those whose names they bear, we find scarcely any reference to the details of the life of J. C. Mr. Proctor points out, thirdly, that all the more remarkable events from the Annunciation to the Ascension "are found in the records of solar heroes, or of men to whom, long after their death, the characteristics of the sun-god were attributed. He adds:

"Fourthly, it is simply a fact (be the explanation what it may) that all the miracles in the New Testament are such as had in old times been always regarded as specially solar. Because the

sun brings light, it had been taught that the sun-god causes the blind to see; because the sun restores winter's dead to life, the sun-god raises the dead; because the sun restores sickly and diseased vegetation to health, the sun-god heals the sick; because the sun turns the waters which fall on the earth into the rich juice of the vine, the sun-god turns water into wine; because the sun causes the seeds which fall on the earth to bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and even a hundredfold, therefore the sun-god feeds the world richly out of little; because the sun kills feeble vegetation, the sun-god blasts the barren tree; because the sun rises above the sea-horizon, the sun-god walks upon the water; and because the sun re-appears after the darkness of storm calm presently is restored, the sun-god stills the tempest."

Mr. Proctor further notices that all the festivals adopted by the Christian Church are not only related to astronomical events but regulated by them, and that the natural events recorded in the Gospels correspond with facts related by Josephus and others, while the teachings of the New Testament "not only in their ethical aspect, but in method, and often in actual wording, are such as Gautama and his disciples preached long before and as holy Aryans had taught long before Gautama."

We are by no means sure that Mr. Proctor is right when he goes on to declare that the better part of the Christian doctrines are obviously Aryan in origin. As Emmanuel Deutsch pointed out, all the characteristic phrases and dogmas of Christianity are found in the Jewish Talmud. Much certainly has rather come from Egyptian than from Buddhist sources. The doctrine of the Atonement is found in the sacrificial systems both of the Egyptians and Jews, but has no place in Buddhism. The moral teachings also have fully as much affinity with those of the Chinese Lao-tse, as of the Hindu Gautama, while their similarity to the teaching of the Jewish Fathers is sometimes so close that M. Rodrigues suggests that the Sermon on the Mount is but a cento of Jewish aphorisms.

There were plenty of Semitic as well as Aryan myths, and a leading one was that of a Messiah. Believing the Scriptures to assert that the Messiah should do and suffer certain things was sufficient authority for saying that Christ did so act and suffer. The first Gospel has many illustrations of this tendency.* The result is sometimes grotesque. Zechariah, for instance, in accordance with the well-known method of Hebrew rhetoric, repeats his description of the beast on which the King was to ride, in two parallel lines: "Lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt, the foal of an ass"—where the "and" is simply equivalent to "yea." The Greek evangelist, misunderstanding the idiom, actually makes Jesus act as an acrobat and ride under Jerusalem upon *two* beasts, an ass and her colt. So the same writer tells of an atrocious massacre, unmentioned by any historian, connecting it with a misinterpreted Old Testament prophecy. As Moses had miraculously fed his followers, so must Christ. As Elijah restored the widow's son at Zarephath, so Christ is said to have raised the widow's son at Nain. If, as some think, other of his alleged exploits have arisen from misinterpreted metaphors, as the story of the Incarnation and the descent of the Holy Ghost, from the saying "born of the spirit," the stories as related are as equally myths, as if they were copied from Aryan legends of solar heroes. Indeed, Mr. Proctor, taking out from the Gospels all that may be assigned to mythical sources, leaves but the scantiest evidence of the real existence of "a teacher of great power and of singularly earnest character." To us it seems simpler to say that the Jesus of the Gospels is impossible. We know that as early as the time of the epistle according to St. John there were those who denied that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh. Whether there was a teacher named Jesus, and whether he was the son of Joseph or of Pandera is hardly worth discussing.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE PRODIGAL SON.—It was at a fancy fair, held ostensibly for the purpose of supplying the cannibals of Hayti with pepper-casters and toothbrushes, that the pretty little stall-keeper, Miss Millie Sparkins, said to young Lord Gourmandby, "Now, Peter, dear boy, you must really buy this beautiful pin-cushion!—it's only ten guineas—a mere trifle, you know, to you." "I beg pardon, Miss Millie," replied Lord Gourmandby, "doosid sorry; but 'pon my soul I can't afford it. You know I am the prodigal son." "Gracious goodness! Peter," ejaculated the snappy little beauty, arching her eyebrows, "who'd have thought it? Why, I should have guessed you more like the *fatted calf*. But we live and learn. Ta, ta! Peter; don't look so uncharitable! Do try and bear yourself like a great and magnanimous Christian."—*Fun*.

* See *Gospel Lies*.

ACID DROPS.

At Hostock, near Bolton, the people are alarmed at the appearance of a ghost in a spinning-mill. An overlooker spoke to it, and a watchman saw it walking about the mill on Sunday night. Evidently there is much better proof of the existence of this ghost than of the Holy Ghost of the New Testament. Two living witnesses who can be cross-examined are worth all the documents compiled by nobody knows whom from hearsay reports and traditional stories. The Church doesn't believe in such rubbish unless it appears in the Bible. In Matthew the bodies of the saints rise from their graves and appear in the city unto many. This kind of thing is gospel truth in Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago, but in England now it is contemptible and idiotic superstition fit only for silly servant-girls and foolish old women.

THE *Rock*, complaining that its beloved Church is sorely beset by the enemy, says: "The twin sisters of Ritualism and Infidelity, who play into each other's hands, are exercising their enchanting blandishments, and alluring many from the paths of simplicity and purity of worship. We fear that there are many true believers to be found casting their influence into the wrong scale, simply because they do not recognise the devices of the evil one." We are glad to hear that "Infidelity" is so attractive as to be charged with exercising "enchanting blandishments."

To counteract this alluring propaganda of Freethought the *Rock* is issuing articles each week against Infidelity and Ritualism. The ignorance and stupidity of the writer of the articles on "The World's Witness to True Religion" is shown in the fact that he makes Carlyle a Christian. Carlyle took Mohammed as his example of the religious hero; he owned we know nothing of immortality; and he regarded the Bible as Hebrew "old clothes."

