

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 240.



JESUS AT THE WELL.

Jesus said unto her, 'Thou hast well said, I have no husband; for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband . . . The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.—JOHN IV, 17-19.

PRAYER AND WHITEWASH.

THERE is very little belief in prayer nowadays. A million or two smug Christians go to church or chapel on Sundays in this pious home of Beer and Bible, and supplicate the Lord in a perfunctory way; while the parson or minister, for the most part, spins off his applications to Providence with the regularity and indifference of a Buddhist praying-machine. Some church dignitaries go so far as to assert that we should not ask the Lord for material blessings. *Spiritual* comforts should be requested, of course, and for these we should wrestle with the Almighty as vigorously and tenaciously as Jacob did in his famous match with his Maker. This line of "argument" was taken by a bishop who preached at the British Association last year; though another bishop, addressing the same congregation on the very same day, fervently begged the Lord for daily bread. Perhaps the art of adulteration is carried pretty far in that locality, but unless the authorities are blind, and the public are blinder, there must be some material blessing supplied from the worst-regulated baker's shop.

Spurgeon, of course, would indignantly repudiate such new-fangled notions. "Give us this day our daily bread,"

is a prayer he never omits to despatch to the Throne of Grace, and he always finds it answered. His dinner is regularly on the table, well cooked, appetising, and succulent. Some people are malicious enough to suggest that a big income has something to do with this result. They also smile at Spurgeon's gout, which the Divine Doctor cures so easily at Mentone, and finds so obstinate at South London. Still more blasphemously do these wretched creatures poke fun at Spurgeon's mysterious cheques, for miraculously happy amounts, that arrive, God knows whence, in the very nick of time; and with a sickly grin, worthy of Satan or Voltaire, they dare to suggest that Spurgeon should let the Lord know what he wants, and nobody else, and then see how much he gets.

Dr. McCann's views of prayer, recently ventilated at the London Hall of Science, are remarkably striking. Whether they are orthodox or not we cannot decide. Once upon a time we thought we knew orthodoxy, but riper years and maturer experience have shown us that orthodoxy is "the unknowable." It changes like the chameleon in color, and in shape like the sunset clouds. Could the ghosts of dead divines, whose children still flourish, revisit the glimpses of the moon; or, in other words, bask in the seraphic silliness of their pulpit successors; their bones would rattle at the

shocking heresy which defiles the edifices in which they once ministered unto the Lord.

Men ask men for things, said Dr. McCann, and why should they not ask God? Men answer, and why should not God? If a father gives his children beef and potatoes when they are hungry, why should not "our father which art in heaven" practise the same benevolence? Besides, God's power is infinite, while the strongest man's is limited, and therefore, while we can only ask our wiser or wealthier fellow mortals for some things, we may ask the Almighty for anything. Yes, yes; of course you can *ask*. There's no law against begging from heaven, and with respect to Providence the Christian thinks it is always leap-year. That great magician, bold Glendower, told Harry Hotspur that he could "call spirits from the vasty deep." Whereupon Harry Hotspur exclaimed that so could he or any man, but "will they answer when we call?" Aye, there's the rub! We are all free to pray as long as we please. We can petition Jehovah, Brahma, Buddha, Allah, or even Mumbo Jumbo. But will they answer us? That's the question. As Huxley remarks, there is not, and cannot be, any absolute induction against the efficacy of prayer; but the great argument against the doctrine is the fact that no single prayer, of all the billions men have offered, has ever been proved to have been answered.

Dr. McCann, who is very far from a fool, sees this clearly. He therefore scouts the idea of putting the efficacy of prayer to a test. God will not be played with; he is not a gull for the scientific sharpers to practise upon. Prayer must be tested by religious methods; not by the intellect, but by the spirit. The Christian believer says that prayer *is* answered, and his authority on this subject is the only one worth consulting. Dr. McCann does not see—perhaps he does, though—that the votaries of every deity that ever lived, or didn't live, could use the same argument with exactly the same force.

Following the same line, Dr. McCann answers the argument from Lord Palmerston's letter to the Edinburgh Town Council. The pious worthies of that body were anxious for the Lord to spare their city, and pass the cholera on to some less godly district. They therefore begged Lord Palmerston to set aside a day of humiliation and prayer. His lordship recommended attention to the drainage; in substance he told them that they believed in prayer and he believed in whitewash. "Yes," says Dr. McCann, "that's all very well. But just see the advantage of Christians over sceptics. We can use whitewash as well as you, but we have prayer in addition."

Well now, let us look at this. First, is it not a fact that the ages of faith are the ages of filth? The more people trust in prayer, do they not trust the less in whitewash, and *vice versa*? Secondly, can you show that prayer and whitewash are any more potent against disease than whitewash alone? Thirdly, is prayer *without* whitewash any use whatever? Is a clean Christian any safer than a clean Freethinker? And is not a clean Freethinker far safer than a dirty Christian?

Dr. McCann, like every theologian who condescends to argue, tries to play the dialectical game of "heads I win, tails you lose." He believes in prayer; we believe in whitewash. We are ready to stand on whitewash, if he will stand on prayer: but he says, "No, I must have whitewash too." When both sides have escaped the cholera, we visit him and inquire which saved *him*, the prayer or the whitewash; and he replies "Well, half and half."

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRIST'S PARABLES.—VI.

THE PRODIGAL SON (Luke xv., 11—32).

(Concluded from p. 118)

CHRISTIANS may ask whether I would have the father be so unnatural as to reject the wanderer, and turn his penitent son out to starve. Certainly not. But I would treat shameful conduct as such, and not make such feasting over a broken-down rake in his rags as was apparently never before seen in that household over an industrious and well-behaved brother. I would welcome a prodigal son with grave solicitude and needful help, but not with a brass band and a dancing party. I would not parade the family disgrace. I would feed the starving scapegrace, but not with the fatted calf, which I would reserve for the

birthday or marriage of more deserving members of the family. If penitence is real, it will be ashamed of a public glorification. Tears of sorrow will be its wine, and bread of affliction its chosen food, while it works its way to lasting reform through paths of real humiliation and steady work. The celebration of promised penitence with music and dancing and feasting is a public scandal.

