

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. VII.—No. 22.]

MAY 29, 1887.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 200.



SAMSON'S HONEY.

*And, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion.—JUDGES, XIV., 8.*

## GOING, GOING—GONE!

EIGHTEEN hundred and fifty odd years ago the Jerusalem Ghost caused a great excitement among a little knot of credulous fanatics. One hysterical female had seen and conversed with the apparition in a garden; two men had met him during a country walk, at the end of which he vanished into thin air, as thin as their story; and eleven men had seen him in a third-floor back, through the closed door of which he made his appearance, either by the medium of the keyhole or of a crack which had been left unrepaired for the sake of ventilation. Very few people, however, besides these gullible gentry believed in the Jerusalem Ghost. The knowing ones cocked their eyes at the affair, and the more superstitious protested that they had so many ghosts already that they were not in want of a new one.

By-and-bye the Jerusalem Ghost had to emigrate. He manifested such an invincible disinclination to appear in any but the select circle of his admirers that they thought it prudent for him to levant, as they could not produce him to corroborate their story, and it was very awkward to

bear the taunts of the ungodly scoffers who made fun of their pretensions. Yet it appears that they had considerable difficulty in getting rid of him. Like other ghosts, he had a fondness for haunting the places he had known in the flesh. But at length they succeeded. Daily he was "going, going," but eventually he was "gone." He went to glory, as the Salvationists would say; but how long a journey it was God only knoweth. Supposing heaven to be beyond the reach of our telescopes, the Jerusalem Ghost must have travelled several million times faster than light to have reached it in a twelvemonth. Yet he got there, somehow, in a good deal less time. According to Mark, he went and "sat on the right hand of God." When Stephen was lynched he saw him "standing" in that position. The Jerusalem Ghost must, therefore, have been in heaven for some time; at any rate, long enough to take a rest and get up refreshed.

So far we have made every concession to orthodoxy, but when we look closely into the exit of the Jerusalem Ghost we find it highly unsatisfactory. Jesus is said to have gone to glory in the presence of his disciples, and two of them, Matthew and John, are said to have written the first and fourth Gospels. Yet, curiously enough, they are the very two biographers who never allude to the event.



Mark and Luke relate it, but they were not present. Is not this a strange fact? Two biographers who were *not* there tell us all about it, while the two biographers who *were* there are as silent as though the Ascension never occurred.

Examining still more closely, we find that Mark must be dismissed altogether, as the portion of his last chapter which narrates the Ascension does not exist in the earliest Greek manuscripts, and is generally admitted to be a late addition to the text.

There remain Luke and the anonymous author of the Acts of the Apostles. Luke says that Jesus ascended from Bethany, a short distance from Jerusalem, on the very day of his resurrection, or, at the latest, the next morning. The author of Acts, however, says that Jesus appeared, off and on, for forty days before levitating. Could there be a flatter contradiction? And when two such witnesses stand on the same side in the case, who can believe either of them unless there is a third witness, which there is not and cannot be, to corroborate one or the other?

The author of Acts tells us that Jesus "was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight." That is, he was lost in a cloud. Yes, and so were they. And all the millions of simpletons who have believed that cock-and-bull story have been lost in a cloud too.

Personally, we have no objection to *believe* that Jesus sailed to heaven with or without wings. We are ready to credit it on receipt of the proper evidence. But the evidence vouchsafed is so paltry that we should require a good deal more to prove which cat stole our fish. Nor have we any objection to Jesus or any other person *going* to heaven. We should be glad if heaven were fuller. There are thousands of pious gentlemen who might be there, possibly to their own profit, and certainly to the world's advantage. Not a tear would drop from our eyes if the Lord were to call home nine-tenths of the sky-pilots, all the Salvation captains, and every street-corner preacher, next Sunday or any other early date that suits his convenience. They are always "going, going." Would to heaven they were "gone." They would be in everlasting bliss, and we should find their room so very much better than their company.

Alas! we fear there is no hope of this happy event. Yet it is pleasant to know that the time is coming when these gentry will be starved into more honest and useful occupations. Christianity has long been "going, going." By-and-bye it will be "gone." Science, civilisation, and common-sense have slowly but surely been driving it away. The sun scatters the morning mist. There is plenty of hypocrisy but very little sincerity in Christendom, plenty of lip-service but very little vital faith. Jesus gets the empty praise, and other objects the solid devotion. Let us take a single instance out of millions. Thursday, May 19, was Ascension Day. To commemorate the mighty event with which it is linked, the House of Commons met a little later than usual. Yes, that pious assembly, almost every man of whom is piously sworn in on a New Testament, adjourned till two o'clock in honor of the Ascension. How touching! How devout! Yet the same assembly adjourns a whole day for a national race. A couple of hours for Jesus and twenty-four hours for the Derby! Could anything show more convincingly that the Ascension, aye, and the Resurrection, the Incarnation, and the Atonement are really dead doctrines? Profession is one thing, practice is another, and it is by the latter that men are to be judged.

Here is another instance. Everybody remembers the fierce opposition that was offered to Mr. Bradlaugh's admission to Parliament. The name of God was freely invoked, the constitution was said to be in danger, and we should insult the Deity and degrade ourselves by letting an Atheist sit in the legislature. Well, what do we see now? Mr. Bradlaugh is in undisturbed possession of his seat, the very Tories have got used to him, and his Oaths Bill stands a good chance of being carried by a large majority, including some of the men who were loudest against him only a year or two ago. Was it not, after all, as some of us suspected, a party outcry from beginning to end. Bradlaugh the Atheist had to be opposed, and religion was found a very useful weapon against him. Swift said that most people had just enough religion to make them hate each other, and we find to-day that there is just enough religion left to persecute when it pays.

G. W. FOOTE.

## THE FEAST OF PENTECOST.

WHITSUNTIDE, we are told, is kept in commemoration of the Feast of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost descended on the early Christian apostles and they "began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." As a matter of fact Whitsuntide, like the other Christian holy days, is an ancient Pagan festival, and the customs of ale-drinking, morris-dancing, etc., connected therewith, are without any reference to Christianity.

The story of the manifestation of the Holy Ghost at the Jewish Pentecostal Feast—that is, fifty days after Passover, throws so much light on the real character of early Christianity, and the untrustworthy nature of its records, that it is worth briefly examining in detail.

We are told that the number of Christians who assembled was about an hundred and twenty. After the meeting there were added unto them about three thousand souls. If, however, we credit Paul's assertion that Jesus appeared to five hundred brethren, it is evident the first number is understated. The method of this first successful revival meeting was curious. The narrative in the second chapter of Acts states that "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Commentators have been much exercised about this passage. Some think it was a vision, others that there was a hurricane charged with electrical flames of lightning. In either case we should think the spirit which represented natural phenomena in this way was not a spirit of truth, but rather the reverse.