THE Calvinistic Methodists of West Merioneth have unanimously passed the following resolution: "We consider it our duty to protest emphatically against the unworthy conduct and schemes which the clergy of the Church of England had recourse to in order to secure a vastly larger attendance than usual at their churches last Sunday, when the census was taken of the attendance at places of worship through the Principality, and that therefore the census is thoroughly violated in the mode of taking it, and unreliable in its results, and that we make this protest before the result is published." Christians evidently haven't a very high opinion of each other's pious devices, and if the Methodists are right in their accusations, as is probably the case, the Episcopalian Christians are responsible for a deliberate fraud. Evidently they feel that the end sanctifies the means.

THERE is a worthy clergyman who is very absent-minded and has a short memory. It is a common habit with him in the pulpit to forget something, and then, after sitting down, to rise up and commence his supplementary remarks with the expression, "By the way." A few Sundays ago he got half through a prayer, when he hesitated, forgot what he was about, and sat down abruptly without closing. In a moment or two he arose, and pointing his finger at the amazed congregation, he said, "Oh, by the way, amen."—*Christian Commonwealth*.

IF Christ had lived to-day and performed the miracle of making wine, as he did at Cana, of Galilee, the officers of the internal revenue would have arrested him, and after carting him all over the state for trial before the United States Court, he would have been sent to the Albany Penitentiary for one year and fined five hundred dollars and costs. If old Noah had lived in these days he would have been arrested for being drunk, and sent to jail to break stone for ten days at least.—*Star o' Liberty*.

MARY ANN COFFIN, an old woman of Portsmouth, has, like Jesus Christ, been betrayed by the Devil. Arrested for being drunk in Albert Road, she pleaded that she was a member of the Salvation Army. "But I met with the Devil on the road, and he betrayed me, like he did Jesus Christ." She was fined five shillings.

In a tirade against the Salvation Army, the Rev. J. H. Browne, of Antipodean fame as a Congregationalist minister, formulated several charges against it, such as that it was "irreverent," and that its theology was "sulphurous." It has not escaped those on the spot that this is a truly amusing charge for a minister to make. Do the other forms of religion want to have a monopoly of Hades? Does Mr. Browne consider that the "churches" have a pre-emptive right in the presiding fiend? It would seem so, because they use him as their trump card on all occasions. He is never in such demand as at missions and revival meetings, because the clergy know well that nothing fills the collection-plate like fear.

WE gather from sundry reviews of novels, that we do not intend to read, that Agnostics and Atheists are becoming quite common in the fiction of the day. No doubt this is a sign of the times, but the individuals so represented are usually as much caricatures as Mr. Tennyson's Edgar in *The Promise of May*.

Real Atheists, however, are sufficiently common to correct the exaggerations of the caricatures.

THE death of Jezreel, author of the *Flying Roll*, and founder of the New House of Israel, upset the minds of many of his followers who had been taught to believe in the immortality of the body. Mrs. Jezreel, upon whom the mantle of her husband fell, has excommunicated the doubting ones. The local newspaper, which devotes a lengthy article to the subject, adds that the fanaticism has led to much misery in once happy homes, by members of families leaving their friends and "the world," and "gathering" with the New and Latter House at Chatham Hill. One notable case is mentioned, in which a man left his wife and children, and forfeited an excellent commercial position, in order to join this sect, submitting to the performance of degrading offices, under the idea that such service was pleasing to the Supreme Being, and who, as one result of the "split," is now thrust penniless into the world.

THE Rev. F. W. Goodwyn, vicar of Sharrow, felt called by the Holy Ghost to accept the Bishopric of Bathurst with all its emoluments. But he has since ascertained some "circumstances connected with the finances of the Bishopric" which have convinced him that the Holy Ghost made a mistake in calling him to that post. So he has declined it. Of course he must have found that the salary was too large or too secure for the merits of a humble Christian like himself. To suggest any other reason would be flat blasphemy as ever was committed.

AT Gedling, near Nottingham, two laborers named John Alcock and John Jessop, "said their prayers" before taking laudanum as a means of committing suicide. Alcock died but Jessop recovered. Religion did not prevent them poisoning themselves.

REVIEWING a recent work on the Miraculous Element in the Gospels, the *Christian World* expresses the conviction that miracles can only be treated beneficially by showing their moral and spiritual significance. Will the *Christian World* explain the moral and spiritual meaning of cursing a fig-tree or sending devils into swine?

AN American speculator named Cazalet, is forming a company to buy up Palestine and fulfil the prophecies. The *English Churchman* says that although the Holy Land is sterile and out of the way of easy communication, all inconveniences will be overcome because "great physical changes will be effected at the time of Messiah's second coming." Mr. Cazalet's company will afford an excellent opportunity for cranks to lose their money.

THE Scriptural theatricals at Clapham are to be followed up by a religious historical drama called "St. Augustine; or, the Conversion of England," which has been written by two clergymen.

THE Social Democrats are continuing their church parades. At Battersea they greeted the prayers for the Queen and Royal Family with loud and prolonged hissing. The sermon by the Rev. J. Buckland was received with frequent expressions of disapprobation. An assertion that children could be hired for purposes of begging was met with loud hissing and cries of "It's false." The aim and end of our journal is hostility to religion, but we cannot do otherwise than condemn such unseemly interferences with religious worship for purposes of advertisement.

SOME five years ago it was announced by the Madrid Press that a Spanish gentleman was going to put into verse the whole of the Spanish Bible. It is now stated that Senor Carulla has actually accomplished the task, the result of his labor amounting to over 260,000 verses. A monument of wasted labor is thus produced. But if Christians will be content with wasting their own time without persecuting us, we shall be glad of the improvement.

