

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 221.



WASHING JERUSALEM.

I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down.—2 KINGS XXI., 13.

AMONG THE CHRISTIANS.

THE Bishop of Lichfield enjoys a salary of £4,500 a-year for preaching "Blessed be ye poor," and he lives in a palace as a representative of one who "had not where to lay his head." How instructive, then, is it to hear this consistent and honorable Church dignitary tell the Church Congress that "the honest doubter is no longer regarded as a criminal, but as an invalid." We presume the clergy are in robust health; but, in that case, it is astonishing how reluctant the athletes are to encounter the invalids in debate. Goliath shrinks from David, although David is not only small, but suffers from chronic dyspepsia, nervous debility, and muscular degeneration.

"Every man," said Dryden, "is a fool or a rogue to the opposite party." Formerly the clergy called us rogues, but now they only call us fools. We are no longer fit candidates for gaol, but graduates for the asylum. Bless their charitable hearts! Hard words, however, break no bones; and if they cease persecuting us, their abuse will slide off our backs like water from a duck.

Yet is the change, after all, a charitable one? Is there not more alteration in the language than in the sentiment? When three Freethinkers were imprisoned in Holloway Gaol for the very same crime which was imputed to Jesus Christ, the chaplain of that establishment told one of them that they deserved penal servitude for life; but subsequently he said they deserved perpetual detention in a lunatic asylum. Was he any the less a bigot in the latter case than in the former, or did he display less rigor or less rancor?

Invalids are usually treated with attention, and often with tenderness. How much of either has been shown to Freethinkers during the last ten years? Did the Christians regard Mr. Bradlaugh as an *invalid* when they "chucked" him out of the House of Commons like a tap-room brawler? Did they treat Mrs. Besant as an *invalid* when they robbed her of her child? Did they treat Mr. Truelove as an *invalid* when, at the age of seventy, they made him pick oakum till his fingers were raw? Did they treat poor old Mr. Ferguson as an *invalid* when, at the age of seventy-eight, they made him walk in his stockings in winter weather on the stone floor of a Scotch gaol? Did they treat Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp as *invalids* when they sent them to herd with felons, and dressed them in convicts' garbs, for twelve, nine, and three months respectively? No, no, your lordship; all the suffering your creed *could* inflict on these heretics was inflicted. Every one of them is at least as honest as yourself, and some of them have made greater sacrifices for their principles than you ever contemplated. Yet when they were the victims of outrage and oppression, did your lordship for a single moment reflect that they were *invalids*, or so much as lift a finger in their defence?

Let us now turn to the Archbishop of Canterbury. His Grace declares that the Church must find men who can speak with power to the masses, and he speaks approvingly of the Church Army. But what is that but a poor copy of the Salvation Army? All the Church can do is to violate Booth's patent and take to street-walking. Surely the Archbishop has a ridiculously false notion of working men if he fancies they are to be won over by such means. There are thousands of sceptical artisans who would demolish a parson in argument before breakfast; and hundreds of thousands, not much given to religious discussion, look upon parsons as theological quacks who preach as lawyers plead, simply for a living. Will such workmen be charmed into devotion by "Glory, Hallelujahs" shouted in the public thoroughfares? Will they respect an Archbishop, with £15,000 a year, who sends out a few underpaid poor devils in black to fish for the poor? His Grace may rely on it that he is basking in a fool's paradise if he expects any number of Church Armies will capture the masses, who know that their industry is taxed to support the vast army of sky-pilots and their extensive anti-Malthusian families.

Mr. Champion, the Socialist, has followed up his paper at the Church Congress with an article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* giving his impressions of the discussion. He appears highly satisfied, and even delighted, with his recent hobnobbing with the clergy; and profoundly convinced that some good thing will come out of Nazareth yet. According to Mr. Champion's account, several members of the Black Army expressed sympathy with his views in private, though they either opposed them or frowned at them in public. Of course, it is difficult to say how much truth there is in the statement, but we sincerely hope there is a good deal. Nothing would give us greater pleasure than to see the clergy patronising every sensation of the hour. The more they catch at every passing chance of popularity, the more they relinquish their high and mighty pretensions and fish for extraneous support, the more they neglect their holy dogmas and pursue carnal projects, the surer it is that they feel the intellectual and moral movement of the age is against their creed. Nor will it be surprising if the Church becomes the chief patron of the crudest forms of Socialism. Jesus Christ was a Communist, his Apostles and their first disciples were Communists, and the spirit of Communism has appeared in the writings of many Fathers and Saints. It is also well known that the Christian system of charity, administered

by the clergy, has been one of the chief agencies in promoting the self-helplessness and pauperisation of "the poor." The Church has, indeed, directly or indirectly, always exploited the poor; and it need not astonish us if the Church continues to do so by promoting wild and hectic sentimentalism. One thing, at any rate, is certain; the clergy will resort to any artifice rather than relinquish the loaves and fishes. Even now they are virtually crying out to the people, "Tell us what you want us to say, and we'll say it." No viler form of demagoguery was ever conceived; and if this kind of thing continues, as it assuredly will, the disestablishment, and above all the disendowment, of the Church will be a measure of social sanitation.

While Christianity is dissolving away, the age is full of hypocritical compromises and bastard parties. Not only are there Christian Socialists—which is not unnatural—but there are Christian Agnostics, and even Christian Positivists. The *Pall Mall Gazette* gives a lengthy account of this new sect, which seats Jesus Christ and Auguste Comte together at the head of the table. How this diverse couple would agree if they were alive, is quite another matter. Probably, before Jesus had conversed with Comte for ten minutes, he would be calling on the devils to come out of him. Christian Positivists are certainly a strange sect even in the century of Mormonism, Jezreelism, and Glory-Holeism. The only thing required to crown the edifice of absurdity is a sect of Christian Atheists.

We will finish this excursion among the Christians with a fine old port-wine sample. The newspapers report that at a banquet of the North St. Pancras Conservative Association, held last Monday evening at the Holborn Restaurant, the Rev. C. Mackeson delivered himself on the Irish question. Waxing indignant over the behavior of the Irish members in the House of Commons, he declared that "if he had his will he would roll them down Parliament Hill on to the railway, and let the engines finish them as they deserve." There now! That is quite refreshing. Mr. Mackeson is a clergyman of the good old sort. The spirit of the Lord is upon him, and he has evidently been washed in a very large quantity of the blood of the lamb.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE ROCK ON DIVORCE.

