

# THE FREETHINKER

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

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 242.



TWO ANOINTED ONES.

*And he came to the sheeppcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave. . . . Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily. . . . David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt . . . for he is the Lord's anointed.—1 SAMUEL XXIV., 3, 4, 5, 10.*

## CHRISTIAN IMPUDENCE.

SOME months ago we referred to a meeting in Hackney, at which an East-end black preacher undertook to show the superiority of Christianity over Freethought, and its competence to maintain itself in free and open discussion. After the learned discourse of the unchangeable Ethiopian, a charitable and veracious disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus moved a resolution to the effect that the Board of Works should be memorialised to put down the Freethought lectures in Victoria Park. This motion was cordially seconded by another devout admirer of fair-play, and was as cordially voted by the Ethiopian's audience. Since then the concoctors of this pious scheme have apparently been at work in their peculiar manner. A week or two ago we caught scent of them, and learned that they were procuring signatures, mostly female ones, in favor of their object. We now read the following paragraph in the London papers:

"BLASPHEMY IN THE PARKS.—A petition, signed by over 2,000 residents in the neighborhood of Victoria Park, will be presented to the Metropolitan Board of Works to-morrow, praying the Board to adopt such measures as will effectually put a stop to the blasphemous and obscene language used in the Park by certain men in propagating infidel doctrines, and stating that some of

the memorialists will be happy to attend by deputation, should the Board desire it."

Could anything be more impudent? Unable to argue Freethought out of the park, these champions of the faith as it is in Christ call for the assistance of the constable. They are perfectly sure Christianity is true, but they hate to hear it questioned; they know it is divinely founded on an eternal rock, yet they writhe with rage or apprehension when they see it attacked. God Almighty is their friend, yet they want a little help from the Board of Works.

Persecutors—for such are all who would silence their opponents—always have a strong dash of hypocrisy as well as cowardice. It is not surprising, therefore, that this precious memorial does not advance "blasphemy" as the only ground of objection to "infidel" lectures in the Park. "Obscenity" is coupled with it, and the Board of Works is asked to believe that those who speak from the Secular platform are in the habit of using indecent language. No greater, no more malicious falsehood was ever told. Probably the two thousand women and children who have signed the memorial take the vile allegation for gospel, but the promoters of the memorial must know it to be a downright lie. Who they are is no very profound secret. We shall endeavor to obtain a full list of their names, and we shall be very much surprised if it does not include more

than one person who has discoursed sweet music from the Christian Evidence Society's platform.

As a copy of this article will be sent to every member of the Board of Works, we think it right to speak plainly, and this is what we have to say. Should any scoundrel or fool, from any platform in any park, indulge in obscene language, let him be prosecuted under the existing law. There is no need to memorialise the Board of Works to do this, and if it is done by the police we venture to say the culprits will not be Freethinkers. They are more likely to be persons who have fed their minds on the filth of the Bible, its tales of fornication, adultery, incest, and outrage, to say nothing of the lascivious Song of Solomon and the beastly diatribes of Ezekiel.

Blasphemy, on the other hand, is a matter of opinion. How is the Board of Works to discriminate in such matters? Anyone who is aggrieved has his remedy. If his delicate ears are shocked by a criticism of his faith, which he deliberately stops to listen to, he can go to a magistrate and take out a summons against the offender. But if he has not the courage to confess himself a bigot, he has no right to throw the dirty work of persecution on the shoulders of a public body.

Any attempt to stop Freethought lectures in Victoria Park will be stoutly resisted. The London Secular Federation will do its duty, and we pledge ourselves to stand by it at all hazards. Piety shall not gag us because it cannot answer us, nor shall we slink away because it frowns and threatens. The prohibition of *all* lectures in the Park has at least an air of impartiality, though it would be an unwarrantable act in itself. But to allow some lectures and forbid others, to give policemen and park-keepers the power to decide what opinions shall have a public hearing, is a flagrant outrage on the equal rights of citizens. Such a course will raise a storm of opposition. Freethinkers will not tamely submit to such an insult, and such a deprivation of their rights. While Christians are allowed to speak in the Park, the privilege cannot be withheld from other bodies, and Freethinkers will assert their right now as they asserted it in darker and more perilous days. Should the Board of Works, as we scarcely imagine, attempt such a ridiculous *rôle* as that of a censor of religion, instead of looking after the drainage and street improvements, it will make itself the laughing-stock of wits and the scorn of honest men. Nor can it expect any measure of success. Directly it was foolish enough to prohibit Freethought meetings, Freethinkers would go to Victoria Park in their thousands, and the present writer would certainly take his part in defying the Board and testing its powers. Meanwhile we beg to remind Christians with an itch for persecution that they have invariably failed in their pious efforts to suppress Freethought. They simply advertise what they cannot extirpate. They have neither the harmlessness of doves nor the wisdom of serpents.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### CHRISTIAN ABSURDITIES.

THE absurdities of Pagan superstition are a source of wonderment to the Christian. The belief in oracles is frequently ridiculed as a superstition likely to lead to disaster. Yet the divinely-inspired Bible endorses this belief. The Urim and Thummin of the priest's breastplate were consulted as an oracle by the Jews. The prophets also performed a similar function. Belief in the efficacy of prayer is indeed as foolish, and, if really acted up to, would be as disastrous as the reliance upon oracles or magic, or any other heathen superstition. The belief in spirits, which may be said to be the root of all religious superstition, is fully endorsed in the Bible, and it would be difficult to find more ridiculous legends than those of the Christian God casting devils into swine, and being tempted by the Devil and carried by him to the pinnacle of a temple. What heathen miracles are more monstrous than those of the talking ass, the swimming iron axe, the prophet-swallowing whale, and the woman turned into salt? Did Apollonius of Tyana do anything so ridiculous as to turn from twelve to eighteen firkins of water into wine for guests well drunk, and to curse a fig tree for not bearing fruit out of season?

The absurdities of the belief in charms and fetishism are paralleled, not only by the brazen serpent which Moses was commanded to make, and which was worshipped until the time of Hezekiah, but by the belief that people could be cured by touching the hem of Christ's garments, and that the handkerchiefs and aprons of Paul cast out evil spirits (see Mark vi., 56; Acts xix., 12). What greater absurdity can be conceived than the practice of taking a wafer, or bread and wine, as the body and blood of a divine person?