IN this city, not long ago, a bank director asked the cashier: "Is Mr. — good?" "That depends on whether you inquired in a Godward or manward sense," replied the cashier. "I mean manward, of course," said the director. "In a Godward sense," remarked the cashier, "Mr. — is very good. A No. 1. No man in the church can pray louder. But in a manward sense I am sorry to say that he is tricky." It is sufficient to say that the note of Mr. — was not discounted.—*Cleveland Plain Dealer*.

THE Rev. John Johnson, a clergyman of the Church of Ireland, cut his throat with a penknife and made a sanguinary mess in a hotel because of certain monetary losses. He was taken to a hospital and has recovered.

THE Rev. E. A. Knox quotes from Dr. Colet, once Dean of St. Paul's, the remark, "I tell you that ignorance is the mother of devotion." He thinks it very true so far as the Roman Catholic form of Christianity is concerned, but that it has no relation to the Protestant offshoot.

THE *Rock*, in a leading article on "Science and Religion," speaks of the theories put forth by Darwin, Huxley and "Tyndale." Its confusion of the orthography of Tyndall with that of

Tyndale the old religious reformer, is on a par with its ignorance of the facts of science and its absurd reiterations of confident assurances in the unshaken truth of the Bible. A journal that says there is no scientific proof that the chronology of the Bible is wrong, must manage to forget that there is such a science as geology. Six thousand years are miserably inadequate for the formation of strata and the gradual development of species.

WHEN Ginous the murderer was guillotined at Carpentras last week, the people rushed through the ring of troops and sprinkled their children with his blood, the idea being that it would prevent them becoming murderers. Most of these people have been brought up to believe in the efficacy of the blood of Christ, and there is really no reason why the blood of Ginous should not be just as efficacious.

ACCORDING to the *Bristol Times*, the whole of the congregation of Staplegrave Church, near Taunton, were nearly asphyxiated by the gases from the heating apparatus. Several women fell fainting in the church, while the rest of the congregation had to make for the doors, faint and overcome.

A BILL of the Primitive Methodist Chapel, Alford by Nottingham, announces "A Hot Pie and Coffee Supper: Proceeds for Reduction of Chapel Debt." Below are the words: "The Lord is at hand. Be ye therefore ready." This is meat before grace, but we suppose a hot-pie and coffee supper is a good preparation for receiving the Lord this cold weather.

A CHURCH of ENGLAND Sunday-school near Halifax has been raising the wind by a whistling match, the first prize being five shillings and the second half-a-crown. If J. C. and the twelve had been as 'cute as their successors, they might have kept Mr. Treasurer Judas in funds, and saved him the trouble of peaching.

THE Bishop of Gloucester bewails the accursed agitation against extraordinary and other tithes and the lowered rental of glebe lands. With failing funds the prospect of God's Church is black indeed. But a worse evil remains. Blaspheming infidels are attacking it from without, while the factions within are hurrying to make the question of disestablishment.

SPEAKING to the Young Men's Christian Association at Exeter Hall, the Rev. Burman Cassin said that God had allowed David to fall into murder and adultery "for a purpose." "If he had never been guilty of heinous sin that Psalm (the 51st) would never have been written." Outward goodness and religious observances without the inward purification of real conversion, were only, as Bunyan put it, "a cleaner way to hell." "They wanted to know the heinousness of sin before their hearts could be really renewed—to know what was blacker than blackness before they could realise what was whiter than whiteness—'whiter than snow.'" This looks very much like telling the young men that they had better sin like David, "for a purpose," as the only means of ensuring a deep and thorough repentance and conversion.

CHRISTIANS are always discovering some confirmation of holy writ from profane sources. A little while ago they made much of the Moabite stone which says that the Israelites were worsted in a fight which the Bible says they won. The other day they discovered the mummy of the Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea, and now Mr. D. Burnett of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, puts out a little book to tell us that because Pharaoh called chaste Joseph, Zaphnath Paaneah, we shall find Joseph mentioned under the name "Aah"—which is the name of the moon-god. Champollion, however, tells us that the Coptic form of the name "Ooh" should take the masculine article P., by which the moon deity, who is also Joseph, becomes Pooh. No doubt Pooh! is the fitting exclamation with which to greet Mr. D. Burnett's theory.

THE angels in heaven whose duty it is to listen to the prayers of God's chosen people, have another burden to bear. They must now learn the Czech language, which has been introduced in a new Prague synagogue. They have to listen to Hebrew in all its varieties, from nasalised Polish to Sphardic, German, English and German-English. It is no sinecure to be an angel under these circumstances.

A PROHIBITION Bible is being sold in Atlanta, Georgia. It encloses a bottle of whisky. By touching a spring at one end of the book the other end opens, and the neck of the bottle bobs up serenely.

THE Rev. Gavin Lang and other godly inhabitants of Inverness are in a terrible passion with Mr. F. R. Benson, who played one of Shakespeare's dramas at the theatre on a recent Fast-Day. They talk of appealing to the authorities against such horrid desecration. Instead of hearing Shakespeare on a Fast-Day, the people of Inverness ought to be reading about Lot and his daughters, Judah and Tamar, David and Bathsheba, and the hero and heroine of Solomon's Song.

ANOTHER Scotch sky-pilot, the Rev. Alexander Campbell, of Montrose, has been lecturing on Sabbath profanation at Edinburgh. He was very severe on unnecessary exercise of the legs on the Lord's Day. In his opinion, people had a right to take four walks, and only four; first, to the church in the forenoon; second, back to their homes; third, to the church in the afternoon; and fourth, home again. Mr. Campbell takes a trade view of the question. He evidently thinks the Sabbath was made for preachers.

A SORT of revolt has occurred among the Ursuline nuns at Cividale, Triuli, in Italy. They have dethroned their abbess and set up another. The Archbishop of Udine has gone to the convent to "restore order."

THERE seems to be a latent spirit of revolt among Catholics in America also. Father McGlynn was deprived of his post by Archbishop Corrigan for advocating Henry George's land theories and refusing to go to Rome and defend himself before the Pope. The priest by whom he was replaced has been coldly received by the parishioners, who are holding indignation meetings to protest against the wrong done to Father McGlynn.

