

THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

[TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

"COMIC BIBLE" SKETCHES.—XXVIII.



DIVINE ILLUMINATION.

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."—
Genesis i., 3.

SUNDAY TYRANNY.

LAST Sunday the myriads of Paris turned out to the Chantilly races. The sun shone brilliantly, and all went merry as a marriage bell. Yet there was no drunkenness or disorder; on the contrary, the multitude behaved with such decorum, that one English correspondent said it would not have appeared strange if a bishop had stepped forward in full canonicals to give them his benediction.

Why cannot Englishmen enjoy their Sunday's leisure like the French? Because we are still under the bondage of Puritanism; because our religious dress is nothing but Hebrew Old Clothes; because we follow Moses instead of Jesus; because we believe that man was made for the Sabbath, instead of the Sabbath for man; because, in short, there are in England a lot of sour Christians who play the dog in the manger, and will neither enjoy themselves on Sunday nor let anyone else. They often prate about liberty, but they understand it as the Yankee did, who defined it as the right to do as he pleased and the right to make everybody else do so too.

Let us all be unhappy on Sunday, is the burden of their song. Now, we have no objection to their being miserable, if they desire it, on that or any other day. This is supposed to be a free country; you decide to be wretched and you select your own time for the treat. But you have no right to interfere with your neighbors. This, however, is what the Christians, with their customary "cheek," will insist on doing. They like going to the church and the public-house on Sunday, and those establishments are permitted to open; they have no wish to go elsewhere, and so they keep

all other establishments closed. This is mere impudence. Let them go where they choose, and allow the same freedom to other people. Those who advocate a free Sunday ask for no favor; they demand justice. They do not propose to compel any Christian to enter a museum, a library, or an art gallery; they simply claim the right to go in themselves. The denial of that right is a violation of liberty, which every free man is bound to resent.

This country is said to be civilised. To a certain extent it is, but all our civilisation has been won against Christianity and its brutal laws. Our toiling masses, in factory, mine, shop, and counting-house, have one day of leisure in the week. Rightly considered it is of infinite value. It is a splendid breathing-time. We cast off the storm and stress of life, fling aside the fierce passion of gain, and let the spirit of humanity throb in our pulses and stream from our eyes. Our fellow-man is no longer a rival, but a brother. His gain is not our loss. We enrich each other by the noble give-and-take of fellowship, and feel what it really is to *live*. Yet our Christian legislature tries its utmost to spoil the boon. It cannot prevent us from visiting each other, or walking as far as our legs will carry us; but almost everything else is tabooed. Go to church, it says. Millions answer, We are sick of going; we have heard the same old story until it is unspeakably stale, and many of the sermons have been so frequently repeated that we suspect they were bought by the dozen. Then it says, Go to the public-house. But a huge multitude answer, We don't want to go there either, except for a minute to quench our thirst; we have no wish for spirituous any more than spiritual intoxication; we desire some other alternative than gospel or gin. Then our Christian legislature answers, You are discontented fools. It crushes down their better aspirations, and condemns them to a wearisome inactivity.

Go through London, the metropolis of the world, as we call it, on a Sunday. How utterly dreary it is! The shutters are all up before the gay shop-windows. You pace mile after mile of streets, with sombre houses on either hand as though tenanted by the dead. You stand in front of the British Museum, and it looks as if it had been closed since the date of the mummies inside. You yearn to walk through its galleries, to gaze on the relics of antiquity, to inspect the memorials of the dead, to feel the subtle links that bind together the past and the present, and make one great family of countless generations of men. But you must wander away disappointed and dejected. You repair to the National Gallery. You long to behold the masterpieces of art, to have your imagination quickened and thrilled by the glories of form and color, to look once more on some favorite picture which touches your nature to its finest issues. But again you are foiled. You desire to visit a library, full of books you cannot buy, and there commune with the great minds who have left their thoughts to posterity. But you are frustrated again. You are cheated out of your natural right, and treated less like a man than a dog.