It would be difficult indeed to discover, even in the records of barbarous and departed religions any more foolish and ridiculous doctrines than those which form the very substratum of the Christian faith. Collect the most fantastic notions of Paganism, add the wildest absurdities of savage superstitions, and you shall find nothing more intrinsically irrational and preposterous than can be found in the standard statements of Christianity.

What can be more absurd than the doctrine of the Trinity, as laid down in the Athanasian creed? Here deity is dissected into his or its component parts, and we are solemnly damned if we cannot believe that three are one. What can be more absurd than the notion that a father can beget a son, and that from the father and son a third may proceed, yet the father, son and third party are alike in having existed from all eternity? Christians say these are mysteries, but in theology *mystery* is a synonym for *absurdity*.

What can be more preposterous than the notion that God should be born of a woman, and one, too, engaged to a human spouse, be crucified by his own peculiar people, should die and be buried, descend into hell, and rise from the dead the third day—or indeed the second? What more monstrous than the doctrine that God, on account of Adam's sin, caused all mankind to be born utterly depraved and liable to everlasting life in unutterable torments in hell? What more shocking and absurd than the doctrine of the Church of England that works done before grace "have the nature of sin," and that those are to be accursed who "presume to say that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law, and the light of Nature. For holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved."

What can be more monstrous than the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, that God from eternity did foreordain or predestinate all the sins that were ever committed and all the suffering that was ever endured; that he foreordained the sin of Adam and the consequent torments of the greater portion of his descendants in eternal misery? What can be more absurd than that after letting ages pass away without making himself known except to some insignificant Jews, who were always turning away from him, God Almighty gave a second revelation to that people in the Greek language, over which Christians have disputed from that day till this? What more nonsensical than the idea that although Jesus was put to death *volens volens* for blasphemy, he nevertheless made an atonement with his blood? What more foolish and fantastic than the notion that blood is a remedy for sin; that God needs the punishment of an innocent being before he forgives mankind? What can be more irrational or immoral than the doctrine that men are justified and saved by faith alone, and that a death-bed repentance may annul a life of crime and entitle the penitent to unending felicity? What Pagan rites were more absurd than those of the Eucharist, where Christians profess "to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood"; and of Baptism, by which children are made to declare they become members of Christ, while their god-fathers and godmothers promise and vow that they shall "renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh"?

There is no end indeed to Christian absurdities, and perhaps the greatest of all is that men in the nineteenth century should profess to guide their lives by the unpractical precepts of a teacher who believed the world was coming to a speedy end, and who promised to personally wind up human affairs within the lifetime of his own generation.

J. M. WHEELER.

## ACID DROPS

LECTURES for "men only" are a capital dodge for getting audiences. The most indifferent spouter can draw a crowd with such a prurient bait. All the dirty-minded men in the district prick up their ears, loll their tongues, leer with their eyes, and with their pious noses smell smut from afar. Jesus Christ doesn't appear to have hit upon this plan, but

"John P. Robinson he  
Says they didn't know everything down in Judee."

VARLEY and Grattan Guinness are the chief hands at this elegant business. Both of them have been unscrupulous opponents of Mr. Bradlaugh. Both of them consider Atheists "unclean." We are glad of it. Their censure is praise; their abuse is a compliment.

SOME orthodox idiot, who writes anonymously in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, has the impudence to say that Matthew Arnold had one advantage over Rénan in being a moral man. Probably the writer, like so many more Englishmen, has been so nurtured on Puritanism and hypocrisy that he mistakes intellectual courage for personal lewdness. Rénan is well known to have led one of the chastest and purest of lives. His *Abbesse de Jouarre* is a work of imagination. To accuse him of immorality because of that frank and fearless treatment of a certain theme, is like calling Shakespeare immoral because he drew Cressida and Cleopatra. Cressida is only a commonplace wanton, it is true; but Shakespeare has lovingly lavished the wealth of his incomparable genius on the "serpent of old Nile."

"RENAN is not to be mentioned in the same breath with Matthew Arnold," says this writer. True, and it is the only true thing in his criticism. Arnold's religious criticism is superficial, and Rénan's goes to the bottom of the matter; Arnold was a dilettante, while Rénan is a profound scholar with a firm grasp of his subject; Arnold coquetted with the truth, while Rénan has made love in downright earnest.

THE Rev. J. N. Heale, Vicar of Orpington, seized a number of sheep-hoofs for extraordinary tithes, but afterwards returned them and seized a fruit van instead. But Mr. Wood, the owner, sued for his van, and the reverend distrainer now has to return it and pay all costs. He learns that clergymen must keep within the law, even in the matter of seizing people's goods to teach them charity and justice and honesty.

THE Rev. Luke Rivington has seceded to the Romish Church. *The Catholic Press* says: "The conversion is an important one, as Mr. Rivington was a man of light and leading among the Ritualists."

THE rib story is explained at last. Mr. William Sinclair, lecturing on Evolution at the Balloon Society, says that the gorilla has a rib more than man, and herein lies the solution of the matter. We presume Mrs. Eve Orang was made from the rib of a thirteen-ribbed brute, which accounts for the milk in the cocoanut and the monkey's face on the outside!

THE Grand Jury at Quebec have just found a true bill against the Salvation Army as a public nuisance.

THE Rev. Watkin Davies, a Monmouthshire vicar, was fined forty shillings for breaking off pieces of stone from ancient monuments in Westminster Abbey and pocketing them. He pleaded that he did not know he was doing any harm, and that he only took the pieces for relics. What would he have said to any mischievous boys that chipped off pieces of his church?

ELECTRICITY is to be used for ringing the bells and blowing the organ at St. John's Church, Taunton. Christianity and science don't seem to fit together very well, but perhaps electricity may be a modern form of the Holy Ghost.

THE Secular Publishing Company, of Ontario, Canada, has been denied letters patent because it publishes *Secular Thought*, which is "hostile to Christianity, and Christianity is a part of the law of the land."

THE Rev. David Alexander, a Congregational minister, being depressed at the loss of his situation, committed suicide by shooting himself in a field near Peckham. He leaves a widow and several children.

THE Rev. John Munro, of Eyemouth, has to pay £50 and costs for slandering his sexton.

AT Broxton, in Cheshire, Thomas Twiss, a Wesleyan preacher, was charged with embezzling £35. He was sentenced to one month's imprisonment.

