

# THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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## PRECIOUS PROMISES.—III.

*And these signs shall follow them that believe. . . if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.—MARK XVI., 17, 18.*

## BLOOD AND FIRE.

"GENERAL" BOOTH takes for the watchword and trade-mark of the Salvation Army the striking phrase of "Blood and Fire." Thousands of superfine Christians, who have not the least understanding of the creed they profess, are horrified at this exclamation. They regard it as shocking and blasphemous. But if Christianity be true, the words are singularly appropriate. Booth evidently knows what he is about. With a sure instinct, he sees what is the real essence of Christianity. He knows where its actual strength lies. He feels that if it continues to live, it must subsist, as it always has done, by its strong appeal to the terror and credulity of the multitude. So while the cultured, half-and-half, milk-and-water Christians turn up their noses at him, he goes on recruiting and developing his Army, and raking in the cash to the jingle of tamborines and the roll of the big drum.

"Blood and Fire" sums up Christianity. Booth is not a man of ideas, but the phrase is a master-stroke. Christian doctrine and Christian history, Christian hopes and Christian fears, are all expressed in this shibboleth. The great fact to a Christian is a future life, and the great fact in a future life is Hell. No one acquainted with the history of Chris-

tianity, or with its present characteristics, can say that the idea of Heaven has been or is very alluring. Scarcely ever has it been anything but an alternative. Its features are rather negative than positive. More than half the pleasure of this life consists in the absence of pain, and considerably more than half the pleasure of Heaven consists in the escape from the tortures of Hell. Read Christian sermons of the real ages of faith, and you will see the truth of this; or look at the pictorial history of Christianity, and you will see that for every single picture of Heaven there have been a hundred of Hell. Religion, as Lucretius said, began in terror; by terror it lives, and in the death of terror it dies.

Now, Booth has caught at this truth. It is his sheet-anchor, his rock of ages. He is doing what the commercial men call "good business" because he ministers to a want which is as wide as ignorance and as perennial as stupidity. Yet he knows that Hell has lost some of its power through familiarity, to say nothing of its being used for swearing purposes; so he dexterously substitutes another word, which gives the substance and essence of Hell with none of its jocularity. Fire! A capital word. It strikes terror, suggests escape, and evokes a desire for safety. The dread of fire is an animal instinct, and how strong it is even in highly-civilised men and women may be seen when the cry of "Fire!" is raised in a theatre. There is a mad, blind, brutal rush; the strong

trample the weak, every avenue is blocked, and a place which, if cool-headedness reigned, could be emptied in three minutes, becomes an earthly Gehenna. So if you cry Hell Fire! to ignorant, credulous, and silly people, they shudder, turn pale, and fly every way for safety; always, in the end, rushing into the arms of the quacks who shout the warning and profit by the panic.

Then comes Blood. That is the fluid which puts out the fire. Apparently it cannot extinguish Hell, but it keeps any sinner cool when it is played upon him through the celestial hose. The Blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin, although the sin against the Holy Ghost is never forgiven in this world or in the next. We must all be washed in the Blood of the Lamb.

There is a fountain filled with blood,  
Drawn from Emanuel's veins,  
And sinners, plunged within that flood,  
Lose all their guilty stains.

A blood bath! Angels and ministers of grace defend us! We prefer good honest soap and water, or a plunge in the sea. Nor can we relish a religion whose supreme word reeks of the slaughter-house. We like a cleaner system and better language. The blood-cure is disgusting, and the creed which says "believe or be damned" is anything but polite.

Without shedding of blood, says Paul, there is no remission of sin. Very well then, we will let the sins go unremitted. No doubt it was very kind of Jesus Christ to get murdered for us, but we do not desire the favor, and he might have waited till he was asked. No doubt, also, his blood is a very excellent patent-safety fluid for those who stand in need of it; but we don't, and we object to having it left at our doors in blood-cans without orders.

There is, of course, a philosophical explanation of all this sanguinary nonsense. Blood ritual runs through all savage religion. Jehovah's altars were drenched with blood, and the infinite altar of God the Father is drenched with the blood of his infinite Son. Some day, when an opportunity arises, we shall explain the matter fully, and show the real meaning of the Blood of Christ.

Lastly, "Blood and Fire" epitomises the history of Christianity. Robert Emmett told his judge that if all the blood he had shed were collected together, his lordship might swim in it. But if all the blood shed by Christianity were collected together, it would float a navy. Hundreds of millions have been murdered by this brutal religion since it first obtained power. It has also borrowed the Fire of Hell to torture people on earth. When history is impartially written, the symbol of Christianity will be two-fold; an altar red with blood, and a heretic burning at a stake.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### RECENT CHRISTIAN FORGERIES.

THE chapter on Pious Forgeries in *The Crimes of Christianity* is a long one. The taint of forgery infects the whole of early Christian literature. Bishop Ellicott, speaking of the first Christian centuries, says: "It was an age of literary frauds. Deceit, if it had a good intention, frequently passed unchallenged. However unwilling we may be to admit it, history forces upon us the recognition of pious fraud as a principle which was by no means inoperative in the earliest ages of Christianity." These early forgeries include the four canonical gospels, besides very many apocryphal ones; many of the epistles, and all the writings of the Apostolical Fathers, with the possible exception of the first epistle of Clement. The Apostolical Constitutions, the Apostles' Creed, and the creeds ascribed to the Council of Nice and Saint Athanasius, are now known not to have proceeded from the parties to whom they were assigned.

Most of the external evidence which has been used to bolster up the gospel story is in the same predicament. The passage in Josephus, in which the learned Jew acknowledges Jesus as the Christ, now takes place beside the epistle of Jesus to King Abgarus, in which he quotes from the gospel according to John—a gospel not written until the latter half of the second century. Even the testimonies of Pliny and Tacitus to the persecution of the early Christians have not been unquestioned.