AS religion is usually one of the most formidable opponents of reform and progress, no one need be surprised to find that the *Rock* is exceedingly annoyed by the fact that the Legislature of New South Wales has passed a Divorce Bill which allows marriages to be annulled for crime, for habitual drunkenness or wife-beating, or for "continuous desertion by either party for three years." Being very angry and very pious, and not being particularly bright even at the best of times, the *Rock* naturally talks very foolishly on the subject. It says that under this law "there may be no limit to the number of wives an old rake may have during his lifetime!" At the utmost such a clever old fool could not manage to marry oftener than once in three years, or twenty times in a lifetime, which is a very modest allowance besides Solomon's allowance of seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines (1 Kings xi., 3). But the idea that all his deserted wives will put the law into force to please the scoundrel is worthy of a — well, of a Christian editor.

The *Rock* calls on every Christian in England to protest against this Australian Bill. It calls on the Queen to veto it, as if the loyalty of the Australians was not rather too ticklish a quantity to be thus played with by personal or religious tyranny exercised from an island on the opposite side of the world. It calls on all women to unite in resisting the new law, and declares that their sex will be the ultimate sufferers from it. But as deserted or cruelly-treated wives will not avail themselves of the law unless they wish, that argument *ad faminam* is not worth much.

The great objection taken by the *Rock* is the religious one. It says:

"Under the pretence of providing for deserted wives, the whole of the marriage law, as ordained by God, would be upset, and marriage would cease to be an indissoluble tie binding husband and wife together for life. If we do away with the lifelong, far-reaching nature of the marriage vow, men and women will be rushing recklessly into hasty marriages, with the consciousness that, at the worst, it is but a kind of short-service engagement, and that it need not be for life unless they like. We submit that this would completely upset the whole idea of marriage as taught by the Word of God. Far better let polygamy be at once intro-

duced, for in countries wherein that institution exists the men, at all events, are made legally responsible for the support of the wives they have married. To limit marriage merely to a three-year engagement would be one of the most appalling retrograde steps that a Christian nation could possibly make."

The less the *Rock* says about the "whole idea of marriage as taught by the Word of God" the better for its case. For God's Word teaches polygamy, concubinage, polygamous marriages with deceased brothers' widows, divorce by the husband's own untrammelled decision, marriage by capture, and other enormities, all of which are now justly regarded as serious crimes or degrading vices. The *Rock*, however, would reject the complete teaching to which it refers, and would stand by Christ's words. But even Christ allowed divorce for one cause—so that under Christ's own decision the "appalling" fact is acknowledged that marriage may cease to be "an indissoluble tie binding husband and wife together for life." The indissolubility on which so much stress is laid, is already gone. If this indispensable protection for women is already annulled in certain cases, why appeal to its supposed absolute necessity in other cases which need similar relief? To talk of the new law as if it would limit marriage to three years is childishly absurd. The present law limits it to a much shorter period if a particular form of misconduct occurs. The fact is that the *Rock* founds the greater part of its leading article on an error which is absolutely asinine in its sheer stupidity. It talks throughout as if the law made by civilised English colonists were framed solely in the interests of rogues and vagabonds. It says:

"Some few men desert their wives now, but then the law lays hold of them when it can, and makes them pay the penalty. But if this proposed law comes into effect these villains will be able to claim the protection of the law."

The *Rock* measures the colonial corn in the proverbial manner, and attributes its own pious imbecility to the Legislature of New South Wales. It actually thinks that the wrong-doer will be able to obtain a divorce on the ground of his own wrong-doing—that a man can desert his wife, and then divorce her on the ground of his own desertion! The *Rock* might as reasonably expect our Australian brethren to allow a thief to prosecute the person he has robbed, or the forger to imprison people for the crime of being defrauded.

It is easy to say, as the *Rock* does, that bad men will "desert their wives in order to obtain a divorce;" but it can be urged with exactly similar force that under the present law men will beat their wives and commit adultery in order to obtain a divorce. Such objections to divorce laws are not by any means of sufficient validity to prevent us allowing relief to those who are wronged. In all such cases it is *only* the sufferer who can set the law in motion, and to deny the victim justice on the plea that you are protecting her interests by doing so is either sheer hypocrisy or monstrous stupidity.

The *Rock* laments that fond parents with a colonial son-in-law "will not be certain that within three or four years she will not be thrown back upon their hands deserted, and that the promising bridegroom may be on his way home to look out for another bride." But exactly as much or as little uncertainty about desertion already exists. The only additional risk under the new Act will be that the husband can marry again without first committing adultery and treating the beloved daughter with positive cruelty. Anyhow, there can be no need for the alleged uncertainty of the truant husband's marrying another bride. He cannot do so unless the first wife chooses to give him the opportunity by seeking a divorce. She need not use the new law unless she wishes. If it were otherwise, the Legislature of New South Wales would be as richly imbecile in their ideas as the editor of the *Rock*—a supposition which all sane men must at once reject as utterly impossible.

W. P. BALL.

MY RELIGION.

Rightly or wrongly I hold the fair
Supremely worthy of worship here,
And neither in sky, nor earth, nor air,
Heaven, nor Hell, nor anywhere,
Can I find a theme so worthy of praise
As that which fired Anacreon's lays.

W. S.

AT a christening, while the minister was making the certificate, he forgot the date, and happening to say: "Let me see, this is the thirtieth!" "The thirtieth!" exclaimed the indignant mother; "indeed it is only the eleventh."

TO OUR HEAVENLY FATHER.

(By one of his Children.)

Our hands they are bleeding and torn,
Our eyelids are heavy with sleep;
Alike through the darkness and morn,
We toil, and we faint, and we weep.
When didst thou soothe us with fatherly love?
When didst thou smile through the smoke-darkened sky
How canst thou rest in thy glory above,
Watching thy children in misery die?

Our lips they move vainly in prayer—
Unheeded our accents ascend.
Thou giv'st but gloom and despair;
O, how can we call thee our friend?
Millions of angels await thy behest,
Bright glows thy heaven with jewels and gold;
Why dost thou send us, who might be so blest,
Sickness and poverty, hunger and cold?

O, why didst thou cause us to be.
Foreseeing our trouble and grief?
We long not thy splendor to see,
We only crave rest and relief.
The world it is filled with oppression and woe—
Thou lollest at ease on thy throne in the skies.
God, if hereafter thy presence we know,
Curses, not praise, to our lips will arise!

O, what is the heart of a god?
A heart of the flintiest stone.
His sceptre is naught but a rod,
To chasten and torture his own.
O, endless the labors, the sorrows, the fears,
That man in his sojourn must bravely sustain;
The blossoms that spring 'neath the rain of his tears
Are all he possesses to solace his pain.

EX-RITUALIST.

ACID DROPS.

THE Bishop of Bath and Wells says that "One good result of the weakened support which the Church derives from the State is that she can no longer look upon Dissent with the supercilious looks of worldly superiority—the look of lofty superiority, I mean, derived simply from the consciousness of safety from assault." This is an excellent argument for a further withdrawal of State support from the supercilious Church which only needs complete disestablishment to be brought down to its proper level in time. The Bishop ought to join the Liberation Society. He might commence Church reform by giving up his own State salary. This ought to be no sacrifice to a true Christian who knows that he will receive a hundredfold in the next world.

