

THE FREETHINKER

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

Vol. VII.—No. 50.]

DECEMBER 11, 1887.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 227.



WASHED IN THE BLOOD OF THE LAMB.

AMONG THE CHRISTIANS.

M. SADI CARNOT is the new French President, and of course the Christians are anxious to claim him as one of themselves. M. Grevy, the retiring President, was well known to be a Freethinker. We are not sure whether he retained, or ever possessed, any kind of belief in Deity, but it is certain that he was not a Christian. He was brought up in a stern school. When he was a young man the Catholic monarchy was exhibiting its love of popular ignorance and political despotism. Years afterwards he saw the forces of clericalism gather round Louis Napoleon when that little imitator of a great man overthrew in blood the Republic he had sworn to maintain. All through the Empire the priests were against liberty. Nearly every Republican was a Freethinker, and the line of cleavage between the two opposite parties in France is still theological as well as political. What wonder then that M. Grevy should understand that superstition and tyranny are two sides of the same thing. M. Sadi Carnot is also a Freethinker. Yet the *Daily News*, always eager to humor its Nonconformist readers, does its best to minimise the fact. "Deism," it admits, "has been the religion of the Carnot family for three generations," but it derives great comfort from the knowledge that the first famous Carnot—the "organiser of victory" in the French Revolution—was not an Atheist. He believed in the existence of a Supreme Being, and consequently he was within the pale of theology. Well, so are Brahmans and Mohammedans, and even Jews. Voltaire was a Deist, and so was

Thomas Paine. By-and-bye the *Daily News* will be celebrating the orthodoxy of these "infidels," and claiming them as a kind of Christians because they were not Atheists. Turning to the *Standard*, which is less concerned than the *Daily News* about the religious prejudices of Dissenters, we find it speaking very differently of M. Sadi Carnot. "He is likely," it says, "to be attacked by the Clerical Party on the ground that he has not been baptised, his father, M. Hippolyte Carnot, having been a prominent member of the sect of the Saint Simonians, so that, odd as it may appear, the chief of Catholic France is not even a Christian."

The fact is that the mental soil of France is not favorable to the production of Christians. Christianity there is obviously played out as an intellectual and moral force. It is quite incompatible with progress, and it hates the very name of freedom. It cannot even accommodate itself to the irresistible tendency of the age. All it can do is to yearn towards the past, and construct petty dams against the stream of the present.

From President Carnot to Canon Liddon is a far cry. While the former is devoting his energies to the real interests of a great nation, the latter is spinning endless rhetoric about a religion which he undoubtedly finds "profitable for this life," whatever it may be to the millions who pay for it. Last Sunday afternoon Canon Liddon preached at St. Paul's on the parable of the Unjust Steward. According to the report of this "soul-stirring" sermon in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Canon Liddon admitted that mankind did not wait for the Gospel to give them a

sense of responsibility. We should think not, indeed. With respect to property, the chief teaching of the New Testament, as to the social responsibilities of its possession, is that we should get rid of those responsibilities as quickly as possible. "Sell all that thou hast," said Jesus; and the Apostles, who must have understood him better than a nineteenth-century Canon, not only took the proceeds of such sales, but "settled the hash" of persons like Ananias and Sapphira, who kept back a per-centage for a rainy day. Notwithstanding all this, Canon Liddon poses as a champion of property, and doubtless he is thoroughly sincere, for his own living is too good to lose. But he teaches that the owners of property should hold it as "Stewards of God," though it does not appear what meaning he attaches to this pretty phrase. Perhaps he means assisting the "unemployed." Probably he means supporting the Church.

Canon Liddon's notion of "spiritual responsibility" is eminently clerical. Public opinion, and even conscience, are fallible judges; and "if the liability is to be something real it must be to a Judge who is above all error." This infallible Judge, of course, is the Christian God; a being who, according to the Bible, which is our only source of information about him, lied, altered his mind frequently, and several times repented of the evil he intended to do. Such a Judge as this is not likely to give infallible decisions. Besides, he has distinctly declared that prisoners will be tried at his bar by the laws of faith, and not of reason or morality. Canon Liddon has signed the Church of England articles, which plainly assert that no good man can be saved unless he entertains the same opinions as his parson. On the whole, therefore, the Christian God is only a magnified edition of Judge North.

Canon Liddon pretends to believe that without a Day of Judgment, and future rewards and punishments, the old "Epicurean rule, Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die, has much to say for itself." Surely it is anything but soul-stirring" to find such nonsense talked in the greatest church in England. There never was such an "Epicurean rule." This absurdity was fathered upon Epicureanism by St. Paul, who knew as much about it as the man in the moon. Epicurus taught a noble and beautiful philosophy, compared with which most Christian teaching is childish babble or lunatic raving. Why should a man live like a pig because he does not believe he will live for ever? Is Canon Liddon stupid enough to think that any Atheist sat down and deliberately said to himself—"I cannot possibly live more than seventy or eighty years, and therefore I will gormandize and guzzle, ruin my health, deny myself every intellectual and moral pleasure, and end my life with the greatest rapidity?" Canon Liddon will find that Christians, and not Atheists, fill our goals as well as our asylums. Seneca aspired to live nobly without a thought of heaven or hell, but Canon Liddon, who says that God made us, has so poor an opinion of mankind—doubtless derived from study of his fellow Christians—that he thinks the hope of heaven and the fear of hell are necessary to keep them from social suicide. Such is the philosophy of a "soul-stirring" preacher after eighteen centuries of Christianity!

G. W. FOOTE.

NEW TESTAMENT FORGERIES.

MORALITY, like every other element of human nature, is a development. It is a growth of earth, and not a gift of heaven. What is known as literary morality—the intellectual conscience which makes no statement without evidence, scrupulously cites authorities, and assigns every production to its true author—is a very late growth indeed, and no sign of it can be found in the first ages of Christianity. Those ages are indeed distinguished by an amount of admittedly spurious literature unparalleled in any epoch of the world's history. To mention only the names of compositions universally recognised as fraudulent would be a long task. Over seventy gospels, epistles, acts, and revelations are ascribed to the apostles and their companions. Spurious works were, moreover, ascribed to Adam, Enoch, the twelve patriarchs, Moses, David, Solomon, and Ezra; and an epistle was even forged in the name of Jesus Christ himself.

Is the New Testament, which arose amid the atmosphere of fraud and forgery, itself exempt from all taint thereof? Manifestly it is not. The epistle ascribed to Jude quotes from the Book of Enoch as by "the seventh from Adam."

Yet all authorities now agree that the work referred to does not date earlier than the first century B.C. The immense majority of critics concede that the second epistle of Peter is not by that apostle; and conceding this, they cannot escape the conclusion that it is a forgery, since it pretends to be by "Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ." The epistle to the Hebrews is no less generally admitted not to be the production of Paul. On these points even orthodox critics have given in to rationalism. But the admissions must be extended much further. The gospel ascribed to St. John is not mentioned before the latter half of the second century, and cannot have been written by a Jewish fisherman. That ascribed to Matthew is an original Greek gospel, while the earliest writers concur that Matthew wrote in Hebrew. God's second revelation was, like his first, sent in the first instance to the Jews; but the story of the strange doings in Palestine first saw the light in a foreign land and in the guise of a foreign language.

