

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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JEHOVAH—FIRST TRUMPET.

And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. . . . And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.—EXODUS XIX., 18, 19.

HOLY LIQUOR.

"USE a little wine for thy stomach's sake," quoth Saint Paul to Timothy. This is a hard nut for Gospel Temperance people to crack, but they bite at it, even at the risk of breaking their teeth. "Ah," said one of them, "you read it wrongly; Paul meant Timothy to use the wine as a lotion; he was to rub it in." The argument was smart and plausible, but it was soon demolished. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing. The rest of the verse settled this gentleman. "Drink no longer water," Paul says before recommending the juice of the grape.

Another difficulty to Christian teetotallers is the communion cup. Some of them pretend that the wine Jesus drank, and in fact all the wine praised in the Bible, was unfermented. But this is the veriest nonsense; a mere subterfuge of puzzled pietists. These jesuitical zealots urge that the communion should be administered in pure grape-juice, though they do not tell us how it is to be obtained when grapes are out of season. They contend (and the contention may be sound) that reformed drunkards are in danger of relapse by partaking of the Blessed Sacrament. But this objection to Communion Port rouses the ire of our pious contemporary the *Church Times*. "With the mixed chalice barely tasted," it replies, "and partaken of

with devout prayer and kneeling, it is impossible to admit so shocking an idea as that the Cup of Salvation can lead to sin." At any rate, the *C. T.* says, there is no danger in the Church of England, though there may be among Dissenters, who are encouraged to take a big swill at the flagon. Evidently the *C. T.* fancies Dissenters are like the nigger, who, on being introduced to the Blood of Christ for the first time, poured all the sacred fluid down his capacious throat, and exclaimed, "Fill 'im up agin, massa; me lub Jesus."

Communion Port is notoriously bad, and a man must be a "lushington" or a savage to relish it. But there seems a disposition to improve the brand. A Plymouth firm of dealers in what the Gospel Temperance folk call "the Devil in solution" is actually advertising *Vino Sacro* (Holy Wine) at the fabulous price of three-and-sixpence a bottle. Surely the liquor must be drinkable at that figure. It should make Saint Peter's lips water. Paul would advise Timothy to stock his cellar before the supply was exhausted. Had the last supper been washed down with this brand, two or three of the apostles might have dropped under the table. Judas, at least, might have been too drunk to sell his master. The Crucifixion, in that case, might not have come off. There would then have been no Atonement, and the few Christians who have contrived to get saved on the

orthodox plan would now be seated round the fire in Hades.

Messrs. Hicks and Co.'s *Vino Sacro* boasts a good testimonial; not the best, but still good. Apparently no English bishop has been found to give the article a lift, but the firm has bagged an ex-colonial. This gentleman was formerly Bishop of Honolulu, and is now Vicar of Croxhall. The Rev. J. N. Staley is a Doctor of Divinity. Being full of the Holy Ghost, from his hair to his toe-nails, he should be an excellent judge of holy tippie. "I am glad to testify," he writes, "to the excellence of *Vino Sacro*, as in every essential particular adapted to all sacred purposes. I now use no other." This is so far satisfactory. Wine which pleases a Doctor of Divinity should delight meaner mortals. Laymen, as well as clericals, will be tempted to buy this Plymouth Relish. Messrs. Hicks and Co. have "struck ile."

For our part, however, we should like Dr. Staley to be more explicit. We understand the sacred purpose of the Communion, probably better than he does; but what other "sacred purposes" is *Vino Sancto* adapted to? Does Dr. Staley find it good for his "stomach's sake," and does he mean that the liquor which comforts and refreshes a Doctor of Divinity fulfils a sacred function? There is, indeed, much to be said for this view. When an episcopal battery has charged a man with the Holy Ghost, the sacred spirit may be presumed to inhabit his whole system. Whether some of the Holy Ghost would vanish if the man lost a limb, or whether the portion which inspired the amputated member would retire into the remaining flesh, is a nice question that has never had the attention it deserves. But this is certain, the man harbors a large supply of the Paraclete, and spirits like liquor as well as able-bodied men. Scripture assures us (Judges ix., 13) that wine "cheereth God and man." Now the Holy Ghost is but a part of God, and must share his partiality for crusted port. Every parson who takes a drop too much has a capital excuse. "I'm not drunk," said the old toper, "my legs are drunk." So the well-soaked parson might exclaim "I'm not drunk, the Ghost is drunk." In fact, he might deny that he drank at all, and solemnly swear he took in liquor to "cheer" the Ghost. Parson Butterfield, who was so frequently brought before the beak, and is now we believe in an asylum for inebriates, had not studied this question with sufficient acuteness, or he might have cleared himself every time he was charged with being drunk and disorderly. Even now it is difficult to say whether Butterfield or the Paraclete is under medical treatment.

Unless report belies them, the old monks "cheered" themselves and all the Holy Spirit they had most plenteously. What a blasphemous wit they must have possessed to call a certain brand *Lachrymæ Christi*—the Tears of Christ! Perhaps the idea was, "Christ's tears are precious, and so is this choice wine. Let him weep and let us drink. *O la dive botelle!*" Yet it is curious that the monks of La Chartreuse, who grow the finest wine in Europe, are very abstemious. This, however, may be on the principle that cooks are poor eaters. There are many sons of God to make up for their deficiency.

Church of England parsons notoriously affect port. The gravity of their profession is alien to more volatile liquors. A sober, solemn sermon could scarcely be composed on hock or champagne, and sherry might give it an acid flavor. Port is solid and orthodox. A parson who drinks it may be a scholar, but never a heretic. Nor is he likely to be excessive as a wit. We would wager that Bishop South drank madeira.

But enough of this vinous subject. Dr. Staley will perhaps enlighten us as to his meaning. While he is preparing an explanation we have a word to Messrs. Hicks and Co. We are nearly as abstemious as a monk of La Chartreuse, but Christmas comes once a year, and a toothful mellow is the plum-pudding. Our taste is therefore unacknowledged, and we should be a good judge of *Vino Sacro*. Who knows, indeed, if the Holy Wine might not effect our conversion? Perhaps the advertisement that *Vino Sacro* had converted the editor of the *Freethinker* would be a better puff than Dr. Staley's testimonial. G. W. FOOTE.

A REPORT of the Seamen's Mission and Evangelisation Society winds up with the statement that in the year 1200 a tablet was found "containing the death warrant of our Lord Jesus." Of course the tablet is a forgery, examined in the *Freethinker*, July 3rd, 1887, but no doubt it serves to bring in the subscriptions.