The craving for confirmation of the too ideal story which induced these fabrications must be still at work, judging by some paragraphs which have been going round the papers exciting the wonder of the ignorant and the contempt of the well-informed. These purport to be a copy of the death-warrant issued by Pontius Pilate—strangely enough, in Hebrew instead of Latin—discovered on a copper-plate during the excavation of the ancient city of Aquila in Naples. Here is the precious item:

"Of the many interesting relics and fragments brought to light by the persevering researches of antiquarians, none could be more interesting to the philanthropist and believer than the following, the most imposing judicial document ever recorded. It has been thus faithfully translated:

"Sentence rendered by Pontius Pilate, acting governor of Lower Galilee, stating that Jesus of Nazareth shall suffer death on the cross. In the year 17 of the Emperor Tiberius Cæsar, and the 27th day of March, the city of holy Jerusalem—Annas and Caiaphas being priests, sanctificatoes of the people of God—Pontius Pilate, governor of Lower Galilee, sitting in the presidential chair of the Prætorium, condemns Jesus of Nazareth to die on the cross, between two thieves, the great and notorious evidence of the people saying: 1. Jesus is a redeemer; 2. He is seditious; 3. He is the enemy of the law; 4. He calls himself falsely the son of God; 5. He calls himself falsely the king of Israel; 6. He entered into the temple followed by a multitude having palm branches in their hands.

"Order the first Centurian, Quintius Cornelius, to lead him to the place of execution. Forbid any person whomsoever, either rich or poor, to oppose the death of Jesus. The witnesses who signed the condemnation of Jesus are: 1. Daniel Robani, a Pharisee; 2. Joannes Robani; 3. Raphael Robani; 4. Japet, a citizen. Jesus shall go out of the city of Jerusalem by the gate of Strannus."

If such a document was ever discovered as pretended, it is as clumsy a forgery as the pretended plates of the book of Mormon. It follows the Gospel of John in its historical blunder of making Annas and Caiaphas high priests at the same time. It makes Pontius Pilate Governor of Lower Galilee, whereas Herod Antipas was tetrarch of that division of Palestine, and Pilate was procurator of Judæa only. We do not know when or where the paragraph was concocted, but certainly a more plausible narrative of the same matter can be found in the Christmas Number of the *Freethinker* for 1881.

No doubt if Pilate, at a time of peace, did take upon himself to put a man to death in the barbarous way related in the gospels, of which there is nothing worthy the name of historic evidence, he ought to have transmitted an account of the matter to the Emperor. Accordingly various "Acts of Pilate" have been forged, which betray the hand of the Christian. In one letter to Tiberius Cæsar, Pilate praises Jesus Christ as the most pious man that ever lived or will live. He says that not only the Hebrew Prophets, but the Sibyls testified to him." A very likely story to come from his condemner. Another report addressed to Augustus Cæsar, who died A.D. 14, tells how Jesus raised Lazarus and performed other miracles. Thus Jesus was officially reported to be executed some sixteen years at least before the event is alleged to have occurred. Pilate confesses that the works done by Jesus "are greater than can be done by the gods whom we worship," yet says he "ordered him to be crucified, having first scourged him, and having found against him no cause of evil accusations." A nice magistrate truly.

In some of the shop windows there is to be seen a photograph, said to be an authentic portrait of Jesus Christ copied from an emerald gem executed by order of Pilate, and sent by him to Tiberius. It is hardly necessary to point out the absurdity of the legend, which is of quite modern date. In the age of Tiberius the emerald was never engraved upon. No Roman governor would think of selecting so valuable a material for portraying the portrait of a malefactor. If this intaglio really exists upon an emerald, it no doubt dates only from the time of the Renaissance, when wealthy patrons supplied to their artists precious stones, adequate, in their intrinsic value, to the dignity of the subject to be engraved thereon.

It must have struck anyone who thinks at all that it is curious that none of the portraits of Jesus represent him as what he must have been, if an historical character at all, viz., as a swarthy Palestinian. A white, love-lorn-looking youth, with long, fair, waving hair parted in the middle, does duty for a Jew. A sufficient explanation, some may think, may be found in the fact that artists naturally paint from their own race. But there is another explanation. The first artists who portrayed the features of Christ were Gnostics, who did not believe in the historical Jesus at all. The Christ depicted in the catacombs at Rome is sometimes

a child and sometimes a man, but always an ideal, and not Jewish. Mr. C. W. King—than whom there is no better authority—says in his work on the Gnostics and their remains: "There can be no doubt that the head of Serapis, marked as the face is by a grave and pensive majesty, supplied the first idea for the conventional portraits of the Savior."

J. M. WHEFLEL.

### DIALOGUE.

PROCEEDING FROM THE FATHER AND THE SON.

SCENE—Heaven. *The Eternal Father discovered unbosoming himself to the Son.*

THE FATHER—

When I was a jolly, a given-to-folly,  
A dashing young god on the "bend,"  
I used to get tight about twice every night,  
And say things I didn't intend.  
Tough yarns I narrated, and "searchers" related,  
I prophesied things by the score,  
Made ridiculous laws and preposterous saws—  
Oh those bibulous revels of yore!

THE SON—

Well, cheer up, my hearty, a jolly young party,  
A high-blooded deity, too,  
Couldn't help but hold revels with similar devils—  
Then what does it matter to you?

THE FATHER—

That isn't the worst; I oftentimes curs'd,  
And blessings I sometimes bestowed;  
I blest all the worst ones, the good were the curst ones,  
Though if I could help it I'm blowed.  
And Old Harry, it seems, filled a couple of reams  
With this language alarming of mine;  
And he got me one night, when uncommonly tight,  
My name as the author to sign.

THE SON—

I can follow his plan. He has published to man  
This collection, his feelings to shock;  
Well, I know what to do—you must swear it's not true;  
You must go down and say so, old cock.

THE FATHER—

I'm afraid it's no go, for my people, you know,  
Are so used to this scandalous tomo  
That if I denied what I've written inside  
They'd ill-use me and chivy me home.  
You see, they expect me (or else they'll reject me)  
My prophesies all to fulfil;  
And that's why I weep, for, my promise to keep,  
I am bound my dear sonny to kill.

THE SON—

It's the deuce of a fix, my invention it licks,  
This dilemma absurd to evade;  
For you cannot kill me, I'm immortal you see—  
'Tisn't easy to murder a shade.

THE FATHER—

Stay! I have it! We'll choose—if you favor my views—  
Some erratic and mystical Jew;  
Just a wave of the hand, and a word of command,  
And, hey presto! he straight becomes you.  
Then I'll cause all the folks to believe it's a hoax  
And to collar and settle their lord.  
Pray don't be alarmed, you cannot be harmed;  
In fact, you'll look on and applaud.

*Ensemble and Dance.*

Then a hop and a skip, and a festive hip! hip!  
For the magical mystical sell;  
'Twill redound to the praise of the Ancient of Days,  
And 'twill diddle Old Harry as well.  
A cheer for the Father! (a crafty one rather),  
A cheer for the composite Son:  
And one for that Fogey, the rarefied Bogey—  
Three cheers for the Not-to-be-done.