The same principle which authorised the ascription of false authorship justified the arbitrary alteration of texts. It should be borne in mind that the oldest extant MSS. of our New Testament give the text only as it stood in the fourth century of our era. It would naturally be a text of gradual and slow formation. Such precious care was taken of the originals that no one knows when or where they existed, or when or where they were lost. Dr. Scrivener, in his introduction to the criticism of the New Testament, p. 511, gives the opinion that "the worst corruptions to which the New Testament has been subject originated within a hundred years after it was composed." Dr. Tischendorf, in his introduction to the Tauchnitz New Testament (p. xv.), also states: "I have no doubt that very shortly after the books of the New Testament were written, and before they were protected by the authority of the Church, many arbitrary alterations and additions were made in them." We know from Origen (against Celsus, bk. ii., 27) that Celsus complained that the Christians of his day (A.D. 170) were continually correcting their gospels. The same charge was, later on, brought by Faustus, the Manichean, who said that almost every passage was corrupted with tares sown among the wheat (Augustine, reply to Faustus, bk. xviii., 3). Having regard to the literary morality of the time, it is probable that the owners and transcribers of manuscripts would gloss, alter, erase, and revise them. A very orthodox writer in the *Quarterly Review* (Oct., 1885, p. 282)—I believe Dean Burgon—says: "To paraphrase and expand, to supplement and explain, to withhold, to transpose, to abridge, and in various other ways to alter—was evidently held to be not only allowable, but even to be the translator's characteristic function and essential privilege." What this writer says of the translator may with almost equal truth be said of the transcriber.

Dr. Scrivener says at p. 3 of his Introduction to the Criticism of the New Testament:

"The more numerous and venerable the documents within our reach, the more extensive is the view we obtain of the variations (or various readings, as they are called) that prevail in manuscripts. If the number of these variations was rightly computed at thirty thousand in Mill's time, a century and a half ago, they must at present amount to at least fourfold that quantity."

One hundred and twenty thousand variations in the second edition of God's infallible revelation is pretty good. But it is often said the variations are of slight importance—as though anything in the Word of God could be of slight importance. But the truth is, textual criticism affects the most important passages and documents. The last sixteen verses of Mark, for instance, are generally admitted to be spurious. They are wanting in the two oldest manuscripts. Eusebius, in the fourth century, said that accurate copies closed with the eighth verse; and Jerome affirmed that the paragraph was wanting in nearly all the Greek MSS. If this was so in his time, it is not so now, for the greater number of old manuscripts prove their own untrustworthiness by containing it. The rejection of these verses takes away the principal authority for the damnation of unbelievers, and leaves Mark (which many think the earliest gospel) without any knowledge of Christ's miraculous birth, or his ascension, or of his injunction to preach to all the world.

Eminent authorities consider all the opening statements about the birth of Jesus in Luke, from chap. i., 5, to the end of the second chapter, an interpolation. If we com-

pare our text of the Acts of the Apostles with the ancient Latin version, we find one-sixteenth of the book is totally different. In some cases we can detect that alterations have been made with a view of supporting doctrines. Thus in Acts xx., 28, we now read, "To feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood;" the word "God" being substituted for "*the Lord*," which remains in the Alexandrian manuscript. God's blood was a small matter to the worthies who touched up our Testament. In 1 John v., 7, 8, a passage was interpolated to favor the doctrine of the Trinity. In 1 Timothy iii., 16, *os* was changed into *Theos* to support the doctrine of the deity of Christ. While it is easy to show that such passages are spurious, because they do not appear in the earliest versions, it is not easy to show that any single passage is certainly genuine, since the earliest manuscripts only date from the latter end of the fourth century, and nothing whatever is known of the originals.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

JOSEPH BLOMFIELD, a deacon, fell dead while exhorting the children in the school-room of the New Congregational Chapel, at Halstead, in Essex. M. Colvin, organist, was suddenly struck with total paralysis while playing sacred music in the church of St. Honore, Eylau, France. He died as he was being carried out of the church. Christians pray to be saved from sudden death, but with all their prayers and wishes God's "judgments" fall as heavily on them as on unbelievers.

FIRE broke out in the Methodist Free Church, South Hornsey. Firemen helped God with plenty of water from buckets and hydrants, and thus enabled him to put the fire out without the church being burnt down. How omnipotent this wonderful being is when properly aided by human effort!

THE town of Bisignano in Calabria has been destroyed by earthquake. More than four thousand of the homeless inhabitants have fled in terror. The military rendered assistance in saving those who were buried beneath the falling houses. Over twenty dead bodies have been extricated, and a great many people are still missing. God doesn't manage these things as gently or as reasonably as might be expected of omniscient and omnipotent benevolence. Nay, he even struck down his own parish priest, who was killed by the fall of the church.

GOD has often made Southern Italy a scene for his worst freaks in the way of earth-shaking. Thirty years ago he destroyed Montemurro and other Calabrian towns, with the loss of ten thousand lives. Fifty-two years ago a thousand people perished in the ruins of Cosenza. Since 1783 more than a hundred thousand lives have been lost in Southern Italy by earthquakes alone. And yet they tell us that God is love and that his tender mercies are over all his works. Save us from his tender mercies, good Devil.

JOHN BRIGHT speaks of the Protectionists returning to their follies "like a dog to its vomit"—an unnecessarily disgusting comparison. If John Bright's taste had not been depraved by reading his Bible he would never descend to the use of such biblical vulgarity in social or political controversy.

MR. R. BOSWORTH SMITH writes in the December number of the *Nineteenth Century* on Mohammedanism in Africa. Although an upholder of the Church of England, he admits that "There is no disguising the fact that, hitherto, with the exception of one or two isolated spots, such as Abbeokuto and Kuruman, Christian effort has been anything but marked by success in Africa." The Africans, it seems, have not forgotten that the Christian nations of Europe kidnapped them away by tens of thousands from their homes. As for the Mohammedans, they very pardonably mistake Christianity for Tri-theism, and find it in direct contradiction to the principal text of the Koran, "Say there is one God alone, God the Eternal. He begetteth not and is not begotten."

MR. BOSWORTH SMITH also admits that Mohammedanism converts whole tribes while Christianity is converting a single individual. He says Islam cures the two great evils from which Africa suffers, the habit of intemperance and the belief in witchcraft. Yet he thinks Christianity might do as well. We should say if Christianity wanted to remove these evils it should remove from its Gospels the story of turning water into wine and the numerous yarns about possession by devils. Just fancy telling Africans who believe in witchcraft that the Lord said, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." The missionary who introduces this text to their notice will be as culpable as the introducers of rum and brandy.

THE young Prince Barclay de Tolly, son of the well-known General, has been struck off the Russian Army List, because he

christened his son after the Lutheran rite. As the person who suffers in this case is a prince, a "great sensation" has been caused at St. Petersburg, and the dismissal is "not unnaturally regarded as a great mark of religious intolerance."

WE see it announced in the *Rock* that the Rev. Barton S. Tucker has been appointed chaplain to the Sultan. Has the head of Islam then turned to the faith of the despised Nazarene? The "Sultan" in question is simply the British ironclad of that name. All our big fighting ships carry parsons to sanctify the slaughter.