ST. MICHAEL'S CHURCH, Workington, has been entirely destroyed by fire. The damage is estimated at £10,000, but as the custodians trusted in a fire-insurance office rather than in the Lord the loss will be recouped.

THE will of the late Pope Pius IX. has just been published. Like the papacy itself it is a good deal behind date. In the preamble Pio Nono recommends his soul to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But lest the three-headed deity should be unable to give him a leg-up to heaven, he also invokes the assistance of God's mother, her poor old husband, Saints Peter and Paul, and the archangel Michael. If all these cannot lift Pio Nono into heaven, he must, like Jack Falstaff, show a great alacrity in sinking.

KING MUANGA, the negro king of Uganda, is imitating the historic methods of Christianity. He has burnt nearly a hundred native Christians, and threatens to exterminate all the converts made by the Catholic missionaries. Had he been born white instead of black, in Europe instead of Africa, and two hundred years ago instead of now, he would have made an excellent Grand Inquisitor.

THIS King Muanga is, we believe, the gentleman who was presented with a Bible and a trombone. What use he made of the Bible has not been ascertained, but his recent massacre shows that he stood in no need of its teachings. He did, however, some tremendous business with the trombone.

THE Rev. T. Hindley, rector of Holy Trinity, Margate, has induced the Penny Dinners Committee to decline a subscription of £10, which was the result of a dramatic entertainment on behalf of the fund. The reverend gentleman hates theatres, probably because they outrival churches as places of entertainment. Trade jealousy again.

MRS. TEMPLE, wife of the Bishop of London, presented the scriptural prize to the children of the Westminster Board Schools on January 15. The Rev. J. R. Diggle, chairman of the London School Board, who presided, said that 250,000 children were receiving biblical instruction in our metropolitan public schools. This is a terrible fact, but it will not last for ever. The day is approaching when State education will be purely secular.

MR. DIGGLE pretended to think there is no objection to religious instruction because there are so few withdrawals under the conscience clause. But he must know as well as we do that the conscience clause is very much of a delusion. Parents who avail themselves of it make little martyrs of their children, and consequently there are many who scruple to avail themselves of it, and try to undo the mischief of Bible reading when the children return home.

THE Rev. John Page Hopps, of Leicester, has been writing upon the Spiritualism of the Old Testament. He especially selects Ezekiel, which he calls a collection of spirit séances. Ezekiel, he says, "was what is now called a medium," influenced, so Mr. Hopps thinks, by spirits interested in the affairs of the Jews both at home and in captivity. Mr. Hopps thinks the medium made the mistake of attributing the works of the spirits to Jehovah. We have a much simpler theory, viz. that Ezekiel was insane. Any one who besieged a tile, baked his dinner with dung, cut off his hair, weighed it in three parts, one of which he burnt, the other smote with a knife, and the third scattered to the wind, and who uttered the rhapsodical nonsense found in the visions of Ezekiel, would at the present day find his proper place in the worst wards of Colney Hatch. Spiritists and other believers in his revelations would be at home in the same establishment.

A CERTAIN Presbyterian elder said: "Some people in these ungodly days believe that *all* will be saved; but, my dear brethren, we Presbyterians hope for better things."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Jan. 23, Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool; at 11, "The Star of Bethlehem;" at 3, "Old Nick;" at 7, "Where is God?"
 Tuesday, Jan. 25, Stanley Hall, Cairns Road, Battersea Rise; at 8, on "Mansions in the Sky."

JAN. 30, Camberwell.
 FEB. 6, Sunderland; 13, Milton Hall, London; 20, Plymouth; 27, Huddersfield;
 MARCH 20, Hall of Science, London; 27, Hall of Science, London.
 APRIL 10, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—J. Langford, Argus.
 E. AND A. OATES, 4 Station Road, Wood Green, supply the *Freethinker* and all Secular literature.

ATHEIST.—We respect your right of opinion, but we must agree to differ. As to mesmerism, we are no authority on the subject; but our belief is that all the phenomena you refer to are the effect of the patient's *imagination*, and not of any "force" or "fluid" passing from the magnetiser.

J. BARNABY.—Thanks for the cutting. Paper sent. Freethought is making headway. There will be a great change in the next twenty years. Leading Freethinkers are getting the public ear on many questions besides religion, and people are beginning to see who are the advance-guard of progress.

MEMBER N. S. S.—Every gaol chaplain preaches on a full stomach to half-empty ones. The phenomenon is not confined to Brighton.

J. STOPHERD.—Always glad to be of assistance to our readers.

G. COCKMAN.—Thanks for cuttings, which we are always pleased to receive.

W. CABELL.—Properly speaking, of course, the Romish priest takes a *vow of celibacy*. But as all sexual intercourse outside the married state is a sin in the eyes of the Church, the vow is virtually one of *chastity*. We do not agree with the Free-lovers' interpretation of the passage you refer to. Certainly we do not believe that Jesus and Paul taught sexual promiscuity. Their mistake lay in the opposite direction. Dr. Nicholls is wrong in stating that "the Freethought party in England call themselves Malthusians." Some Freethinkers are Malthusians and some are not. Nor is it true that the Malthusians advocate the abolition of marriage.

UTAH, U.S.—Our correspondent here is requested to excuse delay and to send us his address, which has been mislaid.

W. SCHWEIZER.—Many thanks for the cuttings.

W. HEALEY.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

P. A. RODY.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

W. GASCOIGNE says that Secular literature can be obtained in Spennymoor at Messrs. Byers, Post Office, and at Goulard's, Market Shops.

J. SOUTHIARD.—The old Act of Elizabeth, compelling people to go to church under penalty of fine and imprisonment, has never been repealed, and is consequently still a part of the law of England. No law is really obsolete until it is repealed. In prosecuting Mr. Dillon the Government has gone back to an Act of Edward III. We may add that when we mentioned the Act of Elizabeth to the chaplain of Holloway Gaol, he said he would like to see it enforced. He thought people should be *made* to go to church.