In regard to the speaking with tongues many opinions are held. According to all the old commentators, and we venture to think according to the narrative itself, the people were supposed by means of a miraculous operation of the Ghost all at once to have spoken in various languages hitherto unknown to them. Some moderns contend that they spoke in their mother tongue, and that each auditor heard it in his own. It all came out Aramaic, but it entered into some ears as Greek, in others as Parthian, Persian, Arabic, Latin, Egyptian, etc., for the writer enumerates fifteen races, who declared "we do hear them speak in our tongues." So that the miracle was not one of speech but of hearing. Another ingenious commentator has combined the two views by assuming that the language spoken was a sort of Volapuk, in which the elements of all existing languages were united so that each of the listeners caught his own peculiar dialect. Some have further surmised that all the angels of whatever clime or planet speak the same language, and that those who spoke at the Feast of Pentecost made use of this heavenly speech.

If, however, we look at what Paul has to say on this matter of the gift of tongues, we shall obtain a far different and more probable view of the matter. Writing to the Corinthians, among whom the "gift" was cultivated, he tells them that speaking with tongues can only edify the speaker. He says, "If, therefore, the whole Church be come together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there came in those that are unlearned or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad: for God is not the author of confusion." It is evident from Paul's fourteenth chapter that there were in the early Christian Church numbers of excitable persons who passed the bounds which separate enthusiasm from delirium, and who gave vent to their exultation in incoherent utterances which were taken to be the product of the Holy Ghost. Those who believe that this was really the work of that mysterious individual must at least acknowledge that the Spirit was uncommonly like the spirit of frenzy, since it led them to speak at unseasonable times what was not edifying to others.

One of the most common symptoms of a mental breakdown is this fervent talking of senseless gibberish. The "gift of tongues" may be witnessed in any lunatic asylum. An approach to it may be found in the ecstatic cries of the Salvationists, "Alleluia, Amen, More God," and so on. The "tongues" have broken out in revivals in Wales and Scotland, and also in London some fifty years ago, under the excitement produced by the enthusiastic eloquence of Edward Irving. To this day the insane in the East are considered as "possessed" by a spirit, and are revered accordingly. It is evident from Acts x., 46; ix., 15; and xix., 6, that this speaking with tongues was considered a special sign of the Holy Ghost.



Among the promises ascribed to Jesus was that all believers should speak with tongues, as well as take up serpents, cast out devils, and drink deadly poisons; but beyond this legend there is no evidence of their ever having done so. From Acts xiv. 14, it appears that Paul did not understand Lycaonian, although, according to 1 Cor., xiv. 18, he was mighty in the gift of tongues; while Papias, one of the apostolical fathers, records that Peter employed Mark as an interpreter. That some of the spectators at the Feast of Pentecost said, "These men are full of new wine," is sufficient disproof of the other story, that they heard every man in his own tongue, wherein he was born. The enumeration of the many nations who heard their own speech is but another proof of the mendacity of the writer; for in the majority of the nations Greek at that time was more common than their ancient national dialects. Altogether, this opening chapter in the history of the Christian Church forms a fitting prelude to the long story of fanaticism and fraud which followed.

J. M. WHEELER.

## ACID DROPS.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR says that he thinks Englishmen as a body are strangely ungenerous, illiberal, and callous to the sufferings of the clergy. He says there are clergymen whose families are literally starving. He didn't, however, reprove the bishops and archdeacons for not sharing their incomes with their poorer brethren, nor did he point out the cruelty and folly of bringing families into the world to be literally starved. It would never do to find fault with the bad example set by our clergy. The Archdeacon called for subscriptions and said that hundreds and thousands of English laymen did not contribute a single sixpence towards their own spiritual maintenance—that is, towards the clergy. But some £10,000,000 are contributed to the Church alone, mostly in national funds and remission of taxation. So that the Archdeacon's statement is untrue. But he only refers to *voluntary* contributions. Enforced contributions to his own trade he doesn't trouble about. The national black mail for the black army is to be added to voluntarily.

NEITHER did the Archdeacon say anything about the tithe-collecting clergy being strangely ungenerous, illiberal, and callous to the sufferings of the farmers whose goods and cattle they seize in the name of Jesus Christ. A number of these distraints have recently been made in Wales. In some cases the bailiffs were driven off by a mob of men armed with sticks. At Rhydyglave's farm the bailiffs were chased off the premises by a bull, which the farmer's wife let out for that purpose. In Hatherden, in Hampshire, there was also a lively demonstration. The crowd threw eggs and stones at the auctioneer and seized his waggon and ran it down to a pond with the intention of giving him a ducking. The sale had to be abandoned. A resolution was then passed condemning Lord Salisbury's Tithe Bill.

LAST Sunday more than half the members of the House of Commons marched behind the Speaker to St. Margaret's Church, to commemorate in a special service the "fiftieth year of the reign of her Majesty Queen Victoria." Joining in the responses these legislators told God Almighty—"We have offended against thy holy law, we have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us." We thoroughly believe them. Yet if they were told so outside church they would resent it as an insult. So much honesty is there in the piety of these gentlemen.

WE regret to notice the name of Professor Hunter among these pious flunkeys. We understand that he is an Agnostic, but perhaps he wishes to stand well with his constituents, and Aberdeen is a priest-ridden city, full of gospel-shops and hypocrisy. Some of the crowd who watched the legislators going to church cried out, "Where's Bradlaugh?" Bradlaugh was engaged more sensibly elsewhere. It is refreshing to learn that there was a scanty attendance of Radical members.

MR. M. CARR, of Carlisle, has been "going it blind" at the Maryport Home Mission. Ninety-nine out of every hundred ghost stories, he said, were fictitious; but he knew a ghost story that was perfectly true. Of course! The story was vouched for by two Plymouth Brethren. That's enough! We don't know who they are, or where they live, but two Plymouth Brethren, swearing together, would satisfy any judge and jury that the world is flat and the moon made of green cheese.

MR. CARR's story is this. A young woman was possessed by a devil that tormented her fearfully. She consulted a witch, who put a ring on her finger (terms—cash down), and told her that while she wore it she would be "all serene." So she was. But when the Plymouth Brethren got hold of her they prayed hard

for light from heaven, and were instigated to remove the ring, when it was found that the inside bore this inscription—"Don't trouble this woman till she's in hell." She then had dreadful fits for two hours, after which the demon left her in peace. How's that for high?

THE *Rock* charges the *Church Times* with vilifying the judges who decided against the Rev. J. Bell Cox, the Ritualist. In an article on "Ecclesiastical Lawlessness" it refers to the *Church Times* as giving the lie to Archdeacon Lefroy. It shows the beneficent influence of Christianity in its statement that directly the bishop "seeks to uphold the laws of the National Church, then immediately, at the instigation of the English Church Union, and its weekly organ—the *Church Times*—all sorts of secret influences are brought to bear to blacken his character, and set him forth before the world as a monster of iniquity and a persecuting tyrant." How these Christians love one another.