SPURGEON, junior, packed off a deacon by his father's advice because among other things he didn't believe in hell. Nearly two hundred members of a Young Men's Bible Class, conducted by the deacon went with him, the vicar of Greenwich offering them

a meeting-place, which their own Nonconformist pastor refused except on terms of unconditional obedience in all things. Christianity is evidently a great source of love and harmony.

THE Rev. F. A. C. Lillingston, addressing the Clapham Y.M.C.A. on "The Ideal Young Man," said that this individual should take as his model the man Jesus Christ. Such a noodle would soon be popped into a lunatic asylum. Fancy him trying to work miracles, driving devils out of people into pigs, cursing and withering apple-trees because they have no fruit in January, addressing his mother as "woman," and asking her insolently, "What have I to do with thee?" driving people out of Westminster Abbey with a knotted scourge, announcing the speedy end of all things in a tremendous cataclysm, and being guilty of many other follies and extravagances.

THERE is, I find, a very unpleasant misunderstanding just now between the Y.M.C.A.'s at Aldersgate Street and Exeter Hall. The latter association has only been in existence for a few years, and yet the secretary advertised his recent annual meeting as the 44th anniversary! He also describes his association as the central or parent Society. Now the friends at Aldersgate Street will not stand this. Their association has, they say, been in existence for 44 years, and is really the parent institution, and they protest against the attempt of their fellow workers to "render an already difficult work more arduous." It is a painful thought that while these complicated distinctions are being laboriously arranged, young men are going to the Devil by thousands. Why not cease fighting one another and begin to fight the Devil?—*Christian Commonwealth*.

*Light*, whose title as a spiritist organ should rather be *Darkness*, takes the trouble to translate from the German a pseudo-scientific article on the disturbing effect of light in séances. When a dark lantern has suddenly been flashed on the mediums they have usually found it very disturbing indeed.

A WRITER in the same journal recently stated that Mrs. Guppy's flight through the air from Holloway to Lamb's Conduit Street was certified by seven witnesses, and he did not see how Christians could refuse to believe in this modern Venus travelling through the air when they read in the eighth chapter of Acts how the spirit caught up Philip and landed him at Azotus.

THE Roman Catholic Bishops, at the instigation of Cardinal Manning, are making an indignant protest against the Oaths Bill. Much good may it do them. The Anglican Bishops are equally in a fluster in opposition to the passing of the Bill legalising marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister. Although it has been repeatedly passed in the House of Commons, they will do their best to throw it out in the Lords.

"DOES Christianity Involve the Abolition of Poverty?" is the title of a lecture announced to be delivered by a clergyman at the Memorial Hall during the May Meetings. We always thought it said "Blessed be ye poor" and that the poor should never cease out of the land. If Christianity does involve the abolition of poverty, it has been a long while taking its task in hand, and its methods have been very peculiar.

A CERTAIN West-End member of the Lawyers' Prayer Meeting Society has five servants in his pious household, and out of consideration for their immortal souls, though with none for their mortal bodies, he makes them go to church twice every Sunday, besides attending prayers every morning and evening. The servants hate this enforced piety, but they are threatened with instant dismissal if they absent themselves even once from the gospel-grinding, God-begging, and psalm-singing.

CHRISTIAN veracity, said Herder, deserves to rank with Punic faith. Here is a fresh illustration. The *Church Evangelist* prints that old story about the anonymous nurse, who told an anonymous gentleman, who told an anonymous parson, that she saw Voltaire die, and that "not for all the wealth of Europe" would she see another infidel give up the ghost. But this pious journal gives the story a fresh turn by hinting that the old lady said this to a parson who is still living! Of course the *C. E.* does not print a P.S. to the effect that Voltaire has been dead considerably over a century.

THE Rev. Evan Rowland was charged at Hexham with fraudulently collecting alms. It was stated that he had received money from many persons "for the poor Welsh clergy who had not received their tithes." The accused denied that he had ever asserted that he was collecting for others than himself. The Chairman of the Petty Sessions, in discharging the prisoner for want of sufficient evidence, remarked, "You had better leave the district, or the next time there may be stronger evidence against you."

THE Rev. Thain Davidson laments that people are generally so imperfectly acquainted with the Bible. So do we. If they knew their book better, Christians would never fancy it endorsed teetotalism, anti-slavery and other movements which men like Mr. Davidson consider part of the Gospel.

JOHN CRAMPTON and three others have had to pay £1 10s. 6d. for the luxury of desecrating the Sabbath at Rothwell. They were running a show, and had taken a plot of ground, which was so soft that the waggons were sinking into it; so they wisely resolved to unload. This excited the wrath of a Wesleyan minister and a Church parson, and the culprits were brought before the beak, who taught them that, while Jesus Christ said they might drag an ox out of a ditch on the Sabbath, he never said anything about sinking waggons.

THE Russian authorities are repressing Lutheranism as well as Judaism. They have just deported Pastor Christoff, a Lutheran clergyman of the Baltic provinces, to Astrakan. The alleged offence is that he has spoken disrespectfully of the Government. If such a policy were carried out in England the greater part of the male population would have to be transported, for there are very few men that have not spoken disrespectfully of the government at some time or other. What is it that makes the difference between England and Russia in the question of liberty? Not Christianity, for Russia believes in it more than England. It is civilisation and the spirit of the people, and orthodox Christianity tries to take credit for a result which it has always tried to hinder.

ORTHODOX Christianity in England is not greatly superior to the tyrannical orthodoxy of Russian Christianity. In answer to a question in the House of Commons Mr. Matthews stated that an application for the assistance of the military at projected tithe distrains in Anglesey had been sanctioned by the Quarter Sessions on the ground that a determined resistance appeared likely. The Church has to call in the military to help it in seizing the goods of people who disbelieve in the Church and reject its ministrations. A beautiful spectacle. Plunder the people, kill them if they resist, and call the whole thing Christian love and doing as you would be done by. Plenty of cant and hypocrisy will sanctify any amount of robbery or bloodshed in the name of Christ.

IN Nevada city, Col., the exercises of the Salvation Army are classed as "shows," and the managers must take out a license.—*Truthseeker.*

THE Rev. Robert Blight, of Ferring, was summoned for being drunk and refusing to quit licensed premises. He was fined five pounds. One Sunday recently, it is said, the rev. gentleman was wheeled home from church in a barrow.