CHRIST'S PARABLES.—XI.

THE SOWER (Matt. xiii., 2—23; Mark iv., 1—20; Luke viii., 4—15).

THIS parable is accompanied by Christ's private explanation of the reason why he addressed the "great multitudes" in parables. He did so in order that the multitude of eager listeners "might not understand" (Luke viii., 10). Surely a more remarkable reason could scarcely be given by a teacher or Savior of the multitude. He came from heaven with a grand message to all, and then deliberately delivered it in parables, so that the poor ignorant peasants might not perceive his meaning, "lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them" (Mark iv., 12). If Christ's parables were really as deceptive and as hard to understand as he thus represents them to be, they must have been imperfect in the first requisites of such stories, namely, in intelligibility and in suitability to the persons to whom the instruction is addressed. Christ's charge against his own parables is, however, a libel. The explanation of this foolish and unnecessary libel is that he or his reporters persisted in dragging in a bitterly satirical passage from Isaiah (vi., 9, 10), in which the angry prophet is told by God to say to the people: "Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." This message from God seemed so good an explanation of the general unbelief of the Jews and their scornful rejection of Christ's preachings, that Christian faith readily adopted it without perceiving the absurdity or wicked mockery of such a course of action in a great teacher whose professed mission was to save men and to set them a perfect example of sensible conduct and kindly feeling.

The parable of the Sower which was thus intended by Christ to prevent people understanding and being converted, is by no means a bad one if morality were its aim instead of religion. The Sower scatters good seed, and some of it falls on the roadway and is devoured by the fowls of the air, some falls among thorns, some falls on rocky ground, and the rest falls on good soil and bears good fruit. Applied to instruction or good example as the seed, the story would be a sound and useful one. But it is faith in the supernatural which is the seed sown, and not virtue or reason or wisdom or knowledge. The parable is theological rather than moral. The fowls of the air are the Devil, who cometh immediately and taketh away the gospel tidings from men's hearts. The withering of the plants on rocky ground is the decay of godliness under persecution. The thorns are the cares and desires of this world which "choke the Word" and render it unfruitful. The seed on good soil reproduces itself in kind abundantly and furnishes a splendid crop of godliness or supernaturalism. Of course modern Christians assume that the original seed of the Word, or the Gospel, produces a crop of all manner of worldly virtues and good actions. If this was really the intention of the parable, it should be set forth. The religious corn-stalk would then bear oranges and figs and apples and roses and lilies. Or if this were too extravagant or unnatural a representation of the alleged lesson, still Christ might well have explained that the good fruit was secular morality or goodness of all kinds, and that that was the great lesson he intended to inculcate by the parable. Of course Christians thought that godliness brought forth all that was necessary, but it is perfectly evident that this was an exceedingly mistaken notion. The morality associated with Christianity is exceedingly imperfect and often exceedingly mischievous and immoral.

Seeing that the great Sower is Christ himself, and that all the minor sowers are helped and guided by the Holy Ghost, it is somewhat strange that so little skill is displayed in the sowing. Why do Christ and his inspired disciples waste so much seed-corn where it can come to nothing? Why do they not sow only on the good ground? And why does the great Savior keep a Devil to devour the good seed, and cherish thorns to choke it, and make barren places where it can only wither away?

Why does Jesus make so much fuss over explaining so simple a parable to his apostles? Were they indeed such fools as the Gospel accounts imply? And is it probable that the people even were so dull of comprehension that the parable only served to confound their meagre minds? Is there not a considerable element of falsehood in such

representations of the preternatural stupidity of everybody except the Jesus whom these dullards admired? The obvious explanation is treated as belonging to the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which Jesus will privately communicate to the apostles, but which is not given to the multitude to understand. Such childish fiction can only have arisen in inferior minds, and can only have remained acceptable to minds of a similar standard.

W. P. BALL.

ACID DROPS

THE Rev. C. L. Engstrom is delivering the Boyle lectures this year, and the *Echo* accuses him of "hastily gabbling." Engstrom pleads that he had an hour and a half's discourse to get through in forty minutes. But he believes in prayer; at least he says so at the Hall of Science. Why then didn't he ask God to shorten his lecture, lengthen the time, or give the congregation an extra dose of patience?

THROWING dice on the communion table doesn't look very pious, but until recently it was done every year at the parish church of St. Ives, Hunts. Dr. Robert Wilde, who died in 1678, left £50 to provide for the annual sport. The interest was to be expended on Bibles, which are raffled for by the boys and girls of the parish; and ten shillings was left for the vicar to preach a sermon on "the excellency, perfection, and divine authority of the Holy Scriptures." A few years ago the bishop interfered, the dicing was prohibited on the communion table, and the bones are now rattled on a special table at the chancel steps.

THE bishop seems rather precise. Dicing is a good old Bible practice. Casting lots, as it is called, was very common. Joshua found out Achan by that method; by it Jonah was discovered to be the cause of the tempest; and when a new apostle had to be substituted for Judas, the Holy Ghost was asked to decide the die, and "the lot fell upon Matthias."

MR. A. MACMILLAN, the publisher, has offered his house and grounds at Upper Tooting as a residence for the Suffragan Bishop of Southwark. Blessed be ye poor.

THE murderer Richardson, who was executed at Leeds, wrote a letter full of pious allusions to God. He is quite a superior kind of Christian murderer however. He invokes God's blessing on his wife and children, and even on the widow and children of the poor man whom he killed in the heat of his passionate temper. He is going to spend the brief remainder of his time in making "a reparation to God" in order that God may pardon his poor soul and enable him to accept his fate "with a pure and holy resignation." Reparation to God excludes from his mind all idea of reparation to the widow and children of his victim, except in the cheap form of asking God to protect them. He expects to meet his wife "in that better land where we shall never part."

SPURGEON writes thus of the split he caused in the Baptist camp:—"Mourning over a great evil in some of the churches, I sacrificed peace, friendship, and repute to be clear of it. . . . It has cost me many wounds and much dishonor to have been the accuser of brethren, and it is still more painful to find their great errors are not regarded as serious by the mass of professors." And all this fuss and trouble and unbrotherly strife is over religious dogma. Such is the comfort and the peace-making and the union that flow from religion.

THE managers of a New York church have been found guilty of importing "contract labor" in the shape of the Rev. E. W. Warren, whom they had induced to leave Europe under contract for a stipulated salary. What will the parsons say to this curious case?