Christian defenders of the parable may also notice that it is not so much the conduct of the earthly father that I denounce as the conduct of the heavenly Father whom he typifies. The earthly father is full of human weaknesses, which have an amiable aspect as well as an unfavorable one, and he has but the limited experience of a brief lifetime. God is like this unwise father in some respects, and infinitely worse in others.

God is like the foolish father in being the source and creator of the son's profligacy. The earthly father, like the heavenly Father, evidently spoiled the son in the nature and the training he gave to him. He foolishly, or even wickedly, gave half his goods to a spoilt youth, who was totally incapable of doing anything with them but waste them in riot and in moral ruin. Why does he weakly give such opportunities of spendthrift vice to one whom he makes unfit, and should know to be unfit, for the reasonable enjoyment and use of wealth? If the father must divide the family property, surely it should be the industrious and obedient elder brother who should share his confidence and his means, not the unsteady idler and debauchee. But God's ways are not as our ways, and he declines responsibility for his actions.

God is far worse than the father in one all-important respect. The father, acting under the warm promptings of injudicious parental fondness, helped to ruin the youth, but never *promised* any special feasting and welcome and triumph over a ruined rake and wasteful sot who is compelled by poverty and hunger to come home for food. It is God who deliberately and systematically holds out this promise, this consolation and reward for sin, this premium on vice and wickedness. He announces *beforehand*, in this parable and in many other passages of Scripture, the ease and certainty of full forgiveness and glory to all who turn to him, however vile their vices may be and however black their crimes. Such an assurance of forgiveness beforehand is a license for sin, and the assurance of joy and triumph is a premium upon the vice and crime whose consequences will drive the sinner to God as his only friend, and to infinite glory and eternal bliss as his only hope.

Christians may say—"But if this is the obvious teaching of Christianity, why do not Christians take advantage of it and rush into universal sin?"

The answer is that Morality is a firmer power than Religion, and in a death-struggle is bound to conquer. Nature is real and certain; gods are but ghosts, and their promises but pie-crust. Faith expects the miraculous, but the logic of fact overpowers the idle desires of superstition. Put your finger in the fire, and it is burned. Commit murder, and you are hung. Sin, and of your pleasant vices nature will make whips to scourge you. Morality is a Rock of Ages, which the waves of Religion assail in vain. In the practical conduct of life Religion has to submit to the main requirements of morality and of natural fact. Otherwise natural or artificial selection eliminates the religious criminals or the pious idlers; and if their follies infect the whole community, the whole community suffers or perishes. Trusting in God for food or the abrogation of natural laws brings starvation or ruin. To believe thoroughly in the promises of religion is to be a madman. To act upon them is to be a licensed criminal. Good Christians, therefore, assume that no settled points in morality can possibly be contravened by their religion—which, indeed, they would otherwise have to reject. They make believe that their religion conforms to morality on the most essential points, and they are scornfully blind to any conflict between the two forces. They continually accept one aspect of a doctrine, and yet reject the other because it is so immoral that they feel that a good God could never sanction it. By such illogical means they serve Morality and Religion, just as they often continue to serve Mammon and God. They believe Nature first, and God afterwards. As men, they are too moral to allow religion to lead them astray. Their sturdy secular sense of morality thus prevents the shocking lessons of religion from being widely accepted and openly acknowledged.

W. P. BALL.

ACID DROPS.

THE question of opening the free libraries on Sundays is exciting considerable interest in Salford. The Town Council rejected the petition for Sunday opening on the ground that there was not clear evidence that it was desired by the ratepayers. Mr. Armitage then gave 600*l.* for defraying the expenses of a poll. For opening, there were 3,445 votes; against, 3,162; the majority for opening being 283. This is rather close fighting. The bigots always forget that they have no more right to stop a man going to a public library than he has to stop them from going to a public church. Suppose a majority decided on closing the churches, what would the religious people say then?

DR. PARKER sends a five-pound note to the G. J. Holyoake testimonial fund, and recoups himself by a capital advertisement in the *Daily News*. The oracle of the City Temple says, in his well displayed letter to that journal, that he has no fear of any form of unbelief; on the contrary he would willingly let its best champions speak from his pulpit, if it were his private property, on condition that he might answer them directly. Evidently Parker thinks they would need coffins after he had done with them. He takes care, however, to insert a very safe condition, which puts such an encounter a long way off. But if he wants to slay an infidel or two, he can find an opportunity. The Free-thought party can easily furnish champions who are fit to meet him, and there would be no difficulty in obtaining a platform.

UNBELIEVERS, says Parker, cut a very poor figure before Jesus of Nazareth. This sentence terminates his letter, and we hope Mr. Holyoake is sensible of the compliment.

"J. C.", not, we presume the original J. C. but some other, writes in *Glad Tidings* on "The Secularist's Testimony to the Truth of the Bible." "J. C." has seen, not the *Crimes of Christianity*, but an advertisement of that work, which he forthwith instances as a confirmation of the truth of Christianity, "For it testifies that what was predicted more than eighteen centuries ago has come to pass; thereby establishing what it desires to overthrow—the genuineness of God's words." J. C. cites various vague texts about false teachers, etc., but makes no attempt to show that the specific crimes which we charge on Christianity were prophesied in the New Testament. On the contrary, it is evident that the writers were alluding to disorders which had already crept into the Church in their time.

PILGRIMAGES are falling off. A number of clergy and other pilgrims who assembled at Vienna from all parts of the country to go by rail to Rome found themselves disappointed. As there were only half the stipulated numbers, the railway authorities refused to start the train, which had been engaged at reduced fares.

THE Holy Sepulchre and various other sacred places are, it appears, "in a deplorable state of dilapidation which is discreditable to the Christian world, through the want of funds to keep the grounds in preservation." The Roman Catholic bishops are thinking of making a big collection to keep these places in better order. As they are mostly, or probably entirely, shams, the matter is of little historical interest save as a rudimentary remnant of the Christian zeal which so conveniently found all such places as were needed to fit in with the Gospel narrative. The "Chapel of the Invention of the Cross" bears a truly significant name.

A SEVERE tornado passed over Dacca, in Bengal, causing much damage, and killing nineteen people. What had these people done to God that he should thus kill them?