AT a Salvation Army meeting at Geneva, one of the principal speakers had his oratory rudely interrupted by the police, who arrested him on the charge of stealing wearing apparel.

THE threatened split in the Baptist body has been plastered up with a compromise between the particular Baptists and the Baptists who are not so particular, and who, from their giving way, seem evidently in a minority. The first two paragraphs of the Council's report, to which Mr. Spurgeon objected because they disclaimed creeds, were quietly suppressed. The next two paragraphs the Council adopted from Mr. Spurgeon's own amendment. The last sentence affirms the doctrine of eternal awards in the words of Matt. xxv., 46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment and the righteous into life eternal."

A FOOTNOTE to this passage as originally proposed by Dr. Clifford, the not very particular Baptist, declared that although some members might not understand the words "everlasting punishment" in the usual sense, the Union yet found no difficulty in working with them. To this Mr. Spurgeon had objected as leaving the door open to Purgatory and Universalism; it was accordingly amended to declare only "as a historical fact" that there have been members who, while rejecting the doctrines of Purgatory and Universalism, have not held the common interpretation of everlasting punishment. Altogether Mr. Spurgeon's party seem to have had it pretty much their own way, and hell-fire as well as tank water will, for some time to come, remain an essential portion of Baptist theology.

SAID a Christian to a Rabbi: "Don't you think that the early Jews were a most profligate race?" Rabbi: "I don't think they were more immoral than most other contemporary religionists. Why do you suppose they were?" Christian: "I judge by the large number of illegitimate children of that time." Rabbi: "Ah! now you mention it, I do remember a case of that kind. But why complain? Your ancestors made gods of both mother and bastard, and their posterity have worshipped them ever since."

THE *Midland Times*, of Rugby, has this wonderful heading weekly: "Roundabout Jottings—for God, the Queen, and the People." A good old Conservative print. What interest Jehovah should take in such frivolous things as "Roundabout Jottings" passeth comprehension; but again, God is offered first choice; what he doesn't care about he passes along to Her Majesty; and when she's finished the People take the rest. Good business!

A PROTESTANT contemporary illustrates the moral effect of the Roman Catholic form of Christianity by the case of a Neapolitan shepherd, who came in great anguish to his priest and exclaimed,

"Father, have mercy on a miserable sinner. It is the holy season of Lent; and while I was at work, some whey, squirting from the cheese-press, flew into my mouth, and, wretched man! I swallowed it. Free my distressed conscience by absolving me from my guilt." "Have you no other sins to confess?" said his spiritual guide. "No, I do not know that I have committed any other." "There are," said the priest, "many robberies and murders from time to time committed on your mountains, and I have reason to believe you are one of the persons concerned in them." "Yes," he replied, "I am; but these are never accounted a crime: it is a thing practised by us all, and there needs no confession on that account."

WHY will people write about things of which they are utterly ignorant. Here is Mr. George F. Underhill, in a pretentious little work entitled *Literary Epochs*, asserting that "Voltaire and his school preached atheism and democracy." This worthy asserts that the aim of Voltaire "was to destroy the whole fabric of society, without having any plan on which to reconstruct the building which he had destroyed," and that the *Histoire Philosophique* of the Abbé Raynal "is an ill assorted mixture of blasphemy and socialism." The force of ignorance cannot further go.

WE read in a Christian contemporary that

"Out of Christ, Almighty power  
Can do nothing but devour."

This is not very flattering to the Almighty Father, who is explained to be so "just and righteous" that he can only "devour" men for their offences unless they save themselves by relying on the sacrifice of Christ's body on the cross.

OF eight clergymen interviewed by the *Charleston News* as to the fate of heathens, four think they may be saved, and four that they are damned. Old Jahveh has the casting vote, and he goes in for dosing all unbelievers with fire and brimstone.

A FEW of the rascally reverends exposed last week are Rev. B Hill, of St. Albans, Vt., bigamy; Rev. Henry Baum, New York, grand larceny; Rev. Charles Millen, Brooklyn, gross immorality.—*Truthseeker.*

IN America the clergymen obtain free passes for railway travelling or in the case of long journeys, for reduced fares. The companies, however, publish a confidential memorandum, giving the names of those who are detected abusing the privilege and it appears that a good number of the sky-pilot fraternity do not scruple to lend, alter, and sell their permits.

THE *Rock* reviews a tract entitled "No Hope; or Future Punishment Eternal, and How to Escape and Obtain Eternal Life." The *Rock* strongly recommends the tract as a most stirring, trenchant and convincing defence of the Evangelical doctrine of eternal punishment. And yet many Christians are indignant when Freethinkers describe the atrocious doctrine as Christian. The fact, of course, is that the genuine Christian fervently upholds the comfortable doctrine, just as the more civilised kind of Christian fervently rejects it and then has to explain away the Bible texts as meaning anything but what they say.

OF what sex is the third person in the Trinity? A correspondent in the *Christian Commonwealth*, pointing out what he considers a "grossly dishonest piece of mistranslation," says: "This mistranslation has the curious result that, while in John xiv., 26, and xvi., 13—15, the alleged personal Holy Ghost is made to be masculine, in Matt. i., 20, the same Holy Ghost is by the most necessary implication made feminine, although, as every Greek scholar knows, the Holy Spirit of Scripture is really neuter." If Christians thus quarrel over the sex of the Holy Ghost, it is evident that mere Freethinkers with no Holy Ghost to help them to all truth can never decide the matter.

ANOTHER correspondent of the *C. C.* finds that Ahaz was 36 when he died (2 Chron. xxviii., 1), and that, as his son Hezekiah was then 25 years of age (2 Chron. xxix., 1), the latter must have been born when his precocious father was only eleven years old. The editor gets his puzzled correspondent out of his difficulty by assuring him that the biblical statement in 2 Kings xvi., 2, that Ahaz was 20 when he ascended the throne "is a mistake." He says "the transcriber must have committed an error in copying, writing 20th, where he should have written 25th." But the same statement is also made in 2 Chron. xxviii., 1, so that in each case the transcriber must have made the same error. This is a remarkable coincidence, to say the least of it. Besides, if mistakes like this occur in the Bible, what confidence can Christians feel in its accuracy? If numbers go wrong, why not words also?

