

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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THE HAND OF GOD.

Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand.—
ISAIAH XL, 12.

THE NEW TORY HOPE.

EARL BEACONSFIELD was a very astute man, and he saw clearly that tapping what Gambetta called the *nouvelles couches sociales*—in other words, extending the suffrage—was no immediate danger to Conservatism. In the course of time the existing electorate becomes educated on political questions, the claims of truth and justice are more or less adequately recognised, and the party of convention and privilege falls into grievous straits. Its instinct, of course, is to fight on against the longest odds; but a clever leader, who sees that is a bad losing game, finds a temporary relief by staving off the evil day. To do that he must change the character of the electorate, and the only method of effecting this alteration is an extension of the suffrage. By this means a fresh body of voters may be drawn into politics, and their education must be completed before the old danger reappears. Each Reform Bill has led to a Tory reaction. But the democratic spirit is rising again. The Tories, therefore, must resort to the old device of tapping a fresh stratum of voters. This is not easy in the case of males, but there is unlimited room in the case of females. It is not surprising, then, that Lord Salisbury has just declared himself unreservedly in favor of Woman Suffrage. The reason he assigns is that the influence of women will be “in the direction of morality and religion.” But we venture to think that the Premier has partisan reasons which he dares not avow. He has sagacity enough to see that, at least for a considerable time, if not always, the influence of women will be a Conservative force. Milleniums of superstition and domestic thralldom have made them inveterate respectors of authority. They love the old and look with mistrust on the new. Even more than men, they are the slaves of custom. Consequently, until their character is modified by new training, they will be an immense support to the party of the old, the party of superstition, the

party of custom, the party of tyranny. Give them votes, and their indirect influence will be turned into a direct influence in favor of Conservatism. How much more will this be the case if a judicious selection can be made! And that is precisely what Lord Salisbury intends. He does not propose to let every adult woman vote. Oh dear no. He only proposes to give the vote to women ratepayers, who are generally spinsters or widows, and in every case attached to “things as they are” by ties of property as well as inherited instinct. This will mean a large reinforcement of the Tory strength. Lord Salisbury sees it, and the Radicals will be very foolish if they do not see it just as plainly. Such female suffrage as this will aid the “classes” against the “masses.” Radicals should therefore keep their eye steadily fixed on the broad principle of personal as distinguished from property suffrage. If any women are to vote, let all women vote; wives and mothers as well as spinsters, the artisan’s women-folk as well as the aristocrat’s. But this will be the end, not the beginning. Lord Salisbury’s plan will be tried first, and for a while it will throw us back. Reaction will flourish. Freethought in religion, politics, and sociology will be under a cloud. Audacities of every kind will be reproved by the timid femininity. That is what Lord Salisbury really means by “the direction of religion and morality.” Except in sexual matters, where countless ages of hard repression have produced a certain effect, it is not true that women are more moral than men, though their vices may be more negative than positive. The assertion of their superiority in this respect is one of those cheap flatteries which really superior women smile at contemptuously. But, on the other hand, it is beyond question that women are more religious than men. Were they polled to-day, their verdict would be overwhelming, and their sentence severe, on any tampering with the orthodox faith. It is fortunate that so many religious disabilities have been broken down before their advent to political power. They will probably give the State Church a new lease of life, and the State Church is simply the spiritual citadel of Conservatism. Lord Salisbury is alive to these truths. He is not animated by any motive of chivalry. In the very same speech in which he declared for Woman Suffrage he sneered at Mr. Naoroji as “a black man,” and showed himself to be on a level with the larrikins who pester Chinamen in the London streets. We quite understand Lord Salisbury; he is going for Woman Suffrage as a Tory card. Yet Woman Suffrage is just in principle, and Radicals cannot oppose it. We shall have to pass through a bad period, but it is inevitable. Men must pay the penalty for keeping women in childish ignorance and subjection. Nature exacts her debts to the last farthing. But when it is paid she smiles on us afresh. We shall find an ample compensation for our temporary loss in the elevation of women into loftier spheres of usefulness. They will look out beyond the home, which, sacred as it is, is yet too narrow for the growing spirit of humanity. When called upon to take a part in public life, they will acquire an earnest interest in public questions. This will both cultivate their intellects, and educate them in that wide principle of social justice, in which Mr. Herbert Spencer remarks that they are now deficient. Sharing thus in the higher affairs of society, their lives will be broader and deeper. They will become better companions for men, better wives, and, above all, better mothers. Their morality, which is now too much a hot-house product, will become more robust; and as they grow more thoughtful, and their horizon expands, they will become less superstitious, and less ductile in the hands of priests. Toryism will win at first by their enfranchisement, but Radicalism will win in the end.

G. W. FOOTE.

"BLOOD, IAGO, BLOOD!"

"Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."

There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood
Lose all their guilty stains.

JUDAISM was a religion of blood and thunder. The Lord God of Israel delighted in blood. His worshippers praised him as a god of battles and a man of war. All his favorites were men of blood. The Lord God was likewise very fond of roast meat, and the smell thereof was a sweet savor unto his nostrils. He had respect to Abel and his bloody offering, but not to Cain and his vegetables. He ordered that in his holy temple a bullock and a lamb should be daily killed and hacked to pieces every morning for dinner, and a lamb for supper in the evening. To flavor the repast he had twelve flour cakes, olive oil, salt and spice; and to wash it down he had the fourth part of a hin of wine (over a quart) with a lamb twice a day, the third part of a hin with a ram, and half a hin with a bullock (Exodus xxix., 40; Numbers xv., 5-11; xxviii., 7). But his great delight was blood, and from every victim that was slaughtered the blood was caught by the priest in a bason and offered to him upon his altar, which daily reeked with the sanguine stream from slaughtered animals. The interior of his temple was like shambles, and a drain had to be made to the brook Cedron to carry off the refuse.* The most characteristic customs of the Jews, circumcision and the Passover, alike show the sanguinary character of their deity. Because Moses did not mutilate his child, the Lord met him at an inn and sought to kill him (Exodus iv., 25). The Passover, according to the Jews' own account, commemorated the Lord's slaying all the first-born of Egypt, and sparing those of the Jews upon recognising the blood sprinkled upon the lintels and side-posts of the doors: more probably it was a survival of human sacrifice.† God's worshippers were interdicted from tasting, though not from shedding, the sacred fluid; yet we read of Saul's army that "the people flew upon the spoil, and took sheep and oxen and calves, and slew them on the ground: and the people did eat them with the blood" (1 Sam. xiv., 32), much as the Abyssinians cut off living steaks to this day.

Christianity is a modified gospel of gore. The great theme of the Epistle to the Hebrews is that the blood and sacrifice of Christ is so much better than that of animals. The substitutionary sacrifice of Jesus Christ is the great inspiration of emotional religion. Revivalists revel in "the blood, the precious blood":

Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidd'st me come to thee,
Oh! Lamb of God, I come, I come!