CURTAIN.

EX-RITUALIST.

## ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. Nathaniel Brunyee, a retired clergyman, residing at Tickhill, had a servant in his employ for twenty-two years. As she died in his house and was buried by him, he seems to have thought himself entitled to her effects. He violently abused his servant's sister when she called for the things. An action at law was met by a counter-claim for medical attendance and heavy burial expenses, but the judge sustained the sister's plea and declared that the counter-claim fell through entirely. The Rev. Nathaniel Brunyee seems to be just the sort of man who needs a Savior upon whose vicarious merits he can crawl into heaven.

Mr. Lowy again challenges the Moabite stone as a forgery, and declares that Professors Gractz and Zunz are of his opinion. It is a pity that his authorities, like himself, are of the Jewish race, for it may be suspected that their national vanity takes

umbrage at a record which declares that the Israelites were thrashed by the Moabites, and their god Jehovah dragged in disgrace before the victorious deity Chemosh.

F. HENDERSON, a member of the Socialist League, who has tasted the sweets of prison life, contributes a well-written sonnet to *Our Corner* on a copy of Shakespeare which he obtained from the prison library after serving two months of his sentence. Mr. Henderson was more fortunate than Mr. Foote. There was no Shakespeare in Holloway Gaol, the greatest of poets being regarded as too profane for criminals. Dick's *Christian Philosopher* was offered instead. All the volumes are goody-goody. Need we say that they are all selected by the chaplain, who, in all the sermons Mr. Foote had the unspeakable pleasure of listening to, never betrayed the least acquaintance with any other book than the Bible.

THE following edition of the Lord's Prayer, revised for the benefit of the clerical party, has been circulated in Rome. "Our father who art in the Vatican; Infallible be thy name; thy temporal sovereignty come; thy will be done in Europe and America as in Ireland. Give us this day our tithes and titles, and forgive us our trespasses as we give plenary indulgence to those who pay penitently unto us; lead us not into democracy, but deliver us from thinking; for thine is the crozier, the key, and tiara, Rome without end. Amen."

THE following announcement was a few weeks since extensively placarded on enormous posters in the town of Lisburn, county Antrim, where a series of lectures was being given in one of the Protestant churches:

*Sunday, April 3,*

THE REVEREND CANON —

"Descended into Hell."

You are all affectionately invited.

ANOTHER minister, the Rev. G. Brooks of 27 Varbry Road, Stamford Hill, is gazetted as bankrupt. The precept "owe no man anything" is not a favorite one with the cloth.

THE members of the Protestant Alliance are trying to induce Conservatives to oppose the future stages of the Oaths Bill. They declare in a petition that by sanctioning the Bill the Legislature will in effect ignore "the overruling presence and existence of the Divine lawgiver." Nevertheless (says the London correspondent of the *York Herald*), I cannot ascertain that many members of the Conservative Party are disposed to sympathise with the Alliance, now that there is no chance of making capital out of the question. The opposition to Mr. Bradlaugh subsided in vigor after the perpetual pensions were commuted.

CANON FERGIE has been speaking at the annual meeting of the Liverpool Church of England Scripture Readers' Society. According to the report "He had no hesitation in saying that there was not nearly as much infidelity among the working classes as there was fifty years ago." We beg to differ. Our memory does not go back for fifty years, and we doubt whether Canon Fergie's does to any purpose. But the working classes, as is admitted and deplored at Church Congresses, are now almost alienated from Christianity. We are assured of this, however, that there is as much shameless lying in the Church as there was fifty years ago, and Canon Fergie is a walking proof of the statement.

THERE was to have been a special thanksgiving service at All Saints' Church, Lambeth, last Sunday morning. The church was decorated for the occasion, and the Rev. Dr. F. G. Lee was ready to perform, but the parishioners were disloyally and irreligiously absent. The vicar gave out as his text, "Fear God: honor the king." Then he gazed round on the empty benches, and denounced the absence of worshippers as disgraceful. Preaching to empty pews had a most depressing effect, and he should leave the pulpit without delivering his sermon. The rev. gentleman thereupon withdrew, after slowly and solemnly repeating his text. This is one sign among many that fearing gods and honoring kings is rapidly being played out.

The dead body of the Rev. David Jones, pastor of the Congregational Church at Cwmrhos, Brecknockshire, has been found suspended by a rope from a beam in a barn. The rev. gentleman had been in a very depressed state of mind for some time. Religion seems to do very little to prevent suicide. Indeed it is always inefficacious in the momentous affairs of life.

THE wife of the Rev. Robert Leckie, of Airth near Falkirk, cut the throats of three of her children and then committed suicide. Any such actions on the part of a Freethinker's wife would have proved the horribly demoralising effects of Atheism; but in a Christian's wife such homicidal tendencies prove nothing. Such at least is Christian logic in its two aspects as applied to enemies and to friends.

THE Rev. R. F. Watson, rector of Aston-sub-Edge, Worcester fell dead in the pulpit the other Sunday. The Rev. E. M. Chapman, rector of Low Toynnton, near Horncastle, was seized with apoplexy while conducting service in the parish church on Sun-

day evening. He soon expired. By the rules of Christian logic these sudden deaths would have been striking judgments if they had befallen Freethought lecturers, but when they happen to Christians they only show the blessedness of them that die in the Lord.

DR. HILLIER, a local magistrate at Sandwich, died suddenly in church during the Jubilee Thanksgiving Service.

A LADY, residing in Gloucester Road, Regent's Park, fell dead the other Sunday as she was leaving Park Chapel. The *Christian Herald* ought to note this divine judgment on chapel-going. But evils happening to the pious are somewhat counted as blessings. The *Christian Herald* for instance quite rejoices in the case of a minister who was "killed on the spot" after enthusiastically repeating a stupid verse of a stupid hymn.

In the Hungarian floods the land belonging to the Bishop of Szanad has suffered damage to the amount of more than a million florins. Why don't the Lord look after his own dignitaries a little better than this?

GOD has killed seven hundred and ninety sheep by lightning at Biesjesdam, South Africa. What had these harmless animals done to bring down his wrath? If he had killed a few hundred of his sanguinary tigers or sharks there might have been more sense in his action. As it is the Father of the Lamb has killed animals to whom he is proud to compare his own son.