CHRISTIANS tell a tale of a youth who once struck a Quaker on the cheek, fondly thinking that the latter would turn the other cheek to receive a second blow. The Quaker, however, knocked his assailant down, who thereupon told him that the Bible bade him turn the other cheek. "It also says," promptly retorted the religious pugilist, "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you again." If this were the genuine sense of the text it would only show how contradictory the scriptural instructions are.

## MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Saturday, April 28, Co-operative Hall, Chester-le-Street, at 7, "The Cooling of Hell."

Sunday, April 29, Free Library, South Shields, at 11, "The Tory Hell in Ireland." At 3, "Was Shakespeare a Christian?" At 7, "After Death—What?"

Monday, April 30, Cleveland Hall, Middlesboro', at 8, "After Death—What?"

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.

R. B.—A paper entitled the *National Reformer* was started in Nov. 1844 by J. Bronterre O'Brien. It was edited from the Isle of Man and had, we believe, but a short existence.

W. S.—When you hear a Christian tell a yarn about Ingersoll, you should study his face; after that you will always know a liar at sight. That Ingersoll refused to attend his father's funeral, is not even *ben trovato*. Over in America, where Ingersoll's kindness is a proverb, such a lie would not live five minutes.

H. H.—We have sent you the *Freidenker*. Mr. Forder will supply you with the Secular Burial Service, and give you all the information you require. We have seen "Present Day Tracts," and several of the essays have been reviewed in our columns.

A. WOOD.—Too long, and some of the lines are defective. Verse is nothing unless it is terse and pointed.

MOUNTAINEER.—Of course you are at liberty to believe in a Creator, but we do not, for the simple reason that we know nothing of creation. Sorry to hear your neighbors are so bigoted.

H. RICHARDSON.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

ROBERT HARVEY.—The main contradiction is that Christ said the cock should not crow till Peter had denied him thrice, and Mark shows that the cock crew long before the three denials had taken place. To turn this into a reference to a particular period of the night "known by the name of cock-crow" is a mere device of foolish or unscrupulous commentators. If they wish to remove the contradiction they must alter the words of the Bible, in which case of course, the contradiction will cease to exist. A further contradiction is that Mark makes Jesus use different words, and say that Peter shall deny him thrice before the cock crows twice. The contradictions in the accounts of Jesus before the priests and before Pilate are that Matthew always represents Jesus as silent, while John is not so foolish and always represents Jesus as replying, and sometimes giving rather lengthy answers. It is easy for commentators to say that Matthew describes a different set of examinations or trials from those described by John, and hence the total difference in the behavior of Jesus. But such a supposition is not reasonable. The only answer given by Jesus, according to Matthew, is the brief one to Pilate, "Thou sayest." You are far from correct in urging that this is the same as either of our quotations from John. Buchner's *Force and Matter* is published by Trübner, price 7s. 6d. It is a very able book.

CYMRU.—The *Mistakes of Moses* we publish is a book, and the only book Ingersoll has ever written. The *Mistakes of Moses* issued by the Freethought Publishing Co. is a lecture, about a fourth the size of the larger work. The two are quite distinct. Thanks for the report, which we notice elsewhere. Of course we are pleased to hear that our own utterances directed you to Freethought.

R. S. SEAGO.—We are obliged for the report. The South Londoners did well to give the Bishop a treat.

J. T. (Newcastle).—Thanks for the cuttings. Pleased to hear you think the *Freethinker* "improves with time" and that "the sketches this year have been splendid." We trust our readers will introduce this journal to their friends as often as possible. That is the best method of advertising when a paper has any merit.

S. C. DE GRUCHY.—When you send us another big packet of advice, please pay sufficient postage. We never had any advice worth paying for, and yours is the most imbecile we have received for years.

HARRY RICHARDSON, 12 Rutland Street, Brompton, asks if any readers have Freethought literature to give away for distribution. (2) We have not seen *Young Folks' Paper*, but have read of an exposure of Madame Blavatsky's secret shrine in India. (3) *Iconoclast* signifies *image-breaker*. It was first applied to the Greek reformers of the eighth century.

SANCHO PANZA.—Yes, we have D'Alembert's volume on the Jesuits. The subject will be dealt with in *Crimes of Christianity*. Las Casas did recommend negroes as slaves instead of the Indians, but he regretted it afterwards.

FARNHAM.—Anonymous letters go into the waste basket unread.

J. N. BROWN.—Victor Hugo may be called a Pantheist. He believed in a soul of the universe, but in no form of theology. He ridicules every Christian dogma in *Religion et les Religions*.

GERMAN FREETHINKER.—Thanks for your good wishes.

G. COLLINS.—Your letter to the Bishop is quite fair. We presume he has not answered.

W. TEMPLE.—The London Secular Federation could do far more work if it were better supported financially.

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.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—South Wales Daily News—Independent Pulpit—Liverpool Daily Post—Lucifer—Le Journal du Peuple—La Nation—Justice—Liberator—Thinker—Volapük Journal—Radical—Neues Freireligiöses Sonntags-Blatt—Open Court—Freethought—Truthseeker—Boston Investigator—Ironclad Age—Workington Free Press—Western Figaro—West Sussex Gazette.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. BRADLAUGH'S losses in the Peters' case, to the tune of £500, were made up in one evening by his sympathisers in the House of Commons. Evidently the "chucked out" one has changed the opinion of many people about himself. "Bradlaugh" was once a monster, but now he is "a fine fellow." The monster hasn't changed a bit, however; the prejudiced people have simply found out their mistake. They'll bury "Bradlaugh" in Westminster Abbey at the finish, see if they don't!

HAD Peters been Saint Peter, the jury could scarcely have taken a more favorable view of his claims. Mr. Bradlaugh said he had received a cheque from Lord Salisbury, and for this awful libel on his character the jury gave him £300 damages, or about three years' honest income. Two or three more libel suits will enable Peters to retire from work altogether, or to follow the congenial occupation of landlord in a Tory public-house.

LORD SALISBURY ought to bring an action against that jury. Their verdict implies that it is a serious aspersion on a man's character to say he has any dealings with the Lord of Hatfield. One would think the Marquis was a pimp, a blackleg, or a receiver of stolen goods. It is really too bad to malign Lord Salisbury in this manner. The jury, being all hot Radicals, were naturally anxious to show their dislike of a Tory premier, but they might have chosen a less reprehensible method of doing it.