NEARLY a hundred thousand people are homeless in Germany through the floods which their heavenly Father has sent to comfort them after the snow-storms of the winter. Twenty million pounds' worth of damage has been done, and many years must elapse before all the mischief can be repaired. Many people have been drowned, and among other things ten thousand cattle have been swept away. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow!

A HUNGARIAN ghost has come to grief. A peasant ventured to enter the haunted house armed with knife and pistol. Catching the ghost, he administered such a thrashing that the bruised and battered joker had to be taken to the hospital, where he died of his injuries.

It is officially announced that the 10,000 families of foreign Jews settled at Odessa are to be expelled from that city. If Mohammedans expelled 10,000 Christian families, Holy Russia would probably go to war to prevent or punish such cruel persecution.

MR. SPURGEON may rejoice. The majority of the Baptists still warm up their watery gospel with hell-fire. Dr. J. Clifford, who writes on "Baptist Theology" in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*, does not use the word, but says: "The majority, probably 80 or 90 per cent., believe the unending

misery of all who die rejectors of Christ to be a Scripture doctrine." Some few, like Dr. Cox, of Nottingham, think that "the retribution which will overtake the rejectors of God will be terrible beyond all imagining"; yet that the good old hell-maker in the clouds will finally bring them all to kingdom come.

MR. LAKEMAN'S report on female labor in London notices that religious publications are very poorly paid for.

MR. WILLIAM CUBITT, a well-known member of the Baptist body, died suddenly while attending a prayer meeting in Banbury Baptist Chapel.

THE Rev. Walpole Sanders, curate of St. James's Church, Dudley, has committed suicide. He shot himself through the heart with a revolver.

JOHN DAVIES, a miner, who was charged at the Pontypridd Petty Sessions with threatening to commit suicide, explained to the magistrate that he was subject to hallucinations, which he attributed to thinking so much of heaven and hell. He was afraid this had affected his mind.

THE two clergymen committed for indecency evidently have a proper sense of the dignity of their calling. Burleigh, as a clergyman, objected to be called a prisoner, and said it would be far more courteous to call him defendant. Sir James Lawrence, however, replied: "This is a criminal charge, and you are a prisoner." Widdows particularly desired to fulfil his engagements during Holy Week.

ACCORDING to Canon Wilberforce, man's "instinct of prayer" is "hereditarily descended from his first Parent, the Divine Father of all men." As our Father in Heaven thus possesses the "instinct of prayer," to whom does he pray? Do Father, Son, and Holy Ghost pray to each other?

AT Chelmsford quarter sessions a gentleman claimed that he was not liable to serve on the jury because he was an Agnostic. The chairman decided that he must be excused. A few minutes later a petty juror declined to serve on the ground that he was an Atheist. He was removed from the panel and ordered to remain in court.

THE Rev. James Kelly, of St. George's, Liverpool, refuses to permit the holy mysteries of the Lord's Supper to be profaned by the eyes of the uncommunicating. "The Church," he said, "does not allow her sacraments to be gazed upon." Two ladies, one of whom was said to be Mr. Kelly's wife (with whom he has been engaged in repeated law suits), refused to retire, whereupon the irate priest sent for a policeman to remove them.

A QUARREL took place in East Wickham Church, in Kent, while the Easter vestry was being held there. The two overseers fought together in the body of the church, and nearly all the people present were engaged in wrestling with one another.

AT the annual vestry meeting at Clitheroe, the vicar, the Rev. E. H. Thomas, conducted the business in a most improper and tyrannical fashion. He refused to put motions to the meeting, whereupon a vote of censure was passed upon him by a large majority. As the vicar still remained obstinate, the motions were put to the meeting in defiance of his authority, and were carried.

AT the vestry meeting at St. James's, Taxal, Chapel-en-le-Frith, a squabble took place between the rector and the churchwarden concerning the all-important subject of pew-rents. The rector called the warden a coward, and threatened to take him by the neck and remove him—this being the reverend gentleman's Christian method of turning the other cheek also. The meeting terminated abruptly.

A VERY stormy vestry meeting also took place at Walmer, one of the proposed churchwardens being "too ritualistic" to please the more evangelical electors. This is only one of the many squabbles that have taken place respecting the arrangements in the new church, which has recently been consecrated by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

THE Rev. Mr. Priggins, of High Shoal, Ga., U.S.A., has arranged a unique entertainment in his church. He is about to preach his own funeral sermon, and will exhibit the coffin that he intends his friends to use for him in his church. No doubt he will have a collection to defray expenses. — *Echo*.

WHEN Dr. Drescher, the State analyst at Newark (U.S.), was asked to kiss the Bible in court, he merely made a pretence of doing so. The counsel for the accused raised the point that Dr. Drescher's oath in the case was invalid because he intentionally avoided kissing the book. Dr. Drescher admitted that he did not kiss the book, but said the omission was prompted by sanitary motives, and not by irreverence. He said he was afraid to put his lips to an article that might cause disease.

"THE Cooling of Hell" was too strong a title for the *Western Daily Mercury* to advertise. It was willing to advertise "The Blood of Christ," but was afraid to shock its readers by announcing that the climate of Gehenna is improving.

EVAN EVANS was charged at the Monmouth Petty Sessions with deserting his wife and family. He pleaded in defence that his wife had forfeited her claim on him by committing adultery with the Rev. John James, a Church of England minister. The Bench said it was clear the complainant had committed adultery and refused to make an order on her husband.

At Lambeth Police-court, C. W. Amer, a "color-sergeant" in the Salvation Army, charged a laborer with assaulting him at an outdoor meeting of the Army. After hearing the evidence, Mr. De Rutzen found that it was the Salvationist who had assaulted the laborer, who was accordingly discharged, the "color-sergeant" being ordered to pay him 23s. costs. A memorial, very numerous signed, was also presented to the magistrate, complaining of the nuisance caused by the Army meetings.

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* is championing the cause of the Salvation Army at Torquay, where General Booth's followers insist on Sunday processions with brass bands in defiance of the bye-laws. But would the *P.M.G.* rush into the arena so readily if Freethinkers were the victims of police "despotism"? It is astonishing how many people think they are defending liberty when they are only defending their own preferences.