BERNARD SHADWELL and Thomas Harvey have been fined 20s. and costs for assaulting a churchwarden's deputy or assistant during divine service in the parish church at Little Ilford. Bernard Shadwell is the son of the Rector of Little Ilford, who was the instigator of the whole affair. While the Rector was reading the exhortation, Mr. North, as "sidesman" appointed by the people's churchwarden, showed a lady and gentleman to a seat. This irritated the meek and mild minister of Christ beyond endurance. He stopped the service, walked down to the lady and gentleman, and called out for help to expel Mr. North from the church. Then, going to the choir, he cried to his son, "I command you to put this man out of the church." The two defendants then left the choir, clad in their surplices, seized Mr. North by the collar and the arm, and bundled him out of the church, Harvey exclaiming the while, "We have had enough of your tricks for several weeks, you blackguard!" Christianity doesn't shine in scenes like this. The Rector got the case postponed some time ago on the pretext that he would take proceedings in the Court of Arches to test the legality of Mr. North's powers. As the reverend shuffler did not fulfil his promise, the case was restored to the list. The astonished Rector now learns that assaults cannot be committed with impunity even under the orders of a Christian minister in his own church.

THE congregation of Oldbury parish church had a foretaste of Old Nick's paraphernalia last Sunday. The church was "filled with sulphur." So suffocating were these fumes that above twenty persons fainted and had to be carried from the building. The service was abruptly closed. Old Nick did not appear in person, and carnal-minded people go so far as to pretend that the Satanic phenomena were merely the natural result of some defect in the heating apparatus.

ALTHOUGH the Marquis of Aylesbury is not considered fit to associate with the members of the Jockey Club, he has the right of presentation to eleven livings in the Church of England. No one can challenge his action, and the people whom he presents with their spiritual pastor and master must submit in silence.

"A DESCENDANT of Philip Henry" writing in the *Church Times* mentions another instance of the evils connected with Church patronage. In his adjoining parish the next presentation was bought by a successful keeper of gin-vaults for £11,000. When vacant he appointed his son, who is despised by all the parishioners and who avows that his intention is to make as much money as he can out of the parish so as to recoup his father's outlay.

"AN Evangelist serving under the Lord's Restored Apostleship," has taken the Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell, to bear a solemn testimony that the long-delayed Jesus Christ is positively about to appear for the last time. The Evangelist knows that the day is at hand because "Atheism and Communism are openly taught in our streets and the Christian Faith is assailed by infidel Materialism." The Evangelist warns us that "As it was in the days of Noah, so it is now; the moment is at hand when God shall shut the door." As Jesus has a long way to come he has probably started already. Indeed he promised to return in the life-time of his Apostles. Perhaps he has got lost on the road, and the Evangelist, like so many of his predecessors, is doomed to disappointment.

THERE is one good story in the *Hayward Letters*, and the hero of it is the late Mr. James Merry. The incident took place during the contest for the Falkirk Burghs in 1861:—Questioner at public meeting.—"Will Mr. Merry vote for an alteration of the Decalogue?" Merry (aside to friend): "What the ——'s that?" Friend: "Flogging in the Army." Merry: "I beg to say, if elected, I will vote, and indeed, I will move, for its total and immediate abolition."

ANOTHER story told of Merry is that he offered to bet James Baird a sovereign that he could not repeat the Lord's prayer. "The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want" began Baird. "Dammed if I thought you knew it," cried Merry, as he handed him the sovereign.

SOME one publishes a list of "Names and Titles of Jesus," comprising several hundred epithets such as Rose of Sharon, Branch, and other terms culled from the Bible. For the most part they are as silly as the titles given to Jesus in the Middle Ages when he was called "Prince of Bethlehem, Lord Duke of Jerusalem, and Baron of Nazareth."

THE *Record* is very much incensed at Canon Isaac Taylor for plain words on the relation of Christianity to Islamism at the Church Congress. It says of his paper "it indirectly challenged the power of the Gospel over the hearts of Africans; it directly asserted the practical superiority of Mohammedanism in their case." The *Jewish Chronicle* suggests that someone should be as bold as Canon Taylor in exposing the futility of Missions to the Jews.

THE other day our sub visited the fine collection of paintings at Dulwich Gallery. There are not many scriptural pieces, but he was struck by one large canvas, the Creation of Eve, by Procaccini (No. 364). The scene, of course, represents Adam lying asleep on the ground. The Creator, represented as an aged man not quite so corpulent as in our artist's pictures, is pulling Eve, in a state of nudity, with one arm, while the other points away as if he was telling her the way to elope. The picture might also do for Susannah and the Elders.

AN American paper says that the widows of seven clergymen occupy a single pew in a Detroit church, and yet there are only two women. Our printer's devil asks:

When these two widders get to heaven,
How will they share them among the seven?

WM. HAYGARTH, who attended a Bible class and preached in the streets at Spilsby, has been sent for trial for housebreaking at Skegness.

THE Spanish Government is so convinced that the revolt of the natives in one of the Caroline Islands was only caused by religious persecution, that it has ordered that only those who are convicted of actually murdering any Spaniards shall be punished. What is to be done to Roman Catholics who murdered Protestants is not stated. In future the authorities are to prevent the monks from interfering with the Protestants, who are to be allowed complete religious liberty. The missionaries are also to be paid the indemnity demanded on their behalf by the American Government. Roman Catholicism is not the supreme power in the world that it was formerly.

THE modern Jeremiah who figures in police-courts for disturbing congregations with his prophecies and warnings, has also been testifying to the unemployed at Trafalgar Square. The faithful prophet stood upon a seat under the north wall, and after blowing a penny trumpet to signify the solemn nature of his divine message, he announced that he was one of God's messengers. He then proceeded to imitate one of Christ's miracles. Drawing a bun from his pocket, he broke it into fragments and distributed them among the crowd. But the crowd were not filled, nor were twelve basketsful of fragments collected. The people evidently had not the requisite faith for such a miracle.

They were merely amused at the tomfoolery of the modern prophet. It was not likely that God was going to let himself down to feed such an unbelieving set in the old miraculous fashion.

A SALVATION ARMY procession passing along Camberwell New Road was run into by a cab last Sunday evening. Seven persons were knocked down, and one young girl had to be taken to St. Thomas's Hospital. Why don't God look after his own? Both the procession and the cabdrivers are supposed to have been under the influence of the spirit—but which of the two kinds of spirit is most injurious to mankind is a question as yet undecided.