LIVERPOOL gave Mr. Foote a crowded audience last Sunday evening, when he lectured on "After Death—What?" There were two curious opponents, and the discussion was more amusing than edifying. We hear that a Branch of the N. S. S. is being formed at Bootle, and we wish it every success. Something also should be done at Birkenhead. The Liverpool Branch holds its annual meeting to-night (April 29). A good attendance is desired.

MR. FOOTE'S lecture on "Darwin on God" drew a good audience at Hanley on Monday evening. We hope the hall of the Mechanics' Institute will be available for further Freethought lectures. Mr. Irving made a capital chairman and the audience listened with rapt attention. There was, however, no discussion worth speaking of. The local infidel-slayer did not put in an appearance, and Mr. Foote still survives.

THE Leeds' Freethinkers should make a fresh effort to organise themselves into a strong body. For this purpose a meeting will be held at Mr. Fisher's, 1 Coburg Terrace, on Wednesday, May 2, at 8 o'clock. We hear there is a prospect of obtaining the use of a suitable hall.

MR. FOOTE lectures at Middlesborough, in the Cleveland Hall, on Monday evening. The subject is "After Death—What?" Freethought has been very quiet in Middlesborough for some time, and it is hoped this lecture will cause a revival.

THE Bishop of Rochester got a fine wiggling the other evening. In an evil moment he consented to patronise Mr. Rossiter's show in the Camberwell Road, and Secularists were invited to come and state why the people don't go to church. They went. Messrs. Ellis, Mayne, Heaford and Wood, enlightened the Bishop's darkness, and one lady gave him a bit of her mind. His lordship seems to have borne the infliction with good temper, for his salary is still safe; but we fancy he will not be caught by the astute little Fine Art Gallery man a second time. Once bit—but the proverb is somewhat musty.

A SOUTH London paper has the impudence to say that the language of some of the controversialists was "unfit for ears polite—especially for ears feminine." If the writer means that indecent language was used, he is one of those people who will have their portion in the lake that burneth with brimstone and fire.

NEXT Friday (May 4) another "social evening," under the auspices of the London Secular Federation, will take place at the Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road. Commence at 8.30 and close at 1. Tickets can be had at the Hall, of the secretary of any London Branch, or of G. Standing, 8 Finsbury Street, E.C. Only Freethinkers and their personal friends are welcome.

ELIZA LYNN LINTON was one of the twelve children of the vicar of Crosthwaite in the lake region. There she was accustomed to see Robert Southey, whom, she says, she remembers "with his eagle's beak and small, retreating chin, spare frame and dark eyes full of fire. He preferred long, solitary rambles to our primitive society. But Harriet, Duchess of St. Albans

was more sociable, and when journeying northward used to invite the vicar to spend the evening with her at the Royal Oak. My father's fellow-parsons were a queer lot. Some drank and fought in public-houses, others were little better than honest day-laborers, and it was not uncommon to hear the officiating clergyman exclaim, when his Sunday ministrations were over, "Gosh! that job's jobbed!" Mrs. Liuton has for years been a pronounced Freethinker.

THE *Thinker*, of Madras, which, owing to the illness of Mr. Mudaliar, has been rather irregular in its appearance, reaches us again as usual. The number before us contains an extract from Ingersoll's *Defence of Freethought*, and reprints from this journal Mr. Foote's article on "Huxley's Warning."

THE Sunday organ recitals at the People's Palace are well attended, and as many as 1,700 readers avail themselves of the library which is only open in the afternoon and evening.

THE Newcastle *Weekly Chronicle* has given room for notes and queries on the Bible and Teetotalism. Mr. J. Rouse, of London, puts in a sensible and effective letter from the Freethought point of view.

In a paper read before a meeting of Presbyterian preachers at Indianapolis, the Rev. Dr. McLeod said: "The plain truth, and, to a Christian, the sad truth, is that, viewing the debate between Dr. Field and Colonel Ingersoll simply as a debate, the infidel has outwitted and outargued the Christian at almost every point." Dr. McLeod thinks little of the excessive praise of the religious press and the many gushing letters which Dr. Field received complimenting him upon his great achievements. He says, "Gush is very cheap," and "It is no new thing under the sun for every religious paper to praise as well as to censure some persons and things beyond measure."

COLONEL INGERSOLL is taking a holiday in California. He will have pressing inducements to lecture in the Golden West.

#### CHRIST'S PARABLES.—VII.

##### THE TEN POUNDS (Luke xix., 11—27).

THIS parable is in substance the same as that of the Talents, but there are important differences. I must leave commentators to explain why Matthew and Luke should give two such different versions of the same parable.

In Luke's version the nobleman, before departing to receive a kingdom, gives his ten servants a pound each, and says, "Occupy till I come." This is, perhaps, better than giving no instructions whatever, as was the case in the parable of the Talents; but the instructions are still vague. This vagueness or silence is a common fault in God's instructions to us. Theologians quarrel as to what his instructions are, and thoughtful people frequently come to the conclusion that he can have given none at all. Why does not God give us plain and indubitable sailing orders? Why did not the lord in the parable give some definite and intelligible directions? Seeing that God will hold us responsible for carrying out his wishes, would it not be as well to express them clearly rather than leave them to be guessed at?

On the lord's return he gives ten cities of his new kingdom to a servant who has made ten pounds by trading, and five cities to another who has made five pounds. To another servant who had laid up his pound in a napkin, and now brings it to his master without any increase in the amount, he addresses words of utter condemnation—not, however, for disobedience; for the instructions were evidently far too vague to found such a charge upon. The charge is the more convenient and elastic one of wickedness. The man is a "wicked" servant, although he faithfully guarded his master's money and safely restored it.

The lord acknowledges that his servant is right in supposing him to be an austere man, who takes up that which he has not laid down, and reaps that which he did not sow. As the conduct and character of this nobleman represents the conduct and character of God, God must be an unjust and unreasonable being.

The motive appealed to by the parable is that of self-interest. We are to employ our gifts in the service of God in order to receive cities in heaven in return. Not sympathy, not the social instincts of brotherhood and of justice, are the foundation of the morality of the "kingdom of heaven," but pure selfishness. This kind of teaching, even when directed to sound moral ends, defeats its own purpose. It tries to make people unselfish by promising substantial rewards. It thus trains them in selfishness, while calling that selfishness

by pretty names. And the Secularist perceives, moreover, that the promises are false promises! The whole system is merely one of belief. Christ deludes people into morality.