This Christian legislature has much to answer for. Drunkenness is our great national vice. And how is it to be overcome? Preaching will not do it. Give Englishmen a chance, furnish them with counter attractions, and they will abjure intoxication like their continental neighbors. Elevate their tastes, and they will feel superior to the vulgar temptation of drink. Every other method has been tried and has failed; this is the only method that promises success.

Fortunately the Sunday question is growing. Christian tyranny is evidently doomed. Mr. Howard's motion for the opening of public museums and art galleries, although defeated, received the support of eighty-five members of Parliament. That minority will increase again next year, and



in time it will become a majority. Mr. Broadhurst, for some peculiar reason, voted against it, but we imagine he will some day repent of his action. The working-classes are fools if they listen to the idle talk about Sunday labor, with which the Tories and bigots try to bamboozle them. The opening of public institutions on Sunday would not necessitate a hundredth part of the labor already employed in keeping open places of worship, and driving rich people to and fro. All the nonsense about the thin end of the wedge is simply dust thrown into their eyes. The very people who vote against Sunday freedom under a pretence of opposing Sunday labor, keep their own servants at work and visit the "Zoo" in the afternoon, where they doubtless chuckle over the credulity of the lower orders. Christian tyranny unites with Tory oppression to debase and enslave the people. It is time that both were imperiously stopped. The upper classes wish to keep us ignorant, and parsons naturally want everybody else's shutters up when they open shop. We ought to see through the swindle. Let us check their impudence, laugh at their hypocrisy, and rescue our Sunday from their hands.

G. W. FOOTE.

SAVAGE RELIGION.

The Origin of Civilization and Primitive Condition of Man.
By Sir JOHN LUBBOCK. (4th edition). Longmans.
1882.

WE take the occasion of a new edition, with numerous additions, of this standard work, to call attention to its important contributions towards a study of the genesis and developments of religion.

In a previous work ("Prehistoric Times") Sir John Lubbock, whom we may venture to designate the historian of the prehistoric, ably summarised the evidence for man's antiquity and the stages of his industrial development through the old and new stone eras to the ages of bronze and of iron, derived from a survey of the flint implements drawn from all parts of the earth, and from caves where men dwelt, probably worse off than the present Esquimaux; from the shell mounds of Denmark and Scotland, where they lived mainly on fish, much like the present savages of Terra del Fuego; from the lake dwellings of Switzerland, where we have probably the earliest evidence of man as an agriculturist with domestic animals; and from the old mounds and tumuli raised over the dead in various parts of the world, and the analogues to ancient customs that are found among modern savages.

The observations upon the mental and social condition of savages in the present volume entirely confirm the author's conclusions "That existing savages are not the descendants of civilised ancestors. That the primitive condition of man was one of utter barbarism, and that from this condition several races have independently raised themselves." From an examination of savage arts and ornaments, marriage, domestic customs and relationships, religion, laws, language, and moral conditions, comes the most complete proof that in all communities of which we can trace the development, the tendency has been, upon the whole, an upward one—a history of progress, and not a history of degradation. In vain did the Duke of Argyle attempt to impugn these conclusions. The researches of Tylor, Maine, McLennan, and of all archæologists, have only served to confirm this general view. But it is with the evolution of religion that we have specially to do.

Old Hobbes declared that religion was superstition in fashion, and superstition religion out of fashion. Researches into the early genesis of religious beliefs strongly confirm this statement. Sir John Lubbock says:—

"It must, however, be admitted that religion, as understood by the lower savage races, differs essentially from ours; nay, it is not only different, but even opposite. Thus, it is an affair of this world, not of the next. Their deities are evil, not good; they may be forced into compliance with the wishes of man; they generally require bloody, and often rejoice in human, sacrifices; they are mortal, not immortal; a part, not the author, of nature; they are to be approached by dances rather than by prayers; and often approve what we call vice rather than what we esteem as virtue" (p. 202).