MR. GEORGE MITCHELL states that the following scene occurred at a Board of Guardians near Petersfield. A farm laborer, who has worked hard for sixty years, and lived fifty years in one house, being unable to work any longer, applied for outdoor relief. The chairman, a reverend gentleman, who has received £2,200 per annum for fifty-two years, addressed the applicant thus: "What do you want?" "Outdoor relief, sir, for me and my wife." "What! working sixty years, and not saved enough to keep you in your old days?" "No, sir." As a matter of fact, the poor couple had brought up a family on 8s. a week. The reverend chairman offered them the house, but another guardian proposed 2s. per week each. At this the Christian minister was aghast, however, and he eventually allowed 1s. per week each and a loaf. We should like to know the name of this minister of the gospel of charity. Can any of our readers inform us?

THE Rev. J. L. Bateman, formerly vicar of Haile, Cumberland, has been released from prison. He was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. Six months of this has been remitted. So much for benefit of clergy in modern days. Emancipators of thought who get sent to gaol for the fictitious crime of blasphemy have to serve the whole of their time. No mercy can be expected for them.

THE utmost anxiety and alarm prevail in Quebec owing to the continued and violent hostility displayed by the French Canadians to the Salvation Army. The latter, at the urgent request of the authorities, have temporarily abandoned their processions, which abandonment, it was hoped, would allay the popular excitement. One night, however, an immense mob congregated in the streets and held a meeting, at which violent and inflammatory speeches were delivered against the members of the Army, and threats to annihilate them were uttered. The Salvationists have expressed their intention of holding a procession, in which case bloodshed is believed to be inevitable, it being feared that the police will be unable to restrain the mob. The two local volunteer battalions are divided in sympathy between the Salvationists and their opponents. A serious feature of the agitation is that the question is rapidly developing into one of race feeling.

THUS religion spreads peace and harmony. The Roman Catholic French Canadians and the Protestant Salvationists are equally full of the Holy Ghost, and both are determined to obey God rather than man.

RELIGIOUS abuses are common in all lands. In India the addresses to the Governor of Madras invariably beg "for the improvement of the law relating to the vast religious endowments of the Presidency, so as to make malversation less easy and the up-keep of the religious services more certain and satisfactory."

THE Rev. Joe Parker, who it was generally supposed went out to America to take Beecher's place, doesn't seem to take. He is now taking a lecturing tour to rake in the shakels before returning to the Viaduct Temple. A writer in the *Ironclad Age* complains that he went to hear him lecture at Indiaupolis on "Christian Agnosticism," but instead of learning anything on that subject, listened to a few generalities on different topics, the main feature of which was the glorification of Mr. Gladstone.

A PIOUS monthly sheet, edited by a person who lives on the notoriety of a name made famous by the junior member for Northampton, has been giving "well-authenticated cases of converted Infidels." The last of these cases is that of Walter Smith, of Whitechapel, and the account of this Infidel's conversion is written by E. J. Turner. This gentleman informs us that the whole story is a hoax. He sent it to the editor to see whether he would insert it, and of course it was inserted immediately, without the slightest investigation. So much for these "well-authenticated" conversions!

FOR the sake of any who may be sceptical, we may add that Mr. Turner's address is Olga Villa, Hurlingham Lane, Fulham, S.W.

THE *Echo* asks, "Is not self-denial the highest Christian virtue?" Substitute *rarest*, and the answer is, "Yes."

LORD LYONS lived a Protestant and died a Roman Catholic. We wonder whether he will turn Protestant again on the road to Jerusalem. According to the Central News report he was unconscious when the Catholic Bishop of Southwark received him into the Church and administered to him extreme unction. Had the pervert been a poor devil earning a pound a week, the Bishop

would probably have thought it too late, and carried off his holy oil. Christ preaches, "Blessed be ye poor," but every Christian Church considers a nobleman a first-rate catch.

CANON GAUNTLETT, preaching at the Trinity Church, Swansea, told his congregation that heathen systems produced "excellent specimens of what men may be," and some who "put to shame the professors of our Christian religion." But the worthy Canon was careful to state that human morality and acceptance before God "are two very different things." Nobody who has read the lives of Abraham, Jacob, David, and other Bible heroes, will doubt this for a moment. In morality, as in other things, God's ways are not our ways.

THE Rector of Limehouse is fishing for fresh scholars for his Church school. He has reduced the fees to twopence for boys and girls, and one penny for infants. We should imagine, however, that all his scholars are infants when they leave his school if they are not when they enter it; for in his prospectus he says, "In the day-school a child should learn the Christian Faith; in Sunday-school he should be taught to apply it to his own practical life." Evidently the Rector of Limehouse is preparing children for the next world instead of this, and we suspect that most of them when they grow up will swell the ranks of the "unemployed."

THE Rector of Limehouse is called Norman Thicknesse. Nobody will dispute the thickness.

THERE is a notable tract circulating in the East End of London. It is printed by Andrew Stevenson, of Edinburgh, and is intended for the edification of children. One side of the tract contains the rib story from Genesis, and the other a colored picture of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden before they took to eating apples and wearing clothes. Both are as naked as they were born—we forgot, they weren't born but manufactured. The children are given a side view of Adam and a full view of Eve, whose middle parts are half screened by some vegetable produce. This is called "A Scriptural Lesson," but it looks more like a lesson in physiology.

THE Rev. John Dickson, of St. Ninian's Church, Edinburgh, continues to make a public exhibition of his imbecility. He has long been the joke of the Edinburgh papers, which discern a singular appropriateness in the name of his church; but the *Leith Herald* hospitably finds space for his ridiculous vaporings. Mr. Dickson is preaching a series of sermons to young men, the first of which is on drunkenness and infidelity. By some obscure process of clerical logic he discovers that infidelity is a prime cause of drunkenness, although infidelity is on the increase, while statistics show that the British drink bill is decreasing every year. Mr. Dickson fancies that the "mashers" who crowd round hotel bars are seduced by reading Spencer, Huxley, and Darwin; and he wonders why the Government does not punish those who spread Freethought literature broadcast. Evidently it would be impossible to find a rarer fossil of orthodoxy than Mr. Dickson, even in Scotland; and we sincerely hope his mummy will be preserved in the Edinburgh Museum of Antiquities.

THE anti-infidel mountain at Portsmouth has brought forth a mouse. Major-General Syngé opened the special meeting of the Church Defence Association with prayer, and Commander B. H. Key occupied the chair. The latter gentleman said that "all who lived in the town must be appalled at the spread of infidelity," and steps should be taken to check it. Well, the steps resolved on were these. Messrs. Millett and Tomlins—two gentlemen who are burning to achieve notoriety by debating with some leading Freethinker, an honor to which their knowledge and abilities do not entitle them—were appointed as a Committee, with power to add to their number; the object of the said embryo Committee being to clear infidelity out of the town. But as Messrs. Millett and Tomlins have been trying to do that for years, with no result except increasing the number of Freethinkers in Portsmouth, we fail to see how this grand new effort will secure them any greater success.

GENERAL SYNGÉ thinks this election—by whom?—will give the noble Millett and Tomlins "a status," and that Bradlaugh, Berant, and Foote will dash down to debate with them. But he is mistaken. A really representative Christian can have a public debate in Portsmouth whenever he likes; but Millett and Tomlins—well, no thank you.

