

# THE FREETHINKER

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

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## PRECIOUS PROMISES.—IV.

*For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.—MARK XI., 23.*

*Verily, I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.—MATT. XVII., 20; JOHN XIV., 12.*

## RAIN DOCTORS.

THE prolonged drought has already inflicted serious injury on the farmers. They are, as a rule, a loyal class of men, but their loyalty will probably be shaken when they realise that the Lord has spoiled their crops to provide Queen's weather for the Jubilee. An occasional shower might wet the Queen's parasol or ruffle the plumage of the princes and princelings in her train. Occasional showers, however, are just what the farmers want. The Lord was therefore in a fix. Though the Bible says that with him nothing is impossible, he was unable to please both sides; so he favored the one he loved best, gave royalty unlimited sunshine, and played the deuce with the agricultural interest.

Possibly the Lord knows better than we do, but we venture to suggest that a slight exercise of intelligence, though we admit it may have been a strain upon his slumbrous brain, would have surmounted the difficulty.

The windows of heaven might have been opened from two till four in the morning. That would have been sufficient for a proper supply of rain, and the whole of the day could have been devoted to "blazing" without injuring anyone. Or, if the early morning rain would have damaged the decorations, the celestial turnkey might have kept us a week without water, giving us an extra supply beforehand. On the whole, if we may hazard so profane an observation, the powers above are singularly behind the age. Their affairs are frightfully mixed, and the result is that capital and labor are both in a state of uncertainty. The celestial dynasty will have to improve, or its imperial power will be questioned, and there will be a demand for Home Rule with regard to the weather. It is a perfect nuisance, with respect to a matter which vitally affects us, not to be able to know what a day will bring forth.

Meanwhile we turn to the clergy, and inquire why they do not perform their professional duties in this emergency. There is a form of prayer for such cases in the Prayer-book. Why has it not been used? Do the clergy think

the Lord is growing deaf with old age? Have they a secret suspicion that praying for a change of weather is as useful as whistling for the wind? Or has the spirit of this sceptical age invaded the clerical ranks so thoroughly as to make them ashamed of their printed doctrines? When a parish clerk was told by the parson one morning that the prayer for rain would be read, he replied, "Why, sir, what's the use of praying for rain with the wind in that quarter?" We fancy that parish clerk must have a good many sympathisers in the pulpit.

Still the clergy should do what they are paid for, or resign the business. They are our rain doctors, and they should procure us the precious fluid. If they cannot, why should we pay them a heavenly water-rate? The rain doctors of savages are kept to their contract. They are expected to bring rain when it is required, and if they do not, the consequences are unpleasant. They are sometimes disgraced, and occasionally killed. But the rain doctors in civilised countries retain all the advantages of their savage prototypes without any of their risks and dangers. Modern Christians allow the clergy to play on the principle of "heads I win, tails you lose." If the black regiments pray and there is no answer, Christians resign themselves to the will of God. If there *is* an answer, they put it to the credit of the priests, or the priests put it to their own credit, which is much the same thing.

We should be sorry to charge such a holy body of men with duplicity, but is there not "a sort of a smack, a smell to?" They are reluctant to pray for rain, on the alleged ground that Omnipotence should not be interfered with rashly. But the sincerity of this plea is questionable when we reflect that it obviously favors the clergy. Our climate is variable; long spells of particular weather are infrequent, and if when one occurs the clergy hold back till the very last, their supplication for a change cannot long remain unanswered. But perhaps this is only an illustration of the wisdom of the serpent which Jesus recommended to his apostles.

If the clergy are anxious to exhibit their powers they should pray for rain in the desert of Sahara. Missionaries might be sent out to establish praying stations, and in the course of time the desert might bloom as a garden, and the wilderness as a rose. We make the suggestion in all sincerity. We are anxious to be convinced, if conviction is possible. Praying for rain in a watery climate is one thing, praying for rain where none ever falls is another. If the clergy can bring down a fruitful shower on the African sands, we shall cry, "A miracle," and send them a quarter's pew-rent.

Seriously—for we can be serious—we ask the clergy to do their level best. The farmers are swearing wholesale, and by taking the name of the Lord their God in vain they incur the peril of eternal damnation. The fruit crop is injured, and children suffer unusually from the stomach-ache. Worst of all, infidel France is flooding our markets with cherries and other fruits, and we are supporting the accursed sceptical brood because the Lord has not nourished our own growths. Surely then it is time to act. If the parsons lose this fine opportunity they may rely on it that the anti-tithe agitation will develop into alarming proportions. Their livings are at stake, and we ask them to consider the interests of their wives and families. If our generous warning is unheeded the clergy may find the nation carrying out the principle of free trade in religion, and importing some rain doctors from Africa. Many of these magical blackmen would be glad to exchange their present pickings for a vicarage and five hundred a year. If they thought there was a chance of obtaining a bishopric, with a palace and six or ten thousand a year, they would start for England at once. Many of them are of excellent reputation and would come to us with the best of testimonials. Would it not be well to give them a trial? We should find out who was the best at the business. He might be constituted our national rain doctor at a liberal salary, and the rest discharged; for surely the Lord does not require thirty thousand praying to him at once, unless on the principle that he must be surrounded to prevent the prayer from going into one ear and out at the other.

G. W. FOOTE.

## CHRISTIAN AND PAGAN MIRACLES.

THE *Dictionary of Miracles*, compiled by Dr. E. C. Brewer, is an interesting work, illustrating the credulity of Christians in the ages of faith and the narrow range of their imagination. For, profuse as are the stories of wonders taken from such works as the *Acts of the Saints*, there is a curious sameness among them. Similar stories are repeated, with slight variations, of large numbers of the saintly crew. Some walk on water, others cure the sick and raise the dead in the name of the Lord Christ or of the Trinity. Others multiply food. A whole host of them turn water into wine, and miraculously cure diseases with relics. Dr. Brewer ranges these together under various Bible texts, and the reader gets the impression that the mass of Romanist miracles are plagiarisms from the Bible. Now we venture to think the *Dictionary of Miracles* would have been a far more valuable work if the able compiler had collected together not simply the stories of wonders subsequent to the Christian era, but those which were related prior to that time. Had he done so, we venture the assertion that the impression would have been a very different one, viz., that the Gospel miracles were but a re-hash of pre-existent stories.