The parable is superior to that of the Talents in one respect. While the money is taken from the unprofitable servant in each case and given to the richest, the servant in the parable of the Ten Pounds is not cast forth into outer darkness and misery; but this may be a mere omission of a detail which was regarded as self-evident.

The final lesson of the two parables, or versions, is that "unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him." Such will be God's conduct towards us at the end of the world. Christian benevolence is not supposed to act on this principle on earth. The man with two cloaks is to give to him that hath none. The rich Christian is to sell all he has and give to the poor. God will reverse this process where moral matters are concerned, as if moral needs were not equally pressing with physical needs. Why proceed to extravagant extremes in either case? Why not take reasonable care of the poor on reasonable principles which appear to have been undreamt of by Christ? And why should not God similarly study the moral paupers or invalids who meet him on the Judgment Day? Why take the crutch from the cripple and the staff from the blind? Why strip the half-naked to give to him who already has two cloaks and to spare? Why should God take from poor wretches their little all because they have no more? Why should he give it to those who already have plenty? Is it not possible for God to act reasonably and considerately and justly? As we are to imitate him and to regard his ways as perfect, his conduct should be thoroughly good and wise, and should be so depicted in parables put forth by his Son to instruct our ignorance and guide our child-like credulity into paths of sense and justice.

The parable of the Ten Pounds is complicated with an extraneous episode. The citizens sent a message after the nobleman declaring that they would not have "this man" to reign over them. Nothing further appears to occur till the nobleman on his return to power exclaims, "But these mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." This is how Christ depicts his own conduct—God's conduct—towards those who reject him. He will have them slain before his eyes. And we are to imitate Christ and God, who are perfect. We are to love our enemies, and to slay them before our eyes when we attain fulness of power. Where is the consistency of Christ's teaching and of Christ's example?

All who say they will not have Christ to reign over them are to be massacred. God is like a pitiless Eastern despot, absolute in his wrath and implacable in his revenge. All Atheists, unbelievers, Jews, Mohammedans, Buddhists, etc., are to be slaughtered by Christ, the rejected monarch of the universe. This is the picture and pattern of tolerance and magnanimity and love displayed by God in his picture of himself. And yet Christians think that parables which include such horrible and debasing pictures of their God are perfect.

W. P. BALL.

THE rector of Merthyr has dismissed a young lady from the church choir for daring to sing at a concert in connection with the Baptists. Hath Christ any fellowship with Belial?

A MINISTER on his road to Chingford had to ask the way of two lads who were playing at pitch and toss by the roadside. Thinking to improve the opportunity, he asked them whether they thought that was the way to get to heaven. Whereto one of the culprits replied, "Ga'an, you don't know the road to heaven; why, you can't even find your way to Chingford."

A sporting journal has unearthed this marvellous advertisement from a country newspaper:—"Wanted, an able-bodied man at country rectory, willing to make himself generally useful, must have thorough knowledge of chickens, pigs, and understand milking; must be able to drive horses, and groom them; ring the church bells, dig graves, be cheerful mourner, and not object to carry coffin; where parlor maid is kept."

A HUMOROUS old man fell in with an ignorant and rather impertinent young minister, who proceeded to inform the old gentleman in very positive terms that he would never reach heaven unless he was born again; and added, "I have experienced that change, and now feel no anxiety." "And have you been born again?" said his companion, musingly. "Yes, I trust I have." "Well," said the gentleman, eyeing him attentively, "I don't think it would hurt you, young man, to be born once more."

BEFORE THE DREADED WORKHOUSE.

"Lasciate ogni speranza voi che entrate."—DANTE.

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!

Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.

Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now."—Tennyson.

(Matthew xxv. 11—13).

Too late! the clock struck twelve. We've tramped all day  
In search of work. My wife fainted away.  
The workhouse shut! We cannot enter now.

No crust have we, no shelter this cold morn.  
Poor baby! 'Tis a fortnight she was born—  
The workhouse shut! We cannot enter now.

No hope, alas! No help in our sad plight.  
Footsteps approach; I see the watchman's light.  
"Too late! Move on! You cannot enter now."

How long shall honest folk endure this pain?  
There cannot be a God. We pray in vain.  
"Move on, I say! You cannot enter now."

Too late! With bleeding hearts they turned away.  
At daybreak, in the snow, three corpses lay;  
Oh, praise the Lord from whom all blessings flow.

CHAS. KROLL LAFORTE.

HOW CHRISTIANITY IS SPREAD IN CHINA.

In *Faithful Words* a missionary narrates his experiences in China. One part of his journeying he does in a sedan chair carried by coolies. This is an improvement on Christ's method of walking, but civilised missionaries are naturally more luxurious than their master. At another time he hires a boatman to row on continuously for two days and a night, in order that he may reach a certain city by Sunday. As the man finds that he has overestimated his powers and keeps falling asleep at his work the missionary party kindly allow him to take two hours' rest. The lazy missionaries on board the boat never dreamed of helping the man by taking a turn at the oars themselves, but when the wind blew so strongly against them that the boatman couldn't make any headway at all, they helped in a more efficacious way. They told the man that they agreed with him there was little prospect of reaching the town by Sunday, and that therefore they were going to ask their God to change the wind. They assured him that if he watched he would see that the Christian God was one who heard prayer. The narrator says: "This was a bold thing to say, but it was done in faith. The boatman made reply that his gods could not change the wind. Then we said our God is the living God, and can do as He pleases."

The missionaries prayed accordingly, and within a quarter of an hour the wind suddenly changed and began blowing in the opposite direction. "M. T.", it seems, was "so confident of the answer coming that he had actually fallen asleep," and had to be awakened to direct the boatman's attention "to the answer our gracious God had given us." Then the missionaries prayed to the Lord to guide them straight to their destination, and he did so almost miraculously. Next day they miss their medicine chest. Their "previous experience of God's faithfulness" made them believe that it would be restored in answer to their special prayers for its recovery. Next morning the first thing they saw was their medicine chest. The missionary says: "The honesty of this boatman in bringing back our missing property under such circumstances was, I think, more remarkable than the answers to prayer about the wind. . . . What kind of impression had been made upon his mind by the striking evidence he had received of the power of our God, in changing the course of the wind in our favor, we could not tell, but this fact probably had something to do with the speedy delivery of the missing medicine chest."