THE opposition to the tithe distrains in North Wales is so great that the military is again called in. The people have been barricading their houses, felling trees across the roadway, or placing huge boulders thereon, and there have been frequent assaults upon the police who were protecting the Church's servants in their pious work of seizing people's goods.

THE *Rock*, speaking of the Trinity, observes that "The whole subject of the constitution of the Deity is an extremely solemn and sacred one, defying all attempts at criticism or analysis." God has chosen to reveal himself in three characters, and all we can do is to fall down and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever. That is, we must entirely surrender our judgments in order that we may profess that three persons are one God. But every religion has its mysteries—that is its self-evident absurdities—which can similarly be sheltered from criticism. This kind of policy will make us believe in anything if it is only put forth as a matter of solemn faith.

THE *Rock* also acknowledges that "Probably no point of the Christian doctrine has been more fiercely battled over than that of the triune conception of the Godhead." Exactly. The more

solemn, the more supremely religious, a doctrine is, the more strife and bloodshed it causes.

THE Rev. Edward Husband, incumbent of St. Michael's, Folkestone, writes to the *Daily News* in favor of making the recitation of the Athanasian Creed optional instead of compulsory, as now. He says: "I am only one of a great multitude of clergy who feel oppressed and burdened by the existing Rubric in the Book of Common Prayer, which directs that the Athanasian Creed—what I might term the Creed of Anathemas—shall be said in our own churches on certain days of the year. . . . Such a sweeping human judgment as that contained in the words—'This is the Catholic faith; which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved'—was not, alas, out of keeping with the narrow, bitter and uneducated spirit of the Middle Ages, but is altogether inconsistent with the more enlightened and educated spirit of the present time. We shall never win the masses of intelligent men to our side until we give up these monstrous dogmas of the dark ages."

THE minister gets over his difficulty by absenting himself from his own church whenever the Athanasian Creed is read. But why don't he and the "great multitude of clergy" who reject the creed absent themselves for good from the Church and the religion which teaches the abominable doctrine of damnation? If the creed is abolished the dogma still remains in the Bible which they have to uphold.

THE *Engineer* reports that the first line of railway in what is called the Holy Land is about to be constructed by a Belgian company under a concession from the Sultan. The line will run from Jaffa to Jerusalem. How this would astonish the prophets, who were quite unable to foresee any such wonders as the steam engine and the telegraph. As Palestine becomes better known, people will wonder how such a sterile spot was ever called a land of milk and honey, and selected by God Almighty for his chosen people. Future excursionists to the "Holy Land" will probably soon find a lager beer restaurant on the Mount of Olives, a Bodega wine vault in the Holy Sepulchre, and automatic cigar and sweetmeat stands erected on Mount Calvary.

TWELVE Salvationists, including their female captain, were fined 2s. 6d. each for persistently obstructing the traffic in the High Street, Brasted. Nine of them refused to pay the fine, and were sent to prison for seven days.

THE Irish Party having passed resolutions condemning the papal rescript, and a meeting being arranged to take place at Limerick in support of their action, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Limerick reminds the people through the Mayor that the recent decree of the Holy Office "binds the consciences of those whom it concerns" and that "it is a sin for any Catholic to disobey it, and a much more grievous sin, under any pretext, to deny the Pope's authority to issue it."

THE meeting at Limerick, some twenty thousand strong, passed a resolution declaring that the Catholics respectfully declined to recognise the right of the Holy Office to interfere in Irish political affairs. The leading Catholics, however, absented themselves from the meeting.

AFTER noting that in the city of Benares alone there are 40,000 men who give up wives, children and lands, and go from place to place in the service of idol gods, the *Christian Herald* suggests that there should be something like the same consecration among Christians. If the Christians generally were to obey Christ's injunction to hate their wives and children for the Gospel's sake, and were to abandon them in expectation of his promised reward, what would the moral sense of modern Europe say of such Christian consecration?

THE Rev. J. B. Norman, vicar of Whitechurch, Little Stanmore, was fined 5s. and costs for assaulting a costermonger. The man had purchased a sackful of vegetables from the vicar's wife, but the vicar refused to let him have the cabbages or to return him the money he had paid for them. The vicar slapped his face instead, and pushed him off the premises. This is how the man of God teaches his parishioners honesty and civility.

THE *Rock* says that our "dioceses are not formed on any common-sense principle, but simply to accommodate the bishops and their palaces." It also speaks of "the ill-feeling that exists between the members of different churches." Christianity then evidently does not make bishops unselfish and public-spirited, or congregations brotherly and charitable towards each other.

"BROTHER SEBASTIAN" has been continuing "the good work so well begun by the Rev. F. G. Widdows," of whom he was an associate. He has been holding religious services for three months at Luton. He is now charged with similar offences to those of his prototype, and is remanded.

LAZARUS LESEGELD, a Jewish scripture reader in the Manchester Synagogue, has committed suicide by cutting his throat. Talmage would probably say it was because he was not a Christian.

THE Rev. Edgar HERNANCE, being disappointed because his demands for an increase of salary were ignored, shot himself in the pulpit of the Presbyterian church at White Plains, New York. Talmage ought to preach on this occurrence, but he prefers circulating fiction against Atheists to telling truth about Christians.

A BOY named Woods, who was taken by Catholics from the care of a Protestant society, has at length been given up under a peremptory order of the Dublin Queen's Bench. In attempting to serve the writ of habeas corpus on the parish priest of Doon, the bailiff, Leahy, sustained injuries which caused his death.

DR. ULLATHORNE, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Birmingham, has been appointed Archbishop of Cabasa. Cabasa is a bogus see, said to have been once situated in Lower Egypt, but now unknown. As Dr. Ullathorne is still to reside at St Mary's College, Oscott, it is understood that Cabasa, being exoterically interpreted, means York. There are two Bishops of Liverpool, but two Archbishops of York might be a little embarrassing, hence the creation of Cabasa.

DR. McCANN, writing in the *Rock*, praises Gladstone's reply to Ingersoll, but spends all his time in showing that Gladstone is wrong in disputing Ingersoll's position as to the effects of the Darwinian theory. Dr. McCann concludes that "Colonel Ingersoll is right when he says that Darwinism, carried to its legitimate conclusion, is fatal to creeds and Scriptures."

SOME of the chief champions of orthodoxy have very little respect for the blessings of poverty. The Rev. George Rawlinson, for instance, is perpetually appealed to as an authority for the historical truth of Scripture. He is Camden Professor of Ancient History in the University of Oxford, and Canon of Canterbury. But these posts are not sufficient for his appetite, and he has therefore accepted the living of Allhallows, Lombard Street, offered him by the Dean and Chapter of *his own cathedral*. Canon Rawlinson enjoys his fat pluralities, laughs at the text "Woe unto you rich!" and thinks he'll take his chance of getting through the needle's eye.