Christianity arose from the dispersion of the Jews, and the consequent amalgamation of Judaism and Paganism. In these two elements can be traced the whole of the Christian myths pre-extant long before the Christian era. Certain things were supposed to be prophesied of the Messiah, and Jesus being believed to be the Messiah, they were related of him, without anything worthy the name of evidence, "that the saying might be fulfilled." Moses had been said to cross the Red Sea dry-shod, so Jesus must still a tempest and walk on water. Moses fed the Israelites with manna, so Jesus feeds thousands miraculously. Moses and Elijah fast for forty days. Jesus does ditto, and encounters the devil into the bargain. As Elijah restored the widow's son at Zarephath, so Jesus is said to have restored the widow's son at Nain. "As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly so must the Son of Man be three days and three nights (*i.e.*, from Friday night till Sunday morn) in the heart of the earth." Just as our old friend the sea serpent periodically turns up in the "silly season" as fresh and lively as ever, so these gospel miracles are but revised versions of the old Jewish legends.

Some of the gospel yarns however are spun from a different web. The doctrine of the incarnation, for instance, is to this day a stumbling-block to the Jews, inconsistent with their monotheistic conception. There is good reason to believe that the source of this and other legends is to be found in Egypt. Numerous incarnate gods, some born of virgin mothers, were cited in an article on the Incarnation in the *Freethinker* of January 2. The other miraculous events of the gospels are equally paralleled in earlier myths. The star at birth, and the song of the heavenly host, were both related of Buddha. The fasting and temptation in the wilderness are also told of the same hero. Max Müller says that although Gautama taught that the true miracle was to conceal one's good deeds, "The Buddhist legends teem with miracles attributed to Buddha and his disciples—miracles which in wonderfulness certainly surpass the miracles of any other religion." Miraculous healing was ascribed to Æsculapius. Justin Martyr, the first Christian Father whose works can be accurately dated, in the middle of the second century said, "As to our Jesus curing the lame, the paralytic, and such as were crippled from birth, this is little more than what you say of your Æsculapius." The temples of Æsculapius were the Pagan counterpart to modern hospitals. Votive tablets recording how the sick were restored by the god, were hung up as a testimony to Pagan faith. Many of these remain. M. Renan points out that nearly three thousand of such tablets record how the Carthaginian goddess, *Rabbat Tanit*, answered the prayers of her votaries. The Egyptian goddess Isis was also alleged to be a great curer of diseases, and Serapis had the title, "Healer of the World."

Mr. R. Proctor has pointed out that a large number of these Pagan prototypes of Christian miracles are distinctly solar in character. Because the sun is the great reviver of life, the sun god was said to restore the sick and raise the dead. The sun is the light bringer, so the sun god causes the blind to see. The sun turns the waters which fall on the earth into the rich juice of the vine, so the sun god

A GIRL having been asked in a Sunday-school who the foolish virgins represented, promptly answered, "Them as did na' marry."

turns water into wine. The sun multiplies food, but blasts the barren tree. The sun rises above the sea-horizon, so the sun god walks upon the water. The sun disappears in the west to reappear in the east, so the sun god dies, descends to the under-world, and is raised again.

Christian evidence-mongers sometimes tell us that the miracles of Christ were never disputed. To this there is the simple question—Why, then, were the Jews unconvinced? But the assertion is not true. Celsus and Lucian laughed at the early Christians because any juggling mountebanks were able to gull them. Pagans who believed in the literal character of the miracles of their own deities were little likely to challenge those alleged of Christ. The early Christians did not dispute the Pagan miracles, but simply asserted that they were wrought by devils. Pagans like Hierocles simply compared the stories related of Jesus with those told of Apollonius of Tyana, who was said to have prophesied, to have healed the sick, and to have raised the dead. But to others who understood the meaning of the Pagan myths, for Justin Martyr to assert that Jesus Christ was actually born of a virgin mother, actually turned water into wine, and actually went up from earth to heaven, was as ridiculous as if he had declared there was actually a man in the moon. Celsus asks what nurse would not be ashamed of teaching such fables to children?

J. M. WHEELER.

#### THE BEST MAN IN NEW YORK.

(From the "New York World.")

"If you know Colonel Ingersoll," said one man to another down-town the other day, "you know a man who is a multitude within himself. Knowing him, you know the best friend, the best lawyer, the best poker-player, and the best husband and father that there is in the city of New York."

This is down-town praise, perhaps, but it was honest and well-deserved. Everybody knows Colonel Ingersoll's reputation as a lawyer and a politician, but everyone cannot speak of his personality as truly. Take the word "friend" for instance. The broadness of the term cannot be better shown, surely, than by something he said to a man one day last week. They were talking of the prosaic matter of "new shirts," when the colonel declared he was not going to have another made for himself until he could find a shirtmaker who was honest enough to give the woman who did the work the 1 dollar 50 cents each that he was willing to allow.

"I'm afraid you'll have to wait some time," said his companion. "Shirtmaker's fortune are not built that way."

"Then I will wait," said the colonel. "Henceforth I wear no shirt until I have seen the woman who makes it, and she has told me herself that she got paid for her work."

This, then, is what the word "friend," as applied above, means. No man can say that Colonel Ingersoll ever paid him less than his work was worth, even in the most liberal sense of the word, or that he ever asked for a good turn and was refused. It is not to his friends that this big-hearted man is a friend, but to all honest men and women.

Colonel and Mrs. Ingersoll are living at No. 89 Fifth Avenue, with their two only children, Miss Eva Ingersoll and Miss Maud Ingersoll, both of whom are now "out." They go a great deal into society and have received formally a number of times this last season, but the Sunday evening informal receptions are particularly the colonel's. A great many of his own friends come then, and, with the bright and pretty women whom the ladies ask, there is always much that is sparkling and enjoyable. Mrs. Ingersoll is a big, handsome woman, whose happy face shows in every line the love and the loyalty that has been lavished upon her. Miss Eva Ingersoll is a tall, slender girl with a face of the type made dear to us as the "Madonna" style of beauty—fair, serene, pure, and loveable. Miss Maud is darker and rosier and extremely like her father in temperament and mental qualities—an extremely bright and witty girl. The two girls are inseparable, and have never been away from each other but one night, nor from their father and mother but two nights in their lives. Last year they tried to go to Elberon for two weeks, but papa and mamma, having let them go, went after them in just two days. They could not bear the loneliness. And no one who does not know the closeness of the ties that hold them together could appreciate what that "loneliness" meant. Miss Ingersoll was speaking of her life to a friend the other day, and she said most truly that she knew people would not believe what hers and her sister's had been. Never in all her life had she ever heard either her father or her mother speak an angry or an impatient word. Never had she been denied a pleasure or forced to do anything unpleasant. She had simply, she said, from the day she can remember first, been made so happy that sometimes it frightened her, used to it as she was. "When I see other people," she said, "and see how unhappy

they are, I feel almost wicked to be so happy myself." In this same little confidential talk she said of her father—said it with tears of love in her eyes, "Nobody but his wife and his girls know how absolutely perfect a man he is." Could any man ask more of life than praise like that?