J. COTTERELL.—Although we know no work replying to Keith, you will find much matter on the prophecies in Cooper's *Bible and its Evidences* and Greg's *Creed of Christendom*. See also *Freethinker*, May 16 and June 13, 1886.

A. TREVOR.—You will find the statistics you require in the new edition of Mr. Foote's *Shadow of the Sword*.

H. H.—What can the revolution of the Sun have to do with Joshua's miracle? Relatively to our earth the sun is stationary. The text plainly involves a supernatural lengthening of the day. That is not astronomy, but theology. Glad to hear you find *Bible Contradictions* so useful in your discussions with the orthodox.

W. J. CHADWICK.—See "Acid Drops."

W. COOKNEY.—Your lists of subscriptions are too voluminous for our limited pages. Sorry we cannot find room for more.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Liberty—Avant-Courier—Liberator—Justice—West Sussex Gazette—Ironclad Age—Sydney Evening News—Mind in Nature—Hackney Examiner—Thinker—Great Thoughts—South Wales Daily News—Jersey Evening Journal—New York Herald—Reynolds' Newspaper.

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.

Mr. Adam and Captain Noah, the first two numbers of Mr. Foote's new work on *Bible Heroes*, are now ready. They are written in the same vein as *Bible Romances*, and contain a lot of curious out-of-the-way items from Jewish and Oriental sources.

THE Children's party at the London Hall of Science on Jan. 12 was a great success. The galleries were crowded with adults, while the floor was a Babel of happy youngsters. The presents from the Christmas Tree were distributed by Miss Bradlaugh.

THE Swedenborgian Church yet boasts of the adherence of one man of genius, Dr. J. J. Garth Wilkinson. At any rate he writes in their organ, the *New Church Magazine*. A paper on "Dogma" in the January number is full of verve. He contends that, despite much indifference at the present time, there is but little real freedom, for dogmas lie in reserve, a great intolerant force incarnate in clergy and laity. "The history of the Church in all ages shows that it is cruel. It burns its enemies though it loves its friends. It does not burn them now in Smithfield or in the Inquisition; it burns them in their beds, in their doctrines. It prevents the truth for which they may yearn from its marriage portion in their hearts."

THE authenticity of the Book of Ezekiel has recently been attacked by M. Seinecke, who assigns the book to the Macbean age. It is pretty generally acknowledged now that the book of Daniel, whose name is mentioned in Ezekiel, dates only from the second century B.C. Prof. C. P. Tiele in his recently-published *History of Babylonia and Assyria* pronounces that the Book of Daniel is an historical romance unfit to be classed among the sources of history. In the same work Prof. Tiele speaks of Noah and Nimrod as "legendary persons."

DR. CHARLES LETOURNEAU, president of the French Anthropological Society, has just put forward another important work entitled *L'Evolution de la Morale*. He traces the evolution of morality through four stages "the bestial, the savage, the barbarous and the mercantile." Dr. Letourneau, who is a frank materialist, declares that he aims at preparing the way by a study of the evolution of morals for the construction of scientific ethics free from all theology and metaphysics. He says "From the moment when the conduct of man is regulated by the caprice of gods, everything becomes possible;" and it is now of importance for social progress "to remind them that their kingdom is not of this world." We trust the work will soon be translated.

M. RENAN's articles on the Origins of the Bible, contributed to the *Revue de deux Mondes*, will shortly appear in book form.

DR. A. KUENEN, in recent numbers of the Dutch *Theologisch Tijdschrift*, attacks the Gospel of St. John as "an historical romance."

PAUL BERT's remains were buried at Auxerre, on Saturday afternoon, Jan. 15, in the presence of about 25,000 people, a large number of whom had travelled from Paris. The weather was exceedingly cold, the thermometer having fallen to 21°, and the attendance of so many mourners must have been due to something more than the "mere sense of duty" to which the *Daily News* attributes it. The speeches lasted for two hours. Among the speakers were M. Flourens, the Foreign Minister, and M. Berthelot, Minister of Education. The latter, who is a life-long friend of Rénan, and one of the most eminent scientists in France, significantly remarked that Paul Bert sought to free his countrymen from the prejudices of the Church as well as of the Throne. Other speakers were M. Guichard, the Senator; M. Millicaux, Mayor of Auxerre; M. Spuller, one of Gambetta's lieutenants; M. Janssen, Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences; and MM. Dastre, Dehairin, and Chauveau, lecturers at the Sorbonne.

THE Sunderland Freethinkers, who have recently formed a strong Branch of the N. S. S., are making great preparations for Mr. Foote's visit on Feb. 6. A handsome and commodious hall has been secured and large audience are expected.

THE GOLDEN CALF.

It is natural that John Bull should worship the golden calf. Paternal pride in his own offspring would account for this deification. But I must not stay to deliver the valuable social sermon contained in this joke. I must turn at once to the biblical legend of the Golden Calf which has furnished this figurative expression for Mammon worship.

Moses had led the children of Israel to the foot of Mount Sinai. "And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount." Undismayed by this, Moses ventured to wait on the Lord on the summit of the mountain. There, enveloped in damp cloud and *tête-à-tête* with God, the old man of eighty endured an idiotic fast of forty days and nights while receiving the divine instructions for making a box of religious toys, gaudy curtains of red and blue, ridiculous ecclesiastical millinery, and sacrificial articles of the greatest importance, such as wash-basins, snuffers, candlesticks, incense, holy ointment, and

so forth. Mingled with these heavenly revelations, various moral and immoral injunctions were issued, among them those known as the Ten Commandments. Meanwhile the people had grown tired of waiting for the return of their grand old man. The terrible plagues of Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the miraculous daily supply of manna rained down from heaven, the thanderings and lightnings and earthquakes of Mount Sinai, and all the many and striking miracles and judgments they had so recently witnessed, were forgotten—so preternaturally short was the memory of this strange people when the exigences of the story required such unnatural forgetfulness. Their religious requirements being as yet insufficiently provided for by their absentee leader, they called on his brother Aaron to make them a God; and Aaron, like a true priest, was as ready to humor them as a modern Talleyrand would have been. Such a change in the people's religious views would obviously have been impossible if the events narrated in the Bible had really occurred. The frequent revolts of the people under so terrifying a dispensation of miracle prove only the falsity of the sacred romance. But religious legends, like fairy tales, must be taken as they stand. If we examine them they crumble to pieces.