A NEW sacred cantata, named after its subject "Isaiah," was performed at the Norwich Musical Festival. The more striking personal actions of Isaiah, such as his three years' tour in a state of nudity, are of course omitted. As the Bible incidents of Isaiah's life do not readily lend themselves to modern poetry or romance, the author has borrowed an embassy of maidens from pagan history and has done his best to invent a plot. Hezekiah's boil and Isaiah's fig poullice were hardly good enough materials.

GOD has presented Mexico with a sample storm which laid the town of Quelite in ruins. Many people have perished, and the orange and coffee crops are destroyed. Verily his tender mercies are over all his works.

THE annual pilgrimage to the shrine of King Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey took place the other day. The pilgrims are mostly Roman Catholics or Ritualists. They were followed by Mr. McClure, the honorary secretary of the Working Men's Protestant League, who tried praying aloud as a protest. He was soon silenced, however, by the authorities, and left the chapel protesting against idolatrous practices being allowed within its sacred precincts. It is very difficult to induce Christians to tolerate each other. While Christianity was in power it was impossible.

WHAT constitutes a member of the Church of England? This is so ticklish a question to answer, it seems, that the Bishop in the chair at the Chichester Diocesan Conference refused to enter into the matter when certain lay votes were stoutly challenged because the said voters were not communicants. Although the Bishop was loudly appealed to to define what a member of the Church was, he prudently declined to satisfy either party, and declared that he had never tried to define a member, and never would try. The next speaker gave the disputants to understand that they were treading on dangerous ground. If only communicants are members of the Church, then that State-supported body numbers only a few thousand persons. But the law interprets membership of the Church in a far wider sense than is agreeable to the orthodox.

THE Pope, after due deliberation, has decided that the three-armed Ruthenian cross has nothing to do with Christianity, and is therefore no criterion of Russian orthodoxy. None of these crosses are to be allowed in Galicia. Those now existing are to be removed as opportunities arise. If French Freethinkers had issued this order for the removal of crosses it would have been stigmatised by Christians as a gross act of vandalism and persecution. The Greek Catholic Bishops are advised that their clergy should be forbidden to discuss the matter either among themselves or with the laity.

SPURGEON is so disgusted at the liberal Christianity creeping into the pulpits and sapping the old faith that he has been talking of "disintegration as the only remedy for existing evils." A split was anticipated in the Baptist ranks, but Spurgeon has thought better of it.

THE *South Australian Advertiser* reports a terrible tragedy at Inverell, New South Wales, where a squatter named Wadham Wyndham in a fit of religious insanity has murdered his wife and two children. On the night of the murder he read to them from the Bible. His children he stabbed with a pronged fork, saying afterwards that they were pierced like Jesus Christ.

THE Rev. Edward Trevor, a Methodist clergyman of Laurel Hill, Winchester county, N. Y., left that place suddenly on Monday of last week. He is charged with revolting conduct, his accuser being a boy formerly belonging to the Salvation Army.

A WILKES-BARRE clergyman announced, on a recent Sunday morning, that he would preach in the evening on the topic, "How to Live a Good Christian Life." The congregation assembled at the proper time and waited to be enlightened, but the minister failed to appear. At last a committee found him at the police station, where he was locked up on a charge of drunken and disorderly conduct. He had been favored with a baby, and, in his exultation, drank more wine than he could manage.

THERE was a ludicrous scene at a police-court the other day. A deaf witness, a widow, was called upon to "kiss the book." Catching only the word "kiss," she looked at the usher, and blushing replied, in an undertone, "Not here."

WHILE delivering a speech to the Established Synod at Aberdeen, the Rev. William Thomson, of Belhelvie, was seized with an apoplectic fit, and expired almost immediately.

A WRITER in the *Spectator* has been calling attention to the superstitions of the modern Jews. One of these is blowing the shofar or trumpet at stated times in the synagogue with the object, it is stated, of keeping off evil spirits. The shofar, although repeatedly used, is always put aside enveloped in a veil so that the Devil shall not see it. Perhaps the bells on the priests' garments were associated with a similar idea, though more probably they were to signify to the deity the approach of his minister.

THE *Spectator* says: "The superstition about Lilith, to whom Adam was wedded before Eve was created, and who bore him all the demons that vexed the ancient world, is as strong to-day among the great body of believing Jews as it was four thousand years ago among their ancestors in the Plains of Shinar." In the side-streets of Whitechapel, says the same paper, charms to keep off the night-witch, Lilith, may be bought at a penny apiece. The *Spectator* does not mention that the superstition of Lilith is countenanced in the Bible, but our translators have covered up the meaning, translating the word Lilith by "screech owl," as they have also with the evil spirits, Azazel being translated "scape-goat" and Alukah as "horse leech."

THE *Liverpool Daily Post* inserts a letter from J. S. H., calling attention to the fact that two poor Jews in that city were molested on their way to the synagogue by two Christian clergymen, who abjured them to leave their ancient faith, and then offered them money to do so. The writer suggests they were chagrined at losing a chance of boasting of two Jewish souls being saved at the ridiculously low price of eighteenpence apiece.

THE Rev. E. W. Walpole was recently "called" to America to take the pastorate of Holy Trinity Church, New York. But as he went over under contract for a salary, he has broken the law against the importation of foreign labor. So at least the United States District Attorney decides, and he declares that it is his duty to bring a suit against the Church that imported this laborer in the Lord's vineyard. The penalty is 1,000 dollars. Actors, artists, lecturers, and singers are excepted under this act, but clergymen were forgotten.

THE Vicar of St. Ingoldmells, Lincolnshire, thinks he can keep people out of their money, and defy the law when ordered to pay. He writes thus to the applicant:—"Don't talk to me about the law. I was at the Temple for four years, and only left when I found that a man could not be a successful lawyer (in a worldly sense) and save his own soul." So good a Christian naturally thinks more of saving his soul than of paying his debts. The judge at the Bloomsbury County Court showed him, however, that the law is not to be trifled with even by a Christian minister. An order was made out committing the vicar to prison for ten days for contempt of court. His name, by the bye, is given as the Rev. J. C. Edwards. Does the "J. C." stand for Jesus Christ?

THE Rev. Alex. Hicks, minister of the Welsh Congregational Church at Bootle, has been fined ten shillings and costs for striking a boy with an umbrella and inflicting two wounds on his head.

In his open letter to Colonel Ingersoll the Rev. H. M. Field, editor of the *Evangelist*, had the audacity to say: "I never heard of any Christian teacher who said that the Creator brought beings into the world to destroy." Judge Brewer called his attention to the Westminster Confession of Faith, which all Presbyterian ministers to this day are sworn to believe in and uphold, and which declares—"By the decrees of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained unto everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished." Christian ministers when arguing against Freethinkers always repudiate their own creeds.