The first idea of this ideal home life that the writer ever had was from hearing the answer made by an intimate friend of the family to some one who said during the holidays, "Does the colonel allow the family to recognise Christmas?" "My dear," was the answer, "there is never in that house any question of 'allowing.' Colonel Ingersoll recognises the day as a day of goodwill toward man in a way you might not understand. They give to their friends and their friends give to them, but among themselves it is Christmas all the year round."

## ACID DROPS.

MR. JAMES KNOWLES, the editor of the *Nineteenth Century*, is what they call "a knowing one." But he is taken in sometimes. Several months ago he inserted an article on "Artizan Atheism," by that amiable and prosy old gentleman William Rossiter. It might have been expected that Mr. Knowles's natural acumen would have led him to conclude that one article of such a character would satisfy his readers till the name of his magazine has to be changed to the *Twentieth Century*. But Mr. Knowles's sagacity seems at fault in this case. Another article by Mr. Rossiter on the same subject is inserted in the current number. The *Freethinker* is alluded to, but never mentioned. Several extracts are given, however, and these are decidedly the most readable parts of the article. Mr. Rossiter considers them shocking, but we are very much mistaken if a great many readers of the *Nineteenth Century* do not relish them better than the context.

PROBABLY Mr. Rossiter is afraid to mention the *Freethinker* lest there should be a rush for it at the newsagents. But he is not above advertising the little hobby by which he subsists. Mr. Rossiter apparently thinks that the great cure for Artizan Atheism is to send men like himself, but himself first of all, to lecture to the Infidel working men. Many of our readers, however, have listened to some of the old gentleman's performances, and they assure us that he seldom arouses any interest except when he reads out shocking long extracts from the *Freethinker*.

THESE goody-goody people quite misunderstand the artizan Atheist. They fancy he is as soft-headed as themselves. But, as a matter of fact, he is generally a very hard-headed person. The one great question he asks and wants settled about Christianity is—Is it true? If you cannot satisfy him of its truth, you may talk prosily or eloquently about it till you are exhausted, but you will make no more impression upon him than a shower of rain upon a marble column.

THE Rev. James Kelly, incumbent of St. George's Church Liverpool, who is endeavoring to upset the marriage settlement of his wife, behaved in court with such all-round insolence that the judge had finally to order him to sit down. He had insulted the court and bullied the witnesses to such an extent that his lordship said he ought to have committed him to prison for contempt of court. The reverend bully lost his case.

A CHILD about eighteen months old was brought into the Clerkenwell Police-court the other day. It had been deserted by its mother, who had pinned a paper on its shawl, in which she requested that the child might be brought up at a Roman Catholic asylum at Hammersmith. She assures the reverend mother that she and her child have both been duly baptised, and signs herself a "hart-Broken Catholock." If a mother who abandoned her child should sign herself a heart-broken Free-thinker, what lessons the Christian bigots would found upon the lamentable fact.

ON Saturday evening, July 2, the Rev. J. R. Diggle, chairman of the London School Board, gave a banquet at the Goldsmith's Hall, to commemorate the progress of national education during her Majesty's reign. The report does not say who found the expenses. If Diggle paid the bill, who paid Diggle?

THE clergy seem to have turned up at the feed in full force, the Archbishop of Canterbury being among the speakers. His grace "referred with gratitude to the religious instruction which is given in Board Schools." The Archbishop does right to be grateful, for the thrusting of religion down the throats of little children, in schools which are supported by Freethinkers as well as by Christians, certainly lengthens the life of the Church, and—which is of still more importance—gives security to the Archbishop's £15,000 a year.

MR. MUNDELLA, who followed the Archbishop, was proud that he stood firmly by his friend, W. E. Forster, "in his determination to do justice to the voluntary system and to maintain Bible

teachings in our schools." We beg to tell Mr. Mundella that he dare not teach the *whole* of the Bible to the children. In his so-called Word of God there is filth enough to raise a blush in the stews. But does Mr. Mundella think that the children do not get hold of those peccant parts? They do, and it is natural that they should. Mr. Mundella has been a good friend of education as he understands it, but in foisting the old Jew book on the children in our national schools he is doing his best to corrupt instead of elevating them.

THE Rector of Cheadle edits a parish magazine, and we see in the current number that he is quite satirical about the Jubilee thanksgiving in Westminster Abbey. After some caustic remarks on the profane behavior of the congregation while awaiting the Queen's arrival, he concludes by saying that all this "is a proof of our entire emancipation from the superstitions of the past."

DR. VON SWARTOUT, an American, who calls himself President of the Columbia Free University, has been lecturing in Bloomsbury on what he by a hideous mixture of English and Greek calls, "Truthology." This fascinating compound it seems was revealed to him in a vision on the Mount of Olives. The vision came in a female form, "with one foot planted on the American continent and the other on Europe." "Truthology" it seems reveals that money must be done away with, but since Dr. von Swartout's emissaries pass around the collection plate, we conclude that the Truthological millenium is not yet.

DR. FAIRBAIRN has been moved from Airedale College, Manchester, to Mansfield College, Oxford, in order that the young men of the University city may be taught to stand between "Old Rome (though disguised) and agnosticism, or infidelity, or scepticism." It will not be long before the young men take Dr. Fairbairn's measure, and then he will be a bold prophet who would venture to predict that the students of Mansfield College will not become either Catholics or sceptics.

A FRESH cadging circular from "General" Booth, dated June 17, lies before us. After vaunting the progress of the Army, he tells the reader "War is always expensive work"—even, we suppose, when the soldiers have to pay for their own officers, barracks, kit and band. Booth, from long experience, is an adept at an appeal for cash. He says: "You have assisted me before in this struggle, which generous care for *His* kingdom has not been overlooked by my dear Lord, and I am also sure that every fraction of the amount so contributed has been expended with the greatest care." Booth ought to be as fully acquainted with where the money goes as he is with the doings of his dear Lord, but we doubt if the subscribers have more knowledge upon the one subject than upon the other.