"CONSULT your chart—the Bible—and it will never lead you wrong." So says "Antonio," in the *Christian Commonwealth*, and it is the kind of thing that is often said by pious people, especially when talking to young folks who know no better. After all the experience of the frightful way in which individuals and nations have gone wrong through trusting to the Bible, godly people still pronounce the book infallible. Such assertions are simply the impudent lying of thoughtless assurance, which delights in the well-applauded reiteration of a pious fiction as a sober fact. If the Bible never leads men wrong we must put witches to death, and let elders pray over our sick and anoint

them with oil instead of calling in the doctor or providing hospitals.

ACCORDING to a paragraph in a Christian journal, England has about 30,000 blind people. And Jesus, so full of pity and mercy as he is, won't trouble to heal them. The oculists do far more every year by the help of science than all the Gods and Christs that were ever invented.

THE Church organs are trying to get up a boom of bishops. The poor creatures it appears are very much overworked. The *Morning Post* says, "They simply cannot do the duties which the present condition of the Church lays upon them." More bishops are called for and of course more money. At least £100,000 a-year, it is said, will be required or a capital sum of three millions. Where is the money to come from? If the bishops need assistance in their work they should pay for it themselves out of their exorbitant stipends.

THE *Rock* in its "General Religious Notes," says that the Governor-General of the Caucasus has issued a decree expelling all Jews from Tiflis, and that "this cruel measure," it is expected, will shortly be extended to the whole Caucasus. The *Rock* naturally fails to notice that this item of religious news reflects the gravest discredit on the Christianity which prompts such "cruel" persecution. If Mahomedans had expelled Jews, or Jews had expelled Christians, the *Rock* would have seen at once how dreadfully intolerant their false or imperfect religion had made such persecutors. As Christianity is the offender it hardly cares to draw such a moral.

TALMAGE says that "The wealth of Crœsus, and of all the Stewarts, and of all the Barings, and all the Rothschilds, is only a poor, miserable shilling compared with the eternal fortunes that Christ offers you to-day." And yet Christians claim credit for their self-denial in rejecting the poor miserable shilling on earth for treasures and fortunes worth a million-fold more.

WE have discovered the reason why Christians attack Freethinkers so persistently and virulently. Christ says "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." Christians wish us to be blessed. They act in a spirit of the truest benevolence towards the opponents of their creed.

THOSE two celebrated preachers, Rev. Dr. Bacon and Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, were once disputing on some religious subject when the former accused the latter of using wit in his sermons. "Well," said Mr. Beecher, "suppose it had pleased God to give you wit, what would you have done?"

A PLEASURE steamer was announced to set sail every Monday, D.V., weather permitting, or else on Tuesday, weather permitting or not. The printer managed to announce on the posters that the vessel would sail on Tuesday "D.V. permitting or not." The *Rock* says that the *Standard* completely eclipses this in its article on the Crown Prince of Germany, when it says, "A devoted and martial aristocracy, a solid and faithful army, and a proud and intelligent people, are adequate buttresses for the throne against all shocks of fate and all the decisions of Heaven!" The *Rock* hopes this was a mistake, because "as it stands it is about as gross a piece of irreverence—or should we say blasphemy?—as we have ever read." Grandmotherly papers of the pious kind will have to put up with being shocked. The ordinary papers will trouble little about their susceptibilities nowadays.

THE *Rock* makes a great fuss over the omission of a comma or a rubric in the present editions of the Prayer Book, yet a short time ago it described a chaplain as having made a "terrible mistake" because he asked the Rev. Newman Hall not to join Episcopalians at the communion table. The *Rock* admits that the chaplain is "technically" correct according to the rubric, but it claims that such a case was never contemplated when the rubric was written. So that it is something approaching high treason to alter the Prayer Book in the slightest degree to suit modern requirements, and a "terrible mistake" to obey its instructions when they are too faithfully preserved. The only course for Churchmen who wish to be saved from these distressing alternatives will be to take their instructions direct from the editor of the *Rock*.

SPEAKING of anthems (says a writer in the *Nautical Gazette*) reminds me of the story of two old British sailors who were talking over their shore experience. One had been to a cathedral and had heard some very fine music, and was descanting particularly upon an anthem which gave him much pleasure. His shipmate listened for a while and then said, "I say, Bill, what's a hanthem?" "What," replied Bill, "do you mean to say you don't know what a hanthem is?" "Not me." "Well, then, I'll tell yer. If I was to tell yer, 'Ere Bill, give me that 'andspike,' that wouldn't be a hanthem; but was I to say, 'Bill, Bill, Bill, giv, giv, giv me, giv me that, Bill, giv me, giv me that hand, giv me that hand, handspike, spike, spike. Bill, giv, giv me that, that, hand, handspike, hand, handspike, spike, spike, ah-men, ah-men, Billgivmethathandspike, spike, ah-men!' Why, that would be a hanthem."

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, December 11, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C.; at 11.15, "Quack Remedies for Poverty;" at 7, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

DEC. 18, Hall of Science, London.

JAN. 1, Milton Hall, London; 8, Manchester; 15, Hall of Science, London; 22, Bradford; 29, Blackburn.

FEB. 5, Camberwell; 12, Milton Hall, London; 19, Liverpool.

MARCH 4 and 11, 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. W. FRERE.—George Gilbertson's poem, in our Christmas Number, was reprinted from *Lucifer* (America), which represented it as being reprinted in its columns from *Secular Thought* (America).

CON.—The figures are approximately:—Buddhists, 502,000,000; Christians, 383,000,000; Mohammedans, 169,000,000; Brahmanists, 176,600,000; Jews, 8,000,000; Heathen, 195,400,000. These figures are taken from Oliver and Boyd's Almanack.

R. CHRISTIE.—Irenæus, whose date may be put about 180 A.D., is the first to mention the four Gospels. Papias, about 150 A.D., mentions Matthew and Mark, but it is doubtful if his words apply to the Gospels we now have. He says that Matthew wrote the sayings of the Lord for the Hebrews in their own tongue, i.e., the Aramaean or Syro-Chaldaic. Our Gospels are all in Greek, a certain proof they were not written by Jews of Palestine. Dr. Samuel Davidson dates Matthew about 105 A.D., Mark about 120 A.D., Luke about 110 A.D., John about 150 A.D.

E. J. TURNER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. J. R.—You do not say *who* confiscated and burnt our Christmas Number which was posted to you. If this arson was committed at the Post Office let us know immediately. A fresh copy has been sent as requested.

E. WILKS.—We have published Ingersoll's letter already, and it is selling rapidly. Your suggestions seem sensible, but we have no room for the discussion of politics.

J. H.—We have noticed the articles in the *Liverpool Mercury*. They are well written and must help on the cause of Sunday freedom and general mental liberty.

G. J. W.—You should write to Mr. Payne. No doubt the voucher for your share in the Manchester Hall Company has been overlooked. Thanks for the enclosures.