SIR MONIER WILLIAMS is another case. Like Canon Rawlinson, he is a pillar of orthodoxy. He is never tired of lauding Christianity at the expense of other creeds. For a quarter of a century he has enjoyed the salary of Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford. He is now retiring from the duties of the chair, and as he possesses a considerable private fortune, it was supposed that he would relinquish his pay. But no! He sticks to two-thirds of his salary, leaving only one-third for his successor who will have to do all the work.

A PROTESTANT writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* describes his visit to the Armenian Church, built over the house of Caiaphas, and the cell in which Jesus was imprisoned. It contains the stone which was rolled over the mouth of the sepulchre, which is worn smooth with the kisses of pilgrims. With all the relics thus conveniently discovered by Christians it is a pity there is no documentary evidence, no writings by Jesus, no inscription testifying to the facts of the crucifixion and resurrection.

WHAT struck the visitor most was the many sacred pictures which were often wretched "caricatures" provocative of irreverent laughter. The "horrible attempt at decoration" which most shocked him, is thus described:—"On one of the walls is a picture of the Godhead, three persons in one. At the top of the picture is God the Father, represented to be an old man with a long beard. Beneath this is the Holy Ghost, painted like a dove, with one short wing and one short leg, while Christ is at the bottom, nearly naked, and a cross marked on His stomach. The colors are mostly blue and red, and the limbs of the Deity are variegated in the most hideous manner possible. I left the place disgusted." The religion of one sect is blasphemy to other sects. If Christianity is the cause of European civilisation, why does it leave the Eastern Christians so degenerate?

WHY, too, does Christianity leave the Christians of Abyssinia so ruthlessly savage that they massacre men, women and children of the villages they suspect of being friendly to the Italian Christians at Massowah?

THE members of the Lord's Day Rest Association have been congratulating themselves upon their bigotry. They have succeeded in resisting the Sunday opening of the Saltire exhibition, and they are doing their best to obtain the closing of the People's Palace, which they say "threatens to become a sad injury to the Lord's day in East London." If heaven is peopled by such miserable bigots as those of the Lord's Day Rest Association, we sincerely hope that they and their Lord will have it all to themselves.

A YEAR ago a spasm of piety struck New York city; the saloons were all closed on Sunday, and thirsty people went to New Jersey for beer. Now New Jersey has an attack of Sunday-closing, and last Sunday the residents crossed over to New York to irrigate. Thus what is a crime on one side of the Hudson,

may be committed with impunity on the other. There is an absurdity about these Sunday laws which attaches to no other form of legislation.

THE New York Society for the Conversion of the Jews seems cut out in the same shape as the London society. According to the *Hebrew Standard*, the missionaries are "uncultured vagrants" who depend on bribery to secure converts, and it asks Christians to inquire whether any one of these converts ever contributed one cent for the support of any church or charity; and whether any respectable, self-supporting, intelligent Jew was ever induced to associate himself with the miserable crew of self-seeking conversionists.

SIR JOHN GILBERT has a picture in the Academy of Bathsheba reminding David of his promise as to Solomon. Bathsheba is kneeling, and old Saint David is propped up in bed by the arms of pretty young Abishag, whose beautiful figure is revealed by a diaphanous robe. The *Daily News* says Abishag is out of place in a sacred picture. Well, that is rich! She is in the Bible story, but she is out of place in the Bible picture! The *Daily News* is famous for its religious cant, yet this is really too bad.

WANSBOROUGH CHURCH, Wiltshire, is languishing. According to the parson's circular, the "offertory has become gradually smaller," and "funds are greatly needed." The congregation is therefore "earnestly requested to give more liberally." This appeal is backed by a quotation from the apocryphal Book of Tobit. The canonical Scripture is not good enough for this parson. Yet it affords many appropriate texts. Our sky-pilot friend might have cited this, for instance—"Whoso giveth unto the poor (that's me) lendeth unto the Lord" (that's A1 security and ten thousand per cent—see Christ's promise to Peter).

THE Rev. G. Moore, vicar of Cowley, Oxford, has been fined £5 for cruelty to his horse, which he caused to be worked in shafts while suffering from severe wounds. It was proved that the Christian teacher knew of the condition of his animal.

WHEN civilisation has made any conquest after centuries of struggle Christianity comes in and claims the victory. Slavery remained in Brazil until last month, when the Emperor proclaimed its abolition, whereupon the Pope issues an Encyclical identifying the abolition with his own jubilee. There is no arrogance or impudence to surpass that of the priest.

"ANTONIO," who writes in the *Christian Commonwealth*, is quite a Truthful Tommy. He makes Matthew Arnold say—"Show me ten square miles of territory on the globe which are not Christian, and on which the life of man and the honor of woman are safe, and I will give up Christianity." We invite "Antonio" to tell us where Matthew Arnold said this. Probably it will take him a thousand years to find the place, but we shall be glad to hear he is on the search.

TORQUAY is a quiet place and does not like the music with which the Salvation Army assails the ears of Jehovah every Sunday. Notwithstanding several of the bandsmen being convicted, the Army, with Miss Eva Booth in command, continued their procession with music last Sunday. The result was a free fight between the crowd and the soldiers of the Lord, the police being conspicuous by their absence.

MR. E. FOURACRE, a churchwarden at Exeter, died while praying on his knees in St. Petrock's Church last Sunday. Is this a warning from the Lord or from the Devil?

THE Wesleyan Methodists claim an increase of 3,510 members during the past year. But this is less than 1 per cent. on the total number, and so does not even keep pace with the increase of the population. Relatively to the total population, the boasted increase is a diminution. Instead of Christianising the masses, the churches do not really hold their own. They boast of their increased expenditure, but relatively to secular expenditure they have now a less share of the total wealth of the community than ever.

THE Rev. Silvester Whitehead speaks contemptuously of a Chinese priest who cast out five devils from a child and made them enter five eggs. But how is this story one whit more ridiculous than the Bible story of devils being driven out of a man into a herd of pigs? When the sky-pilot says of heathen superstition that "it is in this way that the people are deluded, impoverished, and priest-ridden," he does not notice that exactly the same remark applies to the Christian superstition and priest craft.