In the *War Cry* also the "General" appeals for a trifle from every reader. Then, he says, "the Lord's exchequer will be replenished." Most of the sky-pilots identify God's will with their own, but Booth makes out that his own purse is identical with the Almighty's. By the way, if the Lord's exchequer is empty why doesn't he sell those cattle upon a thousand hills which he boasts of possessing? But perhaps he has sold them and forgotten to give the proceeds to Booth.

HERE is a cutting from a Christian journal: "Unless we believe what God has communicated to us it is simply impossible for us to reason about religious things at all. Hence I conclude that anyone who rejects the revelation which God has made is incapable of reasoning upon religious matters in an intelligible manner. Indeed, this must be so in the very nature of things." But by the same kind of ruling no one can reason about Free-thought except a Freethinker, or about Toryism except a Tory. Every opinion will thus be exempted from hostile criticism.

FATHER MCGLYNN having failed to put in an appearance at Rome as commanded, the Archbishop of New York has received orders to excommunicate him. Fortunately for Father McGlynn, the power of the Church is not what it was, and he can afford to laugh at the mimic thunders of the Church as so much child's play. In the Middle Ages, when the Church had real power, a sentence of excommunication was almost equivalent to a sentence of death.

The Seventh-day Adventists in America are vigorously preaching the immediate return of Christ. "They say that the preliminary events announced by Christ have already occurred. That the stars should fall from heaven was fulfilled by the great showers of falling stars in 1833. The darkening of the sun took place they say on May 19, 1780, the "famous dark day of history." So of course it is evident to these cranks that the complete fulfilment of Christ's precious promises cannot long be delayed. This is exactly what the believers have gone on believing for nearly two thousand years, and they are not tired of it yet.

A PIOUS farmer named William Carter was charged at Leicester with being a wandering lunatic. He was chock full of religion. He repeatedly advised the court to read their Bibles. When asked his name he said it was a mystery, but they would find it in the Book of "Revelations." The woman there mentioned as

having a man-child is his mother, it seems, but she is now in the asylum. After further specimens of his religious madness he was removed to the asylum still raving, and resisting violently.

THOMAS BARLEY is a good Bible-reading Christian. At any rate when he knocked his wife down, jumped on her stomach and kicked her face, he declared that was the treatment taught by the Bible. The poor woman stated in evidence at the Southport police-court that her husband belonged to the Plymouth Brethren. One day he fetched a man into the house for her to be converted, but she did not want to be converted. Mr. Barley believing, with Paul, that women should learn in silence and subjection, took her case in hand on the scriptural lines already referred to.

ACCORDING to one of the religious papers "cycling" is progressing among our ministers of the gospel. It says that "at one time it would have been considered most undignified for a clergyman to annihilate space on a cycle, but in these days bishops have been known to take a desperate 'fier' down very steep hills." We should like to see the bishops on their bicycles just for once, especially if one of them came a cropper. We hope they perform in full canonicals, and pause occasionally for a devout prayer or for bestowing a holy blessing.

OUR printer's devil wants to know what Y.M.C.A. stands for. He thinks it must be Young Monkey's Christian Association.

THE attention of the sanitary authorities has been called to the condition of affairs in the graveyard around Whitfield's chapel in Tottenham Court Road, where gambling and dancing are reported to be going on over the graves of the dead. From 25,000 to 30,000 bodies are said to be buried there, and near the surface. The Rev. Jackson Wray's attention has been called to the matter, but he says he is powerless. Surely he can raise money to purchase the graveyard adjoining his Tabernacle?

THE *Detroit Free Press*, commenting on the prosecution of Mr. Reynolds for blasphemy, says he ought rather to have been tried for stupidity, because he was attacking the Bible and Christianity after the manner of Ingersoll. Anyone who holds up the Bible to ridicule, it protests, is guilty of stupidity, because ridicule only makes a believer cling the more tenaciously to his belief. If ridicule really had this effect Christians would only be too glad to see Freethinkers employ it. They object to ridicule because they know that it is the deadliest enemy of all forms of superstition.

A CLERGYMAN of Bath has been crucified in effigy on the arch at Lyncombe Hill. Hanging by a piece of cord round the neck was a ticket with the words "The Vigilant Curate." A ladder was procured, and with assistance the effigy was "cut down," and removed to the Widcombe Police Station, where it lies awaiting—not identification or an inquest—but further inquiries. The effigy was dressed in a black suit of clothes, and in other respects was a good representation of a well-known local clerical gentleman.

TALMAGE believes in the fiery end of the world, foretold as being close at hand by the New Testament writers eighteen hundred years ago. He speaks of "the day when the fires from above shall lick up the waters from beneath, and there shall be no more sea." It is a pity his God cannot manage without burning all his handiwork to ashes like a destructive child who throws its toy into the fire. And it is a pity Christians can still believe in such sensational superstition.

A BOSTON barber, arrested for cutting a man's hair on Sunday, has been acquitted. His lawyer quoted 1 Cor. xi., 14, "Doth not even nature itself teach you that if a man have long hair it is a shame unto him?" and the judges were overpowered and let the culprit go.

AN attraction at a concert given in a church in New York the other night was a "whistling soloist," a woman whose performances received praise from the newspapers next day.

THE Hall of Science Children's Summer Excursion will take place on Sunday, August 14; ages from six to twelve. Parents or friends wishing to accompany the children in brakes, tickets 2s. 6d. each. Parents belonging to the National Secular Society will be supplied with tickets first for the children. Subscriptions received:—Per W. Cookney: W. Jones, £1; Mr. Hooson, 7s. 6d.; B. E. Marks, 5s.; —Luvjeta, 2s. 6d.; J. D., 6d.; —Nicholls, 1s.; —Dundas, 2s. Per Mrs. Cookney: Mr. Wood, 1s.; —Hyde, 1s.; A Friend, 3d.; —North, 6d.; A. C., 2s.; —Gould, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, 1s.; A Friend, 6d. Per Mrs. Billot: J. Noble, 1s.; Mrs. Payne, 6d.; —Miller, 3d.; —Haslam, 3d. Per —Dumville: J. L. Chaefer, 1s.; F. Rimell, 1s.; W. Burton, 1s. Per H. Smith: —Willcock, 6d.; W. J. W. E., 3d.; F. H. Miller, 6d.; —Cheesewright, 1s. Per —Mayho: Miss Whittinham, 6d.; Mrs. Mayho, 6d. Per —Dumville: Azile, 1s. All applications for tickets to be sent to Wm. Cookney, Hon. Sec., 1A Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury.