Persons with their eyes wide open can discern many remnants of the mental and social conditions of savages surviving amid what we call civilisation. It would not be difficult to find parallels in our highest circles of many of

the peculiar features of savagery and barbarism. For instance, vulgar ornaments. What are bracelets and bangles but pleasant reminders of women's earlier manacled captivity? Limb compression, buying and selling in marriage, etc., not to mention the thousand and one symbols of an earlier and less advanced civilisation? And so with religion. The highest developed faiths bear some evidence of the superstitions whence they emerged, just as surely as the sacred stone knife used by Jews and Egyptians in circumcision points back to the time when metal implements were unknown. Is not the religion we see around us rather an affair of this world than the next? Ask the parsons, who get the fat of this, and are never in haste to hurry from this vale of tears into a better land. Is not the Trinity a remnant of Polytheism? Are not the Christian deities, who damn the most of human beings for not believing in and worshipping them, evil rather than good? Is it not thought they may be forced into compliance with the wishes of man, or why do the religionists "wrestle in prayer" usually for temporal blessings? What are the Church of England forms of prayer for rain and fine weather and good harvests, and in times of famine, war, or outrages in Ireland, but survivals of the incantations of savage medicine-men? They never could have arisen among men endowed with the conception of universal law. The belief in miracles takes us back to a pre-scientific age. In the antics of Shakers, Salvationists, Revivalists and Ranters of all kinds we find witness of the early method of approaching the deities as practised by Shamans and devil-worshippers. And certainly Yahveh, the God of the Jews, often approved what we call vice rather than what we esteem as virtue. He demanded bloody sacrifices, and rejoiced in their sweet savor (Gen. vii., 21). It is evident from Leviticus xxvii., 29, Micah vi., 6 (Heb.), and the story of Jephthah, that human sacrifices were once common among the Jews, and that animals were substituted as symbols, just as the Romish mass is a symbol of the offer of the blood of Christ. Indeed, this is conveyed in the legend of Abraham and Isaac. And when Yahveh had an only-begotten Son the old Jew-God still must have his pound of flesh. "Without shedding of blood is no remission of sins." For upwards of a thousand years the whole Christian world believed that the ransom for man's redemption was paid over to the devil. The very phrases, "the sacrifice of the Lamb of God" and "the efficacy of the blood," take us back as surely to their savage origin as the tale of Little Red Riding Hood takes us back to the time when wolves were common; the phrases "Mother of God" and "incarnation" remind us of a common savage idea of gods becoming men, arising from their men having become worshipped as gods, as surely as the building of churches to the east recalls the times of sun-worship. No religion has yet wholly emancipated itself from fetichism. The Brahmans, Buddhists and Catholics have it in their accommodations to saint and idol worship. The severely Monotheistic Mohammedans have it in their worship of the Kaaba or black stone. The Protestants have it in their Bible. The savage beliefs in dreams, ghosts, devils and witchcraft, built as securely on Bible texts as any doctrines whatever (see *Freethinker*, April 16th), are scarcely yet quite extinct, and charms, omens and divination still retain their hold upon some believers. If closely-examined in the light of Sir John Lubbock's researches, almost every doctrine and practice of modern religion will be found to have its roots in savagery. The advance upwards to civilisation means scepticism, and the disengagement from a myriad cherished beliefs.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.—SERMON XXXI.

GOD?

JESUS uttered one grand truth, which he unfortunately spoilt by a falsehood in the very next breath; thus: "Ye worship ye know not what" [perfect truth]; "we know what we worship" [absolute falsehood] (John iv., 22). It is a pity he did not realise the universal application of the first proposition. However, he lived too early for that, as many live too early even now to see how true it is that nobody knows what he worships—except his deity be some sensuous object.

What is God? Let us see what light etymology throws on the question—not much, possibly. In the Saxon, Old Saxon, Frisian, Dutch, and Low German languages the word is (or was) written *god*; in Danish, Swedish, Icelandic,

gud; German, *gott*; Old German, *got* or *cot*; Gothic, *guth*; Persian, *khodd*; Afghan, *chuddi*; among the Samoyedes of Russia the word is *kudai*; in Hindustanee, *khooda*. It is probable that the Sanscrit word *guth*, to cover, to conceal (whence comes *gūḍha*, a secret, a mystery), is the oldest form of the word now remaining (see "Ogilvie's Dictionary"). This seems a very natural view to take of it, for, confessedly, *god* does not show himself much. "Verily thou art a god that hidest thyself;" and "No man hath seen God at any time," are well-worn platitudes of theology. Indeed, all the religions of civilised nations proceed upon the assumption that God is invisible.