C. G.—We cannot undertake to touch up your compositions. Our time is much occupied, and our space is limited.

T. H. DUKE.—We note the Manchester Committee's vote of thanks *re* the Wallace Nelson Fund.

F. J. WILSON.—Your letter to hand, but not the enclosure you mention.

R. FOX.—Thanks for the cuttings, but could you not let them be up to date?

AMOS SAULT.—Pleased to hear you find *Infidels' Death-Beds* so useful. Mr. Forder will send you the book you mention; price (we think) 1s.

G. L.—We are obliged. See "Acid Drops."

C. M. H.—Cuttings and jokes are always welcome.

R. J. MURRAY.—We see no use in drawing up a list of books for a workman's library. Tell us any subject or branch of a subject that you wish to study, and we will refer you to the best books. There are no short cuts to knowledge.

INQUIRER.—You will find a full and accurate account of Christian forgeries in the fourth chapter of *Crimes of Christianity*. You may absolutely rely on every statement.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Womens' Suffrage Journal—Jus—Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Thinker—La Semaine Anticléricale—Freidenker—Lucifer—Liberty—Ironclad Age—Portsmouth Evening Mail—Church Reformer—La Médecine Illustrée—Le Libre Penseur—West Surrey Times—Southport Guardian.

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 lectured three times at Nottingham on Sunday. On Monday evening he lectured at Clay Cross, but unfortunately to a small audience. The announcement of his visit had fluttered the Christians amazingly. Special tea-fights were got up to draw off the faithful, and the officials warned the miners down in the pits against going to hear "that infidel." Small as the audience was, nearly half of it was composed of women, and that is an encouraging sign.

The members of the Clay Cross Branch are working miners, earning from twenty to twenty-five shillings a week; but they gallantly offered "to pay" the lecturer, although they had barely cleared expenses. The lecturer, however, preferred to leave

their hard-earned cash in their pockets. If the expense of propaganda in outlandish districts is to be borne by anybody, it is very clear that the burden should fall on the wealthier members of our party, and not on poor men who work openly for the cause and risk their living in trying to stem the tide of bigotry and superstition.

NEXT Thursday evening (Dec. 15) a final Delegate Meeting will be held at the London Hall of Science, for the purpose of establishing the Federation of the London Branches of the N. S. S. The draft Constitution, drawn up by the sub-committee, will be discussed first. After alterations and amendments have been made, the revised Constitution will be voted and the Federation will begin its work forthwith. It is hoped that every London Branch will be represented on this occasion.

THE East London Branch, after a period of masterly inactivity, has now taken the Assembly Hall in Beaumont Street for Sunday evening lectures. This fresh movement is entirely owing to the out-door propaganda, carried on during the summer under the auspices of the Open-air Lecture Committee.

PREPARATIONS are beginning for the Children's Christmas party at the London Hall of Science. Subscriptions should be sent to W. Cookney, 1A Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C. This party is looked forward to by hundreds of little ones, and we hope their elders will at once "shell out."

ALTHOUGH the New York *Truthseeker* and the *Ironclad Age* reprints of Colonel Ingersoll's latest are not complete, we find that the *Boston Investigator* has obtained permission to copy it in full. Those who wish to read and preserve this latest and best of Ingersoll's anti-theological works in pamphlet form should send to Mr. Forder for "Faith and Fact."

AT a recent meeting of the Guardians of the St. Savior's (Southwark) Union, a question was asked as to whether it was a fact that they had prayers at the Champion Hill Infirmary at five o'clock in the morning. Mr. Cooksey said it was not the fact that they had prayers at the hour stated, but they did have them at 6.30, at noon, at 8.30, and at 9.45. The night nurses, who went off duty at 9 o'clock, had to attend prayers at 12 o'clock noon. Some persons were obliged to attend, while others were not. The nurses had to attend service in the chapel, but the gate porter and the receiving ward's woman did not, although the bathman, the barber, and the receiving ward's man had to do so. (Laughter.) The housemaids and the scullerymaids when off duty were obliged to attend the chapel, but the scrubbers were not. (Renewed laughter.) The head laundry woman was not obliged to attend service, but the laundrymaids were. It seemed that some were either too good or too bad to attend. (Laughter.) He thought that attendance at prayers should not be compulsory, but voluntary. Mr. Cooksey subsequently gave notice that at the next meeting of the Board he would propose that the staff of the infirmary should be informed that the rules requiring the attendance of nurses and others of the staff at service in the chapel and at prayers at fixed hours during the day were not compulsory, and that the non-attendance of any nurse or other person connected with the staff would not be a breach of the rules.

OUR French contemporary, *La Semaine Anticléricale*, devotes a couple of columns to the illustrations of our Christmas Number, which it describes at length. It declares "they would make merry the least hilarious of Freethinkers."

ACCORDING to the Rev. John Snider, infidelity is greatly increasing among the negroes of America. Twenty-five years ago Frederick Douglas was probably the only colored person who had departed from orthodoxy. Now the educated and intelligent among the negroes are showing themselves dissatisfied with the Christian belief. The physical lash has been abolished; the theological lash will soon follow the same road.

THE correspondence page in a religious contemporary commences after this fashion:

"HE DESCENDED INTO HELL"

To the Editor of the *Rock*.

We hope the pious editor enjoys his warm quarters down below. We may give him a call some day, just to see how he is getting on.

MR. ST. GEORGE MIVART attempts a reply to Sir Fitzjames Stephen in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*, but his defence of Christianity is not likely to satisfy Catholics, and will prove very distasteful to Protestants. Mr. Mivart makes many admissions; thus he says: "In these days religious belief is far from being the simple easy matter which once it was." He contends that Catholics need not believe in the infallibility of the Bible. The Church existed, and the tradition of Christianity grew and was diffused before any written Gospel existed. "The Creeds repose upon a primitive tradition which has been handed down, and might have been handed down, had the New Testament never been written." Mr. Mivart further admits that "Were I asked to believe in a Virgin birth a real resurrection from the dead, or an ascension into Heaven, on only such evidence as that afforded by the 'written word,' I should find it

utterly impossible to do so, and I can quite understand and sympathise with the impatience which many a man of science feels when asked to listen to arguments in their favor."

WHY, then, does Mr. Mivart believe in or assent to these wonders? Because he thinks the infallibility of the Church and the truth of revelation established on other grounds. What these grounds are he does not state, and we are open to suppose he has had a private revelation. The defence he makes of the "virgin birth" seems to confirm this. He says: "It strikes the keynote of the Church's attitude toward sexual morality." The getting of Joseph's spouse in the family way struck the keynote of the Church's attitude toward sexual morality! Probably it did.

THE recent controversy in the *Times* between Professor Huxley and Dr. Wilberforce recalls the famous encounter between the Professor and Dr. Wilberforce's father ("Soapy Sam," Bishop of Oxford) in the Sheldonian Theatre in 1860. The bishop inveighed against the *Origin of Species*, then recently published, with great vigor. Turning to Professor Huxley, he asked whether he was related by his grandfather's or grandmother's side to an ape. Professor Huxley, in his reply, said no man need be ashamed of having an ape for his grandfather. "If there were an ancestor," he is reported to have added, "whom I should feel shame in recalling, it would be a man—a man of restless and versatile mind—who, not content with an equivocal success in his own sphere of activity, plunges into scientific questions, with which he has no real acquaintance, only to obscure them by an aimless rhetoric, and distract the attention of his hearers from the real point at issue by eloquent digressions and skilled appeals to religious prejudice."