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

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

Sunday, July 10, Victoria Park, at 3.15.

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. 7½d.

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

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—G. D. M.

JAMES GIBSON.—The Rev. Donald McCraw, author of the work on *The Respect due to Ministers* was created by a well-known writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. He is, however, fashioned after the likeness of the average Highland Free Kirk minister.

E. J. PILCHER.—The Rev. Dr. Jones is not Sam Jones. Our item was taken from the New York *Truthseeker*. Dr. Davidson's *Introduction to the Old Testament* will give you the authorities on the book of Daniel.

D. KAY (Rochdale) writes: "Your *Royal Paupers* has sold better with me than any other Jubilee literature." Our correspondent asks who is the Rev. Dr. Jones, whose report on Ingersoll we reprinted from the New York *Truthseeker*. We have written to the editor of that journal for precise information. D. Kay says the report should be printed as a leaflet for general distribution.

R. FOX.—Thanks for the batch of cuttings, also for your subscription for the out-door work. The C.E.S. lecturers are welcome to make what use they please of the passage. Fortunately there are signs of improvement already in the Freethought propaganda.

S. S. sends 10s. for the outdoor work and hopes "the subscription list will bulge." So do we.

J. W.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

DAMASCUS.—It is funny, but we must fight shy of it. The Exeter Hall Christians seem to have as much sense of humor as an owl.

C. K.—Pleased to hear that *Infernal Death-Beds* enabled you to crush the Bible-banger. We took great pains to give chapter and verse for everything, and the little book is therefore as irrefutable as the multiplication table.

G. DEACON writes of Mr. Foote's recent lecture on Peckham Rye: "Where were the rowdies and bullies on that occasion? Far in the background. You had a strong bodyguard. But why don't Freethinkers rally round other lecturers who are not so popular? My heart was wrung to see what occurred. Lecturers not only had to put up with jeers and insults, but were often shoved off the chair, and sometimes injured. If a dozen good men and true gathered round the lecturer this could not happen."

HENRY PORTER, Goxhill, Lincolnshire, would be glad of any back numbers of the *Freethinker*, or other secular literature, for distribution in the district.

BURT AND OATES, High Cross Lane, Tottenham, and 4 Station Road, Wood Green, supply all Freethought literature, and deliver this paper on the day of publication in Edmonton, Tottenham, Southgate, Hornsey, and Wood Green.

MR. HILBERD, 399 High Street, Brentford, sells this journal and similar publications.

J. THORBURN.—Actions for libel are frequently foolish, and should always be avoided if possible. If you are a public lecturer, you must learn to give and take. When you are called an impostor, prove to the public that you are not, and you can then laugh at your calumniators. Personally, we cannot assist you.

ENDOR.—Shall appear.

NED MORGAN.—Sorry to hear your wholesale agent declines to supply this paper. Vickers (Strand) and Marshall (Fleet Street) would supply you. Pleased to hear of your doing such battling for the cause.

G. MANCO.—We are indeed, as you say, making a heavy sacrifice for the out-door work this summer. But something had to be done by somebody, and no fighting cause can win *without* sacrifice by its adherents. Next summer must be prepared for during the winter. There ought to be twenty or thirty stations at least in London, all well manned and well attended.

C. J. BERRIDGE.—We have pleasure in sending you a hundred of the open-air monthly programmes for distribution. It would be well if other Freethinkers would follow your example. Applications for packets of 50 or 100 or more should be made to Mr. G. Standing (Hon. Sec.), 8 Finsbury Street, E.C. Glad to hear you "distribute every week a dozen or two *Freethinkers*."

E. T. GARRET, on behalf of the West Ham Branch, thanks Mr. Foote for last Sunday's lecture, adding: "We never had so vast an audience, and I received the names of some new members after you had gone." Freethinkers in the district who wish to join the branch should apply to E. T. Garner, 8 Heywood Road, Stratford, E., who will also be happy to receive packets of old or new literature for distribution at the open-air station.

W. PERRY thanks us for "the splendid dish served up on Plaistow Green last Sunday evening." Our correspondent says he saw some prominent Christians laughing heartily at the absurdities of the Bible; also that he counted the C.E.S. audience twice, the num-

ber being nine the first time, and eleven the second. The C.E.S. lecturer can at least boast that his audience kept improving.

FREEDOM.—Thanks for the jokes.

YOUNG DEVON.—We have already offered back numbers of the *Freethinker* to the open-air stations.

W. DODD.—Mr. Forder will supply you with Mr. Wheeler's *Frauds and Follies of the Fathers*. It is difficult to show the pronunciation of foreign words by English letters. The *Goe* in Goethe is pronounced something like the *gu* in gust, and the *the* something like *tay*.

S. R. CLAY, corresponding member of the Oldham Branch, reports that the Libraries Committee have at length allowed the *Freethinker* and *National Reformer* to be placed on the tables of the Central Free Library. The Branch endeavored to induce the committee to purchase the papers but failed, and will therefore defray the cost itself. We are much obliged to the Oldham Branch for its exertions in this matter.

JOHN DEWAR.—Many thanks for the cuttings. We are pleased to hear that this journal has readers in Hawick. We do take an interest in politics, and we work closely with the London Radical clubs, but this journal is strictly devoted to Freethought.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Western Figaro—Ventilator—Beverley Recorder—Women's Suffrage Journal—Milwaukee Sentinel—Leicester Daily Mercury—West Sussex Gazette—Church Reformer—Liberty—Lucifer—Truthseeker—Jus—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Evening News—Isle of Man Examiner—Bath Argus.

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.

Mr. FOOTE took a very bad cold to Kingsland Green last Sunday morning. His throat and chest were so sore that he was tempted to give himself a rest, but he resolved to go on with the work, and fortunately it did him no harm. There was a very large and enthusiastic meeting, and the weather was "a scorcher." Two or three policemen patrolled on the outskirts, and they seemed to enjoy the lecture. On the right was the Christian Evidence stand, and in order to keep their little meeting together they judiciously provided a succession of speakers. Two eccentric opponents caused a good deal of merriment. On the whole Jesus sends poor champions on such occasions.