Dr. Brewer ("Dictionary Phrase and Fable") gives the following fanciful derivation of the word:—"God, Greek *agath*, (good), contracted into *'gath*; Goth, *goth* (God)." Here theology prevails, as it often does, over scholarship and common-sense both. To be sure, Dr. Brewer errs in large, if not good company, and many theologians will keep him in countenance. But, theologians being judges, the Hebrew is the oldest language (if theology be correct) in which are embedded the primary principles of divinity and the oldest terms to designate God. Now no Hebrew name for God means *good*, or gives the slightest hint of such a quality. *El*, *Eloah*, *Elioun* all give the idea of *strength*, or *power*. And it would be a curious incident to stumble upon, were we to find that the very best idea of God was first indicated in a heathen language, and missed entirely by that in which the oldest revelation appeared. This is a point theologians never present to their hearers and readers. It amounts to this: In Hebrew, the language of the oldest revelation Jews and Christians boast of, *God* means the *strong one*, that is, the GIANT; in all the Teutonic languages the words *God* and *good* are essentially the same! Goodness is a higher and nobler quality than strength or force; at least, it is so to-day, whatever may have been the case in long-past periods. Are we to infer, therefore, that our Gothic or Teutonic heathen forefathers, with not a ray of revelation to guide them, entertained higher and nobler conceptions of God than they did who were favored with more than a thousand years of almost uninterrupted and close intimacy with God? If the etymology of God and good can be shown to be what it certainly seems to be, and if it can be established that our heathen forefathers meant the *good one* or the *good being* when they used the word God, then, I contend, our Pagan ancestors did better and rose higher without revelation than the Jews and early Christians did with it, for neither in Hebrew nor Greek do the words used to denote God give the remotest hint of goodness!

Nor is that all. If the words *god* and *good* are really one in their etymology, as seems almost certain, then our forefathers applied this term denoting *goodness* to *Wodin*, *Thor*, and the rest of the gods and goddesses of their worship, and thus we realise the funny fact that our forefathers had a higher moral conception of their false gods than the Jews ever possessed of the *true* one, even though the latter revealed himself to them! How shall we explain this great mystery? Did the true god know that he was *not* good, and so keep silence upon the matter? And did the false gods realise their own goodness and so reveal it? Is that the true explanation, or is there some other? Theology is the funniest thing existing; you cannot mention a single point in it without joking, though you may mean to be never so serious; and this point is as comic as most of the rest.

There is a subject, however, not to be overlooked, viz., the sense in which the ancients understood the word *good*. With us a good man is a highly moral and benevolent one; was it so in the ages past? Certainly not. Moral conceptions are all younger than most others. With the cannibal a good man means almost the same as a good pig or sheep does with us, that is, a good man is he who is good for eating. With our ancient Gothic ancestors, evidently a good man was a *Goth*, or *hero*, he who best defended the tribe or brought home most trophies of war. Possibly the *Goths* meant with them the *good* tribe or nation, just as the Franks meant the *free* tribe, etc. A god with the Goths would no doubt be a goth or *guth*—that is, a hero. And thus we find ourselves landed in an almost universal worship, the worship, that is, of heroes really, or of the forces and objects of nature regarded as heroes.