DAVID says the Lord owns the cattle upon a thousand hills. Wouldn't he do well to sell some of them and give the proceeds to some of the farmers who suffer from his lightning and his floods?

A HORRIBLE result of Christian sectarianism is reported from Pittsburgh. It appears that Frederick Herman, a steel worker, is a Lutheran, with a Catholic wife. At the instigation of the priest without his knowledge she had her youngest daughter baptised in the Catholic Church. By some means Herman learned of the circumstance and at once stopped work and went home, brutally pounded his wife with stones until she lay perfectly still, with blood flowing from numerous wounds, then went to his sleeping child and cut its throat with a razor and then drew the instrument across his own throat. Before dying he wrote some pious ejaculations desiring that the child might be buried with him and not in the Catholic burying ground.

THIS man was not mad until rendered so by his religion. He is described as sober and intelligent. His crimes were the natural outcome of the belief in hell fire, and that there is only one way of salvation. Would it not have been better if he had never heard the name of religion?

THE Rev. Wm. Trevelyan Kevill-Davies, of Croft Castle, Hereford, and Queen's Gate, Kensington, is an exquisite specimen of the sort of men provided by an Established Church for improving the morals of the rustic population. He is a married man with eight children, but at the age of thirty-eight he made the acquaintance of a girl whom he, as parish minister, prepared for confirmation. The girl's father was dead, and her mother kept a small grocer's shop. The confirmation business ended in his seducing her at the age of seventeen, and a child was born. An annuity was subsequently settled on Miss Russell, but the reverend teacher of morals now refuses to pay it on the ground of molestation. Miss Russell is now insane through her troubles. She has written him piteous letters, has followed him and his wife, and has told his wife what had occurred. The aristocratic parson thinks that this molestation relieves him of all pecuniary responsibility, and an action is now brought to recover the annuity and arrears, the girl being absolutely penniless, and in the workhouse as a pauper lunatic. Under cross-examination the high-minded defendant said he did not justify his act, but he would not admit the word seduce. He admitted he knew nothing against the girl when he first knew her. He gave her a religious book with the words written inside: "With a fervent hope that God will watch over her and bless her," etc. Shortly after he had intercourse with her. When he found she was *enceinte* he fabricated a letter in a feigned hand, offering her a place in London and purporting to come from a Mrs. Parkin, who was a purely fictitious person. The case is not over, but we hope in the meantime the parishioners will duly profit by the spiritual sermons of this clerical seducer, who admits the act but not the word describing it.

A YOUNG negro named Jarvis, a prominent member of the Northampton branch of the Salvation Army, has just been sentenced to ten years' penal servitude for a criminal assault on a little boy. He always took a leading part in the street processions.

"THAT God may protect and abundantly bless my country is my fervent prayer." So says the plain-looking old lady who sits upon the English throne—now and then. She talks of "my" country as though England were hers, and asks God to bless it. Well, perhaps he will, and perhaps he won't. It all depends on what we do for ourselves. He'll give us nothing, but what we get he'll let us keep—small thanks to him. The praying business

is overrun with cant. The Queen tags on a prayer to her letter to the nation, and then goes on pocketing our cash. Still, if there is any good in prayer, she may as well pray for us, for she has deuced little to pray for herself, as we save the Almighty all trouble in that respect.

THE *British Weekly*, speaking of the Indian clause in Mr. Courtney Kenny's Bill, wants to know who is to discriminate when the question comes to feelings. It says:—"The editor of every newspaper in the country would be in peril certainly; the freedom of the preacher would be gone. No, no; if religion cannot endure some misrepresentation, a little sarcasm, it is a millinery affair, and had better be kept in a bandbox at home."

A PIOUS Methodist boasts that he and his partners have given up the whole of their business to the Lord. They ask him to guide and direct their temporal affairs and "He does it," says this man of business, "as we can all bear witness." If the partners did nothing and really left the management to the Lord it would speedily be manifest that God was about the worst manager possible. The assertion is pious nonsense.

ONE of the "Society" papers says:—"Still following close in the footsteps of the Apostles, the Archbishop of Canterbury and Mrs. Benson have issued invitations to their aristocratic friends to come together for a strawberry-and-cream scramble on Saturday, the 25th inst., at Lambeth Palace. On July 9th there will be another similar apostolic affair at the same place. It does one's heart good to note how active the dear, good Archbishop, with the hairless face, is about his Master's business. Strawberries and cream, and claret cups, and ices, all served on well-kept lawns and in umbrageous walks, quite take one back to the early days of Christianity, and remind one, oh, so much of the Galilean fishermen who were the first followers of Christ!"

THE discovery of the mummy of Rameses II., the Pharaoh of Egypt who is alleged to have oppressed the Israelites in the time of Moses, not exactly coinciding with the statement that Pharaoh and his host were drowned in the Red Sea, the Rev. Dr. C. S. Robinson, of New York, has started the theory that not Rameses II., but Menephtah, was the Pharaoh of the Plagues. It is stated in the inscriptions that Menephtah lost a son by a sudden death, and it is suggested that this son was the first-born, and that the death took place when the Lord slew all the first-born of Egypt. We are to suppose that the equally sudden and simultaneous deaths of all the other first-born in Egypt was too insignificant to be mentioned.

ANOTHER wonderful confirmation of the truth of the Jew books is found in the fact that the city of Pa-tum is found to be built of brick, and some of the bricks are stated to be entirely destitute of straw. After this corroboration of the Bible who can refuse to believe that Aaron's rod turned into a serpent, or that the Israelites crossed the Red Sea dry-shod?

THE Rev. M. Baxter, editor of the *Christian Herald*, seems quite cranky on the subject of prophecy. He gives a calendar of events that are to occur between 1894 and 1901. The bodily rising of the 144,000 saints of the Revelation, and the translation to heaven of these "watchful, living Christians," are to come off "most probably about Thursday, March 5, 1896," or else "about Sun., Feb. 9, 1896." Napoleon's emperorship over ten kingdoms and "a world-wide massacre of Christians" "will be some time about July, 1897, to Jan. 26, 1901." The "Fifth Trumpet Woe of Demon Scorpion Locusts" is to begin in October, 1897. The "Sixth Trumpet Woe of 200 million Demon Horsemen" is to commence in December, 1898. Other horrors and judgments follow till Christ destroys all cities with a terrible earthquake and descends on Mount Olivet on April 11, 1901. He will have previously raised all dead Christians from their graves, and he will then reign over them for a thousand years. Hadn't this minister of the Church of England better take up his abode at a lunatic asylum?