Chorus—Jesus paid it all,
All to him I owe;
Sin had left a crimson stain;
He washed it white as snow.

Jesus Christ says, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him," and the most holy sacrament of the Christian Church consists in this cannibalistic communion.

To understand this fundamental rite of communion, or, indeed, the essence of any other part of the Christian religion, we must go back to those savage ideas out of which it has evolved. It is easy to account for savage superstitions in connection with blood. The life of the savage being largely spent in warfare, either with animals or his fellow men, the connection between blood and life is strongly impressed upon his mind. He sees, moreover, the child formed from the mother, the flow of whose blood is arrested. Hence the children of one mother are termed "of the same blood." In a state of continual warfare the only safe alliances were with those who recognised the family bond. Those who would be friends must be sharers in the same blood. Hence we find all over the savage world rites of blood-covenanting, of drinking together from the same blood, thereby symbolising community of nature. Like eating and drinking together, it was a sign of communion and the substitution of bread and wine for flesh and blood is a sun-worshipping refinement upon more primitive and cannibalistic communion.

This widespread custom of blood-covenanting illustrates most clearly, as Dr. Tylor points out, "the great principle of old world morals, that man owes friendship, not to mankind at large, but only to his own kin; so that to entitle a stranger to kindness and good faith he must become a kinsman by blood." That any sane man seated at a table ever said, "Take eat, this is my body," and "Drink, this is my blood," is ridiculous. The bread and wine are the fruits of the Sun. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest of the Christian fathers, informs us that this eucharist was partaken in the mysteries of Mithra. The Christian doctrine of partaking of the blood of Christ is a mingling of the rites of sun-worshippers with the early savage ceremony of the blood-covenant.

J. M. WHEELER.

BLASPHEMY IN SWEDEN.

AT the last meeting of the National Secular Society's Executive it was resolved to send a subscription to the Freethinkers, or Utilitarians as they prefer to call themselves, who are being prosecuted for blasphemy in Sweden. It was also determined that if the expenses of their defence were likely to be considerable, a special appeal for funds should be made to the Freethought party in England. Captain Otto Thomson writes to us, under date of Nov. 27, that Mr. Lindquist is now in prison, and Mr. Lennstrand's case has been adjourned to Dec. 7. Mr. Lennstrand defended himself manfully, and challenged the prosecution to prove that what he had said about the Bible God was false. He supported every one of his statements by quotations from Scripture, and declared that if the passages were there it was idle to accuse him of blasphemy. The prosecution, however, did not accept the challenge, but relied on the wicked law and the prejudices of the court. Indeed, the case simply turned on whether Mr. Lennstrand had "pained" the feelings of the fourteen gentlemen, including a clergyman, who laid information against him. Unfortunately Mr. Lennstrand, though full of courage, has a delicate constitution; and Captain Thomson fears that a taste of Christian charity in a prison cell will endanger his life. We regret to find such detestable bigotry in a country which reads, or should read, the writings of Ibsen and Bjornsen.

ACID DROPS.

THERE was a pretty scare at the Islington Congregational Church on Sunday evening. While the service was proceeding, a sudden shrill blast was blown from a horn, and a voice cried "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Had the preacher uttered these words, in the usual perfunctory manner, no one would have been alarmed; but, uttered in this novel way, they terrified the congregation. The ladies especially were in panic terror, and they were anything but pacified when the gentleman who had blown the horn declared that he was a second Joshua, sent by God to blow down the wicked walls of London, and to proclaim that the millenium was at hand.

THIS gentleman wore a sackcloth about his loins under an overcoat, and, besides the ram's horns, he carried a wallet full of religious books. Probably he was as authentic a messenger from God as Elijah, John the Baptist, or any other Bible worthy. But, alas, he was born several centuries too late. The pious congregation were ready to adore ancient prophets, but they regard modern prophets as a nuisance. Joshua the Second was removed by a prosaic policeman, and he may thank his lucky stars that he was not charged with being drunk and disorderly, or locked up on suspicion of being Jack the Ripper. He was mercifully taken to the parish infirmary, where the doctor will report on his intellects. Meanwhile the congregation breathe freely. The kingdom of heaven is NOT at hand.

ANOTHER divine messenger appeared in Holloway the other evening. His name is John Granville, and he is described as "a gentleman." He was raving in the street, and brandishing a knife. According to his own account, the Almighty had sent him to kill as many men as possible. He made a stab at a policeman, but the bobby did not take it in a pious spirit; on the contrary, he drew his truncheon, knocked the knife out of the prophet's hand, and ran him in. When brought before the magistrate, the prisoner kept consulting a Prayer-book. The worst of it is, there is some doubt about his identity, for he told one policeman he was the Savior. We suppose the mystery will be cleared up at the Day of Judgment, at any rate for those who hear the case tried. If we are all taken in alphabetical order Mr. Ball and Mr. Foote will be disposed of before John Granville is put into the dock; but Mr. Wheeler will witness the proceedings, and he can tell his colleagues all about it when he joins them in Hades.

CANON LIDDON preached to a crowded congregation in St. Paul's Cathedral on Sunday afternoon. Among other nonsense he said that God cannot be inconsistent. But, if the Bible be true, this is flat blasphemy. Jehovah contradicts himself scores

* See *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, article "Blood."

† See *Freethinker*, April 25, 1886.

of times; he is sorry, he repents, and he changes his mind like any mortal.

BUT Canon Liddon did worse than that, though he did not quite come up to the measure of our "iniquity." We wrote an article on Jehovah the Ripper, suggesting his Lordship as the Whitechapel monster. Cannon Liddon did not go so far as this, but he made Jehovah an accessory after the fact. The police had failed to track the assassin, he said, but "How different with the Divine Judge! He knows at this moment about those tragedies in Whitechapel." Then he and Jack the Ripper are a worthy pair. According to the law of England—if we are to believe Canon Liddon—Jehovah is shielding a murderer. If he knows the monster's whereabouts, and does not reveal it, he will be at least half responsible for the next atrocity.

A WRITER in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald*, who signs himself "Scotland Yard," considers the Whitechapel atrocities to be the work of a religious maniac, and finds the inciting cause in that abominable twenty-third chapter of Ezekiel, dealing with the adulteries of Aholah and Aholibah. He quotes in particular the verses: "They shall deal furiously with thee and shall take away thy nose and thine ears, and thy remnant shall fall by the sword. They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes and take away thy fair jewels. . . . Thus will I cause lewdness to cease out of the land, that all women may be taught not to do after your lewdness." There can be no doubt the old Jew books are the inspiring cause of much fanaticism and crime, and it is quite possible the murderer is impressed with the notion that he is doing God a service.