FOR our part we are inclined to think that no association should be allowed to indulge in regular Sunday processions with what is often mis-called "music." There should be some limit—say once a month, or once in three months for exceptionally noisy societies. Processions alone do not call for interference if they keep moving. You are not obliged to go to your window to see them. But if they blare away on cheap instruments, and thump a big drum as though they were announcing the Day of Judgment, you are invaded by the noise. It is a queer notion of liberty to suppose that people must wad their ears to get a Sunday afternoon nap, in order that others may make a row unto the Lord in the street.

THE question lies in a nutshell. Should one sect be allowed to do what would be impossible if other sects exercised the same right? Looked at in this way it scarcely admits of two answers.

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* is very fond of Christian soldiers. General Gordon's praises it sings perpetually. Sir Charles Warren was another object of its admiration when he was first appointed at Scotland Yard. Now it finds that its quondam protégé is simply detestable. Mr. Stead should hang this motto over his editorial desk:—"Put not your trust in Christian soldiers."

A CHARACTERISTIC utterance of that eminent Christian soldier, General Gordon, appears in his published "Letters to his Sister" (p. 351): "I feel strongly that the grace God gave me to pray for my enemies in the Soudan led to my success, though I certainly used the sword of Cæsar on them." This is beautifully illustrative of the Christian spirit. It has always been ready to devoutly pray for its enemies, at the same time not hesitating to use the sword of Cæsar upon them, and then thanking the Lord for the success granted to the sword.

FIVE shillings per head is all that was asked to witness the marriage of Miss Booth, of England, and Commissioner Tucker, of India, at the Congress Hall, Clapton, on Tuesday. The money, it is understood, is to be a dowry for the Indian mission.

CANON BODY, in soliciting subscriptions for the education of the sons of the poor clergy, said there was no profession in England which seeks to win the allegiance of educated men in which the possibilities of wealth are so utterly lacking as they are in the clerical profession. We are very pleased to hear that the emoluments of sky-pilotage are decreasing. It is, however, a fact, that the average amount left by the bishops who have died during the last thirty years was £54,000. Pretty good for followers of the meek and lowly, who had not where to lay his head.

SARAH MADDISON invaded the Wellingborough Post-office last Sunday morning, jumped over the counter, smashed the windows, broke the chandeliers, and finally tore off her clothes and ran about stark naked. Sarah is suffering from religious mania.

SIR HENRY TYLER, of pious and guinea-piggy memory, asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer on Monday evening whether ministers of religion would be exempt from the horse tax. Were there an ass tax, Tyler himself, as well as heaps of gospel-grinders, might apply for exemption.

THE Rev. John Robertson, of Stonehaven Free Church, is in a dreadful mess. He has apologised for plagiarising from Canon Wilberforce, and submitted to the judgment of the Presbytery; but now he disowns the apology and vows he will leave the kirk. When he made this announcement many females fainted, and

the minister himself had to be assisted from the pulpit. What a storm in a teapot! Canon Wilberforce's essay on Intemperance was not worth stealing from, and the Rev. John Robertson has imperilled his immortal soul, to say nothing of his living, for what Autolyces would call an "unconsidered trifle."

THE *Gospel Messenger* offers its readers the following cheerful picture of life after death:

"Infinite years in torments must I spend,
Which never, never, never have an end.
Yes, I must dwell in torturing despair
As many years as atoms in the air;
When these are spent, as many thousands more
As grains of sand upon the ocean shore;
When these are gone, as many to ensue
As blades of grass and drops of morning dew;
When these expire, as many millions more
As moments in the millions past before;
When all these doleful years were at a close
And multiplied by myriads again,
Till numbers drown the thought, could I suppose
That then my wretched years were at a close
This would afford a hope—but ah! I shiver
To think upon the dreadful words, FOR EVER."

This is the beautiful and divine message of the *Gospel Messenger*. How comforting to the truly godly must be such thoughts of eternity.

THE Mayor of Newcastle, presiding at a lecture on the Holy Land the other evening, said he had never been to Jerusalem, but he had often been told to go to Jericho. And the audience seemed to be more amused by this profane joke than they were interested by the sacred information subsequently poured into their sleepy ears.

PRaise the Lord, but not with any "kist o' whistles," ye godly people of Stirling! On Easter Sunday the town was to have been desecrated with an ungodly performance of the *Messiah*, but a memorial was got up by ten ministers of the town and presented to the magistrates. These gentlemen approached the lessee of the hall in which the oratorio was to be given, and, by an offer of three guineas to cover the cost of printing and advertising if the concert were postponed, saved Stirling from what a Free Church minister characterised as a "bold attempt to desecrate the holy day." With ministers like these Stirling doesn't need any *Messiah*. Praise the Lord!

A LETTER from Japan says that "another way to worship Buddha, in the temple at Kiota, is to chew the prayer paper, and, when soft, throw it at the god, through a wire screen. If it goes through, and sticks on the god, the prayer will be answered. If it hits on the screen, it is no good." How many prayers the English schoolboy would get answered! says a contemporary.

ONE of the Irish religious papers is supposed to be responsible for the following:—

On Egypt's banks, convenient to the Nile,
Great Pharaoh's daughter went to bathe in style,
And as she ran about to dry her skin,
She stumbled o'er the crib the babe was in;
And stooping down—as every one supposes,
To rub her shin—she spied the infant Moses.
Then, turning round, in accents bland and mild,
Said, "Blood and 'ouns, girls! Which o' yez owns the child?"

THE *Jewish World* in an article on "The Prophets of the Lord," makes out that these gentry had nothing in common with Gentiles of the same profession. It forgets one little item. They all took something for their services. When Saul went to look for his father's asses and found a nation to govern, he had to cross the seer Samuel's palms with the fourth part of a shekel. Micah says "the prophets divine for money," and doubtless this was the practice, although they sometimes took consideration of another kind.

FATHER SULLIVAN has been applying for the chaplaincy of the Charterhouse at Hull on the ground that his views are more in harmony with those of the founder than the views of an English Churchman of the present day would be. This argument might be carried rather far, and would make over all the cathedrals and ancient buildings to the Catholics as the most stagnant of religious bodies.