PILGRIM is the name of a new "boy preacher" of 16. The Christian public will naturally take an interest in Pilgrim's progress.

DR. PARKER'S sermons in Beecher's pulpit are reported to be a good deal like Beecher's own with all the good things left out. He has, however, taken occasion to have a slap at Spurgeon for his unprogressive orthodoxy. Rival preachers always find some nice things to say of each other.

THE organ in St. Mary's, Edinburgh, was making a thundering noise last Sunday while the people filed out, and little Albert Glen, who had never been there before, wondered what all the noise was for. A bright idea struck him, and with an eager look in his face, he turned to his mother, saying: "Oh, mother, I was wondering why the organ played so loud, but I see it is to waken the people, and tell them they may go home now!"

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, October 23, The Circus, Bow Street, Landport, Portsmouth as 11, "Thus Saith the Lord"; at 3, "Life, Death, and Immortality"; at 7, "The Blood of Christ."

OCT. 30, Hall of Science, London.
NOV. 3, North Lambeth; 6, Birmingham; 13, Liverpool; 20, Camberwell; 27, Sunderland.

DEC. 4, Nottingham; 11 and 18, Hall of Science, London.

JAN. 1, Milton Hall, London; 8, Manchester; 15, Hall of Science, London.

FEB. 12, Milton Hall, 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.

W. C.—We do not recognise the quotation. The proposal is, for several reasons, impracticable.

R. MORGAN.—Your want of education is not your fault. We honor a man who, without the advantage of schooling in his youth, has thought himself out of superstition. Your question is a pertinent one, and your answer could not be improved by a scholar or a genius. Every believer is an unbeliever with respect to every creed but his own, and the Freethinker is only an unbeliever with respect to that one too.

AMOS SALT, Oversetts, Newhall, Burton-on-Trent, is willing to distribute any Freethought publications that may be sent him. We thank him for the jokes.

DELTA.—Shall appear.

INVICTA.—The quotation from Luther is in a very old number of this journal. To look it up would necessitate reference to his voluminous and not very polite controversial works, in which we would undertake to find worse things. We are obliged for the jokes.

"THE WANDERING JEW."—We do not think you will easily get buyers here for the French and Spanish versions of *De Tribus Impostoribus*. We have an English version. (2) Pierre Sylvain Maréchal, the compiler of the *Dictionnaire des Athées*, was author of "La Lucrece Francaise," and also of some other poems and comedies. He was an outspoken Atheist.

W. SIMONS.—Your Christian friend is "a caution." To call Mr. Foote a liar for saying that Cain was a married man is a fine exhibition of Christian charity. We admit that the Bible does not say Cain was married, but it says (Gen. iv., 17) that "Cain knew his wife," and the distinction is too fine for our carnal intelligence.

AGNOSCO.—The "great wonder" has been treated on before.

ANNIE HUDD.—We have no doubt that Southport is a very bigoted place, and that most of the newsagents there would sooner beg, borrow or steal for a living than get it by selling the *Freethinker*. Glad to hear you wish this journal was 16 pages instead of 8; but, as a matter of fact, we could not double the size without doubling the price.

R. W. HUGHES.—Sorry to hear there is continued disorder on Peckham Rye. It is absurd to hint that the lecturers are at fault, when the very same lecturers provoke no disorder at other meeting places.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Jus—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—Liverpool Daily Post—Lucifer—Bristol Mercury—Union Democratique.—Open Court—Ironclad Age—Liberator—Boston Investigator—Le Journal du Peuple—La Lanterne—Le Mot d'Ordre—Western Gleaner—South Australian Advertiser—Confectioners' Union—La Semaine Anticléricale—Brighton Argus—Glasgow Weekly Citizen—Truthseeker.

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 had capital audiences at South Shields last Sunday. There was a little opposition in the evening by a sincere but belated Christian, but that was all. A local braggart, named Ogle, who was going to annihilate the lecturer, did not put in an appearance. This Ogle has published a thirteen-page pamphlet, for which he asks the modest sum of threepence. On the cover he calls it a "Reply to Messrs. Foote and Ball's Bible Handbook for Freethinkers," but inside there is not a single allusion to that work. The Freethinkers of South Shields must be on their guard against the quackery of Brother Ogle's title-pages.

Jephthah & Co. and Professor Samson, the two fresh numbers of *Bible Heroes*, are nearly ready. The next two numbers will be devoted to Samuel and Saul. David will require two numbers to himself.

NEXT Wednesday evening (Oct. 26) a concert and ball will take place at the London Hall of Science in aid of the Open Air Lecture Committee. Particulars will be found in our advertise-

ment columns. Mr. Foote will be present, and we hope there will be a large attendance of Freethinkers and their friends.

MR. E. B. ROSE lectures on Peckham Rye this afternoon (Oct. 23), and Mr. A. B. Moss on the following Sunday. We earnestly beg Freethinkers in the district to rally round and support the platform. Last Sunday afternoon the Christian rowdies once more prevented the lecturer (Mr. R. Harding) from giving his discourse, although the title was singularly mild—"Emotion, Morality and Freethought." If the meeting is broken up again to-day, Mr. Foote may think it his duty to accompany Mr. Moss next Sunday and see whether order cannot be secured at the final meeting for the season.

THE Building Fund for a Freethought hall in Melbourne now amounts to £2,000. A premium of £25 has been offered for competitive designs, and when the third £1,000 is raised the erection will commence.

MR. JOSEPH SYMES is going to enlarge the *Liberator* in order to devote more attention to politics. A well-attended tea meeting was held in Melbourne, which was reported in the *Melbourne Herald*, to start the project and over two hundred shares were taken up. A hard worker like Mr. Symes deserves all the support of the Freethinkers in Australia and we trust he will get it.

WE are glad to notice that Mr. W. W. Collins still seems active in the movement. He has recently been lecturing with much acceptance at Brisbane.

MR. WHEELER's article, "Hospitals not of Christian Origin," is reprinted in Dr. Monroe's *Ironclad Age* for October 1. We are always pleased that the *Freethinker* articles should have as wide a circulation as possible when, as in this case, they are duly acknowledged.

THE next volume of "The Philosophical Classics for English Readers," published by Blackwood, will be *Spinoza*, written by Professor Edward Caird, of Glasgow.

A CERTAIN M. Guirnet has established a Museum of Religions in Paris, near the Trocadero. The religions of Greece and Rome are most strongly represented, but there are also objects illustrating the religions of Egypt, India and China. Christianity ought to be represented with its rival versions of scripture, its pious forgeries, false relics, and its instruments of torture used against heretics. A Crusader's sword, weapon and crucifix in one, would illustrate a large section of Christian history.