With the gold earrings fraudulently borrowed from the Egyptians by God's directions and subsequently worn by the Israelitish men as well as by the women, Aaron prepared a molten calf and carved it with a graving tool into a more perfect shape. From the bleak summit of Sinai, jealous Jehovah had the pain of seeing his rival god set on a pedestal and worshipped with acclamation by his own fickle followers. Naturally irritated beyond endurance by such an insulting preference and such an ungrateful desertion, Jehovah hurriedly endeavored to break up the long fasting interview with which he as host had graciously favored his aged and distinguished guest. To hear the people say of the precious calf "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Israel," was more than he could endure. Their ingratitude and the untruthfulness of their cry were intolerable; and there was also a diabolical but unsuspected profanity in the idolatrous proclamation. The divine attributes of Trinity or multiplicity in unity was actually pirated in advance from Jehovah and bestowed on this sucking calf so daringly described as "gods" in the plural! The only genuine Three-in-One, thus caricatured and betrayed, turned wildly to Moses and cried aloud to the meek old man, "Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." The diplomatic old interviewer had great difficulty in calming down his passionate deity into a somewhat more reasonable state of mind. The artful octagenarian's advice to his God to "repent" would evidently have been futile without the eminently suitable arguments he employed to influence the divine decision. Moses reminded God how his enemies the Egyptians would triumph over him and his chosen people on finding that he had only led them forth from slavery to slay them in the mountains. He reminded God also of his promises to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Thus checked and moulded by human fallibility and human remonstrance, the all-wise and unchangeable God "repented of the evil which he had thought to do unto his people" (Ex. xxxii., 14).

But although meek old Moses had so far appeased the Almighty's bad temper, he himself almost immediately after fell into a similar fit of rage over the very same cause. Descending the mountain with the tables of stone written by God, he presently heard the singing of the worshippers of the Golden Calf, and saw them dancing as piously naked before their god as David before the ark when it passed through the streets of Jerusalem. Unfortunately, nobody attempted to pacify Moses in his rage as he had pacified Jehovah. Suddenly transformed from a meek and wily sage into a foaming fanatic, he cast the tables on the ground and broke them in pieces.* Standing at the gates of the camp, he cried out, "Who is on the Lord's side? let him come unto me;" whereupon the sons of Levi, the priestly

* As the tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments had not yet been received by the people, it has been rashly alleged that the commandments against idolatry had not been heard of by the people; so that God and Moses punished them for breaking a command which had never been delivered to them. But this is a mistake. The words of the commandments had been recited to them (Ex. xxv., 3; xx., 1-5), but had not at that time been graven on stone by the finger of God and delivered to Moses. It was at a second interview that God tardily confirmed the bargain with the people by handing the duly completed stone documents to Moses

tribe, all gathered around him. The Bible proceeds with the account thus:

"And he said unto them, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Put every man his sword by his side, and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his brother, and every man his companion, and every man his neighbor. And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there fell of the people that day about three thousand men." (Ex. xxxii., 27, 28.)

Such has usually been the method in which religion in power has appealed to the hearts and consciences of the adherents of other religions. The passage quoted is far from being the only one in which men are commanded to slay every man his brother and every man his companion and every man his neighbor because they could not think alike on religious matters. It is not Christians who can consistently rebuke even the wildest and most criminal of those passionate Socialists who would slay the successful worshippers of the modern Golden Calf and spare them not, neither letting their eye pity nor their hand be stayed by any human weakness.

The fate of the real original Golden Calf was an ignominious one. Moses had it burnt and ground to powder, and then made the people drink the ashes mixed with water. The people thus devoured their god as the Christians do theirs in the Lord's Supper. Then the infinitely benevolent God finished his kindly work, for the time, by plaguing the people "because they made the calf, which Aaron made." Further punishment he reserved for a future opportunity.

W. P. BALL.

PAGAN BOB JOINS A FATAL THIRTEEN CLUB.

THE *New York Herald* reports:—"Thirteen men sat down to three tables at thirteen minutes of eight o'clock last evening at the Thirteen Club's final festival of 1886, at Morelli's, No. 8 West Twenty-eighth Street. It was the fifty-ninth dinner. Col. Ingersoll, a new-elected member, was present. After dinner Mr. Wilder announced as the first toast, "Superstitions of Public Men," and introduced Col. Ingersoll, who was greeted with long continued applause. The ovation over, the colonel said: "I suppose the superstitions of public men are that they are exceedingly important to the public. A public man reflects the average intelligence of the public. He should be the centre of the earth, not to weigh anything, but to draw all things his way. That is one objection to the republican form of government. There is a superstition that every man has every other man as his censor. This makes every public man exceedingly conservative. He agrees with everybody on almost every question. He meets a temperance man and bewails the effects of intemperance; he meets a saloon-keeper and tells him that the idea that the prohibitionists can take away personal liberty is simply monstrous. The superstition of a public man is that hypocrisy is the road to success. (Great applause.) Another superstition is that the democratic party has not outlived its usefulness. Still another is that the republican party should have power for what it has done, instead of what it proposes to do. Another superstition is that the people of the United States do not admire intellectual honesty and moral courage. But they are going to and will. The time has come when the old superstition in politics must be thrown away—to rely upon the intelligence of the American people. (Applause and cheers.) The most significant superstition is that in nearly every village under the American flag the school-house is larger than the church. (Applause.)