THE *Christian at Work* is a good title for a journal which, despite the fact that every newspaper which reported the Reynolds's blasphemy case in New Jersey stated plainly that Col. Ingersoll paid the fine out of his own pocket, states that "Mr. Ingersoll defends a man for blaspheming at a profit, but is careful not to offend the law himself, while he hires a hall to denounce God in at a charge of fifty cents a head." Verily when the Christian is at work the result is seen in malignant lies and slander. As a matter of fact Col. Ingersoll not only gave at least two days of his valuable time, but besides paying all expenses for Mr. Reynolds, he also made him a gift of twenty-five dollars.

A WRITER in the *Rock* suggests that Christ may be going about on an "endless mission" from planet to planet, setting examples of godly life to the inhabitants, and "giving His life for their redemption." Another writer thinks it a profane idea that God should have created "eight hundred million planets to send His only begotten Son to spend a human life and die a mortal death upon each created world." At thirty-three years to each, Christ would take some thousands of millions of years in living and dying in those starry worlds. No wonder he hasn't come back yet to keep his promise of a speedy return.

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S OPEN-AIR LECTURES.

Sunday, July 3, at 11.15, Kingsland Green; at The Green, West Ham, near Plaistow Station, at 7.  
 July 10, Victoria Park; July 17, Clerkenwell Green (morning); Regent's Park (afternoon); July 24, Central London Branch (morning); Battersea (evening); July 31, Camberwell; August 7, Westminster Branch; August 14, Bethnal Green Branch.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

AUGUST 7 and 14, 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. 7<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>d.

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.—E. T.

J. B. S.—Mr. Ball has been writing on the National Anthem, and we do not care to continue the subject at present.

T. BATES.—Büchner's *Force and Matter* would probably suit you. It is published by Asher and Co.

E. G. PACKMAN.—The explanation of the puzzle is that it is very difficult for ordinary people to see mistakes in the faith they were suckled in. But it is not true that the number of Christians is constantly increasing—at least relatively to the population. Persons who have been "converted" have been brought up as Christians. We do not deny that there are plenty of honest believers; but they rarely take the trouble to think, and their belief is simply acquiescence.

BOB.—You are not bound to have your child christened but it must be registered, and you are liable to a penalty for neglecting the duty. Freethinkers no doubt take various views on the vaccination question, but there is no argument to justify compulsory vaccination which will not justify compulsory religion.

C. WARD.—Always glad to receive cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

W. C. SAVILLE.—Shall appear in an early number.

F. R. BIRD.—For the place for Mr. Foote's West Ham lecture see Special Notice above.

R. FOX.—Thanks for the batch of cuttings. Glad to hear that you were so pleased with the lecture at the Midland Arches. *Maria Monk* is not a trustworthy book, although all the vices and villainies narrated in it have occurred at different times and places; in fact the well-accredited stories of monks and nuns in many Catholic countries throw the worst parts of *Maria Monk* into the shade.

S. P. HILL.—Yankee Hastings is unworthy of further trouble. A man who says that where Christianity is war is unknown, would certainly take the first prize in an international competition for lying.

NEMO.—There will be a complete, though succinct account of the Inquisition in the *Crimes of Christianity*, which we have in the press. The literature of the subject is wide and various. There is a sixpenny pamphlet on the Inquisition, published by the Protestant Alliance. We are gratified to learn that it was a copy of the *Freethinker*, given you by a friend, which set you thinking on religion.

W. F.—The open-air work in London should certainly be better supported. We are astonished that Freethinkers with any means do not contribute more handsomely to its expenses. Our last week's appeal has only brought a small amount. Fifty times as much is needed. We hope our London friends will wake up at once.

R. JOHNSON.—Mill's *Three Essays* will serve your turn. You will find our examination of his strained panegyric on Jesus in *Who was Christ?*

S. T.—We agree with you that the N. S. S. Conference has been held at out of the way places pretty often, and that a central place would be preferable for the next.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—British Weekly—Independent Pulpit—Lucifer—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—Freireligioses Sonntagsblatt—Jus—Richmond and Twickenham Times—Sheffield and Rotherham Independent—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—Open Court—Menschentum—Visitor.

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 open-air campaign on Peckham Rye opened brilliantly on Sunday afternoon. Mr. B. Ellis took the chair, and opened the meeting with a few humorous remarks. Mr. Foote lectured for an hour to a very big crowd. Many London Branches sent small contingents to surround and protect the platform in case of disorder, and they should be complimented on their energy and spirit. Fortunately the greatest decorum prevailed; the meeting was good-tempered throughout, and many solemn-faced Christians could be seen occasionally smiling in their own despite. There were two very feeble critics, who only "ventured to ask a question." Opposition was invited, nay besought, and there were loud cries for a well-known infidel-slayer. But he did not come

forward, and the Chairman remarked "He prefers another time." The meeting broke up with three cheers for the lecturer. We are happy to add that there was an excellent sale of literature.

THE first meeting of the London Open-Air Lecture Committee was held at the Hall of Science on Friday evening, June 24, Mr. Foote presiding. It was resolved that a month's programme of all the out-door stations should be printed on one side of a leaflet, the chairman undertaking to write a smart tract for the other side, and Mr. Standing undertaking to see it through the press. Twenty thousand copies are to be printed for the first month for general distribution. It was then arranged that each Branch should, if possible, send a few muscular members to Peckham Rye on the following Sunday afternoon to guard against any possible disorder, the place having of old an evil reputation. Several Branches—notably the Hyde Park and Finsbury—complained of being badly hampered by want of funds. A good deal of discussion followed on the financial question. Mr. R. O. Smith thought the winter would give an opportunity of preparing more effectively for next summer's campaign, and generously promised the use of the large hall for a benefit. Finally the meeting adjourned till Monday, July 4, at 8.15, to see what response would be made to the chairman's appeal for funds, and to act accordingly.