A WRITER in the *Christian Commonwealth*, describing his travels in the East, says: "At any rate, we Christians can learn some lessons from the Mohammedans. And I would to God that we were as true to our faith as they appear to be to theirs. Let us, before we speak against these infidels, as many are pleased to call them, see to it that we are as sincere and as devoted as they." This is vastly better than the indiscriminate abuse of the "false prophet" and his followers in which untravelled Christians so commonly indulge.

MOUNTBANK TALMAGE says that the syndicate having charge of the publication of his sermons affirm that every week 13,600,000 copies are published in America, and about 4,000,000 in other lands. Seventeen million copies a week! How the world must delight in being humbugged.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, April 15, Trades Societies' Lecture Hall, Northumberland Street, Huddersfield. At 11, "Darwin on God." At 3, "The Tory Hell in Ireland." At 6.30, "The Blood of Christ."

APRIL 22, Liverpool; 23, Hanley; 28, Chester-le-Street; 29, South Shields.

MAY 6, Camberwell; 13, Hall of Science, London; 20, N. S. S. Conference; 27, 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.

E. A. CLARK.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." Writing a letter to the *Daily News* in reply to Dr. Parker's effusion would be a waste of time, ink, paper, and postage. We know that very "Liberal" journal too well. Had it been the *Standard* we might have ventured.

A. HUDD.—Thanks, but the story is rather long drawn and our space is limited.

H. H.—Obliged. Treating an Atheist with discourtesy, and an Agnostic with civility, shows a fine sense of distinction without a difference.

W. E. C. W.—We have read your letter with interest.

W. GARDINER.—We know there are plenty of Freethinkers who do not belong to the N. S. S., but how do you know they recant? Where are your cases? The Abolitionists we mentioned are well known to have been sceptics. Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose, whom you refer to, is still living in London. She is in her seventy-eighth year, a confirmed Atheist, and ready to welcome death as a release from suffering. Your advice is probably well intended, but we have a habit of acting on our own judgment. We are ready to meet Mr. Woffendale in a public debate.

S. THORN.—We fancy we have seen that verse before.

G. M. F.—Back numbers are of course not "up to date," but the *Freethinker* is not a newspaper; much of its contents being fresh at any time. Why not distribute a few tracts?

E. B.—Mr. Foote does not call himself an Agnostic, and is not responsible for any definition of that term.

CASTREL.—Rather boisterous and far-fetched.

E. L. J.—Received with thanks.

HOMO.—We relied on Mr. Weir's report. Perhaps he meant Edinburgh instead of Dundee, or we misread his letter.

F. M.—Thanks. We have a *Liberator* for you if you send your address.

J. W. RUSH.—Cuttings received with thanks. *Tit Bits* is impudent to write of Tom Paine. The Christians would stare if we wrote Jack Wesley, Charley Spurgeon, or Joe Parker.

A. H. H.—Thanks. What news as to the other matter?

A. SHAW.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

OLD FREETHINKER.—Miss Weston's tract shall have our attention next week. Meanwhile we make one observation. "Freethinkers," she says, "rarely read the Bible." Had she racked her brains for twelvemonths she could not have invented a more ridiculous falsehood. We advise her to get a copy of the *Bible Handbook*. Freethinkers do read the Bible; that is why they are Freethinkers.

FINEM RESPICE.—As no mention is made of Captain Noah taking seeds or cuttings, his grapes were perhaps produced supernaturally. We have only inserted in the *Bible Handbook* absurdities which are obviously so to the ordinary reader. Commentators make out three Herods. Herod the Great, who sought to slay Jesus, but who died 4 B.C., Herod the Tetrarch, who took off John the Ducker's head, and Herod the Great's grandson who killed James. It is likely the Herods have got a trifle mixed.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Lucifer—L'Union Démocratique—Le Journal du Peuple—Freidenker—L'Union des Libres-Penseurs—New York World—Liberty—Menschentum—American Idea—Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean—Ironclad Age—Hope—Western Figaro—Glad Tidings—Lucifer—Australasian—Home Words—Daily News—Workington Free Press—Liberator—Dundee Courier.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE London Secular Federation is preparing for a vigorous open-air campaign in the summer. Intending subscribers for this object should forward quickly. Sixpence is acceptable—"fivers" are not refused. Mr. Foote has promised to lecture at Camberwell Green on Sunday morning, May 6.

THE Federation is arranging for two more social parties, one at the Hall of Science, and the other at Ball's Pond. The former parties (at Camberwell and Milton Hall) brought Freethinkers together from all parts of London, as well as a little cash into the exchequer.

THE Brussels Freethought Society celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary on April 21 and 22, winding up with a banquet on the Sunday evening. Messrs. Arnould and Gorin, president and

secretary, have favored us with an invitation, of which we regret we cannot avail ourselves.

THE conference on the question, "Why the working classes do not attend Church," takes place at the South London Free Art Gallery, 207 Camberwell Road, on Tuesday the 17th, at 8 o'clock, the Bishop of Rochester presiding. We hope some of our friends will attend and aid in the bishop's enlightenment.

MR. JAMES AIMER, an outspoken Freethinker, recently stood for the Dundee School Board, and polled 3,758 votes. Mr. Aimer regards his "defeat" as encouraging, and will fight again. He found himself sadly crippled by lack of funds. Perhaps he will be in a better position in this respect at the next contest. The Dundee Freethought Society is no longer in a state of suspended animation; it has taken a hall, which is filled every Sunday evening, and looks forward to a successful career.

MR. HENRY CHADWICK, of Marple Bridge, a Freethinker of 73 years of age, having been ill, a good opportunity presented itself of preparing an announcement of his conversion. A local preacher declared that he had been seen by a visitor reading the life of John Wesley, and it was currently believed that he would turn before he died. Mr. Chadwick declares that the story is "a lie from beginning to end." He has had no such pious visitor, and has not read the life of Wesley, though, as he has been a Freethinker over forty years, that would be little likely to influence him.

MR. BRADLAUGH is announced among the contributors to Mr. Harry Quilter's *Universal Review*, which will make its appearance in the middle of next week.

COL. INGERSOLL, speaking of paper money, said that every paper dollar ought to be able to lift up its head and say, "I know that my redeemer liveth."

THE *Radical* for April contains a good portrait of C. A. V. Conybeare, M.P.