"If I have any superstition," continued the colonel, "it is the superstition against superstition. The first things to believe in are the corner-stone truths that have been demonstrated. Beyond the possible is the impossible, and beyond the impossible you'll find most of the religions of the world. My idea is that any man who acts beyond the impossible is superstitious. Any man who thinks he can gain a seat in heaven by raising a hell on earth—(laughter)—among his fellow men is superstitious; any man who believes there is or can be any other religion than the increase of human happiness in this world is superstitious. I have known public men who have made me wonder how they ever got their positions.

"What we need all over the United States is to have the courage to speak as we think. We do not want a president who will publicly thank God for earthquakes—(laughter)—but a president who will appeal to the intelligence of the people—the highest intelligence. We don't want public men who pretend to believe all that ignorance has circulated. That is a superstition that interferes in the happiness of mankind. It is a superstition that reaches from heaven to earth and poisons our happiness." (Applause and cheers).

Old gentleman to boy: "Do you go to Sunday-school, little boy?" Little boy: "No." Old gentleman: "Nor church?" Little boy: "No." Old gentleman: "Bless me! Aren't your parents Christian people?" Little boy: "Yes. But you see, one 's a Catholic and the other 's a Protestant. That lets me out."

INFANT MARRIAGE IN INDIA.

THE curse of infant marriage is maintained among the Hindoos by the all-powerful influence of the religious sanction. According to one of their religious books, if a girl passes the age of ten without having been married, her father, mother, and elder brother go to hell. The *Rock* dealing with a pamphlet by a native judge on this subject, says (or, perhaps quotes, only no inverted commas are used): "But how, it would be asked, did such absurdities come to be believed in by a people who boast of such a glorious past, such a rich literature, such subtle philosophy? The answer is that the Hindu is eminently religious. His religion is a living force with him, and always keeps him company—eating, drinking, sleeping, or waking, he is bound up in his religion. A people so eminently religious it would be difficult to find. The Hindu's religious teacher, the Brahmin, knows this, and taking advantage of it gives any precept he wishes to enforce the sanction of religion and appeals to his disciple's ideas of reward and punishment hereafter, with the result that the latter believes, without questioning or troubling himself about the precept being ever so contrary to common sense."

Thus religion is the great enemy to progress and human happiness. Christians can see this is true of foreign religions. They are blinded, like the Hindus, to evils which their own religion sanctions or commands. But Europeans are less religious than the Hindoos, and hence progress and civilisation have had a better chance for free action, although even here they had a narrow escape from being permanently extinguished by the Christianity of the Dark Ages.

A GLORIOUS DAY FOR THE LORD.

(JOSHUA XL, 11.)

"MOTHER," said a maiden of about sixteen or seventeen, "what is this I hear about the Israelites coming to attack our good city of Hazor? Have we done anything to deserve it? Have our people been slaughtering them, that they should seek to wreak their hot vengeance upon us?"

"No, my daughter, they have not," answered her comely mother; "and no one seems to know the cause of their enmity; but they have a God who seems to delight in war and rapine. O that they would embrace our blessed religion, and that these horrid wars would cease! But we have not injured them; and as they say their God is just and merciful, he cannot, will not, molest us. So if our Hazor should fall, fear not, my lovely one, that harm will befall thee, for if this God is all-powerful and created you, he will not, depend upon it, cruelly destroy such a beautiful creature as thou."

"Ah, mother! what is that? It is the Israelites! They are in the city. See, along the streets are coming the hosts of Jehovah. They are striking down the people! Oh, my dear mother, look at their awful blood-stained faces, hear their horrid cries, and behold the lurid flames rising over our poor doomed city! They are advancing in countless hordes, like the wild beasts of the desert, and see—they are entering our dwelling!"

Covered with dust and gore, with eyes flashing hot hate, with faces illuminated with maniacal fury, they burst into the apartment.

"Mercy, O men of Israel! spare my precious daughter, and slay me if you will." The maid contemplates with horror the dreadful, grimy, murderous wretches, who stand grinning hideously and leeringly at her. Her blood seems to freeze in her veins, but she manages to falter: "No; kill me, kill me immediately if you please, but save my dear mother. Spare her, and I will be your slave for ever—indeed, indeed I will, good people."

"The Lord hath delivered you into our hands, and his commands are that you die," said a bloody saint. The ponderous sword is poised on high, still dripping with the blood of victims just slain. The maid makes a last frantic appeal to the fiends around her. "Oh, spare her! For your God's sake, spare my mother, and do with me as you will. Teach us your religion, tell us of your God—we have never heard concerning him. We will—My mother! Oh, my mother! Do not, do not."

With a sickening swish, the heavy sword gashes the fair head of the mother, and the girl falls fainting, sprinkled with the warm blood of her mother. At this moment they discover an infant asleep in its cradle, with its innocent eyes gazing in perplexed wonder at the ghastly scene. It gazes but a moment, for the saints of Jehovah remember that infants are specially mentioned in the articles of war, and its pretty face is instantly crushed by a well-directed blow, and with: "By the command of Jehovah, die." There was a general hideous grin.

"Bravely done! O son of the Lord's anointed," exclaimed an almost supernaturally hideous soldier; "Joshua should have seen that stroke."

Then—then, the girl was dragged into an inner room. She had revived a little, and what took place is too dreadful to relate, and too hellish to think of. Long and loud were the soul-piercing wails of entreaty from the agonised girl; and none came to help her! Heart-rending were the appeals of that beautiful creature, to be instantly dispatched; and then they grow fainter and fainter, and at last ceased; and with the hacking of her lovely body the fiendish tragedy ended. And the loved of the Lord, drunk with blood and rapine, tumbled forth into the streets, that their fellow saints were making a sickening shambles, a horrid Gehenna. Prayers, curses, wails of entreaty, and the name of Jehovah, resounded through the doomed town.

The saints pass an old man, shivering in a doorway. One look at their adamant faces is enough for him. He was about to ask for mercy; he instantly perceives he may as well ask for the moon, so he staggers into the open with a request that he may die quickly. Nor does he ask in vain.