Even the honesty of the poor heathen Chinese has to be credited to Christian prayer and a Christian miracle. The missionary never thinks of acknowledging that honesty is a heathen virtue, and he never thinks of the fraudulent pretences of miracle with which he is endeavoring to delude the Chinese. He is winning ignorant people over to the belief that they can control the wind by prayer, and such devotees as he can thus gain he will count as souls saved from the burning. What is the worth of such superstition? The heathen honesty and hard work of the poor boatman contrast very favorably and honorably with the lazy superstition and fraud and stupid credulity of the servants of Christ.

INFIDEL PHILANTHROPISTS.

TAUNTINGLY the Church inquires, "What have Infidels ever done for charity?" Stephen Girard, an Infidel, left a fortune of six millions [of dollars] to found an orphan's college in Philadelphia; James Lick, an Infidel, gave more than a million for scientific and benevolent purposes; James Smithson, an unbeliever, left half a million to found the Smithsonian Institute at Washington; Henry Seybert, a Spiritualist, who died in Pennsylvania the other day, gave half a million to science and charity; Peter Brigham, an Infidel, gave three millions for the purpose of establishing hospitals for the sick poor of Boston; John Redmon, an Infidel, gave four hundred thousand dollars to support free beds in the hospitals of Boston; W. Maclure, an Infidel, gave half a million dollars to aid the working men of Indiana; Robert Owen, an Infidel, devoted fifty years of his life and expended five hundred thousand dollars in promoting the interests of the poor and laboring classes.—*Komsburg's False Claims of Christianity.*

IDENTITY.—"If it were possible for the mind's identity to be continued after death with a different body, it would not constitute the same person, as our identity or personality is made up of our body and mind."—CHARLES BRAY.

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.

THE Rev. H. Hodder has been lecturing at Pontypool on "Bible Anticipations of Modern Science." He believes he gives "solid and impregnable foundations" for faith by showing that Scripture has anticipated some of the most important discoveries of modern science. The first of these "remarkable Scriptural anticipations" is that at the creation God gathered the waters into *one place* and called them seas. The unity of the waters, it seems, was an "entirely novel truth" which Moses could not possibly have arrived at except by divine inspiration. Geographical discovery now shows that all the "oceans" are joined together as one single mass of water. "This wonderful fore-knowledge of a science then hidden in the womb of futurity" is supposed to make it impossible to doubt the inspiration of the Bible! But the waters are scattered about the face of the earth, and they do not all intercommunicate. The Caspian Sea and the Sea of Aral, and the Dead Sea, do not communicate, for instance, with any other seas or oceans. The vast inland lakes of North America and Central Africa only communicate with the oceans by rivers which carry off their superfluous waters. The mind which can see that God's gathering of the waters into a separate place from the dry land meant that the great oceans joined each other, will be capable of finding proofs of Scripture anywhere. To him the Arctic Zone and the Antarctic are "one place." Lake Superior and the Victoria Nyanza, and the Caspian Sea and the Pacific Ocean are "one place." And if necessity arose he would see that Europe and America are one place, because they are joined together by the land under the bottom of the ocean.

The next wonderful anticipation of scientific discovery is that Joshua commanded both the sun and the moon to stop. This association of the two great heavenly bodies was "a precaution which would never have been thought of" by an uninspired writer. The apparent stoppage of the two is exactly what would have occurred on the cessation of the earth's rotation. Thus Joshua manifestly anticipated a "modern revelation of astronomical science." Can anything be more puerile than such attempts at defending the inspiration of God's word?

The third "extraordinary" anticipation of science is that Isaiah xl, 22, makes the world a globe, and so does not adopt "the revolting idea of the ancient Hindoos" that "our earth is flat and triangular, borne on the heads of countless elephants." But the Bible *does* adopt the ancient Jewish idea, which ought to be equally revolting, of the earth being flat and four-cornered and being supported on pillars. The text mentioned by the reverend imbecile says nothing of a globe; it says: "It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers." Further examples of the rubbish that passes muster as Christian argument are needless. By the three examples given our readers can judge what twaddle the rest must be. Yet the reverend defender of the faith is so proud of his lecture that he has it printed at full length in the *Pontypool Free Press*.

REVIEWS.

*The Volapük Journal*. Vol. I., No. 1. May.—Volapük claims to be making headway as an international language. From what we see of it in this journal, we should think there is little likelihood of its ever superseding English.

*Lucifer*. April 15.—This theosophic monthly opens with an article on "What Good has Theosophy Done in India?" in which is mentioned the case of the Rev. C. W. Leadbeater, who resigned Anglicanism to embrace Buddhism. The principal paper is on The Buddhist Doctrine of the Western Heaven, and there is a trenchant criticism of Sir Monier Williams's recent lectures on Buddhism.

PROFANE JOKES.

Edward (fishingly): "I think of going to the Cannibal Islands as a missionary, Cicely, but you have only to say one little word to bid me stay, darling." Cicely (after a moment's thought): "And did the horrid things eat the last missionary, Edward?" Edward (eagerly): "Yes, Cicely, yes; they left nothing but the bones." Cicely: "Oh, how exciting! Yes, I think that it is your duty to go, Edward."

A Scotch parson in the Great Rebellion said in his prayer, "Lord bless the Grand Council, the Parliament, and grant they may all hang together." A dissident standing by loudly muttered, "Amen, with all my heart, and the sooner the better." "I don't mean as that fellow means," continued the parson, "but pray that they may all hang together in accord and concord." "Never mind the cord," returned the dissenter, "so that it is strong."

PERSONAL AND POINTED.—It is said that Mr. Spurgeon is in the habit of testing the abilities of the more promising of the students of his college by obliging them to go up into the pulpit with a sealed envelope in their hands, containing the text of their address. On one of these occasions a student, on opening the paper found the subject set, "Apply the story of Zaccheus to your own personal qualifications and call." And he delivered himself in the following way:—"My brethren, the subject on which I have to address you to-day is a comparison between Zaccheus and my own qualifications. Well, the first thing we read of about Zaccheus was that he was of small stature, and I never felt so small as I do now. In the second place, we read that he was up a tree, which is very much my position now. Thirdly, we read that Zaccheus 'made haste to come down,' in which I joyfully follow his example."

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