THERE is a story afloat that the Archbishop of Canterbury, having to get up a lecture on Socialism, applied to Messrs. Smith and Son for some Socialist papers, and was informed that he could not have such dreadful publications. The best of the joke is that both the Archbishop and the First Lord of the Treasury are Christians, and they can find full-blown Socialism in the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles without troubling Hyndman and Morris for samples.

A SOUTH Kensington curate, young, zealous, and silly,—held forth to a female congregation. "Even you, my sisters," he said, "though *only women*, may yet find *some duty* to perform." What an egotistical idiot! But the worst was that the women, thus treated, regarded his insult as the wise teaching of a man of God. They have much to learn, and he as much to forget.

THE Lower House of Convocation has taken up the task of amending the Catechism. They do not, however, propose to omit the nonsense about renouncing the Devil, or about submitting oneself to all one's governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters. What they do propose is to add a question and answer on What is the Church? As the Catechism is used in a great number of State-aided schools, Convocation wishes the children to understand that by the Church is meant the Anglican Establishment.

WE notice in a report of a Sermon to Young Men by Dr. Thain Davidson, that that popular preacher still uses the anecdote of the Queen having recommended the Bible as "the secret of England's greatness." Although the story has been contradicted by her Majesty's Secretary, Sir Henry Ponsonby, it still serves to point a moral and adorn a tale.

AT Marylebone police-court an aged clergyman named Louis Thomas was committed for trial for systematically obtaining food and lodging from various people with intent to defraud.

A LOCAL preacher in Westmoreland named Joseph Bell was sentenced to twenty months' imprisonment for assaulting his servant girl. The Wesleyans and other Nonconformists, among whom he was very active and very popular, disbelieve in the verdict of the jury who heard the evidence. They held a public meeting on his behalf, and resolved to petition the Home Secretary for his release.

THE report of Mr. Foote's discussion with Mrs. Besant on Socialism has got abroad and allusions to it turn up in unexpected quarters. But matters affecting Freethinkers are apt to get strangely colored in course of transmission in religious circles. By the time the news reaches the *Rock* the discussion has been converted into the "well-known" case of "litigation" of "Besant v. Foote." But religious people remain religious because their minds are loose and inaccurate, and this looseness and inaccuracy resulting in frequent false statements are what we must naturally expect of them.

A REPORT of the "General Assembly" of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists, in the *Liverpool Mercury* says, "Christian Union is in the air." The next paper we take up, the Baptist *Freeman* tells us that Convocation called upon the prelates to prohibit and suppress the innovation of clergymen using the pulpits of those of other denominations, calling it "a great scandal." It indeed seems that Christian union is where it has been ever since Paul withstood Peter to his face—in the air.

AT the meeting of the Congregational Union, Mr. Guinness Rogers moved a resolution to the effect that recent declarations of certain dignitaries of the Established Church "indicated the growth of a sacerdotal temper and teaching contrary to the fundamental principles of Protestantism, injurious to the highest interests of spiritual religion, and fatal to all hopes of Catholic fellowship between different Churches." True Christian unity is "in the air."

THE Rev. Jarvis Henry Brewster, Congregational minister at Chignal St. James, near Chelmsford, Essex, has been committed for trial on a charge of indecently assaulting a girl of eleven who acted as nurse-girl to his children.



WE notice in the *Liberator* that Mr. W. W. Collins lectured "last Sunday" at Sydney for the last time. In the same paper the Committee of the Australian Secular Association, invite application from competent Freethought advocates, for the post of lecturer. Mr. Collins, according to a new Anarchist paper, *Honesty*, is putting up for Parliament.

ALDERMAN CROPPER, of Nottingham, has a very poor opinion of the Rev. George Bishop. "It was bad enough," he said at a recent public meeting, "to see a clergyman stooping to dishonor, but there was one thing that would be worse than that, namely, to be a member of Mr. Bishop's congregation." Warm, eh? What does the Rev. G. B. say to this?

MR. H. L. HASTINGS, the Yankee revivalist, is still at the same old game, defeating infidels without a fight. On the afternoon of May 19, he lectured on "The Inspiration of the Bible" at the Conference Hall, Eccleston Street, near Victoria Station. Two old friends of ours, Messrs. Hunt and Tovey, dropped in to hear the lecture and put a few questions afterwards. There was a good attendance, and a considerable sprinkling of persons who came in carriages. When Mr. Hastings sat down amidst slight applause, Messrs. Hunt and Tovey asked whether they could put a few questions. Mr. Hastings said yes, but they must be put and answered in his private room. He was evidently afraid to let the audience hear the questions, or judge of his honesty in answering them. Messrs. Hunt and Tovey told him he was a coward and withdrew. Mr. Hastings is a very courageous man. His courage is equal to that of the Apostles who, when Jesus was arrested, "all forsook him and fled."

A DUNFERMLINE Presbyterian minister of the John Knox type has been so horrified by the decorations and ecclesiastical ornaments which he saw in Glasgow Cathedral, that he calls upon the Scottish Church to revive the statute of 1640, which ordains that "idolrous monuments be taken down, demolished, and destroyed" forthwith. This would be a curious Jubilee celebration for the Glasgow folk, indeed.

ACCORDING to the *Hampshire Independent* the good Christians of Netley Marsh, Hampshire, object to the presence at their parish church, of lads from the adjacent reformatory school at Totton. It was not asserted that they were ill behaved, but there was a smell from their corduroy suits which mingled unpleasantly with the odor of sanctity and peppermint which distinguishes the Ritualistic congregation. The churchwardens accordingly forcibly prevented their entering. Their secretary wrote suggesting that the matter should be referred to the Bishop of Winchester, but the Vicar, the Rev. H. B. Dunlop, would not agree to the proposal, and the boys have had to trudge to Minstead, four miles away, in order to attend church. They have been provided with suits of serge in order to facilitate their admission into the sacred edifice. Notice was given, but the first boy who attempted to enter with his hands behind his back had his leg jammed between the gate and the gate-posts. Considering the classes their religion began among these Christians are somewhat fastidious. No doubt their heavenly Father will provide them separate high-class mansions in kingdom come.

"CHRISTMAS GIVING" is the title of the Pastoral Letter for 1887 of the Presbyterian Church of England Synod. It appears that the great necessity of the age is to raise cash for Jesus—that is, for his ministers. Gold, gold, gold! Give, give, give! These are the perennial cries of the sky-pilots. They serve in the Lord's vineyard, it is true, but they have a very decided opinion that the laborer is worthy of his hire, and plenty of it.