JUSTICE NORTH has sent the Tory M.P., Mr. Gent-Davis, to Wandsworth prison for misappropriating trust-money. Mr. Gent-Davis, however, is treated with great consideration. He wears his own clothes, has an airy room fitted up by Maple, receives and answers any number of letters, sees his wife every day, and orders any kind of food and wine he fancies. This same Justice North sent Mr. Foote to Holloway Gaol for laughing at absurdities and telling the truth, shut him in a narrow cell, fed him on prison food, and kept him there for twelve months.

A DETERMINED resistance was offered by Welsh farmers at Llanrhytid to the Christian forces engaged in seizing goods and cattle for the benefit of Mother Church. Among those who refused to submit to this legalised proof of the love which their Church bears to them were some poor-law guardians and a county magistrate. Gates were tarred and chained, foot bridges over torrents removed, and every obstacle was thrown in the way of the collectors. In one case a severe struggle occurred between the officers and the people before an entrance could be effected, sticks being used and stones thrown. Such is Christianity in action, and such is the kind of harmony and brotherly love it promotes.

THE distraining auctioneer who is the representative of Christianity in these raids threatened to bring down a regiment of soldiers to enforce his demands. He was disappointed by the cattle and hay being removed by the farmers, so that he could not find or sell the animals or goods distrained upon. When will Church or State have the sense to end the scandals of this tithe war?

THE Vicar of Lamesley, Gateshead, furnishes a fresh example of the courtesy and tolerance which Christians display towards each other. He refused to allow the burial of a Methodist's child at half-past three, as arranged. He wrote: "Not upon any consideration whatever will I allow you, or any person belonging to you, to enter my churchyard for the purpose of burial, either at three or after three o'clock." He added that the sexton must be paid the usual fee of 8s before he could be allowed to open the grave. This is the Christian consolation which a minister of the Church offers to parents who have lost a child. Mr. Burt's questions in Parliament on the matter may make the vicar ashamed of himself. Mr. Matthews acknowledges that the Select Committee on Burial Fees have reported that the clergy are not entitled to exact fees prior to the opening of a grave.

THE Rev. R. H. Baynes, was arrested at Gloucester, and charged with failing to appear to his recognisances to answer three charges of obtaining money and lodgings under false pretences. His sureties had each had to pay £100. The magistrates committed the prisoner for trial. The prisoner had the impudence to ask to be let out on bail once more, but the bench unanimously refused his application. The very reverend Canon of Worcester, and former Vicar of St. Michael's, Coventry, and Holy Trinity, Folkestone, will now taste the sweets of prison life. Of course he will consider himself much above the common herd of rogues and vagabonds. Christ has washed away his sins, and his friends are well-to-do, so he will probably feel that he is a Christian martyr undergoing persecution from an unfeeling world.

FRANK LEYBOURNE, an evangelist in connection with the Gospel Union, thinks he has the right to annoy a tradesman and

keep his children awake by continually singing hymns opposite his door. Other people join in the singing till the customers cannot be heard in the shop in consequence of the noise. The magistrates imposed a fine of 40s., but the evangelist was obstinate and insisted on his right to annoy other people as much as he pleased. As he would not pay the fine, he was sent to prison for seven days. Another Christian martyr.

ANOTHER pious gentleman in distress! The Rev. J. H. Turner is persecuted by the ungodly in the Isle of Wight. He goes about living on faith—not his own faith, but other people's. The "tick" business became at length so flagrant that the reverend "ticker" was arrested; the police sergeant who took him into custody finding him drunk in a chair. Before the magistrate he confessed to being in debt, like other gentlemen; and generally expounded the philosophy of the worthy Pistol, who exclaimed "Base is the slave that pays." Finally he was removed to Portsmouth Gaol on remand, after vainly beseeching "a little stimulant."

A RECENT case at the Middlesex Sessions shows how religion is a cloak for rascality. John Lacey pleaded guilty to indecently assaulting Jane Ferry. Under ordinary circumstances he would have been sent to prison, but several Sunday-school teachers gave him an excellent character, and he was simply bound over in £20 to come up for judgment if called upon. Moral—make friends among Sunday-school teachers before "going wrong."

THE Church of England Working Men's Society reports itself over £500 in debt, and with no balance at its bankers'. Mr. C. Powell is, of course, very active in passing round the plate.

THE Rev. C. Burrough, of Eaton Bishop, does not get on very well with his churchwarden, and he does his quarrelling moreover in church time. The consequence is that the churchwarden charges him with assault and compares him in the local papers to Judas Iscariot—an expression which he declines to withdraw. The complainant, a gentleman farmer elected as people's churchwarden, followed the rector in church with a view of enforcing the Bishop's order concerning the disposal of the collection. On reaching the vestry the rector, who was carrying the alms dish, turned round and pushed him and slammed the door in his face. The rector raised a point of law as to the warden's right to enter the vestry and thus took the matter out of the jurisdiction of the local magistrates.

JOSHUA HUMPHREYS is starring at Brighton and other places as a convert from "infidelity." He claims to have been a member of the National Secular Society, and, according to his own account, he has had an adventurous career. We can quite believe the latter statement. With respect to the former, we understand that Mr. Forder, the Secretary of the National Secular Society, knows quite enough, if not too much, of Joshua Humphreys.

WHAT soft-headed folk the Christians must be to make so much of such a convert. All our Freethought leaders, to say nothing of thousands of the rank and file, are converts from Christianity. This big fact—gross as a mountain, open, palpable—is quite overlooked. The pious concentrate their attention on a little fact, like Joshua Humphreys.

By the way, how much does Joshua got for his little performances? We should like to know.

PRINCE BISMARCK is in holy orders. The theological faculty of the University of Glessen have made him a Doctor of Divinity. The clergy are dissatisfied, and one pious journal is particularly horrified at the idea that the Prince may now enter a pulpit and preach.

A "CHRISTIAN clergyman" complains in the *Daily News* of the "monstrous indecency" of Lord Salisbury's "cruel and senseless insult" to Hindoos. But why does a Christian allow himself the use of such language; who should he revile again? Ought he not loyally to accept the words and acts of the powers that be instead of fomenting hatred of leaders who are appointed by God? Perhaps he feels this objection, for he says that it is as a man rather than a Christian that he protests.

At the Leeds Police-court one day last week, a witness whose name is not given, stated that he was an Agnostic and objected to take the oath. Mr. Bruce, the stipendiary magistrate, talked the matter over with his clerk, but still seemed undecided as to what course he should take. The witness said his objection was grounded "on religious belief," so that he was a religious Agnostic. The stipendiary was still more puzzled, but at length he permitted the witness to affirm, adding that "the sooner Mr. Bradlaugh's act, prescribing the form which would suit all witnesses, came into force the better. It would relieve him from that sort of thing."