WE have to pillory so many pious scoundrels in "Acid Drops," that we are glad of a change in "Sugar Plums." The Rev. J. Ellis has resigned the living of Wilsdon, Yorkshire, which is worth about £300 a year, because he is altogether out of touch with the Church. This is as great a miracle as any in the New Testament.

MR. W. W. COLLINS, who, we presume, has been enjoying a holiday, again occupies a prominent place in Mr. Symes's *Liberator*.

JOSEPH SYMES has nearly concluded his sketches of English Freethought in the *Liberator*. He speaks with justifiable pride of his old connection with the *Freethinker*. After referring to his visit to Mr. Foote in Holloway Castle, he says—"However, the *Freethinker* survived, and is still carrying on its brave and useful work. Long may it flourish, a scourge of priests and all their slaves and helpers." Amen, Joseph, Amen!

THE Melbourne *Liberator* of March 4th, reports a lecture on "The Comic Aspects of Theology," delivered to a crowded house at the Hall of Science by Mr. Wallace Nelson, of Sheffield, who, as our readers will know, has gone to Australia to recover from a serious illness. He has left for Brisbane where he intends to lecture also.

THE *Workington Free Press* has some admirable skits on Prophet Baxter, who has been recently indulging in his vaticinations in that town. It asks that, as Baxter is confident that the world will come to an end on April 11th, 1901, he will settle the *Christian Herald* and any other valuables he may own upon the Workington Infirmary, or some other charitable institution, the deed to take effect only at that time. Here is an opportunity for Baxter to show his faith.

WITH the number for March 24, Dr. Monroe's *Ironclad Age*, of Indianapolis, which states that it is "a paper without a God, or Devil or Ghost," enters upon its thirty-third volume. The sinner in charge has revised his "wicked proclamation" but he still offers five dollars each for bona-fide ghosts, fifteen thousand dollars for virgin mothers, and fifteen million dollars for a sane believer in a father who was his own son, a son who was his own father, and a ghost who was both father and son yet distinct from either.

MR. E. T. CRAIG, the veteran social reformer, sends us the report of his presidential address to the British Phrenological Association. Phrenology is by no means so extinct as some fancy, and in the form in which it is taught by Mr. Craig it is certainly deserving of consideration.

IN a college chapel the undergraduates used to beguile the tediousness of the service by playing whist. One day, however, the organ unhappily stopped too abruptly, and a shrill voice was heard asking "What's trumps?" Thus the godless sinners were detected by the holy dons, and punished.

A JEW ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE chosen race do not usually trouble themselves much about God's second revelation. That he should repeal his own laws and write an improved version, and that not in the Hebrew language but in Greek, seems too preposterous to merit examination. The *חזק אמונה* or *Faith Strengthened*, of Rabbi Isaac, of Troki, to which I have already drawn attention,¹ however, devotes a section to the criticism of the New Testament, and as the book is extremely scarce, indeed, almost unknown to the non-Jewish community, I will briefly summarise some of its conclusions.

Rabbi Isaac sets out by observing that in no part of the New Testament do we find that Jesus intended to pass as the author of a new law, but that, on the contrary, he admits the permanency of the Mosaic Law. He himself was circumcised, and even Paul circumcised his disciple Timothy. Such facts go far to show that the establishment of Christianity as a separate religion superseding Judaism was an after-thought, only produced when Jerusalem was destroyed. The Jewish advocate then examines the genealogy in the first chapter of Matthew, and points out its discrepancies with Luke and the Old Testament. He refers again to the quotation of Isaiah vii., 14, as a prophecy of the ridiculous legend of a birth from a virgin, and asks "What connection could there subsist between a sign necessary to convince the king of Jerusalem and the event of the birth of Jesus, which happened so many centuries after? How could Ahaz receive consolation from prophecy, the fulfilment of which he was not to live to see?" He notes, moreover, that whereas Matthew i., 23, quotes "they shall call his name Emmanuel," in the Hebrew it is "she shall call." The name Emmanuel is not said to have been ever given to Jesus by his mother. Nor do we find that the Emmanuel mentioned in Isaiah was ever considered to be the Messiah.

The quotation by Matthew of the passage "Out of Egypt have I called my son," as a prophecy of the return of Jesus from that country is thus effectively dealt with.

"The misapplication of the evidence taken from Hosea xi., 1, is perfectly obvious. He speaks of the chosen people delivered from bondage. He says, 'When Israel was a child I did love it, and out of Egypt I called my son.' This allusion to the pristine state of Israel fully agrees with the message Moses gave to Pharaoh (Exod. iv., 22, 23). 'Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my first-born son, and I have said unto thee send away my son that he may serve me.'"

In regard to the alleged massacre of the children of Bethlehem, the Jew points out that Matthew stupidly makes Rachel weep for her children, whereas it should have been Leah, who was their ancestress. Rachel was described by Jeremiah as weeping for her children who were not slain but in captivity, for the passage alleged as a prophecy of the slaughter of the infants goes on to say that "the children shall return to their boundaries."

On the story of the temptation by the devil, he asks. Can any man in his sound senses, suppose that Satan would have presumed to tempt one whom he knew to be a God; or can it be imagined that he would have dared as a creature to lead him away by force against his will?

The saying, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men," our Jew finds "most inapt and undignified. The net catches the unwary by stealth, and those who are caught are destined to death by those who spread the net." Christ's calling himself the son of man, he remarks, is a strong proof of his consciousness that he was not God. If he had been really filled with such a conceit why should he have called himself the son of man—a phrase which implies that Joseph or some other was his father? *Apropos* of this is quoted Ps. cxlvi., "Do not rely on princes, nor trust in the son of man, for salvation belongeth not unto him." The verse declaring that "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come," is justly cited in proof of the son of man and the Holy Ghost not being identical. The saying of Christ that he had come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, is placed in contrast with the prediction of Malachi

concerning the true Messiah, that "he shall restore the heart of the fathers unto the children, and the heart of the children unto their fathers."

The declaration that "the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto" is shrewdly contrasted with the Old Testament prophecies of King Messiah, that "his kingdom shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth"; "And all kings shall bow down unto him, all nations shall serve him"; "And all rulers shall serve and obey him."