A company of women—the young, the beautiful, the good—some carrying children, now approach, pursued at some distance by a squad of Jehovah's Own. Satiated and gorged with plunder, the heroes of the preceding tragedy seem inclined to let them pass, knowing full well that the game would be hunted down later on.

Like timid fawns the poor creatures are about to fly, when a horseman appears on the scene, and takes in the situation at a glance. The soldiers are horror-struck, and seek to hide their abashed faces. Gaunt, grim and ghastly he sits erect, a horrid being of blood and steel—a more dreadful figure it is impossible to imagine. Of all the butchers that waded in human blood that day, he was the bloodiest—it was *Joshua!* Sternly he gazed, and uttered the awful words of his Master, "Thine eye shall have no pity." The trembling flock was instantly hacked in pieces. Their swords "clave to their hand" with the blood of tender females.

Their great captain left, and making their way through a bye-street, the heroes of Israel came upon a score or two of children, cowering in a playground. They entered, and scattered the corpses of little boys and girls in all directions—the sight of the little bodies as they fell seeming to give a fresh zest and interest to their fiendish natures.

And now it is even, and all is quiet, save the occasional collapse of a burning dwelling, or the dying groan of a victim. The sun sinks blood-red below the horizon as the vampires retire, and not an inhabitant walks the once busy street.

Poor Hazor, filled with the charred bodies of her slain children, has witnessed the benign clemency of the God of Israel. The cloyed saints, glutted to exhaustion and bathed in gore, after praising Jehovah, retire for the night with calm repose, and sleep that peaceful sleep that believers alone can know. ENDOR.

FAITH HEALING AT BRIGHTON.

THE summons taken out by the Faith Healers against two local tradesmen for disturbing their religious service has been heard by the Brighton magistrates. When the first witness was cross-examined, he said that the disturbances had not been caused by indecent behavior of the women, but he admitted that they occasionally fell down, under the power and spirit of God, against their will. Sometimes they laid down half an hour, and sometimes three hours, under the spirit of God. Lately rugs and wraps had been brought in to avoid any suggestion of indecency. Of course there was a liability to limbs being exposed. John Chatfield, who lives with his family at a house attached to the hall, denied that anything indecent took place. Cross-examined: He was called "King David," his wife "Rebecca," and his children "Samuel," "Peace" and "Love." He had seen women and children dancing. They were not under the influence of a spell. He called it the power of God. On one occasion a girl was under power, and remained till three o'clock in the morning. He knew Mrs. Walder was kept at the house for a fortnight against the will of her husband. The man Walder was not under a spell, but under the power of God. A Mr. Threadgold was there, and was called Caleb. When the defendants gained admission he said something to the effect that the meeting was to be closed, as the Devil was in the room. (Laughter.) He did say the Devil was in the room, and so he was. (Renewed laughter.) The stipendiary threatened to clear the court if manifestations of that kind took place. Witness, continuing, said he had not had the burial service read over him. He got his new name straight from God himself through Christ. (Sensation.) Mr. Nye said he could prove "King Solomon" read the burial service over the people whilst they had an iron bar round their neck. Witness, continuing, said they did not take jewellery from people who attended the meeting, but people had given it up. He had taken some of these to pawnbrokers, and some to another shop. He gave his services. How do you live?—The Lord keeps me.—Another witness testified to having seen females fall on the floor of the mission room and lie with their limbs exposed.—Bail was accepted for the appearance of the defendants at the Quarter Assizes. Their defence is that they acted with the best of motives in the public interest. Evidently, the Faith Healers will do themselves little good by the exposure of their doings.

PROFANE JOKES.

"MAMMA," inquired Bobby, "do only good little boys go up to heaven?" "Yes, dear." "And bad little boys to the bad place?" "Yes, sometimes, Bobby, and sometimes you are quite a bad little boy." Bobby considered for a moment, and said: "Then I s'pose I'll have to spend part of the time in one place, and part of the time in the other."

THE biblical knowledge of Fleet Street men is simply astounding "You've heard of Esau?" said one the other evening. "Esau—Esau!" said the other, scratching his head; "why, of course, you mean the fellow who wrote something rather smart, and then went and sold the copyright for a dose of potash. Oh yes, I know him." And the other shrugged his shoulders, and made a mental note.

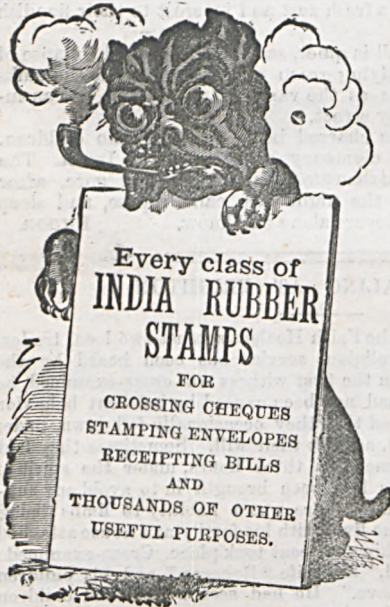
"JOCK," said a farmer to one of his workers one Sunday, after the return of the latter from church, "whaur was the text the day?" "I dinna ken," answered Jock; "I was ower lang o' gaun in." "What was the end o't, then?" "I dinna ken, I came oot afore it was done." "What did the minister say about the middle o't then?" said the master angrily, determined to have an answer of some sort. "I dinna ken, master," replied Jack; "I sleepit a' the time."

CHIT-CHAT.—Naturally, women talk more than men. The learned Buxtorf informs us in his Hebrew Lexicon that the primeval name Eve is derived from a root signifying talk; and it was perhaps to a dim idea of this kind that the Rabbins owed their tradition that twelve baskets of chit-chat—it could not be gossip, for their were no neighbors to gossip about—were rained down into Paradise for Adam and Eve to amuse themselves with; of which twelve Adam picked up three, and Eve the other nine.

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