We are glad to see that the appeal for Mr. Wallace Nelson has been so promptly responded to. The committee propose to close the subscription list next week; all who desire to assist should therefore remit immediately. Acting on his doctor's advice Mr. Nelson is going to recruit his strength for a week or so in the South of England, as he is not at present in a fit condition to embark for Australia.

We are asked to announce the following:—Amount already acknowledged, £16 6s. 10d. Per G. J. Fisher (Leeds), 5s.; Arthur B. Moss (London), 5s.; Rev. W. Sharman (Preston), 5s.; James Firth, 2s. 6d.; D. Kay (Rochdale), 2s.; Aberdeen Friends, per Alex. Clark, £1 11s. 6d.; Bolton Friends, 17s. 6d.; H. Porter (Goxhill), 1s.; J. H. Whittham (Nr. Chesterfield), 2s. 6d.; W. J. Birch (Dulwich), £1; J. Clarke (Leicester), 2s. 6d.; J. M. Chapman (Grimsby), 4s.; D. Fogg, £1; Barnsley Friends (first remittance), 3s. 6d.; R. H. Hyde, 2s.; Wm. Greig (Lombay), 2s. 6d. Manchester: Mr. Strange, 2s.; Mr. Humphries, 5s.; Mr. Bletcher, 6d.; Mr. Davenport, 2s. 6d.; J. Hornby, 2s. 6d.; H. Mainwaring, 2s. 6d.; H. Brierley, 1s.; Mrs. Magnier, 1s.; A. Friend, 6d.; S. Parkes, 1s.; John Sheeran, 6d.; William Mole, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Clarkson, 2s. 6d.; J. Unsworth, 2s. 6d. Jarrow Friends, per H. Sanderson, 8s. 6d. Total, £21 8s. 4d.

A BROAD Church clergyman writing to the *Pall Mall Gazette* relates a recent conversation with Prince Malcom Khan, the Persian ambassador in London. Here is an utterance of the Persian minister's, which the Christians would do well to ponder:—"Remember, your religion comes from the East, the metaphysics you use are Eastern metaphysics, not Western; we can coin dogmas like you—better than you—we know what you mean and we will not have your dogmas; we will have your benevolence, your charity, your justice and truth, your science of health, your railroads, telegraphs, and manufactures. We will adopt what is good for us; but rather than have your Christian dogmas, we will have none of these other good things. You force your religion upon us; your Trinity, which is abhorred polytheism in our eyes; your Divinity of Jesus, which is to us idolatry; your eternal punishment, which is in the eyes of many enlightened people among yourselves a degrading and superstitious belief."

MR. G. WEIR, of Edinburgh, has been run in again for reading from Mr. Foote's *Letters to Jesus Christ*, and *The God the Christians Swear by*. He was taken to the police station last Sunday evening, but he was liberated as usual. The police arrest him, but never carry out their threat of prosecution. Mr. Weir now thinks of taking proceedings against them.

CANON WILBERFORCE says that "the only thing Christianity needs just now is Christians." Exactly; it has millions of cash, myriads of preachers, and multitudes of professors. It only needs real Christians and it would soon resume its former supremacy, and plunge us once more into Dark Ages of faith and depravity.

OBITUARY.—On Nov. 16 death thinned our ranks by claiming an old and respected member, Mr. W. Guest, aged 72 years, who died peaceably in the same belief in which he had lived. At the request of his family, a Secular funeral took place, the first ever held in Barnsley. The service was read to a large and orderly crowd at the grave side, by D. Pattison, Cor. Sec.

PROPHECY TESTED.

CHRISTIANS rely greatly on alleged fulfilments of Old Testament prophecies as affording decisive proof of the truth and inspiration of the Bible. I invite their thoughtful attention to the following instances of biblical prophecies which have not been fulfilled.

God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and to his seed after him for an everlasting possession (Gen. xvii., 3-8; xiii., 15; Ex. xxxii., 13). But Abraham did not receive so much as a foot of it (Acts vii., 5), nor did the Jews retain it "for ever."

God promised that David's throne and David's house should be established for ever, so that David should never lack a descendant to occupy the throne of Israel (Ps. lxxxix., 3, 4, 35-37; 2 Sam. vii., 16; Jer. xxxiii., 17-21). The kingdom has been extinct for more than two thousand years. It can hardly be said that Christ occupies the throne of Israel even in a spiritual sense, for the Jews reject him.

God also promised to establish the throne of Solomon's kingdom for ever (2 Sam. vii., 13; 1 Chron. xvii., 12-14; 1 Kings ii., 33).

Josiah was to be gathered to his grave in peace (2 Kings xxii., 20); but he was slain in battle (2 Kings xxiii., 29, 30).

Ahaz was assured that the Syrian league against him should fail (Isaiah vii., 3-7). Yet 2 Chron. xxviii., 5, 6, shows that he was delivered into the hands of the Kings of Syria and Israel with enormous slaughter.

Isaiah prophesied that Damascus should be a ruinous heap (Is. xvii., 1), but the prophecy has never come to pass, and Damascus remains a fairly prosperous city to this day.

Egypt was to be desolate and uninhabited for forty years (Ezekiel xxix., 2-14); she was to fall with terrible slaughter and rise no more (Jeremiah xxv., 17-33); the Nile was to be dried up (Isaiah xix., 5), and the tongue of the Egyptian sea to be utterly destroyed (Isaiah xi., 15). None of these predictions were fulfilled.

God said through Jeremiah that Jehoiakim should have no descendant to sit on the throne of David (Jer. xxxvi., 30). Yet Jehoiakim was succeeded on the throne by his son Jehoiachin or Jeconiah (2 Kings xxiv., 6; 1 Chron. iii., 16), from whom Matthew traces the descent of Jesus (Matt. i., 11). If Jesus sat on the throne of David, he falsified this prediction of Jeremiah's. If he did not sit on the throne of David, there was no fulfilment of God's promises to David in any sense whatever.

Ezekiel predicted that Nebuchadnezzar should capture Tyre and its riches, and that he should utterly destroy it so that it should never exist any more, save as a rock on which fishermen spread their nets to dry (Ezekiel xxvi., 3-14). But Nebuchadnezzar failed to capture the city, as it was on an island. After a siege of thirteen years, he retired baffled. Ezekiel himself subsequently acknowledges that Nebuchadnezzar and his army had no wages or reward for their arduous siege of Tyre, and he announces that, as a substitute, God has given Egypt into the king's hands that her spoil may be the wages of the unsuccessful besiegers (Ezekiel xxix., 18-20).

Christ's visage was to be marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men (Is. lii., 14; liii., 2).

He was to do no violence (Is. liii., 9), yet scourge in hand he drove the money-changers from the temple and overthrew their tables.

When Christ's soul (?) was made an offering for sin, he was to see his seed and prolong his days (Is. liii., 11). But Christ was never a father, nor did he prolong his days by his death.

Jeremiah assured Zedekiah in the name of the Lord that he should "die in peace" (Jer. xxxiv., 5). But his sons were put to death in his presence by order of the king of Babylon, his eyes were then put out, and he was loaded with chains and carried away to Babylon, where he died in captivity (Jer. lii., 10, 11).