In the evening Mr. Foote lectured again on an open space at Plaistow. When he began, punctually at seven, there were about two dozen listeners. When he had been speaking twenty minutes there was an immense crowd round the platform. Mr. Dunn represented the Christian Evidence Society about two hundred yards off, and his audience never appeared to exceed a dozen. There were two opponents; one a bigoted Christian and a Conservative working man; the other a Unitarian, who modestly demanded that his denomination should be taken as the true standard of Christianity. After the lecture and discussion a resolution was carried, with only one dissentient—the first opponent, who moved an amendment, but got no seconder—asking the Government to give facilities for the progress of Mr. Bradlaugh's Oaths Bill. The meeting, which lasted two hours, then broke up with a vote of thanks to Mr. Hiscock, of the Finsbury Branch, who took the chair, and three hearty cheers for the lecturer.

THIS afternoon (July 10) Mr. Foote lectures in Victoria Park. We understand that fears are entertained of an organised opposition. Muscular Freethinkers in the district should therefore gather round the platform. Christians are warned that, while discussion is allowed, intimidation will be dealt with in the proper way. The Freethought stand is near the fountain.

LAST Monday evening the London Open-Air Lecture Committee met at the Hall of Science. Eight Branches were represented by delegates. Mr. Foote presided, and there were also present G. Standing (Secretary), and R. O. Smith (Treasurer). The monthly programme for London, headed by Mr. Foote's little tract "Did you Ever?", was agreed to be just the thing wanted. Three or four stations had omitted to send in details, but it was hoped that they would wake up in time for the August programme. The Chairman reported that subscriptions were coming in though slowly. Two Branches (Finsbury and Peckham) reported themselves as in great need of funds for the outdoor work, and £1 was voted to each for the present. It was resolved to ask the N. S. S. Executive for a grant of Freethought tracts for gratuitous distribution at the lecture stations; also that persons known to be friendly to the movement and able to assist should be specially asked to do so. The meeting adjourned till Monday, July 18. On that evening every London Branch should be represented, and the delegate should bring, if possible, a list of the August lectures at his station.

WE have to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions for the London open-air work:—W. J. Birch, £1; S. S. G., 2s. 6d.; J. Palmer, 1s.; J. M. Wheeler, 2s. 6d.; H. Roberts, 2s. 6d.; R. Fox, 6d.; S. S., 10s.; H. C. Bysshe, 10s.; F. Hilton, 1s.; B. Miles, 5s.; Young Devon, 1s.; H. M. Ridgway, 2s. 6d. More funds are urgently needed, and we beg our London friends to subscribe as promptly as possible.

MR. FOOTE'S *Randolph Churchill: the Woodstock Bantam*, which had a remarkably good circulation, has been out of print for a considerable time, but Mr. Forder has now a small supply on sale, a parcel having been returned from a wholesale agent's, where it has been lying over a year.

LAST Sunday afternoon Mr. Gerald Massey delivered a most interesting and instructive lecture at St. George's Hall on "Moon Myths and Religious Luniatry." The great conflict between the light and the dark, which lies at the foundation of so many myths, was, according to Mr. Massey, focussed, as it were, by early man, in the moon. Among other matters, he dealt with Samson as a lunar-solar hero. This (Sunday) afternoon, July 10, his subject will be, "Paul, Apostle of the Heretics and Opponent of Peter the Man of Sin."

THE *Church Reformer* is thoroughly opposed to the Indian clause of Mr. Kenny's Bill. It thinks that the introduction of "religious feelings" into an Act of Parliament is probably the cardinal mistake. It points out that India abounds in fanatical religions, and that we, as conquerors, have to govern the various races of India as children to be treated on the principles of the nursery. "Why," it asks, "should we deliberately degrade ourselves to the level of our Indian vassals?"

THE Edinburgh Free Presbytery, on the motion of Professor Thomas Smith, has resolved to petition Parliament against Mr. Courtney Kenny's Bill. Professor Smith said he had no objection to the repealing clause, but he objected to "the enacting portion of the bill," which he thought "would give rise to a state of things altogether inconsistent with liberty of conscience and freedom of the subject." He also considered that the "Bill would put the orthodox as well as the heterodox under restrictions to which they ought not to be submitted." In conclusion he urged that "the preaching of the Gospel would become an utter impossibility if such a bill were passed into law."

COMMENTING on the Presbytery meeting, the *Scotsman* frankly admits that "the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Bill is, as it stands, absurd." The *Scotsman* says that Mr. Courtney Kenny has gratuitously attempted an impossibility, namely, drawing a line "between rightful discussion on religious topics and insults to the religious feelings of any man or body of men." At the same time, the *Scotsman* twits many of the Presbyterian ministers with wanting liberty to discuss Roman Catholicism freely, while they "refuse to unbelievers the right to discuss Christianity freely."

OUR Freethought contemporary, *Monroe's Ironclad Age*, which is published in Indianapolis, reprints the whole of Mr. Foote's *Royal Paupers*, which it says "will be read with curious interest by every one who hates oppression and wrong." The reprint fills more than eleven long columns.

THE reception of Mr. Oscar S. Strauss by the Sultan of Turkey as the American Minister deserves a word of notice. The new ambassador is by birth a Jew and by principle a Freethinker. He is the author of an article on "Religious Liberty in America" in a recent number of the *Westminster Review*. Representing a so-called Christian State among the Mohammedans, the influence of Mr. Strauss is sure to lie in the promotion of religious toleration.

THE *Thinker*, of Madras, continues to treat its Indian readers with extracts from English journals. The number before us opens with Mr. Foote's article, "Who Killed Christ?" and is followed by portions of papers by Mrs. Besant and Mr. J. M. Robertson.

A SYDNEY paper, entitled *Matrimony*, gives the portrait and biographical sketch of Mr. Frederic Jones, President of the Australian Secular Association. Mr. Jones is a native of Devonshire. He went out to Sydney in 1880, and, although he is only twenty-seven, is now the head of one of the largest firms in Sydney, as well as an active Freethought worker. We do not know if the insertion of Mr. Jones's portrait in *Matrimony* implies that he is a candidate for a life partnership, but he certainly appears to be an eligible party.

## REPEALING THE BLASPHEMY LAWS.

(Continued from p. 215.)

John Smith, a lad of seventeen, Jack Robinson, a boy of fifteen, Thomas Jones, aged twelve, and Willie Brown, aged nine, were now put in the dock. Prisoners were charged with wounding the religious feelings of Patrick Murphy and Sister O'Brien.