NEITHER the Italian Government nor the Italian people take any notice of the protest made by the Pope's Penitenziaria Apostolica against the law for the abolition of church tithes. In vain the clerical papers insist on the duty of obeying God, that is Leo XIII. rather than man, that is the Italian Government. Such instigations to rebellion are treated with the contempt they deserve, and the Pope hasn't even the poor consolation of being able to say he is muzzled.

COLONEL INGERSOLL, says the *New York Sun*, "has become one of the interesting characters of Wall Street, and is the only man in town credited with the habit of holding cigars in both corners of his mouth at the same time. Of course it is an illusion resulting from the rapidity with which the colonel shifts his cigar." Mr. Ingersoll's law practice is of enormous proportions, and it comes of his ability and honesty. Not many lawyers are there in that city who would be chosen by legal opponents to look after their interests when temporarily out of town. Yet Colonel Ingersoll has been so selected many times. A man whom Mr. Ingersoll believes to have a dishonest claim cannot get his services. He goes strong on equity and justice, and has mighty little respect for law. He knows law-makers from hat-crown to boot-heel.

ALTHOUGH Mr. C. E. Ford, who boldly denounced Bible teaching in Board Schools, did not succeed in obtaining a seat on the Brighton School Board, he polled 691 votes, and is able to announce that his total expenses amount to only £2 6s. 8d.

NEO-CATHOLICISM.

THE current number of the *Nineteenth Century* is chiefly made interesting to Freethinkers by the article of Sir James Fitzjames Stephen on the new departure in Catholicism represented by Mr. George Mivart. Our readers will remember that Mr. Mivart's repudiation of the necessity of a Catholic believing in the inspiration of the Bible, was dealt with by Mr. Foote under the title "Catholic Treacle," at the time of the appearance of Mr. Mivart's article in the *Nineteenth Century*.¹ Sir J. F. Stephen has allowed some time to elapse before the appearance of his reply, which does not suffer on that account, and as his arguments apply as well to the Liberal school of Protestants

¹ See *Freethinker*, July 17

as to Roman Catholics we may be excused for adverting again to the matter.

Mr. Mivart's position in regard to the Bible may be illustrated by the anecdote, which he himself gives, of the reply of a most pious Catholic to the query if the story of the deluge was true. "True! Of course it is true. There was a local inundation, and some of the sacerdotal caste saved themselves in a punt with their cocks and hens." Mr. Mivart admits that it is highly probable that Abraham, Isaac and Joseph never existed, and his article concludes with the remark:

"We cannot therefore refuse to believe that there is in store for the Catholic world, a transformation of opinion in the domain of history and criticism similar to the transformation which it has antecedently experienced in the field of astronomical, geological and biological sciences."

Sir J. F. Stephen does not omit the retort of the transformation being strange in a Church pretending to be always and everywhere the same. "The Church," he says, "and the Pope are infallible because, after denying and often persecuting the truth, they end in the long run by admitting it." But we pass on to matters more affecting Neo-Christians of all sects. These gentry are usually ready to give up God's first revelation if only they can thereby better hold on to the revised version. But how stands the matter? As Sir J. F. Stephen reminds Mr. Mivart, the assertions that Jesus Christ was "conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried, and rose again from the dead the third day and ascended into heaven" are as much historical statements as the accounts given of the Flood, the Creation, and the formation of Eve. These last Mr. Mivart disbelieves. He says, speaking of the Flood and the little joke made about it by "a most pious Catholic":

"If an inspired narrative which has God for its author can be thus deemed entirely unhistorical and untrustworthy without prejudice to Catholicism, why may not the various other narratives which Kuenen, Wellhausen, Colenso and Reuss criticise be unhistorical likewise?"

Sir J. F. Stephen wishes to add the names of Strauss and Renan to those mentioned by Mr. Mivart, since the method they employ is in substance identical with that of the other critics mentioned. Proceeding to details, Justice Stephen says:

"It is wholly uncertain who were the authors of the Gospels and when they were written. Matthew, Mark and Luke must have been either copied, with additions and modifications from each other, or from some earlier original which has been lost. There is no proof that the Gospel of John was written by John the Apostle. There are very good grounds for thinking it was not, and he is the only evangelist who professes to have been an eye-witness of what he relates. Luke is admittedly a compilation. The title of 'the Gospel according to St. Matthew' suggests an unknown author. The statements of the Gospels are therefore uncertified hearsay. They are not, and do not pretend to be, the statements of eye-witnesses of the facts related, and intrinsically those facts are as far removed from the common standards of probability as the history of the Creation or the Flood."

These positions are all perfectly familiar to our readers. We only cite them as showing that our own conclusions on these matters are endorsed by one of the acutest minds and highest legal authorities in the land. We think the retort might be carried even further than Sir J. F. Stephen carries it. If it is "highly probable that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob never existed," is it not barely possible that the case is the same with Jesus?

Justice Stephen shows that historical criticism may affect even the question of the existence of God. The question, what is the meaning and what is the history of the word "God" and its equivalents in different languages, is historical. Max Muller's investigations, for instance, show that the early significance of the word was something quite distinct from the modern conception. The history, too, not only of the word but of the belief itself, shows that Monotheism is only an evolution from pre-existent Polytheism, and that "God" has represented very different ideas to different nations, while it is quite unknown to some large populations like the Chinese and other Buddhists.

But apart from looking at the question historically, it may be urged that the question of the existence of God is one which comes within the domain of criticism. Once allow full play to the critical faculty, and you cannot restrict its limits. Justice Stephen says:

"If the supremacy of human reason on any subject whatever—and, above all, on science, history, and criticism—is admitted,

it is absolutely impossible to deny its unqualified supremacy in relation to all subjects whatever. You might as well allow a small part of a powder magazine to be blown up, and try to confine the explosion to that part only."

The truth is Mr. Mivart and the Neo-Catholics, together with the Liberal Protestants, avail themselves of reason only so far as they do not see its issues. They think they can as Christians safely reject the legends of the Old Testament without seeing that the same canons of criticism must be applied to the New Testament, and with the same result. They try, in fact, to sit upon two stools, faith and reason, without knowing that, like God and Mammon, faith and reason are rivals; and you cannot serve the one without rejecting the other. This inconsistency is all the more glaring in the Neo-Catholics, since they pride themselves upon belonging to a Church claiming infallibility. Of course, the Neo-Catholics might be consistent, and say: "Yes, you may follow your reason, even though it leads to your doubting the existence of God. God or no God does not matter. Whether there ever was such a person as Jesus Christ, or whether he was God or man, are questions for your own reason to determine. You can put whatever esoteric interpretation you like upon the creeds. All you have to do is to come to mass, make confession, and remember that the one thing vital and essential in the Christian religion is to pay your pew rents promptly."