Christ himself made most solemn and emphatic predictions of his speedy return in power and glory in the sight of the whole world. With a great sound of a trumpet his angels were to gather together his elect from all parts of earth and heaven (Matt. xxiv., 3-35; Mark xiii., 25-30). This was to occur within the lifetime of the generation then living (Matt. xxiv., 34; Matt. xiii., 30). The prophecy has been utterly falsified. If Christ spoke the words

attributed to him, he prophesied untruly and deceptively. If he did not, the gospels are untrustworthy fabrications. In either case Christianity is founded on falsehood. For other passages in which the day of judgment is represented as close at hand see Matt. xvi., 28; John v., 28, 29; xxi., 22.

Paul taught that saints then living would be caught up into the clouds to meet Jesus on his return (1st Thess. iv., 15-17; Heb. ix., 26; x., 37).

Peter announced that the end of all things was at hand (1 Pet. iv., 7), and that the earth would shortly be consumed by fire (2 Pet. iii., 7-12).

John announced that the Lord would come quickly (Rev. xxii., 20, 6, 10, 12; i., 1, 7; iii., 11).

Christ promised the crucified thief that he should be in paradise with him that day (Luke xxiii., 43). Now, whether Christ spent the next three days and nights in the heart of the earth (Matt. xii., 40) or in hell (Apostles' Creed), he could hardly have kept this promise. His ascension to heaven did not take place till forty days after his crucifixion.

Christ promised that such signs as faith-healing, exorcism of devils, and the harmlessness of deadly poisons and venomous serpents, should follow belief (Mark xvi., 17, 18); that prayer combined with belief should be omnipotent (Matt. xxi., 22; Mark xi., 24; John xiv., 13, 14); and that faith should be omnipotent (John xiv., 12; Mark ix., 23; xi., 23; Matt. xvii., 20; xxi., 21).

Do not the many instances of failure show that the predictions and promises of the Bible cannot possibly have been inspired by an unerring spirit, by an omniscient God? Is it not more reasonable to acknowledge that the biblical prophecies are merely human guesses or wishes, of which some came to pass, while others came to naught? If the fulfilment of some prophecies proves the inspiration of the Bible, surely the non-fulfilment of important and striking prophecies still more conclusively proves its imperfection, its fallibility, its merely human origin. A book containing false predictions cannot be the work of an omniscient Being unless such a God were also dishonest and untruthful.

If space permitted, it would be easy to show that many of the alleged fulfilments of biblical prophecy will not stand examination.

W. P. BALL.

GOD'S SERVANT JEHU.

HAVE you ever heard tell of Jehu? Ah, he was a comical fellow was Jehu, cool as a cucumber, rather ambitious maybe, but a fellow that could always be relied upon. Unfortunately we know little concerning his school days, but you may put it down that he was a model boy, and never told a lie if he could help it, never made faces at his teacher, or did a "mooch" from school. His whole after-life shows plainly that he was above such paltry little crimes and peccadilloes, so that while other less gifted juveniles were smoking clover, or bad penny cigars, the immortal Jehu was no doubt at home helping his mother, minding the baby perhaps, or watching the treacle so that no naughty boys might steal it.

When Jehu grew up he got saved, so to speak, and the Lord, who is never asleep, sent a "mad fellow" to him, with strict orders to saturate his head with oil, persuade him to commit high treason, and then bolt. The "mad fellow" found Jehu, got him in a corner, put on the hair-oil, and whispered: "Go for them, Jehu my lad; blood—blood—blood! The Lord be with thee—good boy—ta-ta." Then the maniac "opened the door and fled," and Jehu felt completely saved, and became conscious of the truly religious desire for blood.

From that moment Jehu commenced a glorious career, such indeed as to warrant us in saying, "We shall never see his like again—thank the Lord." The most sanctified men of these degenerate days can scarcely ever keep the Lord from frowning, and it is rare indeed that some peculiarly holy and outrageously pious individual succeeds in exacting a smile; and even then he is not certain that the Word won't turn upon him and burst him. But Jehu made the Lord stand on his head and kick his heels with joy; Jehu made him laugh till high heaven rang again. He had to be slapped on the back to prevent asphyxia; and the oldest inhabitant said he never saw the old coon tickled so. Would-be pious people expect nowadays to please God by attending mothers' meetings and drinking tea. Degenerate rascals! Jehu won his fame by attending hecatombs and drinking blood! Imagine Jehu taking woollen-comforters to his heathens! No, he acted in a more faithful and uncompromising style. He eschewed weak quibblings, and adopted a spirited foreign policy. He said: "The heathen rageth; let us exterminate him, for it is not good that he should rage." Thus spoke the great Jehu, and he did as he spoke, and was rewarded with

the sceptre of a mighty empire, extending over many yards of land.

His first great exploit was the murder of Joram, which he accomplished with a native grace which was all his own. He surprised Joram when unarmed, and shot him in the back; then he went for Ahaziah and killed him; then he had Jezebel lynched and mutilated; all with as much zest as he would eat his Good Friday bun. These were but the preliminaries of his pious career as an eminent servant of God. Jehu was getting into form, and you never saw such a dashing young fellow as he turned out. Spurning such trivial amusements as these, his religious fervor now constrained him to execute seventy brothers of the murdered Joram, and heap up their heads in the street. Over this ghastly pile he held a sort of divine service, and perhaps sang a suitable hymn; he had such funny little ways, and was so thorough. Where is the Sunday-school superintendent that can show a tithe of the number of scalps that Jehu took? Divine inspiration then caused Jehu to polish off the whole family of Ahab (father of the deceased Ahaziah). This might appear queer to a disbeliever at first, but he forgets that Jehu was a queer fellow. Anyhow pious Jehu removed the whole kith and kin of Ahab, and those who had dealings with them, including no doubt Ahab's wet nurse (who didn't hold a sinecure), and his insurance agent.

Now all this would have satisfied the ambition and piety of inferior minds. They would have been content to boast over past glories. After a while they would have left the Lord in the lurch, when they found he was always gasping for more blood. Did Jehu thus? Ah, no, my brethren! the more blood he got the more he wanted; he was always as thirsty as a sponge. He never got saturated. Besides the Lord was only just beginning to like Jehu, and Jehu wanted the Lord to love him; so he prospected around for more blood, which he knew the Lord delighted in as a child would in lollipops or monkey-up-a-stick. Jehu had a piece of good fortune now, a regular Godsend. He met forty-two harmless people going to visit Ahaziah, so he dissected the lot gratis. It was a brilliant affair, but Jehu was such a genius that he thought nothing of a work of art like this, and didn't seem to consider that he was wreathing his brow with holy immortelles. Curious fellow Jehu.

Almost the last act of Jehu's life, and the one upon which his fame and glory must chiefly rest, was one in which he surpassed even himself, and the details of which are amazingly subtle, and the whole plan exquisitely beautiful from the religious point of view. Indeed it was so ingeniously conceived and carried out, that we may well rest assured that Providence aided him in its execution. It was so simple too, that the godly feel convulsed with pious laughter and delight when they ponder over it.