WE regret to learn that Mrs. E. D. Slenker, an old lady of sixty, whose Freethought essays for children are well known in America, has been arrested by Comstock for circulating what this fellow likes to call "indecent" literature through the press. What the particular matter is we know not, but, judging from the title of the leaflet, we imagine that Mrs. Slenker has been concerning herself with the sexual question, on which she holds what are called "peculiar" views, although they are the very opposite of looseness; indeed, she advocates an exaggerated form of chastity. However, she is in prison, awaiting her trial. According to her own account, in the New York *Truthseeker*, she had to share her bed with a female pauper. The bed was a blanket on the bare floor. "All around us," she says, "were doors of iron bars, and behind each was a prisoner, singing, swearing, and using real obscenity. Overhead was a man who was religiously insane. He prayed, cried, preached, and sang; roared, stamped, and raged alternately, while the prisoners aggravated him by calling him a liar and other opprobrious names, just to make amusement for themselves by hearing him rave." We pity this poor lady in such frightful circumstances, and whatever we think of her hobby, we cannot but admire her courage.

THE trial of Mr. C. B. Reynolds for Blasphemy at Morristown, New Jersey, was fixed for May 16, but we are unable to say whether it has taken place. If it has, the chances are that Mr. Reynolds is enjoying a taste of Christian charity in a Christian gaol. The *Truthseeker* promised to give a full report of the trial, and as soon as we receive the report we shall give the

whole of it, or a good summary, for the benefit of our readers, who will be interested in watching a battle between the forces of light and darkness among our American cousins.

"WHEN next you pull a man's nose, sir, draw it mild," quoth Major Wellington de Boots in the play. The same remark might be made by the chairman of the Christian Evidence open-air station on Clerkenwell Green last Sunday morning, for his nose was pulled, publicly pulled, in the sight of gods and men, to say nothing of several boys. This amiable gentleman was presiding at a lecture by Mr. Batchelor, one of the sweetest-mouthed of the sweet-mouthed lambs of Mr. Engstrom, and, thinking himself quite safe, he indulged in the charitable diversion of slandering absent Freethinkers. What he said of Mr. Foote is not worth repeating. We will only record his general statement that most Freethinkers ought to travel in police vans. "Foote and Ramsey," he said, "have had a taste already. They were carted off in a black vehicle, marked outside V.R.—'vagabonds removed.'" Mr. Foote was "far away," but Mr. Ramsey happened, oh so miraculously, to be within earshot. Forcing his way through the applauding Christians, he reached the platform, and quietly asked the chairman whether he meant what he said. "Do you mean," said Mr. Ramsey, "that *vagabonds removed* applies to me? I heard Mr. Barnard say it before, but ladies were present then, and I didn't care to make a row. But there are no ladies present now, and I want to know if you mean it." Challenged in this unexpected manner, the Christian chairman turned pale, and stammered out, "I mean it under certain conditions." "Do you?" said Mr. Ramsey, and without further ado he reached up and pulled the fellow's nose. The Christians were flabbergasted. When they recovered their senses they threatened what they would do, but it was all "words, words, words," and Mr. Ramsey walked off, the fellow whose nose he plucked not having the pluck to pluck him back.

WE suggest that Mr. Engstrom should circulate an additional verse in the Sermon on the Mount among his cubs. This is it: "If one pluck thee on the one nose, turn unto him the other also."

THE Rev. Mr. Ward, who shot his wife at Englewood, New Jersey, committed suicide with chloral. It would have been much more thoughtful in Mr. Ward if he had taken the chloral before he did the shooting.

ACCORDING to a Russian Mrs. Gamp, says the *Echo*, the excess of male over female births is to be accounted for in this way. "The Almighty foresees," he says, "how many men will be killed during the war, and hence he graciously provides that there shall be a sufficiency of boy children to grow up and fill the vacant places." Would it not be better for God to stop wars and equalise the two birth-rates?

Two or three tradesmen at Kettering have, I hear, a novel way of helping the Salvation Army. On Saturday nights they meet together for a friendly game at "Nap," and the winnings are given to the collection of the Salvation Army on Sundays. Sometimes the "Army" will get 2s. or 2s. 3d. in this way. The friends enjoy their social meeting, and their mild dissipation at cards, and the finances of the "Army" profit. I wonder whether the "Army" would hold that "the end sanctifies the means in such a case," and that the coins thus contributed are as "brands plucked from the burning," or more properly "coins plucked from the melting." How would it be if the winners at "Nap" or other more or less innocent games at our local clubs would devote their winnings to some good object—say the Infirmary or the School of Art?—*Northampton Daily Reporter*.

ANENT the May Meetings a correspondent of the *Pall Mall Gazette* narrates an amusing anecdote of which two right rev. prelates are said to be the heroes: "As I stood talking outside the Athenæum the other day," he writes, "I saw a bishop—a humble suffragan—drive up in a hansom and bid the (unpaid) cabman wait while he went into the club. A minute or two later out came a 'real' Bishop, who guilelessly got into the waiting hansom, and, being mistaken by the cabman for his original fare, was straightway driven off. Then issued the suffragan, whose inquiries for his cab led to his being informed by a second cabman that it had been taken 'by another gent in leggins.' Piqued at this ribald allusion to the episcopal garb, the suffragan turned on his heel. But as he replaced his purse in his pocket I marked the frown pass into a smile of resignation as he realised how the wind was tempered to the shorn lamb."

FAITH-HEALING goes on now just as at the time of Jesus, but only fools pay any serious attention to it nowadays. The *Christian Herald* narrates how Miss Bucklands was healed of cancer which the surgeons had pronounced incurable. Mr. Palmer is healed of indigestion and tender feet. A boy is delivered from fits, and a Christian sister of epileptic fits. Mrs. N. was anointed for suicidal mania, and is already recovered. Another lady is cured of "stigmatism" in both eyes. Yet the infidel doctors and infidel bishops persist in taking no notice of these grand triumphs of Jesus. They prefer to profess belief in the triumphs of two thousand years ago.



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, May 29, N. S. S. Conference, Rochdale.

JUNE 5 and 12, Hall of Science, London.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

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

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

J. W. C. says that "The newsagent in Ryder's Court, Leicester Square, W.C., will supply the *Freethinker* and all other Secular publications."

W. H. WOOD.—The Christians have, we believe, immensely exaggerated their early persecutions and martyrdoms. We intend to deal with the subject by-and-bye.

A. MACKINS.—Part III. of our *Bible Handbook* is in the press. We expect to have it ready in a month. There will be a fourth part to complete the work, or perhaps a fifth.

S. (Manchester).—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." Pleased to hear you think the *Freethinker* improves as time goes on.

E. MOORE.—Cuttings always welcome. Glad to learn that your mind is easier.

HATER OF CANT.—The talk about "persecution" is all nonsense. A clergyman has a perfect right to do what he likes as a man, but not as a priest. He takes a living under certain legal conditions, and what right has he to complain when the legal conditions are enforced? If he wants perfect freedom he can have it, by simply casting off his frock and leaving the Church. While he takes its pay he must conform to its rules.—Pleased to hear you have now got *Bible Contradictions* and *Bible Absurdities* and find them of "great service."