All nations and tribes have had gods, and have more or less speculated upon their nature as the ages have rolled on; so that the *name* or word used to designate the object of worship, though retaining very much of its original

form and sound through numberless generations, has come at length to mean something very different from what it did when used by the original worshipper. Thus the Hebrew gods were essentially men at the beginning and for long after. Indeed, the Jews and Christians have not got rid of those conceptions yet. The Bible gods, the very best of them, walk and talk, think (not much) and speak, they sleep and wake, they eat and drink, and exhibit all human members and all human passions, the most brutal especially. It is true, the Christians have tried what refining would do. They have taken away from their God all that the knife would remove; and next they have tried what distillation (the most destructive distillation even) and *rectification* would do. The result is—nothing, except the name. The term God remains, but it means *nothing* now.

This refining process seems to have been carried out and finished in India long before the Christians existed or Jews had begun to doubt. "*Ekam eva advitiyam*, there is but one Being, no second; nothing really exists but the one universal spirit called Brahman, and whatever appears to exist independently is identical with that spirit." It appears that Hinduism is founded upon Pantheism; but what that is I do not know. I know something of the juggle of words which is held to set forth Pantheism; and I have no doubt many of its advocates really imagine that at least they understand themselves; but I feel persuaded that they do not—if they did, their reason would prevent the utterance of the nonsense they indulge in whenever they open their mouths on the subject. If god is every thing, then every thing is god; and that shows that god must be one thing and an infinite number of things at the same time! Saturn devoured his own children; but the Pantheistic deity (or whatever it is) devours himself! I can understand the Theist, so can I the Atheist; but the Pantheist is to me a puzzle. He has (in many cases this is so) grown out of Theism into what? the vaguest of all possible mental states, a condition of things where realities seem dreams and dreams realities; a good-natured, harmless and hopeless mania. At least that is how it appears to an outsider.

Pantheism may have its uses, just as ordinary insanity. The dreams of the insane show us the nature of revelation and inspiration. What multitudes of Bibles we should have, how fast they would multiply, if all the theories and speculations of the insane were but reported and published! And they would, no doubt, be equally good and equally bad with any existing bible. This fact shows what revelation really is. Pantheism serves the same purpose; it shows what worship and creeds lead to—bewilderment, confusion, vacuity, the distilled essence of vanity.

God! This may be anything, or nothing. Its shape and size, color and character, must be sought in every worshipper's fancy. It is but a dream, and a dream is the result of darkness, unquiet sleep—it may be indigestion. Pure health and perfect rest do not dream. And it is only by raising the mental and moral health of man that we can hope for the destruction of Theism and Pantheism. It is only thus the gods will go; for, like cancers, they are the outgrowth of internal sickness.

JOS. SYMES.

ACID DROPS.

THE Rev. Ward Beecher says, "God is the being whose latitude is infinity and his longitude eternity." Beecher is evidently one of those 'cute Yankees who can tell the distance between Plymouth Church and the First of April.

A FAR from comic contemporary says, that some recent exhumations in Egypt have brought to light a statue supposed to be that of Potiphar's wife. Competent judges say that if the stone representation be true to the original, Joseph was justified in having his coat torn.

THE Young Men's Bible Class connected with Shoreditch Tabernacle, have passed a resolution "That the word of God denounces strong drink." We don't know what the Word of God is, but we have an impression that Deut. xiv., 26, Judg. ix., 13, and Prov. xxx., 6, still stand in the Bible. Perhaps they rely on the passage in Zechariah (ix., 17), which says "corn shall make the young men cheerful, and new wine the maids." Let them stick to their corn.

THE Primitive Methodists Mission Society have had their annual meeting. They emulate some of the more important societies in the magnificent character of their deficit, which is roundly stated at £8,000.

It is very amusing at the various May meetings to note how each sect is expecting to be the Church of the Future. The Anglicans, Congregationalists, Wesleyans and Baptists have all found ministers to put forward their claim. Meanwhile everyone of them is aware of the presence of a shadow of infidelity which threatens to obscure their rival claims in a common oblivion.

MRS. FLETCHER, the medium who was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment for fraudulently obtaining jewellery under pretence that it was commanded by the spirits, writes to the Spiritualist paper, *Light*, and says that she was prosecuted because the Government sought to give a death-blow to Spiritualism. However she has been visited by spirits in prison, and says of all her enemies, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do."