WE venture to appeal again on behalf of the open-air work, and this time more strongly. Take an illustration. Mr. Hiscock, a working man, said that he had paid the expenses of the previous Sunday morning's lecture on Clerkenwell Green out of his own pocket, and he did not know where the next Sunday's expenses were coming from. Now we put it to well-to-do Freethinkers—Is this fair? Whoever takes no share in the work, yet subscribes nothing, literally doesn't care twopence for the cause. Two meetings could be held at many stations as easily as one, if only the means were available. Earnest men are ready to do the work, brave fellows of whom any party might be proud, and all they want is a little encouragement. They give their services, but there are necessary expenses which must be met. And really the good done is tremendous compared with the trifling outlay. Mr. Foote is also giving all his open-air lectures gratuitously, paying his own travelling expenses too; and he and the committee have a right to expect assistance in making this work successful. There is no disguising the fact that—through causes we know, but need not dwell on just now—Freethought has cooled off a little lately. We ask it to warm up. There is a glorious harvest to be reaped, and there are willing laborers. All they want is scythes. Who will subscribe for them?

WE have to acknowledge the following subscriptions:—S. Harper, 2s. 6d.; W. Lloyd, 1s.; H. Jones, 1s. 6d.; R. Jackson, 1s.; J. Smith, 2s.; L. Ford, 1s.; T. Smith, 5s.; W. Turnbull, 6d.; M. Freane, 6d.; J. Clark, 6d.; R. Francis, 2s.

OUR readers will be delighted to learn that the Manchester Secular Hall Company completed its purchase of the premises on June 23. The friends came up splendidly at the finish, paying in over £600 during the last week. This enabled the directors to take possession without the £500 expected from the Spencer Legacy. We hope the Manchester Freethinkers will make the Hall in Rusholme Road a centre of vigorous propaganda. They have got their Hall and have fought capitably for it; but the question now is "What will they do with it?"

THE directors have sent us a resolution, thanking the Editor of the *Freethinker* "for his liberality and for the valuable aid which, in various ways, he has rendered towards the scheme for securing the Hall for the Secularists of Manchester."

MR. FENN, a missionary in Madrid, says: "The *Freethinkers' Weekly* has a tremendous sale, but it is all showing up and ridiculing friars, nuns, priests, etc., and in the most abominable manner ridiculing the Bible. Nothing can be worse. This sells; and to meet them there would need to be a paper more popular than any we publish."

THE French Chamber has decided that priests shall be required, like other citizens, to bear their share in the military service, and pay what the Premier called the "blood tax." This is another severe blow at the privileges of the Church, and no doubt we shall hear a fresh outcry of "persecution."

BAND No. 3 of the National Sunday League will play in Southwark Park this Sunday for the first time, permission having been granted by the Metropolitan Board of Works.

ACCORDING to the report of the National Society there is a falling off in the average attendance in Church Schools. They accordingly ask for increased assistance from the public funds and a modification of the system of payment by results. The results show that the Board Schools take the cake. They pass nearly 88 per cent. of the scholars in reading, writing and arithmetic. The Church Schools only pass a little over 81 per cent. Of the Government grant the Church Schools absorb £1,495,000. The various Denominational Schools receive over £2,000,000 from the national exchequer, while the Board Schools receive £1,189,000. During the last sixteen years the number of scholars

has risen from 1,693,000 to 4,505,000. This spread of education is intrinsically the deadliest blow to clericalism this generation has seen.

In its Jubilee number the *Daily News* reviews the "Fifty Years of Religious Freedom" of Victoria's reign. The retrospect is decidedly encouraging, though to the anti-theological mind the "religious freedom" of imprisoning Freethinkers is still an extremely unsatisfactory example of the progress made. The Catholic Emancipation Act, which allowed Catholics to sit in Parliament, had been passed a few years before the Queen came to the throne. In 1837 the Dissenters were allowed to marry, and to christen and register their children, without the intervention of the church minister. In 1860 the oath was altered so as to allow Jews to take their seats in Parliament. Ordinary Church rates were abolished in 1868, though unfortunately a number of local Church rates were left untouched. In 1854 Oxford University opened its doors to Nonconformist students, and in 1856 Cambridge admitted them to degrees. In 1871 they were admitted to fellowships. In 1869 the Irish Church was disestablished. The Education Act took control of National Education from the clergy. In 1880 the Burials Act allowed Dissenters to use the parish churchyards. The bulk of the Liberal party even protested against the application of a religious test to Mr. Bradlaugh. The *Daily News* notes that the phraseology of the controversy about religious liberty has altered. Nobody now talks of toleration, and religious freedom is held to mean religious equality. But the many instances of religious supremacy still left, as in the tithes exacted by the Established Church and the Blasphemy Laws upheld by Churchmen and Dissenters, show that the "Fifty Years of Religious Freedom" cannot correctly be so called. They have only been fifty years of progress towards religious freedom, and the goal is far from having been attained as yet.

It is fifty years since Abner Kneeland, the first editor of the *Boston Investigator*, was sent to prison for sixty days on the charge of denying the existence of a God. Kneeland's *Review of the Evidences of Christianity* has long been out of print, and we are pleased to notice that our American friends at the Paine Memorial Hall have decided to re-issue the work.

Our exchange, *La Semaine Anticlericale*, of Nevers, is making its way, and boasts of a decided success. Its articles are smartly written and bound to tell. We notice that under the head of "Boutades" it translates several profane jokes from our columns. We expect it will in time, like other Freethought journals, follow our example and blossom into illustration.

#### REPEALING THE BLASPHEMY LAWS.

(Dedicated, with compliments and regrets, to  
Courtney Kenny, Esq., M.P.)

THE following imaginary cases from the newspapers of the future are intended to show how effectually the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill will abolish religious prosecutions by increasing them, and how mischievous its new clause from the Indian Code may prove in enabling believers to persecute each other, while unbelievers, for whose benefit the Act is supposed to be passed, will be left in a far more helpless position than ever so far as prosecutions are concerned.

SCENE.—A London police-court. *The Rev. J. C. Sturgeon in the dock.*

MAGISTRATE: What is the charge against the prisoner?

SOLICITOR: Wilfully wounding religious feelings, your worship.

MAGISTRATE: I thought all religious prosecutions were done away with?

SOLICITOR: So they are, your worship. This cannot be a religious prosecution, because religious prosecutions are abolished. It is only a prosecution for hurting religious feelings.

MAGISTRATE: Pray what is the difference?

SOLICITOR: The difference that the Act of Parliament abolishes the one and enacts the other. The old methods of protecting pious feelings had become unworkable and were almost obsolete. An easy, comprehensive, and modernised means of protection is substituted. Allow me to hand you a copy of the Act by which we are now bound.

MAGISTRATE (after reading the Act): I see. Prosecutions for attacking God and religion are at an end. The law no longer cares for God and religion except so far as allusions to them may hurt human feelings. Call the evidence in the case.