THE Vicar of Great Ryburgh has been quarrelling with his parishioners, who have retorted by burning him in effigy. The parishioners had held a meeting to consider the purchase of a new fireproof safe wherein to deposit the parish documents—the

minute-book of the last fifty years having been lost. The vicar was angry at this and wrote the following elegant message to the assembled vestry: "If you decide to purchase a new chest for the parish books, and deposit it in the church, I shall simply get a man to help me chuck it over the church wall; and I forbid you to alter the lock on the old chest." The people of Great Ryburgh naturally resented this insolent communication, and gave vent to their indignation in a little *auto da fê* of a somewhat more merciful character than the Church was wont to bestow on those who offended her in the days of her power.

THE morning after the declaration of the School Board poll in London, a certain schoolmaster gave his scholars the figures of the successful candidates on a blackboard. Being a very pious man, he felt that the scholars would be staggered by seeing Mrs. Besant's name at the top of the poll in the Tower Hamlets, so he told them that she had been elected by those dreadful people down at Whitechapel, where all the murders were committed. Fact!

ORTHODOX politicians, Tory and Liberal, are crying out against the cumulative vote, and demanding the abolition of big constituencies. From the Freethought point of view, we prefer the present system. It gives us a chance of *some* representation, whereas a different system—say of single-member constituencies—would give us none. Mrs. Besant polled 15,926 votes in the Tower Hamlets, but 2,667 were plumpers, and the probability is that a little over 3,000 ratepayers voted for her. Yet there are no less than 65,000 voters in the whole division. What chance, then, would Mrs. Besant stand, with all her fine gifts, if she had to secure an absolute majority in any single locality? Thank you, the present system will do for us just now.

IN opening the Tate Free Library in South Lambeth Road, Mr. Mundella dwelt on the need of pure literature, especially for young people. We quite agree with him, and for that reason we desire to see the Bible excluded from our public schools. Mr. Mundella, however, regards that dirty book as holy, and he insists on dosing children with its inspired filth.

THE *Christian Herald* gives an account of a jacket being "sent in answer to prayer." God sent two jackets in a parcel, and had despatched them it appears, "even before we had asked." "Shortly after our application," the account proceeds, "they arrived, and one of them exactly fitted the little fellow. Our heavenly Father knew his size to a nicety. God does answer the prayers of his people, and does not put to shame those who trust him." Then why doesn't God provide food and clothing and shelter for all who pray to him? He knows the size of their stomachs if he knows the size of their jackets. Why has he so often put to shame those who trusted in him?

MR. QUARRIER says that since he has devoted himself to God's service he has never wanted a coat nor a shilling. God has given him all he needed. If he wanted a coat, a coat came. If he wanted an umbrella one would be sure to be sent to him. So Mr. Quarrier is sure that "God provides for His people, and He seems to take special care of the orphans." Then why does God permit so many orphans to starve or go to the bad for lack of parental care? Why does he occasionally provide for his children by allowing millions of them to perish of hunger or pestilence, while he spends his time in carefully seeing that Mr. Quarrier is immediately provided with a fresh umbrella every time he loses his old one?

AT West-end Baptist Chapel, Hammersmith, the second coming of Christ is announced to be a spiritual and not a physical event. Another sign of the modification to which modern Christianity is subjected is the statement heard at one of the lectures at this chapel, that "that damnable belief in the vicarious sacrifice of Christ never saved one soul from hell, but it has damned more than all other causes together." Christianity must be changing somewhat when such teachings can be put forth in a chapel.

THE *Rock* directs the attention of the religious world to the necessity for providing religious training for school teachers in order that the pupils may also be religiously trained in turn. It also insists that the schoolmasters appointed must be decided Christians and "converted" men. This is quite right from the Christian point of view. They may as well postpone the inevitable as long as possible.

II. GRATTAN GUINNESS, who earned a little notoriety by aspersing Mr. Bradlaugh, is now perambulating the country on the "men only" ticket. That is a capital plan for securing an audience. If women cannot go to Guinness's lecture, the men will, and Guinness knows it.

"I NEVER write about religion unless I have a special object." So said Mr. Gladstone (according to the *Pull Mall Gazette*) when asked to review the novel entitled *John Ward, Preacher*. We quite believe the Grand Old Man. When he championed Moses in the *Nineteenth Century*, it was on the eve of a general election, and very likely he wanted to show the country that his orthodoxy was perfectly sound. When he criticised Ingersoll in the *North*

American Review, his special object was probably the big cheque the editor offered him for the use of his name. And when he declined a second innings, his special object was probably to avoid another bad beating.

MRS. GLADSTONE, says the *P. M. G.*, declares that "her husband considers it one of his most sacred duties to do his utmost to check the flood of infidelity which is sweeping over the country." Well, we have much respect for the G. O. M., but we cannot help asking if he has ever heard of Mrs. Partington.

THE secretary of the Church Missionary Society complains that "General" Booth has reprinted Canon Taylor's article on "The Great Missionary Failure," and distributed it among all well-known pious subscribers. The "General," of course, wishes it to be thought that the S. A. is successful where other agencies fail. To a certain extent, this is true. By playing low down, the S. A. contrives not to popularise, but to vulgarise, religion very considerably.

THE *Church Times* admits it is not unfair to say that there are tens of thousands, nay, millions, of Roman Catholics whose creed is virtually summed up thus: "I believe in the Blessed Virgin and the Pope;" that there are tens of thousands, perhaps millions, of Protestants whose creed is even shorter: "I believe that I am saved." These creeds are too short and easy for the C. T. It wants the Nicene piled on the Apostles' Creed, the Athanasian on the Nicene, and the Thirty-nine Articles in addition to that.

"I MYSELF, poor human worm that I am, would not have made a world of that kind." These words were spoken by Mr. Henry George at the banquet given to him the other day in London. Yet Mr. George calls himself a Christian, and talks in *Progress and Poverty* about the beneficent Creator who gave the earth to his children. Was it a case of *in vino veritas*?

WHAT a pity it is that Liberal Christians, as they are styled, will drag their religion into politics. If Secularists dragged in their irreligion they would be reproved for their bad taste. Mr. Headlam and Mr. Hastings (both parsons) stated at the Henry George banquet that Land Nationalisation was the very essence of Christianity. It is wonderful that all the other parsons do not acknowledge the discovery; and perhaps still more wonderful that such impertinence is tolerated at political meetings, where men of all sorts of religious and anti-religious views unite for a common purpose.

SAILORS are proverbially superstitious, but we were hardly prepared for such an extreme illustration as this. A seafaring friend called on us a few days ago, and told us that a fisherman he knew had left his work and come ashore for six weeks, because he had read in Zadkiel's Almanac that persons born at a certain time should be very careful of their lives between the middle of November and Christmas.