A BOSTON firm publishes a revised version which gives the account of the death of Judas (Acts i., 18) in the following words: "This man caused a field to be purchased, and falling prostrate, a violent internal spasm ensued and all his viscera were emitted." This emendation may make the passage more palatable to the ears of the Bostonians, but it does not bring it any nearer to the account which says Judas gave back the money and went and hanged himself (Matt. xxvii., 3-5).

THE Boston people pride themselves upon their refinement and "culchab." One of the clergymen there had occasion to refer to that merry old story of Jonah, and the report says he spoke "of the prophet as having spent three days and three nights in the whale's—ahem—society."

A CHRISTIAN contemporary heads an extract from W. S. Lilly, the Catholic slanderer of French Freethinkers, with the words "Freethought Hostile to God." We should hardly have expected Christians to state the matter so baldly and—from their own point of view—blasphemously; but when they say God, they usually mean themselves.

THE Rev. A. A. Rees, preaching at Sans Street Chapel, Sunderland, boasted that the Bible was "incomparably superior to all the works of heathen writers." This, at least, is a matter of opinion. We prefer the story of Prometheus Bound as dramatised by Æschylus, to the story of Lot and his daughters as told in the name of Moses. The poetry of the Bhagvat-gita seems to us more sublime than the rhapsodies of Ezekiel, and we find more ethical value in the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius than in the Proverbs of Solomon. But everyone to their own taste.

MR. REES "challenged the Atheists to prove that the histories of Herodotus and other heathens were true." Atheists are not likely to take up so profitless a task. Nothing is more uncertain than all ancient so-called "historical testimony," and that of itself is sufficient reason why any omnipotent God who wished to reveal himself would not leave the evidences of such a revelation on so shaky a foundation.

A NEW publication has appeared with the bitter-sweet title of the *Catholic Freethinker*. It places first among the principles which it upholds, the following: "That license for Atheism, or for the negation of God, is incompatible with human liberty, as being against the natural right of man to affirm the highest of all affirmable things." It does not say how Atheism hinders anyone from affirming whatever they please, but declares bluntly that "The same right cannot be claimed for negative positions, such as that of Atheism and Protestantism—because negation has no rights."

IN these days of intolerable toleration it is quite refreshing to learn that in the eyes of the *Catholic Freethinker* those who deny Christian doctrines have no rights. This is putting plainly what has long been practised by the Church "with the dungeon and the sword for the glory of the Lord." But the old hag has lost her teeth; she can only gnash her gums.

THIS precious publication is edited by the Rev. F. H. Laing, D.D., who indulges in a paragraph on "Darwin and Westminster Abbey," which is well worth preserving as a specimen of Catholic freethought: "Those who fondly cling to the silly delusion that England is a Christian country should take to heart the fact, which has lately taken place, of the high national honor paid to the notorious Atheist Darwin, by burial in Westminster Abbey. It is in vain that the apologists of this impiety would hide themselves under the pretence that the honors which England thus give him are accorded to him, not as an Atheist, but as 'a great naturalist.' This is false, even according to the very professions of those who pleaded for the desecration. They urged his claims to Abbey honors on the very ground of his having been the chief promoter of the Atheistic mock-doctrine of evolution of species and ape-descent of man. It is, therefore, as the high priest of dirt-worship that the English nation has assigned to him the privilege of being interred in a temple dedicated to the worship of the Creator."

Freethinkers sometimes make the mistake of siding with Catholics in their controversies against Protestants. It is all

very well to point out that the Bible miracles are as incredible as those of the Catholic Church; that the dogma of the Trinity is as absurd as that of transubstantiation; that Protestants have both persecuted and taught persecution in their standards, e.g., the Westminster Confession; that an infallible book is as much a monstrosity as an infallible man; but let us never forget that in carrying out to its legitimate issues the right of private judgment we are the true Protestants, and there still exists a most powerful and active Church denying this right, and against which we are bound to protest.