This would be coming to *terra firma*. When the churches, instead of throwing out their cargo bit by bit, make some such confession as this, they will have touched bottom. But, like Paganism when it became confessedly but a mass of ceremonies and myths, Christianity will then be easily supplanted by a more living faith. We do not wonder that Bishop Hedley calls on Mr. Mivart for explanation, or that Canon Browning should demand that he retract utterances so adverse to the faith. But Mr. Mivart has already shown that his position has not been taken up without consideration and is not unbacked by authority. We trust he will not give way to the clamor which the Church would never have thought of raising until Justice Stephen pointed out the consequences of his admissions. The Roman Catholic Church has been the Bastille of the human intellect. The position now occupied by Mr. Mivart proves that the scientific assault has not been in vain. Its overthrow will be accelerated by the divisions which exist within.

J. M. WHEELER.

"ROBBED HIM OF HIS CRUTCHES."

ANOTHER pious Christian fable has been once more imported from America, and has been going the round of the religious press. The story is that Colonel Ingersoll and Henry Ward Beecher were once in company, and in answer to a defence of heresy by Colonel Ingersoll, Mr. Beecher related that, as he was walking along the street, a "big, burly ruffian" robbed a poor cripple of his crutches, leaving him sprawling in the mud. Turning to Colonel Ingersoll (so the yarn goes), Mr. Beecher, "rising from his chair and brushing back his long, white hair, while his eyes glittered with their old-time fire as he bent them on Ingersoll, said, 'Yes, Colonel Ingersoll, and you are the man! The human soul is lame, but Christianity gives it crutches to enable it to pass the highway of life. It is your teaching that knocks these crutches from under it, and leaves it a helpless and rudderless wreck in the slough of despond,' etc.

Henry Ward Beecher wrote a denial of the story to Mr. Horace Seaver, of the *Boston Investigator*, and recently a Mr. Truthart, of Portsmouth, Ohio, forwarded the story to Colonel Ingersoll, and received in reply the following letter, which is published in the *Truthseeker*:

"New York, Sept. 8, 1887.

"J. L. TRUTHART, Esq.,—My Dear Sir,—There is not one word of truth in the article you sent me, entitled 'Robbed Him of His Crutches,' which I enclose to you. People are continually manufacturing falsehoods for the purpose of avoiding arguments which they cannot answer. I never had any such conversation with Mr. Beecher, nor with any other human being, nor anything approaching it, nor anything out of which such a story could honestly have been made.—Yours very truly,
R. G. INGERSOLL."

Despite the denials of both Henry Ward Beecher and Colonel Ingersoll, we expect to have this pious anecdote often brought under our notice. As Colonel Ingersoll says, "Nothing flourishes like a good healthy religious lie." The liar consoles himself with the text "For if the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory; why yet am I also judged as a sinner?"

A NAUGHTY little boy, blubbering because his mother would not let him go down to the river on the Sabbath, upon being admonished, said: "I didn't want to go a swimmin' with 'em, ma. I only wanted to go down and see the bad little boys drown for swimmin' on a Sunday."

THE HOLY FIGHT.

The Devil was an angel once, and lived in Heaven above,
 And played upon a harp of gold, as gentle as a dove;
 He played and sang and flew about, and had a lot of fun,
 And always had a feather-bed to sleep on when he'd done.
 I'll do my level best to tell, how first it came about,
 That out of Heaven's broad golden streets, they turned the Devil out,
 And took from him his golden crown with diamonds studded bright,
 And how the angry God began, and conquered in the fight.
 The Devil made a pop-gun once, and just to have a lark,
 When the bright sun had gone to rest, and it was almost dark,
 He shot the Lord right in the eye, it made him yell with pain,
 And fly at him with doubled fists, ere he could load again.
 A fight was then at once arranged, a ring was formed around,
 They charged spectators threepence each for entrance on the ground,
 And 'twas agreed that he who beat, should reign for evermore,
 As king of Heaven, whom all the angels worship and adore.
 They drew the gloves upon their hands, and stepped inside the ring:
 The crier rang his bell and cried, "The future heavenly king,
 Is he who wins the fight to-day, the conquered one must go
 And dwell in hell for evermore, in agony and woe."
 "Now let's begin at once," said God, "the police are all away;
 And in the absence of the cat, of course the mice will play.
 Vengeance is mine, you know full well, I'm going to have it too;
 I'll see if I'll be shot at with a pop-gun, sir, by you."
 God knocked the Devil out of time, his blows poured down like rain,
 So deftly he belabored him, he filled him full of pain;
 The Devil cried, "I've had enough," before they'd had one round,
 And God exerting all his strength then knocked him off the ground.
 An angel then was sent downstairs, to light the fires of Hell,
 With order that he should not leave till they were blazing well;
 And then, when he came up again, they threw the Devil in,
 There he's to dwell for evermore to extirpate his sin.
 It always is the Devil's fault, when mortals go astray,
 But who was it that led him from the straight and narrow way?
 Was there an elder Devil, then, and is our one his son,
 Or was it from the Lord himself that evil thought began?

APOLLYON.

REVIEWS.

Luniloltry: Ancient and Modern. A Lecture by Gerald Massey, Price One Shilling. Villa Bordighiera, New Southgate, London, N.—Gerald Massey, as our readers are probably aware, is one of those who find a new verification of the theory of evolution in the traces of the religion and mythology of the past. He stoutly opposes the metaphysical theorists who construct archaic man in their own image apart from the evidence of what he must have been—a savage slowly making his way upward. Mythology, he contends, was a primitive mode of *thinging* the early thought. It was founded on natural facts and is still verifiable in phenomena. We must refer readers to the lecture itself for many interesting illustrations of this in connection with moon myths. It was in changes of the moon that early man noticed the great conflict of light and darkness, and moon stories hence find a large place in the old mythologies upon which so much religion has been founded. Mr. Massey even finds in Samson a luni-solar hero, but into this we shall not enter as the subject will be dealt with in Mr. Foote's *Bible Heroes*. We cordially recommend the lecture to all students of mythology.

The Science of Prolonging Life. By E. T. CRAIG, 7 Andover Road, Hammersmith.—That the author has reached the age of 84 and is still in the full possession of all his faculties should bespeak some attention to this pamphlet. Like all sensible men, Mr. Craig is an advocate of fresh air. He has some ingenious contrivances for improved ventilation. He is also in favor of phosphorus as an item of diet, and his speciality is a system of bath and percussion, or massage, by which he believes he has added ten years to his own well-spent life.

Science and Séance. By GORDON SCOTT. South Shields: 8 John Street.—A vigorously written pamphlet, though defaced by many crudities. The author, we fear, has wasted his time and pains. Spiritism is not a thing to be argued down; a certain number of people "will have it so."