THE Rev. A. Shipham similarly denounces the superstition of certain villagers in Ceylon who resolved to sacrifice a girl to a supernatural being who troubled them. The missionary forgets that Abraham is praised because he was willing to offer human sacrifice, that Jephthah burnt his daughter, and that Christ himself was a human sacrifice offered up to appease the wrath of a supernatural being. Christianity is based on horrible beliefs natural to the savage stages of evolution.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, June 3, Secular Hall, 61 New Church Road, Camberwell, at 7.30, "Gladstone's Reply to Ingersoll."

June 24, Hyde Park. July 1, Wood Green (morning), Hall of Science (evening); 8, Hall of Science (evening); 29, Camberwell (morning and evening). August 5, Hall of Science (evening); 12, Hall of Science (evening).

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

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

W. BURROWS.—Your simplicity and incompetence to discuss the question is evident from your first remark that "Mary said how shall this thing be, seeing I know not a man, proving she had not yet made the acquaintance of Joseph. Therefore it is as clear as the day that when the Angel visited Mary it was months before she became acquainted with Joseph." It is as clear as the day you do not know the meaning of your own book.

J. KENDALL.—Your verses are too political for the *Freethinker*.

H. RICHARDSON.—Not surprising that Mr. C. Whitmore, M.P., did not reply to your letter. He is probably too much of a bigot.

W. WEINANT.—All the stock of "Comic Bible Sketches" was burnt in the fire on our premises two years ago. The blocks also were irrecoverably damaged.

H. HISCOCK.—Glad to hear that Mr. Foote's lecture on Clerkenwell Green has stimulated your Branch. You shall have another visit, if possible, before the season closes.

W. H. LINTON.—Your questions are more fit for a purely scientific journal. Read Darwin, Spencer, and Huxley for yourself. That is our advice. Man's relation to the apes, and the origin of life, are big subjects, and cannot be dealt with in a few sentences.

W. HEARD reports that, in imitation of the Secularists, the Christian Evidence people have started preaching at Wood Green, and indulge "in the usual abuse of the Freethought party."

C. G. BAKER.—Your sentiments are excellent, but your verse is indifferent. Writing good verse no more comes by nature than making good shoes. Both have to be learnt.

T. B. LAMB.—Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C., will supply you with any Freethought works you require. Send him a list, and he will tell you how much to remit.

E. G. RILLINGTON.—Every town in the kingdom has a similar by-law. Don't let your open-air propaganda be interfered with by such a clause against "profane" language. You are not swearing, but advocating opinions. If you are molested, you shall be defended. But we don't think you need fear.

J. W. (Blackburn).—No doubt Mr. Ball's articles on the Parables would, as you say, make a useful pamphlet. The publication shall be considered. The quotation from Cardinal Newman, in the Preface of *Crimes of Christianity*, is from his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, p. 8.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Always pleased to see your "fist." But as a copy of the *Freethinker* is bought every week for the Heavenly Museum, you had better look out for squalls when you face the celestial Judge North.

J. FISHER.—Our readers do us a real service by sending us any clippings or other items likely to be useful for paragraphs. Glad to hear you are trying to push the sale of this journal in your district. Would that all our readers would go and do likewise.

W. B. THOMPSON.—Delighted to hear your open-air campaign opened so brilliantly at Chatham. We give you Lincoln's advice—keep pegging away. Our party has only to put a little more energy and enthusiasm into its work to carry all before it.

W. MICKLEJOHN has ordered a dozen copies of Mr. Foote's reply to Mr. Gladstone for circulation among his friends.

J. IRELAND.—Mr. Moss has not been discharged by the London School Board. He has been warned to desist from lecturing, even on Sundays, when his time is his own. Possibly the bigots will go to extremities. If so, Mr. Moss will find the Freethought party ready to back him up.

RUMLEY.—The *Freethinker* can be obtained at H. Underdown's, Temperance Cottage, Stopford Road, New Brompton.

A. MILLER.—There is no Burial Service by Colonel Ingersoll. Mr. Forder will send you two good ones, by Mrs. Besant and Austin Holyoake, post free for 2½d. Thanks for the cuttings.

J. TURNER.—Mr. Gladstone's reply to Colonel Ingersoll deals with his two Letters to the Rev. Dr. Field, which we published under the titles of *Faith and Fact* and *God and Man*. Mr. Gladstone says, "Colonel Ingersoll writes with a rare and enviable brilliancy."

TULSIDAS MOOKERJEE.—You are welcome to copy any of our articles. We wish you all success.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Jewish Times—Liberty—Open Court—Lucifer—Christian Age—Western Figaro—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Truthseeker—Independent Pulpit—Thinker—Menschentum—Vespa—Western Times.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. FOOTE had a big audience on Clerkenwell Green last Sunday morning. Before the discussion closed, Mr. A. B. Moss appeared on the scene, after having lectured at the Midland Arches, and made a few remarks on his attempted suppression by the School Board. Mr. Moss must have been gratified by his

reception. After the speechifying the Finsbury Branch made a collection on behalf of its funds.

THIS evening (June 3) Mr. Foote lectures at the Camberwell Branch's hall, in New Church Road. His subject will be "Gladstone's Reply to Ingersoll." This lecture is not announced on the monthly programme, and we venture to ask our friends to give it all possible publicity.

THE Sydney *Boomerang*, in "A Chat on Atheism with Judge Mein," who, it seems, has been venting his indignation upon some Freethinking witness, says that "Atheism is rampant in every walk of life and every grade of society." It then points out that the term Atheist is one that can be applied to any one who differs from oneself as to the nature of the universe, and declares that the worse Atheists are those who fail in their duty to humanity. The article exhibits the secular spirit of the best writers on the Australian press.

THE *Independent Pulpit*, of Waco, Texas, has several good articles, notably one on "Resurrection," by P. Van Hyatt, and another on "Woman and Conservatism," by G. D. It reprints Mr. Wheeler's article "Across the Gulf" with acknowledgment from our columns.

THE fund of the Melbourne Secular Building Society shows an increase of £2,600 in two and a half years. The Secular Association will soon meet in their own hall. Here is an example which surely our large towns could emulate.

EARLY in May Colonel Ingersoll opened a debate at the Nineteenth Century Club, New York, on The Limitations of Toleration. Colonel Ingersoll contended "that thought is a necessary, natural product—the result of what is called impressions made through the medium of the senses upon the brain, not forgetting the fact of heredity. That no human being is accountable to any being, human or divine, for his thoughts. For one man to say to another, 'I tolerate you,' is an assumption of authority—not a disclaimer, but a waiver, of the right to persecute." Ingersoll was opposed by a representative Catholic and by General Woodford as a Protestant. He replied in a manner which created uproarious laughter.