THE High Church party in the Church of England are seeking to start a Catholic League, with the object of restoring Catholic privileges which have been lost or obscured. Among these are enumerated restoring masses for the dead, restoring the use of incense, and devotion to our Lady. The restoration of the rack and thumbscrews for heretics is not, however, mentioned.

A SPIRITIST journal announces the death of an infant, and states that he was "suddenly called away by croup and bronchitis." We never knew these were angels before, but we live and learn.

RECURRING to the Rev. A. A. Rees, of Sunderland, we must observe that his arguments are about the loosest we have read. He urges, for instance, that Paul's statements must be true because he was no fool. Does Mr. Rees think that no sensible man was ever mistaken? If not, his whole argument falls to the ground. Mr. Rees will never influence sceptics by such stuff. They know very well that men may be deceived without being fools, and state what is not true without being liars. Mr. Rees himself is probably a good instance of both.

MOODY says that the prayers of the British people for the recovery of General Garfield will never be forgotten in America. Perhaps not. And they will never be forgotten in heaven either, for they were never heard there.

AT the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society a Mr. George Williams "fearlessly asserted that no large business could be permanently built up but on the principles of the Bible." Take no thought for the morrow; lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth; give to everyone that asketh. These are the sort of principles they practise in the city.

THAT arch-humbug, A. H. Guinness, who now calls himself secretary of the Anti-Atheistic Committee, is constantly afflicting editors with his dull and stupid effusions. In his latest epistle to the *Christian* he asks, "Is the minister of religion to be excluded [from Parliament], and admission given to the Atheist in the name of religious liberty?" We beg to inform A. H. Guinness that ministers of religion are not excluded from Parliament. Any Nonconformist minister can sit there if a constituency will return him. Only parsons are excluded, because they belong to the State Church, take State pay, and are represented by bishops in the House of Lords. When Mr. Bradlaugh takes State pay for preaching Atheism he will stand in the same category, and not before.

THE *Church Times* asks, "Who is the stupidest man in England?" and gives the name of the Rev. Carr Glyn, rector of Hinton Parva, in reply to this highly interesting inquiry. We cannot understand, however, why, with the entire Clergy List to select from, the Rev. C. G. should have been singled out for this pre-eminence. The only instance given of his stupidity is his having wished the Prayer Book revised, so as to make it more acceptable to Nonconformists.

JOHN HARTMELL, of West Bromwich, was committed to prison for four months for obtaining money by pretending to tell people's fortunes by means of the stars. The impostors who live on the fat of the land by pretending to tell people's fortunes after they are dead must have the most profound contempt for pitiful rogues like John Hartmell, who can only inveigle sixpence at a time from servant girls, by telling them of their matrimonial prospects.

AT the General Assembly of the Free Church Dr. Moody Stuart submitted the report of the committee on the conversion of the Jews. The income was stated at £7,589. With this money they report the conversion of one Jew at Breslau, two at Pesth, and four at Constantinople, total seven. We wonder if these distant Jews were worth converting at the rate of over £1,000 per head.

SOME Christians are foolish enough to believe anything. You have only to visit Exeter Hall to hear more nonsense in an hour than you are likely to hear outside it in twelve months. At a recent meeting in that holy edifice, pious Sam Morley being on the platform, the Rev. H. W. Webb-Peploe gravely stated that a man he knew was obliged, on entering an infidel society with which Mr. Bradlaugh is connected, to "take his Bible and burn it publicly before the meeting." This concoction is about as old as the watch story, and about as true. Mr. Webb-Peploe is a clever liar, or else he is very easily gulled. Perhaps he is a little of both, a fool with a circumbendibus.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

May 28th, N. S. S. Conference.

June 4th, Glasgow; 11th, morning Midland Arches, evening Claremont Hall, London; 18th, morning Clerkenwell Green, evening Claremont Hall; 25th, morning, Gibraltar Walk, afternoon, Victoria Park, London.

July 2nd, Manchester; 9th and 16th, Claremont Hall, London; 30th, Liverpool.

August 6th, Burnley; 13th Rochdale; 20th, West Hartlepool; 27th, Stockton-on-Tees.