There were a number of wicked people who worshipped Baal (a nasty false god); so Jehu went to their temple well armed, and accused them of being lukewarm. He told them to see *him* worship, that they couldn't worship worth a cent, and that he never saw worse worshipping in his life. "Death to all who don't come to worship Baal," said he; "Now then, Joseph, Levi, Isaac, hurry up, hurry up." So it was all the same whether a man stayed away or came, he died in either case; Jehu was so comprehensive and droll. So when he had got the temple crowded, and had stationed some men outside, so that divine service should not be interrupted, he started to carve the lot, and they all died, and the temple was knee-deep with blood; it was a stupendous shambles, a horrible hecatomb. But Jehu was serene. He went out for a walk that evening with a masher collar, and with his Bible and psalm-book in his coat pocket.

Peculiar person Jehu. I am sorry to be obliged to add that Jehu afterwards fell away from the inexpressibly transcendent godliness to which he had attained. He developed a weakness for calves (golden ones this time), and they were too many for him. He must certainly have taken Jehovah for a calf if he thought the jealous God was going to stand such foolishness. So God plagued Israel with plundering Syrians, till at last Jehu slept with his fathers, and no doubt proved a remarkably congenial bedfellow. Exit Jehu.

ENDOR.

PROFANE JOKES.

Sunday-school teacher to pupil:—"Now, my little man, can you explain to us the cause of Adam's Fall?" Little man (emphatically):—"Yes, sir; 'cause he hadn't any ashes to throw on the sidewalk!"

A religious reporter relates this:—"My brethren," said a clergyman, lately, "I will now pass—" and before he could proceed a sleepy hearer in the front pew suddenly started into life and cried out, "Then I make it spades and play it alone!"

A party of friends camping out in a field, near a small farmyard, were much annoyed at early morn by the cackling of the fowls. One day, having retired to bed late, and wishing to sleep an hour or two longer, one of the company was very vexed at a young cockeril's persistent crowing outside the canvas, near his head. Calling to the tent in which the attendant slept, he said, "Sergeant, drive that blooming cock away, he takes me for one of the darned apostles."

The Christmas Number

OF THE
FREETHINKER

Handsome New Cover. Numerous Illustrations. Fascinating Articles.

List of Illustrations:—1, A Christmas Sermon; 2, Joseph and Jesus; 3, The Making of Man (9 sketches); 4, Moses and Old Nick (8 sketches); 5, Walking with God; 6, The Christian Joss-House; 7, God is Love; 8, Aaron's Serpent Trick; 9, Jehovah Fishing; 10, Daniel the Lion-Tamer; 11, The Divine Fly-Catcher; Etc., Etc.

List of Articles, Etc.:—Judge North and the Devil, Moses in Egypt, Re-Incarnation of Jabers, Life in Heaven, Joshua at Jericho, Jehovah's Jubilee, The Wicked Cat, God Almighty Died for Me, Two Preachers, The Dying Freethinker, Correspondence Extraordinary, Bible Curios, Rib Ticklers, Pious Advertisements, Etc., Etc.

PRICE THREEPENCE.

NOW READY.

BIBLE HEROES.

By G. W. FOOTE.

FIRST SERIES, Numbers 1 to 12, Elegantly Bound, Price One Shilling.

FAITH AND FACT

By COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL.

Being a Letter to the Rev. Dr. Field.

Reprinted from the "North American Review."

32pp.

Price Twopence.

32pp.

Manchester Secular Hall Company

(LIMITED).

Registered Offices: 20 Kennedy Street, Manchester.

A SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING of the Members of the above Company was held at the Secular Hall, Manchester, on Sunday, December 4th, 1887, for the following purposes, viz:—

1. To receive a report respecting the Spencer Legacy, and also upon the financial position of the Company; and

2. To consider the resignation of Mr. Payne as Secretary and a Director of the Company, in consequence of the reflection upon his conduct by Mr. Bradlaugh in the *National Reformer* of the 6th ult. and reiterated in the same paper on the 20th ult.

The following resolution was unanimously passed:—"That this Meeting of Shareholders of the Manchester Secular Hall Company, Limited, having considered the resignation of Mr. Payne as Director and Secretary in consequence of Mr. Bradlaugh's imputations in recent issues of the *National Reformer*, respecting the conduct of Mr. Payne in the matter of the Spencer bequest, and having heard Mr. Payne's full explanation, hereby records its protest against the imputations as unjust and indefensible, and, in according to Mr. Payne its entire confidence, earnestly requests him to retain his position.

"A copy of this resolution to be advertised in the *National Reformer* and *Freethinker*."

GEORGE PAYNE, Hon. Sec.



RUBBER STAMPS.

National Secular Society Monogram 1 0
Any two-letter Monogram 1 0
Name in full 1 4
Postage to any part of England, 2d. extra. Agents Wanted.

IRETON AND CO.,
91 GRABOCHURCH ST., E.C.

Price Threepence.

PROGRESS

THE
Freethinker's Magazine.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

The DECEMBER number contains
Death—and Afterwards. By G. W. Foote.

"Primitive Simplicity." By Lloyd S. Bryce.

Ludwig Feuerbach.
Meeting Again. (A Poem.) By James Thomson (B.V.)

The Old Man of the Sea. By Prof. W. D. Gunning.

A New French Philosopher. By J. M. Wheeler.

Christian Evidences. By Lucianus.
Brief Freethought Biographies. By J. M. Wheeler.

W. J. RENDELL,
CHEMIST AND DRUGGIST,

26 GT. BATH ST., CLERKENWELL,
LONDON, E.C.

Drugs and Chemicals, Surgical Appliances,
Patent Medicines, etc.

Articles of a Malthusian discovery sent on receipt of stamped directed envelope.
Orders by Post promptly executed.

LUXURIANT HAIR

WHISKERS AND MOUSTACHIOS

quickly produced, and Baldness cured by using POMALINE. A box sent free from observation to any address for 14 stamps, or two boxes for 20 stamps. H. Daintie, 71 Gloucester Road, Regent's Park, London, N.W.

Progressive Publishing Co.'s LIST.

COLONEL R. G. INGERSOLL

Live Topics	0 1
Myth and Miracle	0 1
Real Blasphemy	0 1
Social Salvation	0 1
The Dying Creed	0 2
Faith and Fact	0 2
Mistakes of Moses	1 0
" " (in cloth)	1 6

The only complete edition published in England. Reprinted verbatim from the author's American edition. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 136 pp.

G. W. FOOTE & W. P. BALL

Bible Contradictions	0 4
Pt. I. of Bible Handbook for Freethinkers and Inquiring Christians. The Contradictions are printed in parallel columns	

Bible Absurdities	0 4
Pt. II. All the chief Absurdities from Genesis to Revelation, conveniently and strikingly arranged, with appropriate headlines, giving the point of each Absurdity in a sentence	

Bible Atrocities	0 4
Pt. III. Containing all the godly wickedness from Genesis to Revelation. Each infamy has a separate headline for easy reference.	

32 pp. PRICE TWOPENCE.

THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF

T. R. MALTHUS. By C. R. Drysdale, M.D. 120pp., with Portrait of Malthus. Should be read by every student of social questions. Post free, 12 stamps, from G. Standing, 7 Finsbury Street, E.C.; trade supplied by R. Fordor 28 Stonecutter Street.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, at 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.