Archdeacon Denison and other witnesses hereupon deposed that in sundry public places, to wit, in various chapels and at public meetings and in open spaces the defendant had wilfully wounded their religious feelings. He habitually reviled the national clergy and their religious beliefs and customs and precepts. He had called them

children of hell and a generation of vipers, and had ridiculed their missionary enterprises in the most insulting terms. He was in the habit of denouncing woes upon them as hypocrites and whited sepulchres. His language concerning the deity was often revoltingly blasphemous in the ears of honest and orthodox believers.

Prisoner made a long defence, in which he assailed the religious views of his prosecutors with more vigor than discretion.

MAGISTRATE (to the prisoner): Your defence does not in the slightest degree disprove the charge of wounding religious feeling. I shall deal with the case summarily. As this is my first case under the new Act, I shall take a lenient view. Two months with hard labor. Next case.

Archdeacon Denison, to his unspeakable surprise, here found himself suddenly thrust into the dock.

Father Jacomo, stepping into the witness-box, deposed that the Archdeacon had most grievously lacerated his religious feelings. He had applied the most opprobrious expressions possible to Holy Mother Church, the ineffable representative and ambassador of the King of Heaven, the object of every true believer's purest aspirations and tenderest devotion. The defendant had openly and publicly called her the Scarlet —. He would not trust his lips to utter so scandalous a word in such a connection, but he would hand the worthy magistrate a book in which the Archdeacon and his companions had openly and publicly exhibited to people the atrocious insult in question. The defendant called the Church of God an abomination and a sink of iniquity. He had publicly declared that the holy sacrifices of his religion, enshrining beliefs dearer than life to the heart of the true Christian, were "blasphemous fables and dangerous deceits." The Archdeacon habitually insulted his religion and his Church with abuse of this kind.

The very reverend prisoner seemed almost bursting to speak, and he had several times interrupted the witness so grossly and insolently that Father Jacomo had to invoke the protection of the court. When finally allowed to reply, the abusive character of the attempted defence made the truth of the charge self-evident.

MAGISTRATE: Keep to the point, sir, and do not increase your offence by unseemly virulence. Do you plead guilty to having wilfully wounded the religious feelings of this gentleman?

ARCHDEACON (almost speechless with bewildered astonishment and indignation): Guilty? What, what, what are things coming to? Everybody knows the truth of what I say. All the clergy in my Church know it and say it and read it publicly from the books the Church has prepared for us.

MAGISTRATE: That is no defence. If these companions of yours are guilty of the same offence I shall know how to deal with them. Numbers are no protection against the law. They rather aggravate the offence. And old Acts of Parliament are no protection against new acts that supersede or correct them.

SOLICITOR: The offence must be wilful, your worship. I submit that there is no evidence that my client intended to wound the plaintiff's religious feelings.

MAGISTRATE: It is obvious that the expressions complained of are extremely likely to wound the religious feelings of Roman Catholics, and a man must be taken to have intended the natural consequences of his acts. The sentence will be six months' imprisonment. One would have thought that the prisoner, who has just used his knowledge of the new act to commit a dissenting preacher, would have studied the act sufficiently to have kept out of its claws himself. He will now pay the penalty for not having done so; for while I sit here I shall always administer the law impartially.

Father Jacomo, who had been unctuously counting his beads and reciting benedictes, now unexpectedly found himself hustled into the dock. His triumph was cut short like the Archdeacon's before him.

The Rev. Ebenezer Stiggins, of Little Bethel in the Hole, deposed that his religious feelings had been deeply wounded on many occasions by the impostor who called himself Father Jacomo. Jacomo and his Church were agents of the devil in corrupting the religion of Christ to infamous superstitions and blasphemous mockeries of the Gospel of God. Jacomo had often made before his eyes the sign of the cross, and had exposed to his sight objects of the most

hateful and soul-destroying superstition, such as crucifixes, beads and rosaries. These idolatrous mummeries and mockeries of the most sacred truths of religion were to him most unbearably offensive, and Jacomo well knew that it was so and naturally must be so. They caricatured the death of our dear Lord and Savior. They perverted that death into a means of entrapping souls for hell. Such devices and such objects were most awfully painful to his feelings.

Other witnesses having also sworn to the exceedingly painful effect of Father Jacomo's proceedings on their religious feelings, the magistrate said he had no option but to sentence the prisoner to six months' imprisonment, as he had done the previous defendant.

The *Rev. Ebenezer Stiggins* was next charged by the *Rev. Theophilus Blessemall*, a Universalist, with having inexpressibly shocked and outraged his religious feelings by having publicly caricatured his God as a fiendish Father who would torture his children for ever. A more revolting insult to the deity he adored and a more wanton laceration of his own religious feelings could not easily be imagined. The charge having been abundantly proved, Stiggins was summarily convicted and sent to gaol for six months.

The magistrate here declined to deal with any more clergymen that day, otherwise it is understood that the *Rev. Theophilus Blessemall* would have been prosecuted by Mr. Stiggins's friends for hurting their religious feelings by publicly abolishing hell, thus treating their God as a liar and opening the floodgates of immorality. Some scores of clergymen departed from the court.

W. P. BALL.

(To be continued.)

#### WAS MOSES A FRATRICIDE?

THE account of Aaron's death as recorded in Holy Writ (Numbers xx.) throws considerable suspicion on Moses as being his brother's murderer. This suspicion becomes strengthened when looked at in conjunction with other things set forth in the same volume. In arguing from the Bible narrative it is not here intended to accept everything stated as true. The impossibilities will be rejected, but the probabilities, which may have a foundation in fact, will be examined in relation to the question heading this article.

Let us first take the reason Moses represents the Lord as assigning why Aaron should be "gathered unto his people," *i.e.*, that he should die. This reason is "Because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah." There are two accounts of this affair (Exodus xvii. and Numbers xx.), and in neither of them is it recorded that Aaron was more to blame than anyone else. In the first version of the story his name is not mentioned. This account says: "And there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, give us water that we may drink. . . . Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" The second version in Numbers is somewhat different. Moses is represented to have lost his temper, but neither in this account is any blame attached to Aaron. It therefore seems strange that the elder brother should be singled out to satisfy the divine vengeance, when, in the two versions of this remarkable story he does not appear to have transgressed by word or deed. And yet this affair at the water of Meribah is given as the reason why Aaron should die. It certainly seems an altogether inadequate, if not absurd, reason, and, with other circumstances which will presently be examined, leads to the inquiry whether Moses himself had any cause to wish for his brother's death.