THE *Thinker* of Madras continues its reprints from other journals. The number before us contains a paper by Mr. Moss on "Bible History and Evolution," and Mr. Foote's article, "Down Below."

THE Hindoos of Madras, being dissatisfied with the religious education sought to be imparted in the Christian colleges, are bent on establishing a College of their own. Some large sums have already been subscribed.

THE French Republic has done itself honor in conferring on M. Renan the highest honorary dignity which it can accord to a man of letters. He has been made Grand Officer of the Legion of Honor. M. Renan's learning and literary distinction are so generally recognised in France that none but the clerical bigots will take exception to this manifestation of the regard of the Republic for its men of genius.

THE *Revue des Deux Mondes* for May 15 has an article on the Krishna Myth, by M. Schure, who seems to think that Krishna was a real person who existed before Christ. M. Schure, however, does not enter into the important question of the chronology.

A CIRCULAR has been addressed to the Freethinking societies of Paris, calling for the nomination of delegates to a committee of organisation for the International Congress of Freethinkers in Paris next year. The organising committee will meet at the Salle de l'Ermitage, 29 Rue de Jussieu, on Sunday, July 15th.

A NEW Freethought journal will be started at Calcutta in July. It will be specially intended to attack the missionaries and Bible superstition. The title will be *Reason*, and the editor Baboo Tulsidas Mookerjee.

MR. A. H. HUNTER, of Nottingham, undertakes to get 100 *Freethinker* bills posted there at his own expense. Any friend who can do likewise elsewhere can be supplied with bills bearing the name of the local newsagents who sell this journal. We shall be happy to post single copies (or more) of the permanent bill to anyone who can get it exhibited.

PHALIC WORSHIP AMONG THE JEWS.

I.—BAALIM AND ASHERAH.

HUME's observation that polytheism invariably preceded monotheism has been confirmed by all subsequent investigation. The belief in one God or supreme spirit springs out of the belief in many gods or spirits. That this was so with the Jews there is sufficient evidence in the Bible, despite the fact that the documents so-called have been frequently "redacted," that is falsified, and the evidence in

large part erased. An instance of this falsification may be found in Judges xviii., 30 (see Revised Version), where "Manasseh" has been piously substituted for Moses, in order to conceal the fact that the direct descendants of Moses were image worshippers down till the time of the captivity.

The priests, whose policy it was to keep the nation isolated, did their best to destroy the evidence that the Jews shared in the idolatrous beliefs and practices of the nations around them. In particular the cult of Baal and Asherah, which, as we shall see, was a form of phallic worship, became obnoxious and the evidence of its existence was sought to be obliterated.

Yet it is unquestionable that in the earliest times the Hebrews worshipped Baal. In proof there is the direct assertion of Jahveh himself (Hosea ii., 16) that "thou shalt call me *Ishi* [my husband] and shalt call me no more *Baali*." The evidence of names too is decisive. Gideon's other name, Jerubbaal (Jud. vi., 32, and 1 Sam. xii., 11), was evidently the true one, for in 2 Sam. xi., 21, the name Jerubbesheth is substituted. Eshbaal (1 Chron. viii., 33) is called Ishbosheth (2 Sam. ii., 8, 10). Meribbaal (1 Chron. viii., 34) is Mephibosheth (2 Sam. iv., 4).¹ Now *bosheth* means "shame," and as Dr. Donaldson points out, in especial, "sexual shame," as in Gen. ii., 25. In the Septuagint version of 1 Kings xviii., 25, the prophets of Baal are called "the prophets of that shame." The place where the ark stood, known afterwards as Kirjath-jearim, was formerly named Baalah, or place of Baal (1 Chron. xiii., 6). The change of name took place after David's time, since the writer of 2 Sam. vi. 2, says merely that David went with the ark from "Baale of Judah."² Colenso notices that when the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal are said to have been destroyed by Elijah, nothing is said of the four hundred prophets of the Asherah. "Also these same '400 prophets,' apparently, are called together by Ahab as prophets of *JHVH*, and they reply in the name of *JHVH*, 1 Kings xxii., 5-6."

That phallicism was an important element in Baal and Asherah worship is well known to scholars, and will be made clear to any discerning readers. The frequent allusions to "groves" in the Authorised Version must have puzzled many a simple student. The natural but erroneous suggestion of "tree worship" does not fit in very well with the important statement (2 Kings xxiii., 6) that Josiah "brought out the grove from the house of the Lord."³ A reference to the Revised Version will show that this misleading word is intended to conceal the real nature of the worship of Asherah.

This worship certainly lasted from the earliest historic times until the seventeenth year of Josiah, B.C. 624. We read how in the days of the Judges they "served Baalim and the groves" (R. V., "the Asheroth"; Judges iii., 7; see ii., 12, "Baal and Ashtaroth"). We find that Solomon himself "went after Ashtoreth" (1 Kings xi., 5) and that he builded the mount of corruption (margin, *i.e.*, the mount of Olives) for that "abomination of the Zidonians" (2 Kings xxiii., 13). All the distinctive features of Solomon's Temple were Phœnician in character.⁴ What the Phœnician temples were like Lucian tells us in his treatise on the goddess of Syria. The great pillars Jachin, "the establisher," and Boaz, "strength"; the ornamentation of palm trees, pomegranates, and lotus work; are all Phœnician and all phallic.

The worship of Astoreth, the Assyrian Ishtar, and Greek Astarte, was widespread. The Phœnicians took it with them to Cyprus and Carthage. In the days of Abraham there was a town called after her (Gen. xiv., 5), and to this day her name is preserved in Esther.⁵ Baal represented the generative, Astoreth the productive power. The pillars and asherah, so often alluded to in the Bible, were the signs of their worship, and Dr. Oort, in his work on the *Worship of Baalim and Israel*, p. 46, says of the name Ashera, "This

word expressed originally a pillar on, or near—not only the altars of Baal—but also the altars of *JHVH*."