H. S.—Your verse is not up to the mark. All communications for the *Freethinker* should be addressed to the Editor as above.

E. G. S.—If your prayers for our conversion are not more efficacious than your letter, we shall remain a hardened sceptic to the last. "Pray without ceasing," says the Bible. Keep it up, man, keep it up.

W. SCHWEIZER.—Received with thanks.

A. E. WRIGHT.—*Royal Paupers* was meant to be an eye-opener. Pleased to hear you think the author "deserves great credit for thus enlightening the public at large." The second edition, which was much larger than the first, is selling still more rapidly. We hope to print a third edition before the Jubilee day.

W. BARROW.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." We are always glad to receive cuttings. Pleased to hear that Mrs. Sowden gave you "three capital lectures" at Nottingham. The Freethought party is suffering from the want of good lecturers. There is room for a dozen more.

A. MILLER.—A Theist is simply one who believes in a God. A Deist is generally used to denote one who believes in God but rejects revelation. The paragraphs in the *Sporting Chronicle* are pointed and racy. The Bishop of Ripon should read them. We regret they are too late for our use.

READER.—Thanks. But it is rather out of date now.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—La Union—Liberty—Pall Mall Gazette—Colchester Gazette—Ironclad Age—Jus—Sheffield Independent—Islington News—Modern Society—Truthseeker—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Hampshire Independent—Echo—La Semaine Anticlericale.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday, if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THE National Secular Society's annual Conference takes place to-day (May 29) at Rochdale. We hope there will be a good attendance of delegates, as there is at least one important bit of business to discuss, namely, the attitude the Freethought party should assume towards Mr. Courtney Kenny's "Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill." Unfortunately there is very little else of much moment on the agenda. Happy is the nation that has no history, says the proverb; but we fear the same cannot be said of societies. Freethought will have to make more stir during the next twelve months unless, like the apocryphal crab, it means to walk backward. The Conference might do worse than instruct the new Executive to appoint a sub-committee of inquiry into the question of Freethought organisation, with a view to developing and strengthening it forthwith.

THE West Hartlepool Branch has invited Mr. Foote to represent it at the Conference, and he has declined the invitation. Representation of Branches by persons, not only outside their list of members, but hundreds of miles from their locality, is fictitious, and ought not to be permitted. Mr. Foote, at any rate, is not going to countenance such an absurdity. Let us be honest. If Branches are too weak or too poor to send *bona fide* delegates they should plainly say

so, and remain unrepresented. Fictions may look well enough on paper, but they are utterly useless in practice; nay more, they are apt to blind us to our deficiencies, and thus prevent us from redressing them.

WE shall give a descriptive report of the Conference in our next issue. Our space does not allow a verbatim report, or even what is called "a full" report, but we shall be able to give the substance of the proceedings, and that is what most people care about after all.

MR. A. B. MOSS, who has been lecturing in London to some good open-air audiences, reports that "there is greater interest in Freethought questions this year." We are glad to hear it, and trust it will continue.

TEN o'clock, instead of eleven, will be the time for the meeting which Mr. Foote has called at the London Hall of Science, on Sunday, June 5, to talk over the open-air work and how to make it more effective. The alteration is made for the sake of some of those who are engaged that morning at outdoor stations. It will give them an opportunity of attending the meeting, while still being in time for their propagandist work.

THE *Truthseeker* has a quartette of pictures representing the conversion of the American eagle into an ecclesiastical hen. No. 1 represents Columbia standing beside the American eagle, while a Popish priest and a Protestant clergyman place eggs beneath her. In No. 2 Protestant serpents and a Catholic crocodile are hatched. In the third picture the Protestant serpent is destroying the young eaglets, while the Catholic crocodile has the serpent in its mouth. Columbia is prostrate. The fourth shows the bloated carcass of the Roman reptile with the American shield prostrate, and nothing left of Columbia or Protestantism but the motto, "In God we Trust."

THE American Jews, having less social ostracism to contend with, are largely giving up their old beliefs and are showing a tendency to fraternise with Freethinkers. The *Jewish Times* says: "We Jews owe a debt of profound gratitude to the Darwins, the Huxleys, the Haeckels, the Drapers, the Buckles, the Youmans, the Tyndalls, and, in a different sense, to the Beechers of this generation. We owe a debt of profound gratitude to the Voltaires, the Diderots, the Garibaldis, the Mazzinis, the Jeffersons, the Paines, the Humes, the Galileos, the Brunos, the Shelleys, the Franklins, the Copernicuses, the Humboldts, the Washingtons, and all the immortals of the past generations who in defiance of established tyranny, religious and political, proclaimed and defended those eternal truths which are the very soul and essence of civil and religious liberty. Through their teachings and life-works the shackles of the Jews, of mankind, have been broken in the civilised portion of the Old World and in the New. Yes, through the noble labors of such dauntless and liberty-loving souls the Jew sits in the Parliaments of Italy, France, England and other countries; he sits in Congress and in our State legislatures; he fills eminent diplomatic positions, and in all public and private stations he is the peer of any man."

*Progress* opens with a smart review of Dr. Bithell's new volume on Agnostic Problems by Philip Sidney. It is appropriately entitled "New Wine in Old Bottles." Mr. Foote finishes his sketches of Giordano Bruno and Anne Gilchrist and her Circle, the latter of which has some interesting passages on the American poet, Walt Whitman. Mr. Wheeler's paper we have already mentioned; it reviews the recent work of Mr. Lillie on "Buddhism in Christendom," dealing largely with the question of the origin of the Essenes. Mr. Ball concludes his criticism of the New Sociology, and Alter Brown illustrates "The Decline of Piety." Those who desire to extend the circulation of *Progress* will find the June number a good one to lend about.

NUMBERS V. and VI. of *Bible Heroes* will be ready next week. They will be entitled *Master Joseph* and *Joseph's Brethren*.

## THE CHRISTIAN EVIDENCE SOCIETY.

IT was with feelings of solemn awe and trepidation that I attended the sixteenth annual meeting of the above Society last Friday afternoon, disguised in a come-to-Jesus hat, a white choker, and a beatific smile. The odor of sanctity flowed in a thick stream from the portals of Exeter Hall, and mingled with the Cherry Blossom and Frangipanni from Rimmell's across the Strand, and the Duke of Mudford's dead cabbage leaves from Covent Garden at the back. An aspect of holiness, or something quite as strong, lit up the countenance of the individual who offered me a back number of the *Armageddon Almanack* as I passed in. The pervading atmosphere of piety was explained when I entered the smaller hall on the ground floor. Two bishops were already there, doubtless with a full supply of the Holy Ghost ready to flow from their fingers' ends. The Rev. Mr. Engstrom, organising secretary of the C. E. S., and Boyle Lecturer for



1887, was reading from the Sacred Scriptures, and soon proceeded to pour out his soul in prayer. There was a fair audience, the majority, women and white chokers, apparently intending to make an evening of it by coming in good time for the Social Purity Meeting which followed. There was a sprinkling of younger people, some apparently expecting to be mentioned as prize winners in the examinations on Christian evidence, only unfortunately there were not enough prizes to go round, and several were mentioned as having obtained "honors," when it was confessed they ought to have received prizes. Looking round during prayer I noted the cheery face of a lady more often seen at the Hall of Science than at Exeter Hall, and who like myself did not bend the head or knee either to Jahveh or Baal.