The prayer of Christ that the cup should be allowed to pass from him, the Jew says, refutes the Christian belief that Jesus offered himself spontaneously as the sacrifice for the salvation of mankind:

"If that had been the case, why should he have hesitated and prayed for the removal of the bitter cup of his portion; and why should he have exclaimed, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' (Matt. xxvii., 46). This is another proof that the Father and the Son are not identical, and that the design of the one did not accord with that of the other."

Some of the arguments put forward by Rabbi Isaac are very similar to those used by Unitarians, but he has none of their exaggerated reverence for the character of Jesus, of whom he says, his mode of addressing his mother shows that he was not at all impressed with the sanctity of the commandment—"Honor thy father and mother." On the important admission (John vii., 5), that "neither did his brethren believe in him," he remarks:

"If his own brothers, men of the same flesh and blood and the nearest judges of the powers attributed to him, felt no inducement to admit his pretensions; surely we Jews may be excused for discrediting what his own contemporaries and brothers rejected as incredible."

The misquotations and misapplications of prophecy which abound in the New Testament are all taken up by our author, who brings out many points which might be overlooked by a non-Jewish reader. Thus he notes on Rev. vii., 5:

"In enumerating the twelve tribes of Israel, the tribe of Dan is omitted, and that of Manasseh mentioned in its stead, although the tribe of Joseph might have naturally included that of Manasseh. This shows that the author of the Revelation was imperfectly acquainted with the very rudiments of biblical history. If the instructor himself be un instructed, what can his disciple profit by the knowledge emanating from such a source?"

Altogether the views of the New Testament held by Rabbi Isaac are vastly more sensible than those exhibited in most works of Christian theology. We have culled only a few samples, but they are sufficient to show that the Jews are not entirely without excuse in rejecting Christianity. The fact that they do reject it is indeed in itself an overwhelming evidence of its falsity.

J. M. WHEELER.

"I HOPE, Mrs. Giles," said a lady who was canvassing for a choir at the village church, "you will persuade your husband to join us. I am told he has a very sonorous voice." "A sonorous voice, marm?" said Mrs. Giles, "Ah! you should hear it a comin' out of his nose when he's asleep."

THE *Church Times*, in its answers to correspondents, declares emphatically that "Unitarians are heretics in the highest degree, as condemned by the First General Council and by the whole subsequent voice of historical Christendom. They are not even Christians." This deserves notice as a repudiation of the Christianity of Milton, Newton, Locke, Lardner, Channing, Martineau, and many others who are often eagerly claimed on the Christian side.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* explains to a correspondent how it is that no man hath seen God at any time, and yet Moses and seventy elders saw him. It was God and it wasn't God that they saw. It was a "Divine Theophany," which can be counted as deity or as not deity, just as you please. A Divine Theophany, or appearance of God, seems to be a sort of a kind of a manifestation of God in which he shows himself but isn't himself, but only a sort of magic lantern picture of himself in space. He mercifully dilutes or modifies himself into an appearance that isn't himself, because his full manifestation would annihilate the beholder. It seems that "Jesus Christ himself is the greatest of Theophanies. In him man sees God, yet under a veil." It also "seems evident to many careful students that the Old Testament is full of records of the appearing of Christ as the Theophany during his pre-existent state." What nonsense Christians talk in their attempts to reconcile the contradictions of the Bible! The *Christian Commonwealth* has to own that the subject is "deep and dark," though the theory of the Divine Theophany "seems to throw at least some light upon it."

¹ *Freethinker*, p. 26.

HYMNS, ANCIENT AND "MODERN."

Mr. JOSEPH SYMES has been furnishing the Australians with some hymns, of which the following are specimens:

AIR—*Old Hundredth.*
All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Queen with cheerful voice,
Her serve with fear, her praise forth tell,
Come ye before her and rejoice.

For she, the Queen's, supremely good,
Her mercy is for ever sure;
Her truth, which always firmly stood,
To endless ages shall endure.

NATIONAL ANTHEM.
God save our great Tom Cat,
May he be ever fat,
God save our Tom!
May he sit snorious,
Happy and glorious,
On th' hearth-rug before us,
God save our Tom!

Thy choicest gifts in store,
On him be pleased to pour,
God save our Tom.
May he shut up his paws,
And never use his claws,
Save in a righteous cause,
God save our Tom!

"THE LIME-KILN CLUB."

DIED WITHOUT RELIGION.

"I KNOWN an ole man who died de odder day without religun," said Brother Gardner, as he opened the meeting.

"Some of de people who stood aroun' his death-bed an' saw de smile on his face as he sunk away in death, could not make it out. He belonged to no church—he worshipped wid no congregation, an' dey wondered dat he died content.

"No! dis ole man had no religun accordin' to de way Christians put it, but I knowed him long an' well. In de fust place he was honest. All de money in Detroit would'n't hev bin a temptashun to him. In de next place, he was forgivin' and conscienshus; if people wronged him he would excuse 'em an' forgive 'em. If he wronged anybody he would go down on his knees to make it right.

"Dis ole man paid his honest debts. To him a debt was as sacred as holy writ. He had kind words fur all. Neber was a man so bad dat de ole man could not say sunthin' good of him. He respected de law; he upheld all dat was moral and virchus; he was widout envy.

"An' as de April sun sunk low in de heavens, dis ole man's time had come. He said good-bye to de world in a whisper, an' he was not afraid. De settin' sun poured its last beams of glory frew do winder over his ole back, and it lighted up wid sich radiance dat we stood dar and held our brefs. It was de eand of a man who called no man his pastor, an' took no church for his guide, but when de las' minit cum, de joys of heaven were so plainly seen in his face dat we shouted fur glory.

"An' so he died, an' sich was de eand of what de world calls a sinner. We has got among us heah three score church members an' prayin' men. Ize wonderin how many of 'em will sink away to rest as calmly and confidently as dat ole man whose name neber appeared on a church roll.

"Ize bin wonderin' if we doan' pray too much, an' hang-off about our debts too long; if we doan' sing wid so much zeal dat we haven' got 'nuff left to speak kindly of our nayburs; if we hain't so snah of our own salvashun dat we doan' keer about anybody else.