Bishop Colenso in his notes to Dr. Oort's work remarks, "It seems plain that the Ashera (from *ashar*, be straight, erect,) was in reality a phallus, like the *Linga* or *Lingam* of the Hindoos, the sign of the male organ of generation." There can indeed be no doubt on the matter in the mind of any one acquainted with ancient faiths and the inevitable phases of human evolution. We read (1 Kings xv., 13, Revised Version,) that Maachah, the queen mother of Asa, "made an abominable image for an Asherah." This the Vulgate translates "Priape." Jeremiah, who alludes to the same thing (x. 5), tells us that the people said, "to a stock, Thou art my father, and to a stone [*yoni*], Thou hast brought me forth" (ii., 27), that they "defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and with stocks" (iii., 9), playing the harlot "under every green tree" (ii. 20, iii. 6, 13; see also Hosea iv., 13). Isaiah xvii., 8, alludes to the Asherim as existing in his own days. Micah also prophesies against the "pillars" and "Asherim" (v. 13, 14). Ezekiel xvi., 17, says "Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels, of my gold and of silver, which I have given thee, and madest to thyself images of men, and didst commit whoredom with them." The margin more properly reads images "*Heb.* of a male" [*tsalmi zachar*], a male here being an euphemism.⁶ It is thus evident that some form of phallic worship lasted among the Jews from the earliest times until their captivity in Babylon. Further evidence of how far it was incorporated in the national faith will be given later on.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

MR. GLADSTONE AND THE GOSPELS.

A GENTLEMAN wrote to Mr. Gladstone during the recess, to ask if politicians, in defending religious faith, were doing the work of progress. The letter observed that certain eminent Dissenters had obstructed the cause of progress in Ireland on account of their religion, and he asked if the faith of which the right hon. gentleman had been the defender, was the true friend of progress and reform. Mr. Gladstone has sent him the following post-card:—

"Sir,—Your letter as being honest, outspoken, and well put, commands my respect. Excuse the following suggestions:—1. Read the Gospels and see whether our Lord, whom we are bound to follow, was a friend to injustice, class-interest, or abuse. 2. Is not our best and safest rule to follow truth in religion, and truth in politics, in the faith that we shall find the means of reconciling truth with truth?—Your faithful servant,
W. E. GLADSTONE."

This is a characteristic reply. Mr. Gladstone writes a neat letter, without answering the question. His correspondent did not ask him whether truth was a good thing, but whether his religion was true. The appeal was to history, and Mr. Gladstone looks up the Sermon on the Mount.

H E A V E N .

If there's a Heaven beyond the sky,
Where all is joy and love,
Where convicts go when'er they die,
Oh, what a world above!

If there's a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,
With rogues and dullards dressed in white,
Oh, what is there to gain?

If Heaven has a perpetual spring,
And never-withering flowers,
Where raving bigots dance and sing—
Oh, what delightful bowers!

If heavenly pleasures banish pains,
And day excludes the night,
While Hell lights up its lurid flames,
Oh, what a blissful sight!

If Heaven's an endless Sabbath Day,
As solemn as can be,
Where parsons cant and curates bray—
Oh, blest eternity!

Could we but climb where Moses stood
And view the landscape o'er—
See millions soaked in Jesu's blood,
'Twould fright us from the shore.

No wonder timorous Christians shrink
From leaving this world's care,
And stand and shiver on the brink,
Too loath to go Up There! F. MARGETSON.

¹ So Baaljudah (1 Chron. xiv. 7) is Eliada (2 Sam. v. 16). In 1 Chron. xii., 5, we have the curious combination, Baaljah, *i.e.*, Baal is Jah, as the name of one of David's heroes.

² The "Baal" was afterwards taken out of all such names of places, and instead of Baal Poor, Baal Meon, Baal Tamar, Baal Shalisha, etc., we find Beth Poor, Beth Meon, Beth Tamar, etc.

³ Verse vii. says, "he brake down the houses of the sodomites that were by the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the grove." A reference to the Revised Version shows that it was "in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings [or tents] for the Asherah."

⁴ See article—Temple in *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

⁵ The Greek *aster* and our *star* are probably from the same word.

⁶ The Vulgate reads "fecisti tibi imagines masculinus et fornicata os in cis."

PROFESSOR HUXLEY ON SCIENCE AND VERACITY.

So far as my experience goes, men of science are neither better nor worse than the rest of the world. Occupation with the endlessly great parts of the universe does not necessarily involve greatness of character, nor does microscopic study of the infinitely little always produce humility. We have our full share of original sin. Need, greed, and vain-glory beset us as they do other mortals; and our progress is, for the most part, like that of a tacking ship—the resultant of opposite divergencies from the straight path. But, for all that, there is one moral benefit which the pursuit of science unquestionably bestows. It keeps the estimate of the value of evidence up to the proper mark; and we are constantly receiving lessons, and sometimes very sharp ones, on the nature of proof. Men of science will always act up to their standard of veracity, when mankind in general leave off sinning; but that standard appears to me to be higher among them than in any other class of the community.

I do not know any body of scientific men who could be got to listen, without the strongest expressions of disgusted repudiation, to the exposition of a pretended scientific discovery, which had no better evidence to show for itself than the story of the devils entering a herd of swine, or of the fig tree that was blasted for bearing no figs when "it was not the season for figs." Whether such events are possible or impossible, no man can say; but scientific ethics can and do declare that the profession of belief in them, on the evidence of documents of unknown date and of unknown authorship, is immoral. Theological apologists who insist that morality will vanish if their dogmas are exploded, would do well to consider the fact that, in the matter of intellectual veracity, science is already a long way ahead of the churches; and that, in this particular, it is exerting an educational influence on mankind, of which the churches have shown themselves utterly incapable.

REVIEWS.

The Practical Value of Christianity. Two Prize Essays by the Rev. J. Broadhurst Nichols and Charles William Dymond, F.S.A. London, Trubner and Co., Ludgate Hill, 1888.—The common observation that the offering of prizes does not produce literature of permanent value is certainly not likely to be falsified by the result of the competition for the Twenty Guineas offered by Mr. Allsop for the best essays, both from the orthodox and sceptical standpoint, on the question, "Assuming the tenets of Christianity to be disproved, what would be the social and moral effects of the discontinuance of its teachings and the abolition of its institutions." The Rev. Mr. Nichols' contribution is of the most commonplace description. The alliterative title, Christ or Chaos, gives his main idea. Something very dreadful would happen, but what the terrible something would be is not very clear except that "preaching would disappear," and even Primitive Methodists lose the "sense of sacredness in stepping upon the cocoa-nut matting which runs along the bricked aisle." He indeed tells us that "the abandonment of the Christian creed would withdraw the motives which restrain from evil," but he makes no effort to prove that the Christian motives are really efficacious, or that they could not be replaced by truer and worthier ones. Atheism he says "would eventually take the spirit out of scientific research." But this prophecy of the future will not command much attention, coming from one who in the face of men like Halley, Laplace, Lalande, Humboldt, and Darwin can say "Providence has not permitted that any of the great secrets of nature be revealed to a man without faith." Mr. Dymond's paper, "Christianity at the Bar," is comparatively sensible, but he wastes much space examining the Articles of the Church of England, and altogether reminds us of a woman dealing with a snake. Our fears are rather for the woman than the serpent. The union of the two papers in one volume may serve to show that heterodoxy as well as orthodoxy has something to say on the outlook of the future. We do not say the essays have fallen below our expectations, but they as certainly cannot be recommended as containing the best that can be said on either side.