Prisoners, with others not in custody, had been parading the streets with an effigy which some of them called a "pope," and others a "guy," or "Guy-Fox," the said Fox or Fawkes having been a Catholic martyr. They stopped before people's doors, and shouted in chorus, "Down with the Pope, and God save the Queen." Sister O'Brien said

that the Holy Father was God's vicegerent on earth, and that to insult him was to insult God and the Church. Such a course of conduct wounded her religious feelings to the quick. She had personally remonstrated with the prisoners, but they only laughed at her, and shouted their blasphemous chorus the more boisterously to drive her away by the painful effects thus produced on her religious feelings.

Smith, as the ringleader, was sentenced to a month's imprisonment; Robinson and Jones were fined 10s. each, which was paid by their parents. Brown was handed over to his mother on her promise to give him a birching.

The prosecutors announced their intention of summoning various bigoted Protestants for burning popes in their back-gardens, and insulting the effigies with squibs and crackers, whereby the religious feelings of Roman Catholics were deeply wounded.

The Court now adjourned, after a hard day's work.

Next day a batch of newsagents and others appeared in answer to summonses taken out by the newly-formed Society for the Abolition of Religious Prosecutions. Prisoners were proved to have openly displayed placards of the *Freethinker* and *National Reformer*, or bills announcing lectures of an atheistic and blasphemous character. A number of Christians swore how deeply the religious feelings of themselves and of their wives and families had been wounded by such unseemly and revolting exhibitions. The defendants were fined sums varying from 10s. to £20, and were warned that a second offence would be visited with imprisonment without the option of a fine. One bookseller, who had persisted in exposing an illustration from the New York *Truthseeker* in his window after being warned, was sent to gaol for six months. He remarked to the magistrate that during his imprisonment it would be a great consolation to his wife and children to know that religious prosecutions were abolished. This, of course, would save their feelings from being at all wounded by the action of their kind Christian neighbors.

John Britton applied for a summons against Major Madman, the Salvationist howler. The major stood in the street opposite his shop, and quite horrified him with his awful descriptions of hell. His daughter was so affected that she had never been the same girl since. She had had fits through the fright produced. But she could not resist going to hear him. She was growing quite melancholy, and he feared she would commit suicide. Before the major had commenced his ravings and threatenings his daughter had been bright and cheerful. She had been a comfort to him. Now he could do nothing with her.

MAGISTRATE: Have your religious feelings been wounded? That is the question.

APPLICANT: I don't believe in religion, sir; and now I believe in it less than ever.

MAGISTRATE: Then it is not your religious feelings that are hurt?

APPLICANT: No, sir. Only my feelings as a man and a father.

MAGISTRATE: Ah, the law doesn't trouble about them when theology is in question. It is only *religious* feelings that need protection in the eye of the law.

APPLICANT: Then when he tells me and my friends that my father is in hell, and that I am going to hell and taking my wife and children with me, I have no remedy? He may say the most shocking things of me and mine, and I can't help myself except with an oak cudgel; but if I hurt his pious feelings I'm to have a twelvemonth in gaol.

MAGISTRATE: I am afraid, my man, that that is so at present. I do not make the law. I only administer it. I am sorry for you, but I am compelled to refuse your application for a summons. If Major Madman applies for a summons against you, however, for hurting his religious susceptibilities by anything you may say to him, the law will compel me to grant it for his protection and your punishment.

A well-known philanthropist applied for a summons against Father Pinamonti and various Roman Catholic booksellers for exposing pictures of torments in hell of the most shocking description. Dragons and demons were depicted gnawing the flesh of horror-stricken men and women chained amidst devouring flames. The letter-press described these horrors as actual realities. Such representations were fearfully demoralising to sensitive children, and were inexpressibly offensive to humane men and women. Applicant, however, could not affirm that it was his religious feelings that were hurt, as he was an Agnostic.

The summons was accordingly refused. Applicant observed that the new law allowed religion to insult and terrify credulous children with threats of the most hideous fate conceivable. It actually protected those who employed such disgraceful horrors from all natural reprisal from those who rejected the belief in these supernatural atrocities and this supernatural nonsense. The magistrate expressed his regret that the law should be so one-sided, and recommended recourse to the Legislature.

Frederick Blunt, whose wife had long believed him to be the devil, was also refused a summons against the street-preacher who had driven her mad, until at last she had committed suicide. In answer to a question from the bench applicant said he didn't care a d— about his religious feelings—it was the loss of his wife and of the mother of his children that he cared for.

Mordecai Solomons next complained that his religious feelings had been wounded by Thomas Larkin, who exhibited to him a pork sausage stuck on a fork, and asked him to partake of the same, knowing how revolting such an idea was to his religious feelings. Summons granted. It is rumoured that Mr. Solomons intends to prosecute every butcher or shopkeeper who exposes pork or bacon or lard, every person who publicly indulges in a ham sandwich or a plate of roast pork, and every person who keeps pigs without carefully concealing them from the public view.

A gentleman wished to know if he could obtain a summons against some foul-mouthed lecturers of a certain Christian gang supported by bishops and other bigots. These malignant wretches were continually charging the body to which he had the honor to belong with the grossest habitual infamy and depravity. Some of them would insinuate, or would even assert, that he and his brethren were such beasts in human shapes that they lived in habitual incest, and that their houses were nothing but abodes of promiscuous vice. As applicant claimed to be an Atheist, however, his feelings had to remain unprotected. He said it seemed then that the deepest anti-religious feeling, or ordinary human feelings however strong, were at the mercy of religious scoundrels and fanatics, who could imprison their opponents for any attack upon their own religious feelings, however degraded and revolting the doctrines and passions might be on which these religious feelings were based.

A number of clergymen, including it is said even the Archbishop of Canterbury, had been summoned for reciting the Athanasian Creed, which deeply wounded the religious feelings of many kindly Christians. These cases were postponed, as were also another set of charges brought by Roman Catholics and others against people who had wounded their religious feelings by reading or reciting various passages from the Bible. A Roman Catholic priest said that such unauthorised reading of sacred works reserved for the interpretation of the Church was a most painful and dangerous perversion of true religion. It was certain to lead men astray through their errors and conceits and natural depravity. Nothing could hurt his religious feelings more deeply than to see such gross assumption and such mischievous distortion and profanation of the sacred oracles committed to the custody of Holy Mother Church.

W. P. BALL.

(To be continued.)

## WAS MOSES A FRATRICIDE?

(Concluded from page 215.)