The Temptation of Jesus. By R. R. STAINFORTH. Bristol: Morrish. (1d.)—Mr. Stainforth argues that the temptation of Jesus was the offer of kingship by a deputation of Jerusalem big-wigs. Nothing could be more fanciful. The Bible is to be interpreted, not according to the knowledge of to-day, but according to the superstitions that prevailed when it was written.

The Confectioners' Union.—A trade journal, out of our line, but evidently well edited, well printed, and useful to those in the business.

CORRESPONDENCE.

WAS JESUS SINCERE?
 TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Charles Kroll Laporte in your issue for Oct. 16th brings an indictment against our blessed Savior on the ground of his enjoining his disciples to "tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ," and his frequent injunctions to "Tell no man" or "Keep it dark," when he worked a miracle. But herein the incarnate deity betrayed his profound knowledge of human nature. I beg Mr. Laporte to observe that Jesus never said, "Tell no woman." By women, as we know from Luke viii. 2-3, he was followed and ministered to of their substance. Coupled with the fact that in those days there were no newspapers, telegraphs, or telephones, I hold that the divine insight of Jesus foresaw that to enjoin secrecy in this manner was the very best means to ensure his fame being spread abroad.

SIMON.

A HOLY ADVERTISER.

At a Friday evening prayer-meeting in a fashionable church recently the brethren observed that a stranger was among them. He was a tall, lank, sorrowful-looking man, with large feet and a three days' growth of beard. After the opening exercises the pastor requested any who might feel so disposed to rise and state their experiences for the benefit of their fellow-sinners. The stranger immediately sprang to his feet and began as follows: "I feel that it is good to be here to-night." ("Amen," from several of the brethren.) "As I look around me I find it difficult to analyse the emotions with which I am filled. You are all strangers to me, yet I feel as though I had known you for years. I am surrounded by an atmosphere of congeniality. I believe that I may speak freely and frankly, and that I need have no hesitation in saying to you all that I long to say." ("Go on, go on," from an enthusiastic deacon.) "Thank you, brother, I will go on. I am introducing a work in this neighborhood which is certain to find a ready sale as soon as its merits are understood—a work which every one of the intelligent men and women to whom I am speaking to-night ought to possess. Its price is nominal, being but one shilling per copy, and it will be completed in fifty parts. The work to which I refer, my dear brethren and sisters, is—" There was a brief intermission, during which the stranger made a hasty and somewhat ungraceful exit, assisted by the janitor. Then a hymn was sung, and the assembled throng soon forgot the sad-eyed man, who stood outside gazing pensively at the silent stars and murmuring: "It was a daisy scheme, and blame me if I can see why it didn't work."

FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN.

THE *Utica Herald* says, the world will never know what would have been the effect on Job if eleven little girls had called on him, one after another, and tried to sell him Sunday-school tickets.

SIR CHARLES BOWEN told a story at a recent bar dinner in London of a nameless American town. The town contained three places of worship. All three were crowded on Sunday mornings with worshippers. One Sabbath, however, the devout people of the three churches found the pulpits empty. They dispersed without hearing the sermon. The explanation was given by a fun-loving young lady who had addressed to each of the clergymen an anonymous note, which contained the following: "Fly; all is discovered." They fled.

THEY tell a story on a local newspaper man that illustrates his presence of mind under trying circumstances. He was awakened in a hotel one night by the cry of "fire," and in one spring and two movements was out of bed and in the hall, which was filled with smoke. Just ahead of him was a flying figure, clad in white like himself, and running at top speed. A turn in the hall and two steps leading to a higher level brought the figure up, or rather down, and the same cause precipitated the newspaper man against her. "Let's pray," cried the affrighted woman, as she clasped him by the arm. "No, let's run," was his reply, and putting her once more in the right direction, the lady was soon far ahead, though her rescuer got out in plenty of time. The two never saw each other again, but their first and only meeting must have vividly impressed itself upon the mind of each.

OBITUARY.—Mr. H. Vandenburg, a member of the Ball's Pond Branch, died on Thursday, Oct. 13, and was buried on the following Thursday at Chingford Cemetery. He had been a great sufferer for many years, but he bore his pain cheerfully. He died a Freethinker as he lived, and wished to be buried without religious rites. Christians tried to force their way into his death-chamber, but they were repulsed. This, however, did not prevent one of the C. E. S. lecturers from publicly asserting that two missionaries had been sent for. Fortunately the doctor is a Freethinker, and he and a member of the Branch are able to stamp the story as a pious fraud.

PROFANE JOKES.

WHEN it comes to a girl eating ice-cream and drinking lemonade to build a church, her patriotism is bounded by a very elastic corset.

MINISTER, at baptismal font: "Name, please." Mother: "Phillip Ferdinand Chesterfield Randolph Livingstone." Minister, aside to assistant: "Mr. Keeler, a little more water please."

SOUTHERNER (in Glasgow, to friend): "By the way, do you know M'Screw?" Northerner: "Ken M'Screw? Oo' fine! A grand man M'Screw! Keeps the Sawbath—an' everything else he can lay his hands on!"—*Punch*.

ONE of the bridegrooms of the week complained of the clergyman's fee. "A widower whom you married at Easter," said he, "tells me that you charged him very much less." "True," said the Rev. Dr. H—, "but he was a regular customer."

"Now, children," said she, "how many of you know anything about Moses?" Only one hand went up. "That's right, Jimmie, I'm glad to see there's one in the school who has heard of him before. Now, who was Moses?" "Ho's the man wot they wanted to know where he was when the light went out," exclaimed Jimmie with great gusto. That ended the Bible lesson for that day.

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"Two keen writers."—*Truthseeker* (London).

"If we are not mistaken, the first-named of these authors is the same gentleman who was imprisoned for blasphemy. We may be excused from any detailed review of a work animated throughout by the bitterest hatred of Christianity."—*Literary World*.

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List of Freethinkers dealt with—Lord Amberley, Lord Bolingbroke, Giordano Bruno, Henry Thomas Buckle, Lord Byron, Richard Carlile, Professor Clifford, Anthony Collins, Condorcet, Robert Cooper, Danton, Diderot, George Eliot, Frederick the Great, Gambetta, Isaac Gendro, Gibbon, Goethe, Henry Hetherington, Hobbes, Austin Holyoake, Victor Hugo, Hume, Littré, Harriet Martineau, J. S. Mill, Mirabeau, Robert Owen, Thomas Paine, Shelley, Spinoza, D. F. Strauss, John Toland, Vanini, Volney, Voltaire, James Watson, John Watts, Thomas Woolston.

"Special thanks are due to Mr. G. W. Foote for his new pamphlet. The sketches of the various Freethinkers are very readable, and a double end will be achieved in refuting pious slanderers and reviving the memories of our dead."—*National Reformer*.

"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*.

"This excellent work.... Many valuable thoughts on the subject."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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