The Bishop of London was in the chair. It was a fine catch for the C. E. S. to have as president one whose entrance to the episcopate was bitterly opposed on the ground of his being a heretic. The Bishop gave the Society some good advice; he told them theirs was a difficult work. The result of the universal diffusion of instruction was widespread unbelief founded on false, yet most plausible reasoning. They must take care to defend the Bible, and not their own interpretations, and remember they might be trying to hold fast to that which they ought to surrender.

Mr. WATERMAN then read the report. He assured the bishop their outdoor advocates were most scrupulous not to employ any but the soundest arguments in the most Christian manner. Before Mr. Waterman's eyes was one of his employes, whose virulent abuse of infidels often had been complained of, and who was engaged in obsequiously ushering people to their seats and afterwards in taking a collection. Under the blessing of God they had most successful meetings in Hyde Park and elsewhere, and their income had fallen from £1,060 to £956. This despite some heavy donations from City companies not having the fear of an inquiry before their eyes. The C. E. S. had to limit its prizes, but the secretaries took the major portion of the income, although, in order to keep the balance on the right side, they had to sell out £100 of reserved capital. They hoped to be recouped for this, but their trust was in the Lord.

The BISHOP OF SYDNEY moved the adoption of the report. He is a better-looking man than Dr. Temple, has a better calf, and is not disfigured by the hideous, mutton-chop whiskers sported by our successor to the apostles. He had, he said, established a branch of the C. E. S. at Sydney, but he found it advisable rather to build up the faith of Christians than to attack the unbelieving.

The REV. W. STEVENSON followed. He wished infidels to be discussed with. He had largely added to his own congregation after a discussion with a sceptic. He would state his opponents' case with the same impartiality "which makes a day in our courts of justice such a treat." It was a great thing that many held by Theism. Even in the Unknowable there was a large piece of theology. "Clergymen of all denominations" should join in the good work of the C. E. S.

DR. BALFOUR-STEWART, who, as a scientific man, was the great gun of the afternoon, was received with much applause. However admirable he may be as Professor of Natural Philosophy at Owen's College, his speech showed nothing but the Scotch metaphysician of the most painful school. He thought the orthodox had good arguments but did not handle them effectively, so he undertook with many er-er-er's to give a new and improved argument for miracles, which in his estimation ought to bring about articles of peace between men of science and theologians. The new argument proved to be a very old friend. The laws of nature were only "laws of the market-place," that is of general experience. But we could not say that breaks might not be introduced by higher law for a moral and spiritual purpose. Dr. Stewart admitted he should not credit a man who said he could create energy, and yet he believes that the observers were quite competent to speak to the truth of miracles in Palestine eighteen hundred years ago. Of course he trotted out the old fallacy of proving the miracles by the doctrine in order to authenticate the doctrine by the miracles. Evidently he had the "personal equation" of an inherited belief. He quite failed to see that his argument for miracles was an argument exactly on a par with the animism of a savage who takes all the unexplained as miraculous. But he did see that it would hardly do to suppose that miracles only occurred when nobody disbelieved them, and he accordingly suggested there might be some traces of the miraculous now, as the members of the C. E. S. might find if they joined in ghost hunting with the Society for Psychological Research. The most evident trace of the miraculous we have found is the fact that a scientific man like Professor Stewart can talk such trash. We fear he will end his days a believer in Mr. Eglington and the "mejums."

The REV. HUGH PRICE HUGHES, a tall, good-looking, almost foppish Wesleyan, who dresses in Church of England garb and wears a *pince-nez* and gold chain, followed. The whole purport of his speech went to show that the C. E. S. was not of the slightest utility. The true evidence was "six foot of living Christianity." Here Mr. Hughes drew himself up, as much as to say, "I am the true evidence." Infidelity was only skin-deep. His friend Mr. Broadhurst was the typical working man. Mr. Hugh Price Hughes illustrated his living Christianity by some very apocryphal stories, first, of an old monk who converted some infidels who had overcome the bishops at the Council of

Nice (A.D. 325), by simply rehearsing the Apostles' Creed (which was drawn up about A.D. 360). His next story was even more wonderful. He declared, as within his own knowledge, that a lady Freethought speaker undertook, about twenty years ago, to give three lectures at Rochdale on the subject, "Christ a Myth." She was met at the first lecture by a person who said he had been converted from a drunken wife-beater to a sober good man, and how could this be explained if Jesus Christ was a myth. The lecturers were so non-plussed that "the second and third lectures have not been delivered to this present day." Now the only Freethought lecturers we know of who occupied the platform twenty years ago was Mrs. Harriet Law. Every one who ever heard that lady will set down the story as an unmitigated falsehood. If Mrs. Law is not the lady intended will Mr. Hughes display his living Christianity by giving the name, date, and full particulars? Until he does so we shall refuse to credit a third story of his, of having himself converted an Agnostic of fourteen years' standing by a single sermon.

A vote of thanks to the Bishop, moved by the Rev. Sir Emilius Laurie, who thought it necessary to recapitulate the whole proceedings, terminated the meeting. LUCIANUS.

### I DREAMT THAT I WAS GOD.

FOR dreams one's not responsible, however wild they be,  
And Fancy's free to wing her flight o'er sky and earth and sea.  
One evening by the fireside glow, as I began to nod,  
In wild audacious reverie I dreamt that I was God.

Down gazing on a rocky coast, I see a ship ashore  
Amidst a raging hurricane, above whose fiercest roar  
I hear loud cries and piercing shrieks, and oft the piteous prayer  
Of souls who cling to mast and rope or kneel in wild despair.  
I see them die a thousand deaths of agony and fear;  
Their hands uplift for help I see, their dying groans I hear,  
Yet, like one paralysed or dead, I stretch no helping hand;  
From heaven I watch in spell-bound awe, in heaven I idly stand.  
But lo, to shame my cruel sloth and break the deadly spell,  
Two life-boats launched by human hands plough through the  
wat'ry hell.

They dash through foaming billows fierce, they ride the roughest  
wave;

If I stay idle on my throne, these men at least are brave.  
With noble courage, bringing help, they reck not of their lives,  
And dash aside thoughts dearer far, of children and of wives.  
'Tis I alone, the God aloft, that have no heart to feel;  
These poor rough fishermen dash on with hearts as true as steel.  
Alas! before they reach the wreck the monster waves prevail;  
The puny boats are whelmed like straws beneath the furious gale.  
The men are buried in the deeps—they rise—they gasp for  
breath—

They battle with mad billows still—a vain, vain fight with death.  
Oh, must they die? Is there no help? Have I no power to  
save?