Were the brothers on good terms? In Exodus xxxii. a very serious cause for quarrel between them is referred to, that of Aaron having made a golden calf for the people to worship during the absence of his younger brother. Here, then, was Aaron interfering in a matter in regard to which Moses would naturally be extremely sensitive, as he wished the people to believe that Jehovah was the greatest god, and that he (Moses) was his chief prophet. In setting up another god for the Hebrews to worship, a direct attack was made on the very groundwork of Moses' authority.

Another dispute is mentioned between the brothers, and, strange to say, this one just shortly precedes the time of Aaron's death. It is thus recorded: "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?" (Numbers xii., 1, 2). Aaron is not reported to have incurred any punishment for thus setting himself up in rivalry to Moses, but Miriam, their sister, seems to have borne the whole penalty. That she "became leprous, white as snow," is, of course, a priestly fiction. It is possible that being "shut out from the camp"—*i.e.*, excommunicated (the way

lepers were treated)—may have given rise to that story. Why did Aaron incur no punishment? There is only one answer to this question. Aaron, being the High Priest, would have knowledge of the artifices used to keep the people in subjection; and also having great personal influence over them, second only to that of Moses himself, the latter would consequently think it imprudent to press his brother to extremes, and was thus satisfied at that time with having put down the conspiracy and punished Miriam. This suggests a strong motive why Moses should wish to put out of the way one who was setting himself up in rivalry to him, and one whom he was afraid, or perhaps even unable, to punish. Through the intercession, as we are told, of Aaron, Miriam's punishment lasted for only seven days. Soon after this her death is reported, which, though it may have been due to the hardships she suffered while she was shut out from the camp and to the mortification ensuing on the defeat of her plans, yet, preceding so shortly as it did that of her brother, and just after they had both set up claims to be leaders of the Israelites in antagonism to those of Moses, the event looks strangely suspicious, and strengthens the theory of foul play attaching to the death of Aaron.

Thus far it has been seen that an absurdly insufficient explanation has been given why Aaron was adjudged to die; and this explanation, it is to be presumed, was the one offered by Moses. It has been shown that the brothers were probably not on good terms; a strong motive has been suggested for the murder; and the sudden death of Miriam, after the defeat of the conspiracy in which she was a ringleader, has been noted. Before going any further, let us see whether the character of Moses was such as to lead us to suppose that he could have been guilty of a cold-blooded, treacherous murder. In Exodus ii. we are told that he saw an Egyptian. The account says: "And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." Although this act may have been considered an heroic one by the Israelites, who had little or no idea of honor and fair play—descended as they were from the pious cheat Jacob, whom they took as their model—yet that it was a cowardly murder must be acknowledged by the civilised reader. Unless Moses was armed and the Egyptian was not, or unless the Jewish leader took some other unfair advantage, such as attacking the Egyptian from behind, it is unlikely that he could have disposed of him in the wonderfully summary manner he is represented to have done. Be it remarked that no fight is mentioned; the account only tells us that "he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand."

Another very important clue to his character is found in Numbers xxxi. We are here informed that his followers, on returning from a murdering and marauding expedition against the Midianites, brought back with them captive all the Midianitish women and children, having only killed the men, and that "Moses was wroth" on that account, and censured his followers for having spared the women and children, and said: "Now therefore kill every male among the little ones." He then proceeded in shockingly cruel and explicit terms to give orders to kill all the matrons, adding that they could "keep the maidens for themselves." Of these, as we see from the Biblical narrative, he did not neglect to keep a share for himself and the priests.

This incident of itself is sufficient to prove that Moses could be guilty, and was guilty, of cold-blooded and revolting cruelty. In spite of this, however, and his murder of the Egyptian, his general manner must have been that of suavity and meekness, for the Bible says: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth" (Numbers xii., 3). We thus see that with the general manner of a Uriah Heep he combined the cowardly and disgusting brutality of a Nero. The question as to whether his character was such as to lead us to infer that he could have been guilty of a cold-blooded, treacherous murder, may then safely be answered in the affirmative.

J. E. ROOSE.

(To be concluded.)

#### REVIEW.

*Our Corner.* July. Freethought Publishing Co.—Mr. Bradlaugh opens with a spirited attack on the City Fathers. Mrs. Besant contributes another Socialistic essay on the Future of the Worker, writing with picturesque and enthusiasm, but also with inaccuracy, charging Mr. Giffen, for instance, with disregarding the rise in rent and the price of meat, when he not only notices it frankly, but actually works out tables to show that the rise is far more than counterbalanced by the general fall of prices and increase of wages. Mr. Robertson has a thoughtful and suggestive paper on Culture and Reaction.

A NEWLY-DISCOVERED MIRACLE.—The evangelists have forgotten to record what may be justly called the most extraordinary miracle of the New Testament. It can be proved by ocular demonstration when the stars shine brightly. To see is to believe (vide Luke ii., 21). The question arises, "Ubi est praputium?" The topic's tender, so shall be my phrase. Many have attempted to account for this interesting relic, but in vain; among them Leo Allatius, in his well-known *De Praputio Domini Nostri Jesu Christi Diatriba*. Having formed part of the divine lad, it was not thrown into Gehenna with the city refuse, but ascended, and now forms the principal ring of Saturn (L'anneau de Satan?) "Si praputium quaeris, sidus adspice." —CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

**PROFANE JOKES.**

"Mother, what is an angel?" "My dear, it is a little girl with wings, who dies." "But I heard papa telling the governess yesterday that she was an angel. Will she fly?" "Yes, my dear; she will fly away the first thing to-morrow."

"Sir," said a little blustering man to a religious opponent, "to what sect do you think I belong?" "Well, I don't exactly know," replied the other; but to judge from your appearance and size, I should think that you belonged to the class called 'insects.'"

A Provost of Dundee, who was an Atheist, was going by sea from Dundee to London, accompanied by one of his Bailiffs, who was an elder in the kirk. A storm came on, and the Bailie anxiously inquired of the steward if "there was any danger?" "Weel, sir," said the steward, "I canna say; we maun just trust to Providence." "Guidness me," said the Bailie, whimpering, "has it cam' tae that?" "Hoot awa', Bailie," chimed in the Provost; "dinna greet, we maun a' dee some time!" "It's a' vera weel," was the reply, "for ye awtheistical doevils, but what's tae become o' me?"

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