ACCORDING to the advertisement columns of a Lancashire newspaper, there is an "elderly Christian gentleman, feeling much his loneliness and deep need of a kindly, intelligent Christian wife," and who is very anxious to find such a comforter in the shape of a Christian lady "whose means place her beyond the desire for more." Capital! That elderly gentleman has little to learn from Mephistopheles.

THE *Star* treads on delicate ground in reference to the "Lingam God," advertised for sale in a New Bond Street auction room. This is a phallic deity, first cousin to the Greek Priapus. There are many references in the Bible to the cult of similar gods, and we suppose that is one reason why the "blessed book" is put into the hands of children.

"I TAKE the following philosophic prediction," says a write in the *Pull Mall Gazette*, "from an amusing account of a journey from Paris to Samarkand. 'The railway respects nothing, not even sacred spots. Before long we shall read of a "Bethlehem bifurcation," and the guards of the trains will shout: "Jerusalem! Fifteen minutes! Luncheon room!" or they will call out, "Travellers change here for Golgotha!"'"

AMERICANS go in for big things. Mrs. E. Quimley wants to collect £10,000,000 and buy Jerusalem, in order to rebuild Solomon's Temple according to the original design. She has got 7s. 6d. already. That isn't much, but it is only a beginning. Rome wasn't built in a day.

IF Mrs. Quimley knows the original design of Solomon's Temple she is wiser than most people. "Authorities," as they are politely termed, differ as to its shape; but they all agree that it was a ridiculously small affair. Mrs. Quimley won't want many seven-and-sixpences to build such another joss-house.

Antediluvian Aunt: "I'm getting an old lady now, Amelia, and there's no knowing how soon I may be called away, so I think it best you should know that I have remembered you substantially in my will!" Niece (piously): "Thy will be done."

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, Dec 9, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.; at 11.15, "The Fate of the Oaths Bill"; at 7, "Faith, Fraud and Fear."

Dec. 16, Manchester; 23, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. B. 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.

J. BENNETT.—Of course the word is "complies" in Butler's couplet. The word "convince" was merely intended to give it an ironical turn. Thanks for 1s. for the School Board Election Fund.

T. WRATISLAW.—Shakespeare's scepticism—indeed, his rank materialism—has been noticed by many commentators. The notion that death ends all is expressed through the lips of all his greatest characters. It is peculiar, too, that those of his characters who believe in a future life nearly always look forward to it with horror. Glad to hear you find *Infidel Death-Beds* so useful. You cannot do better than lend Ingersoll's pamphlets to all who will read them. He is doing (indirectly) a grand work in England as well as in America.

BIRMINGHAM FREETHINKER.—Sorry to hear you are indifferent as to whether or not the Bible is used in public schools. It is all very well to say that strong-minded people will not be victims of superstition. You underrate the power of early training. The priests do not, and that is the secret of their sovereignty.

S. HATTEN (New York).—Pleased to receive a sympathetic letter from such a distant subscriber. There is truth in your saying that just as soon as a Christian thinks, we can count him as a convert.

J. D. LEGGETT.—It was no liberty. Mr. Foote is happy to be corrected if he makes a slip. Infallibility is the virtue of fools.

W. H. H.—Your 1s. has been transmitted to Mrs. Besant. You would have saved us trouble by sending it direct.

J. RUTHERFORD.—Glad to hear you continue the secretaryship of the Sunderland Branch. You are the right man in the right place.

G. NÆWIGER, 5 Hull Place, Osborne Street, Hull, will be glad to receive any Freethought literature for distribution in that district.

R. CHAPMAN.—We hope Mr. Peacock's seat on the South Shields School Board is a secure one. Still nothing is absolutely certain, and we are glad to see the Branch is resolved to work energetically for the Secular candidate.

R. S. SEAGO desires to acknowledge the receipt of the following subscriptions towards Mr. J. H. Ellis's candidature:—J. Caspar, 4s.; V. Rogers, 3s.; Friend (Camberwell) 2s.

G. WEIR reports that the Christian Evidence Section is active again in Edinburgh, and is being opposed by the Freethinkers. The lecturers include Professor Calderwood and Professor Blaikie.

B. BRIGGS.—Thanks for the cuttings. Your experience as a canvasser is amusing, but surely it ought to convince you of the wisdom of our policy in attacking superstition. Some of your suggestions are good, but, properly considered they are rather supplementary than antagonistic to our policy.

C. K. LAPORTE.—Yes, we believe Captain Burton is still consul at Trieste. Copy received.

GREEN-HORN.—Your photo shall be returned if you send stamped addressed envelope.

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.

OBITUARY.

WHAT a world of shine and shade is this! Mr. Bradlaugh's sky was only just cleared by the public subscription which released him from debt, and now it is darkened again by the death of his elder daughter. Miss Alice Bradlaugh kept home for her father, to whom she was intensely devoted. She had considerable natural gifts and many accomplishments. Mr. Bradlaugh will miss her greatly. In common with thousands of Freethinkers, we tend him our deepest sympathy.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A first-rate audience assembled at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "Mr. Balfour's Praise of Christianity." This evening (Dec. 9) Mr. Foote lectures again on "The Three F's—Faith, Fraud and Fear."

By the time this paragraph meets our readers' eyes the Christmas Number of the *Freethinker* will be ready. It has some novel features, in addition to the old accustomed ones, and we anticipate an excellent sale. These special numbers, however,

are very expensive productions. We actually lost five pounds on the Christmas Number of 1882, for which we were prosecuted and imprisoned. We should be glad, therefore, if those who enjoy our "Christmas treat" would take an extra copy and circulate it among their liberal-minded friends.

THE new edition of *Infidel Death-Beds* is being eagerly sought for. A large consignment—relatively, of course—has been forwarded to Australia, and orders are coming from America. Besides twenty-four fresh names (no mean addition), there are other improvements. Full information is now given as to the last hours of John Stuart Mill and Volney, and a very interesting passage on Thomas Paine's last days has been added from an address by Walt Whitman.

MR. WHEELER'S *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* is in the printer's hands, and we hope soon to make a definite announcement as to its publication. We intended to issue it earlier, but it was found that more time was necessary to do justice to the work. It will comprise nearly a thousand names, and it will be invaluable to Rationalists of every shade.