Shall storms—*my* storms—gulf men like these? Must ocean be  
their grave?

Must widows swoon o'er heroes dead that strew a ghastly shore?  
Nay, not while I am God aloft, I thunderously swore.

And as I rose omnipotent from off my golden seat,  
The waves shrunk humbled at my voice, the storm crouched at  
my feet;

The sea grown smooth, the boats still live, the swimmers reach  
the land;

Soon all the shipwreck'd souls rejoice as on the shore they stand.  
I emptied heaven of angels; yea, I did without their song,  
And o'er the ocean's wreck-strewn waste I sent that seraph  
through

To gather all the human waifs that perished on the sea,  
To bring them home, and study not to whom they bent the knee.  
Their joy my thanks, I gloried that I sent those angels down—

Why should they waste eternity in bending to a crown?  
All gracious tasks should be their bliss, wherever need arose,

And I no more would coldly gaze, or sink in calm repose,  
But evermore would stay the storm before the storm arose.

The storm-fiend fled unto his cave, I fettered to the rock,  
To slumber there in harmlessness—

Whence came that fearful shock?

Earth trembles, and I hear a roar that battle never knew,  
And see a flame volcanic leap amidst the heavenly blue.

A hundred Alps, blown high in air, affront the genial sun,  
A hundred towns stood yesterday where now the eye sees none.

Their toiling myriads roast in ash, or boil in steaming mud,  
Entombed alive by showers of fire, or by a scalding flood.

They shriek, they pray, they fly in vain; mad millions stand  
aghast,

Begirt with fiery hell, they fear each moment is their last.

God! Seest thou not? and helpest not?—Nay, I myself am God.  
Oh, shall I curse me for it? Doth my conscience wield no rod?

Am I exempt from pity's throbs, and from the law of love?

Oh, were I not beneath them if I placed myself above?

I started from my sleep of death, I leapt from off my throne,  
A penitent, all tempest-tost, I must and would atone.

In deathless sorrow's deep resolve, I thrilled the worlds afar

With my firm edict's potent spell that flew from star to star.



That chaos and destruction cease, that peace and beauty reign;  
That evil powers no seraph mine should ever dare unchain.  
Then earth was filled with murmurs, concords joyous, vast, and  
vague;  
Then slept the earthquake and the flood, then died the banished  
plague.  
Then famine stalked not, for the earth knew poverty no more.  
And bounteous angels blessed the earth and all the fruits she  
bore.

But still my work was incomplete. For as I looked around  
I saw a timid antelope borne helpless to the ground;  
A panther, purring forth delight, stood feasting on her blood,  
That flowed o'er Nature's carpet rich, and drench'd each flower  
and bud.

A silent gliding horror yet, my vision dark beholds;  
A monstrous serpent drops, and clasps that panther in its folds.  
Half round the branch huge as itself, half round the frantic beast,  
The reptile lifts aloft in air its meal, its living feast.  
With ribs crushed in and failing breath, the panther writhes in  
vain;

It's fate, alas, is but a type of endless victims slain.  
I heard the feeble cooney's scream beneath the ferret's fangs;  
The ring-dove in the eagle's claws, I felt her dying pangs.  
No smallest ant, no germ that lived, escaped my saddened gaze;  
I watched them on each other prey, in myriad cruel ways.  
From lowest germ to highest man, I saw the law of life,  
Of universal struggle and of fratricidal strife,  
The iron law, the fell decree, that dooms the weak to die,  
And makes men prey on brethren's blood as spiders on the fly.  
I saw beneath a world of mirth, a world of pain and woe;  
Could I have planned such wretchedness? Could I have made  
earth so?

It was no time to ponder, while to live was but to kill:  
I thundered through the universe my everlasting will,  
That Nature ne'er should revel thus in agony and gore,  
That all these crimes and horrors cease, and cease for evermore.  
I turned the tiger to a deer, with eyes that gently shone,  
The adder to a harmless eel, the eagle to a swan.  
Each huge devouring crocodile changed to a floating log;  
Each treacherous howling wolf, transformed, became a faithful dog.  
Thus Nature's awful horrors ceased beneath my watchful care,  
That strove to keep its living toys all beautiful and fair.  
And so it seemed the universe grew into happy rest,  
Where in a plenteous home of joy all living things were blest.  
For in my will omnipotent, which all results foresaw,  
I placed a wheel within a wheel, a law within a law.  
No more o'er-crowded numbers growing vast and vaster still,  
Starved on till e'en the tiger saved them from the greater ill.  
As first of boons designed on high to bless both great and small,  
I bade no race to multiply till famine fell on all;  
But only from a happy race and ever-plenteous food,  
Arose the needful numbers in the well-provision'd brood.  
And man, the proudest of my works, I moulded yet again,  
And so that he that did the evil suffered all the pain;  
Till evil ended, self-dismayed, and virtue reigned at last,  
And strife and war were only known as memories of the past.  
Thus I ensured with glowing heart that earth should all be glad,  
That nothing evil should prevail, and nothing good be sad;  
That vice and crime should die self-doomed, and virtue be  
supreme—

But suddenly I woke, and found, alas! 'twas all a dream.  
The fire was out, my blood was chilled, strange darkness filled  
the room,

My vision'd paradise was o'er, my soul was full of gloom,  
For God permits the evil still; in vain his help is sought;  
Whate'er salvation man would see must by himself be wrought.

W. P. BALL.

### "LAZARUS, COME FORTH."

"O cuss this thing," said poor Lazarus, as recently arrived in  
heaven he sat with a 24-carat harp in his hand, upon a slab of  
jasper, and leant against an emerald wall; "I shall never be  
able to play it, and there is a grand concert about to come off.  
I shall have to go to Professor Davidetti, 24 New Jerusalem  
Street." (This was our old friend the man after God's own  
heart, who had altered his name in order to catch pupils).  
Lazarus had been practising "The Sweet By-and-Bye" for  
three days, and at the end of that time a street seraph had  
admonished him, that "Yankee Doodle" was entirely out of  
place there, and that he had better try his hand at something  
better! At last he saw St. Michael turning out of Sapphire  
Street, with his arms round the necks of two angels, and  
followed by twelve others.

"Look here, old sword-flamer," said he, "I can't manage  
this affair anyhow; she lays me over, I guess. Can't I have  
some other instrument? A barrel-organ would suit me down  
to the ground—stars, I mean."