Agnosticism and Christianity. A Lay Sermon by S. Laing. Watts and Co., 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street.—Mr. Laing maintains that Agnosticism, which he believes will supersede old theological and metaphysical creeds, is reconcilable with a Christianity without dogma or miracles. Such a Christianity is no Christianity at all. It discards all that differentiates Christianity from any other faith, and all, too, that Christians think worth preserving. Mr. Laing holds what he calls the "Polar theory of the Universe," a theory of progress by antagonism, and upholds the theory of evolution as opposed to the theological position.

Lucifer. A Theosophical Monthly, May 15th. London, G. Redway, 15 York Street, Covent Garden.—Among much "occult" matter there is an article on "Theosophy and Modern Socialism," and a curious fragment on "The Crucifixion of Man," the purport of which is to show that the story of the crucifixion is mystical, not historical. The editor curiously translates *Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani*: "My God, my God, how dost thou glorify me."

T. P. S. No. 6.—Under this title appears some publications of the Theosophical Publication Society on the subjects of Re-incarnation, Divyatchakhus, Japanese Esotericism, Esoteric Buddhism, and The Religions of Japan. The publications appeal to the abiding appetite for mystery, and attest the interest which is being taken in faiths outside Christianity. We confess we wonder what sort of readers can take any interest in Divyatchakhus. It is a strange world.

THE BIRTH OF SATAN.

The first time man did conscious wrong,
He recognised mysterious powers;
That, like a tempest fierce and strong,
Blighted and killed life's fairest flowers.

Then, wondering what the cause might be,
He never thought himself to blame—
Supposed it was an enemy—
And so the birth of Satan came.

And even now, with broadened mind,
Man will not bear the blame of evil;
But seeks some alien cause to find.
While he himself remains—the Devil.

Wm. SCHUYLER.

THE DEVIL IN CHURCH.

The *Dominicales*, of Madrid, in an article entitled "The Devil in Church," says: "A Jesuit in Murcia was preaching on Good Friday on the Agony of Christ. In the middle of the sermon a carpenter, who was nailing something behind the altar, accidentally moved the veil which covered a large crucifix. Some old women saw the veil move and immediately went out to inquire into the cause of it. They were soon followed by other women. The priest, who had also seen the veil move, was himself a little troubled, and shouted to the congregation: 'Dear brethren, keep your seats. It is the Devil who wants to rob your faith.' A wag who happened to be among the 'faithful lambs' screamed at the top of his voice: 'The Devil, the Devil is here; I smell sulphur!' There was a general rush for the doors, which were rather narrow. In the confusion parents forgot their children, people were trampled upon, dresses and mantillas torn, and blows distributed freely right and left. Although it was after explained that the carpenter who was at work behind the altar moved the veil accidentally, the people in Murcia still believe that Old Nick did really pay them a visit." Another example of Christian superstition!

ADAM DUFF O'TOOLE, AN EARLY IRISH FREETHOUGHT MARTYR.

RAPHAEL HOLINSHED, in his *Chronicles of Ireland*, under the date 1327 (p. 69, 1586), narrates that "a gentleman of the familie of the Otoolies in Loinster, named Adam Duffo, possessed by some wicked spirit of error, denied obstinately the incarnation of our Savior, the trinitie of persons in the unity of the Godhead, and the resurrection of the flesh. As for the holie Scripture, he said it was but a fable. The Virgin Marie he affirmed to be a woman of dissolute life, and the apostolike see erroneous. For such assertions he was burnt in Hogging Green, beside Dublin." Hogging Green is the old name for the Colledge Green.

This is the earliest instance I have found of an Irish Freethinker. I shall be extremely glad, if possible, to learn further particulars of O'Toole and any other early Irish heretics, for insertion in my *Freethought Biographies*.
J. M. WHEELER.

PROFANE JOKES.

Those who bemoan the fate of Lot's wife fail to consider how useful salt is.

Mr. Jones: "Why is it that the ladies of a congregation always present the pastor with embroidered slippers and braces?" Mrs. J. "The braces are to keep up his trousers, so that the embroidered slippers can be seen. How stupid you are."

The choir volunteered to sing the favorite hymns of the members of the congregation. Each was requested to write down his choice. Easily recognised as the chirography of the butcher was, "We shall meat on that beautiful shore." The leading shoemaker chose, "Awl for me." The favorite of the baker was, "I knead thee, every hour." The lodging-house keeper wrote "Abide with me." The young lawyer handed in; "Just as I am without one plea." And the grocer who did strictly cash business, made the selection, "Trusting Jesus, that is all." "The delivery boy had gone a little ahead of me," said the canvasser, "and as I stood on the side-walk a pretty little boy in kilts toddled up and stared at me with pretty blue eyes. I made friends with him at once. He put his hands on my order-book and says he: 'Hot's at?' 'That's my order-book,' I told him. 'Hot does oo do wiv at?' 'Oh, I write down the names of all the bad little boys I know.' He looked at me a minute with his big eyes opened wide. Then, his voice hushed with awe, he asked, 'Is oo Dod?'"

"You bad boy to fight," said Mrs. Brown to an urchin in her Sunday-school class, whose face was adorned with a black eye. "Satan will have you if you don't learn to love your enemies." "Why the Bible tells us to fight," said the youthful pugilist. "Nonsense," said the lady, who was rather fond of misplacing her itches, "where is there any such a bolder given?" "Well, ma'am, you have sometimes read to us the words 'Hit is eye, be not afraid,'" rejoined the young member of the church militant with a sly grin.

PROTESTANTISM AND PERSECUTION.—The Protestant religion is, for the most part, more tolerant than the Catholic, simply because the events which have given rise to Protestantism have at the same time increased the play of the intellect, and therefore lessened the power of the clergy. But whoever has read the works of the great Calvinist divines, and, above all, whoever has studied their history, must know, that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the desire of persecuting their opponents burnt as hotly among them, as it did among any of the Catholics even in the worst days of the papal dominion.—Buckle, *History of Civilisation in England*, vol. i., p. 504, 1857.

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