"ROBERT ELSMERE" is making even more sensation in America than here. Its repudiation of the old theology is just suited to the Universalists, Unitarians and liberal theologians who are booming it along. Colonel Ingersoll, who reviews the work in the *New York Herald*, however, has as usual the right word upon its vague semi-Christian Theism. He says:

"I think the book conservative. It is an effort to save something—a few shreds and patches and ravelings—from the wreck. Theism is difficult to maintain. Why should we expect an Infinite Being to do better in another world than he has done in this? If he allows the innocent to suffer here, why not there? If he allows rascality to succeed in this world, why not in the next? To believe in God and deny his personality is an exceedingly vague foundation for a consolation. If you insist on his personality and power, then it is impossible to account for what happens. Why should an infinite God allow some of his children to enslave others? Why should he allow a child of his to burn another child of his, under the impression that such a sacrifice is pleasing to him?"

FREETHINKERS should circulate Colonel Ingersoll's *Rome or Reason* among their friends. By this means they will be doing good propagandist work. The reply to Manning is crushing. We venture to predict that the Cardinal will find discretion the better part of valor, and decline to come up to the scratch when the editor of the *North American Review* calls "time!"

EX-REV. HUGH O. PENTECOST now writes in his *Twentieth Century* that "There is no stopping-place for exact reason and exact regard for truth but in Agnosticism. It seems to me that all traditionalists ought to go into the Roman Church, and all rationalists ought to become Agnostics."

THE *Echo* talks of the "ludicrous attempt" of the London Secularists to raise the issue of excluding the Bible from Board schools. Well now, let us see. Mrs. Besant's committee wanted her to go in for "unsectarian" education, but she stood firm for "secular" and she was elected at the top of the poll in the Tower Hamlets. That's a very good number one.

NOW for number two and three. In Hackney, Mr. J. Hart and the Rev. S. D. Headlam both stood on the "secular" ticket, and both were returned. Both of them, we may add, mean business.

FOUR and five are Mr. Bowman Spink and the Rev. A. W. Oxford, who were both elected on the "secular" ticket in Westminster. They were vigorously denounced as godless educationalists in a special circular, signed by the Duke of Westminster, Mr. Goschen, and some of the leading clergy.

SIX and seven are Mr. G. C. Whiteley and the Rev. G. B. Ryley, who were at the top of the poll in East Lambeth. The Liberal and Radical Committee which put them forward adopted the "secular" ticket, and although the candidates called themselves "unsectarian," it was understood that they would support secular education whenever an opportunity presented itself. Mr. Whiteley and Mr. Ryley both admitted that Mr. A. B. Moss had been ill-used, and promised to support his right to do what he pleased with his Sunday leisure.

HERE are seven successful candidates out of fifty-five on the London School Board. How does it look now, Mr. Editor of the *Echo*? Is it so very ludicrous after all?

BUT there is something more to be said. Mr. W. F. Revell polled 5,862 votes on the "secular" ticket in Chelsea; Mr. Hubert Bland 3,876 in Finsbury; Mr. S. Quelch 2,893 in East Lambeth; Mr. J. Ward 8,116, and Mr. J. H. Ellis 2,257 in West Lambeth; Mrs. Hicks 3,578 in Marylebone; and Mr. E. Sanson 1,905 in Southwark. Here is a total of 28,787 votes polled by unsuccessful candidates; enough, if concentrated in two divisions, to have elected two candidates near the top of the list. And this is the "ludicrous" result of the first serious attempt the advanced party has yet made in London!

LIKE other journals, the *Echo* backs up its fanatical nonsense by a deliberate fraud. It calls all the "secular" candidates who were successful "unsectarians." Even Mrs. Besant is put in the "unsectarian" category. The *Daily News* wouldn't notice her at all at first, but, finding that she stood a capital chance, it took to reporting her meetings, and gravely stated that she made "a powerful speech in favor of free and unsectarian education."

THE *Pulsey News* comments smartly on the bigotry of the clericals during the School Board Election in Leeds and Bradford, and says that their virulent abuse of all who differ from them in opinion "must be a very edifying spectacle to that large part of the community which embraces Secularists and irreligious men of the world who do not actually avow themselves as unbelievers."

THE Sunderland Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday evening. Mr. John Salt was re-elected President, and we understand he is going to run for the School Board, though the Liberal caucus wants him to lie low. Mr. A. J. Lovell, one of the pleasantest men in the north of England, was re-elected Treasurer; and sturdy John Rutherford continues to act as Secretary. Unfortunately the Branch is hard pressed for a lecture hall. Place after place has been lost through the tender mercies of the local bigots.

THE South Shields Branch holds a special meeting this evening (Dec. 9) at 7.45 to consider the forthcoming School Board election. Every member should make an effort to attend.

THE recently issued twenty-fourth volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* completes a work of almost national importance. Among the many articles, that on Vaccination by Dr. Creighton is likely, though most temperately written, to give rise to much controversy. Dr. Littledale writes on the Vatican Council of 1869-70, and Professor Villari on Vico the Italian scientist, who on some points anticipated Comte. George Saintsbury rather poorly treats of Voltaire, of whom he says "In literary craftsmanship, at once versatile and accomplished, he has no superior and scarcely a rival." Dr. Garnett deals with Warburton with his usual acumen and erudition. Swinburne eulogises John Webster as "the greatest of Shakespeare's contemporaries or successors." James Williams treats Witchcraft historically, and mentions that the belief "was based partly on well known texts of the Mosaic law—especially Exodus xxii., 18—partly on peculiar constructions of other parts of Scripture, such as 1 Cor. xi. 10, where the words 'because of the angels' were supposed to prove the reality of the class of demons called *incubi*." A work authorised by Pope Innocent VIII. explained that witchcraft is more natural to women than to men, on account of the inherent wickedness of their hearts. Professor Wellhausen writes on Zechariah, and declares that the first eight chapters cannot be by the author of the remainder, which he assigns to as late a date as the time of the Maccabees. Professor Geldner writes both on Zoroaster and the Zendavesta.

THE best of the American spiritists are non-Christian. Their Chicago organ, the *Carrier Dove*, has a very good paper by William Emmette Coleman on "The Complete Secularisation of the State." Mr. Coleman denounced the Sabbatarian laws, the enforced reading of the Bible in public schools, and the employment of chaplains in the public service as being in flagrant contradiction to the principles of personal religious freedom.

Menschenhum notices the formation of several new *Freidenkerverein* in Germany and reports successful anti-theological lectures by Dr. Rüdert of Heidelberg.

THE Leeds *Times* inserts a letter from Mr. J. G. Fisher on "The Compulsory Observance of Sunday." Mr. Fisher's letter is an excellent one, and we hope it will raise a local controversy.

JOSEPH SYMES'S *Liberator* is one of the most welcome of our exchanges. The last number to hand reprints Mr. Foote's article on "Are Sceptics Stingy?" Joseph appends an editorial note, "Well done! my old friend, yours is a capital article."

THE *Echo* of Friday, Nov. 30, contained a well-written letter by R. E. H., pointing out the falsity of the claim that all works of benevolence are the outcome of Christianity.

CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

IV.—HEALING THE LAME AND THE PARALYSED.

IN several places the Gospels mention that Jesus enabled the lame to walk, but no descriptions or particulars are usually given. That a man who could hobble a little should walk a little better under the stimulus of imagination or faith was probably as common then as it is with the modern miracle-workers at Lourdes and Knock and Bethshan. The ordinary cases of this kind of miracle were probably felt to be unworthy of special description. The only cases fully

described in the Gospels are those of the restoration of an impotent man at Bethesda, and the instances of men afflicted with palsy or paralysis.

The man "sick of the palsy" whom Jesus healed in his "own city" (Nazareth), according to Matthew (ix. 1-2) or in a different city, Capernaum, according to Mark (ii. 1-12), was restored by the assurance that his sins were forgiven him, followed up (after argument with "the scribes and Pharisees") by what Jesus puts forth as a thoroughly conclusive confirmation or ratification of the assurance in the shape of a command to take up his bed and walk. The miracle thus performed somehow proves that Jesus has the power to forgive sins, although miracles were also worked by the aid of devils who, of course, had no power to forgive sins, and by Moses and the prophets whose power to forgive sins was at least doubtful.

The centurion's servant (Matt. viii., 5-13) was cured of his palsy by Jesus as a reward for his *master's* great faith—a vicarious kind of faith-healing.

In the case of the miracle at the pool of Bethesda, John, who alone records it, says that "an angel went down at a certain season and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had." Do modern Christians believe this? Is it credible that God sent an angel at certain periods into a particular sheep-pond in order to splash the water about, and that the water thus received the peculiar and wonderfully discriminative power of deciding who first out of "a great multitude" stepped into it, and that this water then healed the particular person who was first by so much as a millionth of a second, and healed him moreover of any disease whatsoever? What peculiar and contradictory qualities these muddy waters must have possessed. And how strangely this diffused magical energy of a whole pond must have completely and instantaneously discharged itself like electricity upon the first object that touched it. Is it conceivable that John speaks the truth in describing these circumstances? Is it likely that if a God worked miracles he would work them in this arbitrary and most unsatisfactory manner—the effect being decided by a pell-mell scramble, in which the strongest and most selfish, who needed and deserved help the least, would almost always secure the sole benefit of the wonderful miracle thus vouchsafed? If the inspiration of St. John caused him to adopt vulgar superstitions as facts, how do we know that his accounts of Christ's miracles are any more trustworthy than his untruthful account of other miracles?

The answer of the impotent man to Jesus shows the folly and injustice of the divine arrangements. When Jesus questions him, he explains that the reason he is not "made whole" is that he has no man to put him into the pool when the water is troubled, as that while he is slowly making his way to the pond another person steps before him. Jesus then says to him "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." The man promptly obeys and the miracle is complete. Not only does it remove the actual cause of the impotence, but, although the man has been impotent for thirty-eight years, it communicates the free use and pliancy and aptitude which belong only to long and continuous practice.

This part of the narrative which so inconveniently commits God's Word to the belief in the miraculous sheep-pond, is prudently omitted from the Revised Version, which simply notes on the margin that "Many ancient authorities insert, wholly or in part—waiting for the moving of the water: for an angel of the Lord went down at certain seasons into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole, with whatsoever disease he was holden." The Revisers have cut this out from the text, as they have done other portions of the Bible elsewhere. But the credit of the Bible is only partly saved, for the answer of the impotent man and the assemblage of a "great multitude" of impotent folk and of "blind, halt, withered," imply substantially the same superstitious belief as is contained in the part now omitted. How strange it is that God's Word should need such corrections. The Bible has suffered from these often infirmities for sixteen centuries, and is becoming more impotent every day. Now that the waters are troubled by the angel of criticism, its attendant priests seek to wash away its faults and corruptions by a hasty and reluctant dip. They are too late: for Man has stepped in first and regained the free use of his crippled mind.

W. P. BALL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER"

SIR,—The exigencies of electioneering have prevented me from replying before to the letter of "One of Mr. Bland's Committee," which appeared in your issue of November 11th.

Whether I was "ill advised and impertinent" in appealing at Claremont Hall for help for Mrs. Besant is purely a matter of opinion. On that point I therefore say nothing. But your correspondent is entirely wrong in saying that I asked the workers in Finsbury to come to the Tower Hamlets. I did nothing of the kind. I simply appealed to those who were not working anywhere else to come and help Mrs. Besant. I knew perfectly well that not all those present were Finsbury people; the first person who gave me his name lived at Hampstead. One gentleman, probably your correspondent, complained to me of what I had done, and I therefore spoke to the chairman of the meeting, who quite exonerated me from all blame. As a proof that the audience generally understood me I may say that we got no help from Finsbury for Mrs. Besant.

I should not have troubled you with this letter if it had not been for the veiled attempt on the part of your correspondent to breed dissension between Socialists and Secularists. I spoke as much for Secularism as for Socialism, and sorry as I am that Mr. Bland is defeated, I hold that Mrs. Besant's defeat would have been a far heavier blow to Secularism than the return of all the other Secular candidates would have been an advantage. Let me say finally that if all the Secularists of London had been as true to their secular principles as the Socialists have been to Secularism, Freethought would have been considerably stronger in the present School Board than it will now be during the next three years.

HERBERT BURROWS.

WHAT CRANKY JOHN SAW ON PATMOS.

To ascertain what it was St. John saw on Patmos Mr. J. Theodore Bent made two visits to the island. In the current number of the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Bent gives his reasons for thinking that many of the descriptions in the Book of Revelation really refer to eruptions which took place in the adjacent volcanic island of Thera, which literally means "the beast." Mr. Bent shows that eruptions took place in 46 A.D. and 60 A.D., and compares the account of subsequent volcanic disturbances with passages in the sixth and eighth chapters of the Apocalypse. In the latter chapter, for instance, it says: "The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up." In M. Delenda's account of the eruption in 1707 we read of the flames which issued out of the sea, and of the damage done by the noxious vapors, and by the terrible crashing fall of the volcanic bombs. Many other illustrations are given, and we are told the inhabitants believe the cone to be the entrance to the bottomless pit, and in the smoke which issues from it they fancy they see demons coming out. The volcanoes and earthquakes appear to have got mixed up in John's addled brain with belief in the approach of the last day. The eruptions may, indeed, have contributed to his craze, and so to the thousands of lunatics who have become cracked by studying the Book of Revelation.

CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

ACCORDING to this (the popular and received theology of Christian communities) the condition of the departed depends ultimately upon the will of a being who a long while ago cursed all mankind because one woman disobeyed him. The curse was no mere symbol of displeasure, but a fixed resolve to keep his victims alive for ever, writhing in horrible tortures, in a place which his divine foreknowledge had prepared beforehand. In consideration, however, of the death of his son, effected by unknowing agents, he consented to feed with the sweets of his favor such poor wretches as should betray their brethren and speak sufficiently soft words to the destroyer of their kindred. For the rest, the old curse survives in its power; condemning them to everlasting torment for a manifestation of his glory. To the dead then, if this be the future life, there is left only the choice between shame and suffering.

How well and nobly soever a man shall have worked for his fellows, he must end by being either the eternal sycophant of a celestial despot, or the eternal victim of a celestial executioner. If this horrible story be true, the noblest thing left for us is to curse God and die. The awful wickedness which the popular legend ascribes to its Deity is not to be got rid of by any corresponding monstrosity of structure, by giving him five heads or three personalities, or a round hundred of eyes or arms. The things which are told of him are foul and despicable deeds, worse than any known to be done by Cerberus or Cyclops.—W. K. Clifford, *Fortnightly Review*.

THE BIBLE.—The real oppressor, enslaver, and corrupter of the people is the Bible. That book burnt heretics, built dungeons, founded the Inquisition, and trampled upon all the liberties of man. That book spreads the pall of superstition over the colleges and schools. That book puts out the eyes of science, and makes honest investigation a crime. That book fills the world with bigotry, hypocrisy, and fear. How long, Oh, how long! will mankind worship a book? How long will they grovel in the dust before the ignorant legends of the barbaric past?—*Ingersoll*.

THE CHURCH AND DISSENT.

AN instance of how Churchmen regard Dissenters, and how far the clergy of the State Church abuse their privileges of education is seen in a book by the Rev. F. A. Gace, of Great Barling, Essex, entitled "Some Questions of the Church Catechism and Doctrines Involved" briefly explained, for the use of families and parochial schools. The work in question has run through ten editions. Here are a few sample quotations:—

"85. We have amongst us various sects and denominations who go by the general name of Dissenters. In what light are we to consider them? A. As heretics, and in our Litany we expressly pray to be delivered from the sins of false doctrine, heresy, and schism.

"86. Is then their worship a laudable service? A. No; because they worship God according to their own evil and corrupt imaginations, and not according to his revealed will, and therefore their worship is idolatrous."

"87. Is Dissent a great sin? A. Yes; it is in direct opposition to our duty to God."

"91. But why have not Dissenters been excommunicated? A. Because the law of the land does not allow the wholesome law of the Church to be acted upon; but Dissenters have virtually excommunicated themselves by setting up a religion of their own and leaving the ark of God's Church."

Part of answer to question 96 is:—"The very circumstances of their being Dissenters shows that they have fallen from the unity of the Church Catholic, and consequently are not in a state of salvation."

Part of answer to question 97:—"It must be sinful and presumptuous for those persons who are careful Dissenting teachers to address the throne of grace, usurping the priestly office."

"98. Is it wicked to enter a meeting house at all? Most assuredly, because" etc., etc.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

IN Mr. Frith's new and third volume of *Reminiscences*, he tells the following story:—

"Solomon Alexander Hart was a Jew—the first and, up to the present, the last of his race ever seen in our Academic ranks. The year of Hart's election as associate I forget—if I ever knew it; but it must have taken place about 1830. In the course of the new associate's round of calls, he paid his respects to an R.A. whose name I shall conceal under that of Mr. Christian. This gentleman had the reputation of being a very religious man, a constant church-goer; he also had the reputation of being of an ill-natured and jealous disposition, and famed for saying unpleasant things. Of this Hart was fully aware; but he was not prepared for so complete an illustration of this habit as his interview afforded.

"Mr. Hart," said the Academician, "I am glad to see you. You must forgive me, sir, if I say that I view your admission into our ranks with disapproval—not, believe me, because I do not admire your art (your picture of Wolsey frowning on Buckingham I thought good, very good indeed), but I cannot conceal from myself that, as your co-religionists are neither admitted to Parliament nor to any offices of State, more especially as they are not permitted to enter the colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, your admission to the Royal Academy is—forgive me, my conscience compels me to speak—a matter to be deplored."

"This was a "facer,"" said Hart, as he related it to me; "but it was nothing to what followed."

"Mr. Christian lived in a handsome house in the suburbs, having the advantage of a large garden, in which, on the occasion of Hart's visit, a boy was trundling a hoop. Mr. Christian tapped at the window and called to the boy, who presently entered the room.

"Henry," said the Academician, "I want you to see the new associate, Mr. Hart; this gentleman, Henry, is a Jew. I hope you bear in your mind the lesson last Sunday, in which your mother instructed you so fully on the history of that misguided race. They are spoken of, you know, as "the wicked Jews." Wicked, indeed, they were for the death of our blessed Lord lies at their door. It is to that sect that this gentleman belongs."

Hart seems to have been a good-tempered fellow or he might have made a crushing retort. On another occasion, when at a friend's where a boar's head was placed upon the table, Hart said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

PROFANE JOKES.

Husband (all ready for the theatre): "I declare, dear, it's raining hard." Wife (buttoning her gloves): "Well, what is a little rain? One would think from your tone of voice that we were about to start for church."—*Court Journal*.

"Pocahontas was a great man!" cried the orator. "Pocahontas was a kind-hearted and a true man!" "Hold on!" said a critical hearer—"hold on! Pocahontas was a woman." "She was—eh?" said the unabashed one. "Well, that's just my luck! How am I expected to know? I never read the Bible!"

A minister, with a rather florid complexion, had gone into the shop of a barber, one of his parishioners, to be shaved. The barber was addicted to heavy bouts of drinking, after which his hand was, in consequence, unsteady at his work. In shaving the minister he inflicted a cut, sufficiently deep to cover the lower part of the face with blood. The minister turned to the barber and said in a tone of solemn severity, "You see, Thomas, what comes of taking too much drink." "Ay," replied Thomas, "it mak's the skin vorra tender."

Price Threepence.

THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF
THE "FREETHINKER," 1888.

CONTENTS.

ARTICLES.—Christmas at Nazareth, A.D. 1. The Babe of Bethlehem. John the Baptist, Esq. The Israelites in the Desert. God's Relations. The Unfortunate Prince. A Growl from God the Father. Arrest of Jehovah the Ripper. Mainly about People. Some Bible Questions. Captain Collop on Early Piety. Sacred Correspondence. Rib Ticklers, etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS.—St. John's Menagerie (11 sketches). The Star in the East (6 sketches). Christmas at Nazareth, A.D. 1. J. C.'s Temptation. The Unfortunate Prince (8 sketches). Moses the Stone-mason. Catch Me if You Can. The Story of Man (6 sketches). Bible Jokes (4 sketches). Jehovah's Armory. A Flying God. His Tender Mercies.

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