"Can't be done Lazy, the Boss goes in for stringed  
instruments, and will have them; he never gives anything  
to organ grinders, and is death on German bands."  
"Well, I used to be able to play 'There is a Happy Land'  
on the fiddle; couldn't"—"Hish! you musn't mention  
that; what else could you play down below?" "Wel

the whistle-pipe, when I got a chance, but Mary used  
to bang me so with the tea-tray; but I was a masher on the  
Jew's-harp; can I play that?" "No, every other one that  
comes here wants to play the Jew's-harp as a compromise, but  
The Word won't have it." "Well, the ocarina, organette,  
melo—" "Can you play the lyre?" "Can I? Great  
Moses! you bet I can. Mike, that's just my forte; all Bethany  
used to say that if there was one fellow in the town more  
gifted than another in that line, Lazy was the boy. Would  
you like a specimen? Just take me to The Word and I'll fetch  
him." "You are very ignorant, you must play that harp—" "No,  
no, the kettledrum, the pandean pipes, the concertina,  
the—" But Michael turns away and vanishes with his  
angels, and poor Lazarus continues to twang, twang, in the  
most alarming manner. He doubles up no less than sixty-  
three cherubim and as many seraphim, and produces such  
distressing and diabolical sounds that the occupants of the  
nearest mansions begin to pelt him with boot-jacks, till in  
despair he goes down to the beautiful river to commit suicide.  
His specific gravity won't allow him to sink; he can't  
even get wet, so he tries to choke himself with a harp-  
string, which he also finds totally impracticable. Sudden-  
ly he heard a voice: "Lazarus come forth." It came from an  
invisible point in space multitudinous mil-  
lions of leagues downward. If the person hadn't shouted  
rather loud, he wouldn't have heard it; and, as it was, it was  
lucky he was quick at hearing. He resolved to go. It was  
evident he was wanted very badly. He dropped his harp  
and ran for the pearly gates, where the porter demanded his  
passport. "Look here," said Lazarus, "I've got a few  
quadrillion leagues to go, and haven't got time to thrash out  
the question." So he darted by and threw himself down  
headlong, and had some hair-breadth escapes among the  
stars, and nearly cut a planet in two. It almost took his  
breath away (so to speak). But he landed exactly in Asia—  
nay, precisely in Bethany—ah, smack into his now stinking  
body and grave-clothes without swerving a hair!

It was a caution to snakes and telegraphy, and was the  
very best time on record. He smelt terribly for months, and  
Mary and Martha used to keep their handkerchiefs to their  
noses while they hunted poor Lazy out of the house with  
brooms. He smelt louder than four hundred pole-cats, which  
wasn't nice, especially when he went out to tea. People didn't  
like it somehow, and used to make a talk of it. At last  
Bethany said it supposed the town was too close for him,  
and perhaps after all, he would be happier in Beyrout or New  
Zealand. It used many arguments to prove its case, includ-  
ing pitchforks and clubs, and succeeded in persuading Lazarus  
to migrate, for he could see that their arguments were forcible  
ones. When he was about five miles out on his journey, he  
was sighted by some wild Bedouins of the desert, who shouted  
"Bucksheesh" and made towards him. When they had got  
within a mile and a half, they suddenly stopped short, and  
returned, saying, "It is too far to go," "The afternoon is too  
sultry," etc. The life he led after that was dreadful, and it  
would need volumes to tell all his adventures. As he is  
dreadfully neglected in the Gospels, at some future time we  
may take another glance at poor Lazarus.

ENDOR.

## REVIEWS.

*Bible Saints and Sinners, Part II.* By A. B. MOSS. London: Watts and Co. (1d.)—An honest and lively attempt to show Bible worthies in their true light.

*God's Corner Man.* By GORDON SCOTT. Published by the Author, 19 John Street, South Shields, 1887; price One Penny.—This is a lively lecture on varieties of the sky-pilot tribe whom Mr. Scott designates "God's Corner Men." The ring of an earnest purpose sounds out amidst the fun.

*Christianity: Its Mythical and Pagan Origin.* By CHAS. E. FORD, 141 Upper Lewes Road, Brighton, 1887.—The author who was formerly a member of the Y.M.C.A. seems to have given much serious study to the origin of Christianity, with the result indicated in the title. An acquaintance with Bonwick's "Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought" would have aided the section on Egypt.

WE are informed on the authority of the Scriptures that Judas sold his master, J. C., for thirty pieces of silver, but at the sale of the effects of a cigar merchant in Manchester a large oil painting, 6 feet by 3 feet 6 inches, subject, "The Crucifixion," by an artist of some repute, was withdrawn by the auctioneer as no second bid beyond the first one of ninepence was made. There was a good attendance, some few score people being present, and we presume that the majority would be Christians. Yet only one bid of ninepence was made, and that by a person of the same chosen nationality as the subject of the picture. In spite of the influence of the Bishop, and of revivalists, who keep Manchester pretty warm, we cannot but think that Christianity must be at a low ebb there, or some one would have made a second bid of tenpence, at which figure no doubt the Blessed Savior would then have been knocked down.



A DISCREET DAUGHTER OF THE FAMILY.

ONE of Detroit's best known evangelical ministers has a half interest in a four-years-old daughter. The other day she broke over the traces of discipline and her mother sent her into a closet with the injunction to tell God all about what a naughty little girl she had been.

At the expiration of her penance hour she came forth very quietly, as if her discipline had had a wholesome effect.

"Well, little daughter," said the mother, "did you tell God all about it?"

"No, mamma," was the reply; "I des didn't do it, 'cause I fought my papa wouldn't like to let it det out of the family."

PROFANE JOKES.

A CERTAIN Oxford collegian, though a notorious dunce, yet made himself a name in the Church. When questioned once in his undergraduate days about "Fall not out by the way," in the story of Joseph and his brethren, he answered, "Perhaps they had no tail-boards to the waggons mentioned."

A LITTLE girl was being dressed for Sunday. The gay gown had been put on, and the little one surveyed herself with evident satisfaction. "Mamma," she said, "does God see everything?" "Certainly, dear," said the mother. "Does he see me now?" "Why, yes," replied the astonished matron. "Well then, he sees a pretty neat-looking girl, doesn't he, mamma?"

SOME children take naturally to a practical view of things. A little girl was saying her prayers the other evening, closing up with, "God bless papa, little sister and everybody, and keep us from harm this night. Amen." The "little sister," a bright-eyed puss of five years, quietly remarked: "If you'd said 'everybody' to begin with you needn't have made such a long prayer."

THERE is a story told that one day, not far from Atalanta, a young man, after hearing to a certain preacher pound and expound the Scriptures for two hours, arose and started to leave the church. The preacher stopped short. "Young man!" he said. The young man stopped. "If you'd rather go to hell than to hear me preach, just go on!" "Well," replied the young man, after a pause, "I believe I'd rather!" and out he went.

A MINISTER was making a pastoral call at the cottage of a shepherd, and in the course of conversation spoke of the goodness and power of God, and his might in making the world, the sky, and heaven, and populating the earth with men and women. When he got through, an auld wife broke in with the question: "An' did he make the Eerish, too?" "Yes, most certainly," was the reply. "Ay, then, he has muckle ta answer for," was the rejoinder.

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