Now to come to the death of Aaron. When we are told that the Lord commanded Moses to "take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up into mount Hor," so that Aaron might there be "gathered unto his people," it is very important to elicit if the Israelites were told before the ascent of Mount Hor that Aaron had to meet his death there. If they were it would seem as though Aaron went knowingly to his fate, but if they were not, we should be led to believe that Aaron was lured to the mount by false pretences, and the theory of a treacherous murder having been committed on Mount Hor would be greatly confirmed. A consideration of the matter will show that this story of Aaron having to die on Mount Hor to satisfy Jehovah's vengeance was only offered after Aaron's death as an excuse to the Israelites for his disappearance.

The account says: "And Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead,

<sup>1</sup> Although the word *saw* is here used it is very evident that the people did not see that Aaron was dead. They only heard that he

they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel."

That the Israelites were unaware that they would never see Aaron again at the time of his ascending Mount Hor is shown very strongly by there being no reference made in the narrative to any mourning—the revised version says "weeping"—when he was leaving them for ever. If the people, who wept for him after he was dead, had understood that Jehovah had issued a command that he should die, they would have wept for him, it is to be supposed, when they heard of it, and not only after its consummation. We are told that Moses, with his brother and nephew, "went up into mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation;" and if we are to believe that the explanation was made prior to the ascent, the people are represented to have been callously looking on while Aaron ascended the mount to meet his death—the very people who wept for him thirty days when they had heard that this event had taken place. It is also unlikely that Aaron would have gone up the mount if he had known that by so doing he would have died there and then. The conclusion, on these grounds, is arrived at that the explanation was only offered after the perpetration of the tragedy.

Looking thus at the recorded account, we are led forcibly to the opinion that Moses, for reasons previously examined, inveigled his brother by false pretences up Mount Hor to make away with him. What these pretences were it is impossible to say definitely, but it is not unlikely, from the manner in which the brothers kept the Israelites in subjection by playing on their credulities, that Moses may have proposed to Aaron that they should tell the Israelites that the journey to the mount was for the purpose of holding communion with the Lord, and suggested that this journey "in the sight of all the congregation" would work favorably for them on the minds of their benighted followers. It is possible that he may also have represented to his brother that their absence from the camp would afford them a good opportunity to concert measures for further deception, as well as to make or arrange such apparatus—which their Egyptian education might have given them knowledge of—as would additionally assist them in astonishing and hoodwinking their dupes. These may have been the pretences by which Aaron was lured into ascending Mount Hor. Be they what they may, we are left with the plain statement that *three* men went up the mount, and that only *two* came down. What became of Aaron? He was seen going up the mount in apparently good health by all the congregation, and he never returned. At the present time, when steps are cut in the rock to facilitate the ascent of the steep acclivity, a man in failing health would have difficulty in climbing the rugged height; but when part of the ascent would have to be performed on hands and knees, we may conclude that a man on the verge of natural demise could not have accomplished the task.

Granting for a moment that he had offended the Lord, why should the Lord wish him to go up a mountain before dying? There is no satisfactory answer to this question, and we are irresistibly led to the conclusion, after taking everything into consideration in connection with Aaron's death—the inadequate reason assigned for it; the two causes for quarrel; Moses's character; the strong motive he might have had for putting his brother out of the way; the death of Miriam shortly after she and Aaron had set themselves up as rivals of Moses; and soon after this the mysterious disappearance of Aaron himself while in his brother's company—that a fratricidal, treacherous murder was committed by Moses on Mount Hor.

The question naturally suggests itself whether Eleazar had any hand in his father's death. He came into his father's office as High Priest, with all its emoluments, and thus derived benefit from it. He was in the inner circle of the priesthood before this, and could therefore have had no belief in the marvellous story of Moses, how the Lord had "gathered Aaron unto his people." It is, however, easy to imagine Moses and his brother going apart to converse, or on some other pretext, and the Jewish lawyer by a sudden push sending Aaron headlong down a precipice, or destroying him in one of those effectual off-hand ways which the murder of the Egyptian proved him to have been an adept in, without Eleazar being a witness to the perpetration of the crime; and the awe in which he stood of his uncle might have hindered him from giving expression to his thoughts on the subject. On the other hand, Eleazar may have taken an active part in accomplishing the death of Aaron.

Let us just add in conclusion that though this Bible narrative has been sifted from the standpoint of its containing a modicum of truth, it is quite likely that the story is a mere myth—the product of priestly imagination. This latter hypothesis is undoubtedly the pleasantest one to accept; be it therefore hoped that these deductions from Holy Writ bear out the well-known words of Sterne, "How finely we argue upon mistaken facts."

J. E. ROOSE.

was dead from Moses and Eleazar. It is not mentioned, nor is it likely, that the Israelites went up the mountain to look for Aaron's body. They not only stood too much in awe of Moses to do so without his commands, but it is to be presumed that if such a noteworthy incident had occurred it would have been alluded to in the narrative. That they would have found it no easy matter to find the body even had they gone to look for it is to be conjectured from the precautions taken by Moses on a similar occasion, when he so carefully concealed the body of the Egyptian.

## PROFANE JOKES.

"ARE you a Presbyterian?" asked a lady of a little girl who was visiting at her house. "No," replied the droll child; "nor a Methodist nor a Baptist. I guess I must be an advertisement."

The Second Adventists in a town in New England (U.S.) are every year preaching that the world is to be destroyed before the autumnal equinox (September 21), and yet are building a meeting-house substantial enough to last a century.

A MINISTER of the Gospel, with not much of a clerical gift, came into the place of worship drenched with rain, and said to a brother who stood by as he shook, and brushed and wiped his clothes, "I shall certainly take cold if I go into the pulpit so wet." "Oh, no!" was the reply, "you are always dry enough there."

"Jon printing!" exclaimed an old woman the other day, as she peeped over her spectacles at the advertising pages of a country newspaper. "Poor Job! they've kept him printing, week after week, ever since I first learnt to read; and if he wasn't the most patientest man that ever was, he never could have stood it so long."

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"Mr. Foote's little manual cannot fail to be of great service in refuting the ancient and silly death-bed argument.....We should be gratified to hear that the little book meets with an extensive sale."—*Secular Review*.

"Mr. Foote is in his element in *Infidel Death-Beds*, and his carefully-stated facts about the last hours of well-known unbelievers ought to be in the hands of every Freethinker."—*Our Corner*.

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