"Let us look into dis an' find whar' we stand. Dar'am religun and religun. De sort dat sends a member of dis club down on his knees at de Thursday evenin' pray'r meetin', an' allows him to walk off wid some one's umbrella heah on Saturday night am de sort I want to keep shet of."

C. H. LEWIS (*Detroit Free Press.*)

A QUEER SCENE.

A STRANGE scene occurred some time ago in the parish church at Clignancourt, one of the shady suburbs of Paris. Several little girls were kneeling near the altar, preparing to make their first communion, which was being administered by the parish prior. As the celebrant came up to one of the children he suddenly stopped, and regarding her attentively for a few seconds, passed on without giving her the sacrament. The girl's mother and aunt, two powerful fishwives, seeing what had taken place, instantly left their seats, and going up to the cure, belabored him most unmercifully with their umbrellas!

Then the priest, taken aback by the violence and suddenness of the assault, fled for safety to the sacristy, or vestry, followed by the gorgeous boadle of the church, who tried to keep the excited umbrella-brandishing females back. But his interposition was vain, for the women, pushing him back as if he were mere carrion, dashed into the vestry and renewed their chastisement of the curé. They were joined by other women, who, having nothing about them which could be converted into weapons, actually took the long wax candles off the altar and hit the priest with them!

RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL.

PARSON Whangdoodle Baxter meets Jim Webster, one of his parishioners.

"I hopes dat yer are still walkin' in de narrer paff, Jeemes."

"I hope so too, parson."

"Does yer carry out de golden rule ob returnin' good for evil?"

"I has been returnin' good for evil, but I'se been losin' money at de bizuness. No later den last week I lost a dollar by dat foolishness."

"How so, Jeemes?"

"Gabe Snodgrass asked me ter change a dollar for him. I gib him two good silber half-dollars for a bad dollar bill. Dat was returnin' good for evil wid a vengeance."

"Jim Webster," said parson Baxter, looking over his specs, "I wants ter ask yer a few qeshions."

"All right, parson."

"Yer got de bad dollar bill las' week, didn't yer?"

"Yes, sah."

"Yer went to church las' Sunday, didn't yer?"

"Hey?"

"Yer heered me. Neodn't make out yer didn't hear me. I seod yer in church las' Sunday. I had my eye on yer. You was skylarking wid dat saddle collered niggah, Matildy Snowball. Yer was payin' no tenshun ter de gospel tidings. But dat's not de wusset reskility yer has been up ter."

"What does yer mean, parson?"

"Las' Sunday dar was a bad dollar bill in de hat, and, as Moses said unter Nathan, 'Dou art de man,' and yet yer have de gall to toll me dat yer am still in de narrer paff. Here's de bad dollar, and you jos' shell out a good one of yer don't wante be slammed on de groun' and wrapped aroun' a tree."

"But, parson Baxter—"

"Han' ober a good dollar for dis bad one. So; dat's right. Now you has been returnin' good for evil some more. You am still in der narrer paff. Good mawnin', Jeemes," and with a pleasant smile that seemed to meet behind his ears, parson Baxter passed on.

PRAYING FOR THE SINNER.

THE congregation of a church at Elk Rock was much shocked upon learning that their preacher had departed under most discreditable circumstances. On the following Sunday, it seemed to be the aim of nearly every one to hush up the scandal, and, under great restraint, many uninteresting conversations were held, merely to prove that the members of the church could arise above sensational gossip. Just before the services were closed, Brother Elijah P. Brookrod arose and said—

"Brethren and sisters, since we last met in this house something which seems to have cast a gloom over this congregation has occurred. We were all much attached to our minister; in fact we loved him, and I propose that we offer up a prayer for the wanderer."

A sensational wavo swept over the audience. Another brother arose, and, turning to Elijah P. Brookrod, said—

"I am astonished that you should desire this congregation to pray for our erring minister—you, above all others." "Why?" "Because he ran away with your wife." "Yes, I know," Elijah replied, "and that is the reason why I think that he will need our prayers."

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE PEOPLE.—The entire theory of the Church is antagonistic to any concentrated or consistent scheme for raising the earthly condition of the suffering masses.—William Rathbone Greg, *Enigmas of Life*, p. 20.

GOSPEL EVIDENCE.—The evidence of the miraculous birth must, from the nature of the case, be ultimately that of Mary herself, and it is nowhere said that she ever said anything about it. The only writer who professes to have been intimate with her, the author who calls himself John, does not mention it. The ascension, though mentioned in the Acts, is not mentioned at all in the gospels, except in what is regarded, on independent grounds, as a spurious edition to Mark.—Hon. Justice Stephen, in the *Nineteenth Century*, October 1887, p. 586.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Oo, ay," shouted a Newhaven fishwife triumphantly, "nae doot we can a' curse an' swear, cheat, tell lies, and drink whisky,—but thank God, we're a' believers!"

"Ah, my son," said the minister, "I'm glad to see you in the Sunday-school at last. Is this your first Sunday?" "Yes, sir."

"How do you like it?" "Oh, guess I kin stand it until after the school-treat."

Mrs. Ram is going to take a class at a Sunday-school. She told her niece, "I shall hear the children their cataplasms and instruct them in the three creeds, which, my dear, as the Bishop said in his sermon the other day, are the Epistlos' Creed, the Lyceum, and the Farinaceous Creed."—*Punch*.

The Boston *Transcript* believes the first mention of playing cards is found in the Bible, *i. e.*, "when Neb euchred Nezzar." An impression prevailed that it was when Satan played the douce in the garden of Eden—beat a pair, as it were. The last instance of card-playing will be when the Lord descends with a trump.

In Arkansas City there lives a sturdy six-year-old boy who has been repeatedly told by his mother that God watched his every action. This idea took deep hold on the boy's mind. One morning his little sister was playing with him out by the stable. "Say, Mamie," said he, "you go back to the house." "Don't want to." "Well, I want you to. It's bad enough to have God allus taggin' roun' after me 'thout havin' you along, too."

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 These Tracts are numbered, but the old heading, "Freethinker Tracts," has been omitted, so as not to frighten people. Number 8 consists of a selection from *Bible Contradictions*. The circulation of such leaflets wholesale will be very beneficial to the Freethought Movement, as they are all specially designed for the common reader.

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