October 15th, Halifax.

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OUR next number will contain a Descriptive Report of the Edinburgh Conference. Extra orders should be sent early to secure execution.

J. HARRIS.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums." We shall be glad to receive any further correspondence on the subject.

J. IRELAND.—There are, of course, a host of objections to "Noah's Flood" which Mr. Foote had no room to deal with. Water freezes, as you say, at a certain height, and there would have been an immense sheet of ice encircling the globe about twelve thousand feet thick. Mr. Foote will think over your hint as to the "Bible Heroes." They will follow the second series of "Bible Romances," and will, perhaps, be as "witty, interesting, and instructive" as you find the latter.

WELL-WISHER.—There is no special color affected by Freethinkers, and, for our part, we don't believe in such things. Leave them to the Salvation Army.

S. M. P.—We are obliged to you for sending copies of the *Freethinker* to the reverend gentleman's flock. Mr. Foote may visit Cinderford some day, but his hands are pretty full at present.

W. WOLEDGE.—You should have made sure of your texts before raising the objection. The story of Joshua's circumcising the Jews is in the fifth chapter of "Joshua;" see especially the second and third verses. For his powers of voice, see chap. iii., v. 9; chap. xxiii., v. 2. No doubt the open-air Committee will consider your advice as to opposing the Christians in Hyde Park. The joke is a very old one.

C. B. B.—No doubt the lectures will be republished.

E. WILKES.—To receive the good wishes of those who have grown old in the cause is always encouraging. We hope your healthy mode of life will long endure. Only the first three names at all deserve the title of infidel leaders.

SARIBURIENSIS.—We shall be very pleased if your cathedral city can be leavened with a little freethought.

ANTI-SALVATIONIST.—The doings you describe make us pause at the definition of man as a rational animal.

T. BAKEWELL.—Will appear in due course.

J. S.—Very pleased to hear from you. The object of the Malthusian League is to disseminate knowledge on the population question. The Secretary, Mr. Reynolds, 23, Amersham Vale, New Cross, S.E., will give all further information.

A STUDENT.—Mosheim, the ecclesiastical historian, was born 1694 and died 1755. Murdock and Soame's translation is better than that of Maclaine.

OCTOGENARIAN thinks that when he goes to the antithesis of heaven the letter of the Bible must fail in his case, for he has now no teeth to gnash. Let him have faith, the Lord will provide.

E. WILKS, who tells us he forwarded last week's *Freethinker* to Mr. Gladstone, sends some very thoughtful tracts on religion and political economy, for which we thank him.

A SPIRITUALIST.—We think of asking Lottie Fowler to raise up the spirit of the prophet Daniel to interpret the meaning of your letter.

A. WELLS.—Jacob Boehme, the shoemaking mystic, was born of poor peasant parentage in 1575. His writings are still read, but we cannot decide as to their value.

G. BROWN.—The clergy of the Church of England, exclusive of the Irish, amount to over 20,000. It is not to be supposed that they would relish Disestablishment and having to work for their living.

J. REYNOLDS informs us that he leaves a dozen *Freethinkers* on sale with various newsagents, and that all are bought up.

W. THORNTON.—There is no evidence of the existence of the Apostles' Creed in its present form before the fourth century.

LIBERTY.—We do not seek to please everybody, and shall pursue our own path irrespective of cavillers.

BEN.—Thank. Send on your "More to Follow."

C. B. B.—Received with thanks.

W. SHELTON.—The *Freethinker* tracts will be issued shortly. It is an advantage to print a number together; hence the delay.

A. CARVER.—Thanks for the paper. You cannot break ground better than by distributing Freethought literature. See Mr. Foote's pamphlet on "Secularism." The Secretary of the N. S. S. will write you.

C. E. STEDWICK.—We are much obliged to you for your good wishes. Cuttings are always acceptable.

ELIJAH.—We have a copy of No. 5, vol. ii., which you can have on sending postage.

W. D.—Scarcely up to the mark.

BOTH SIDES.—We thank you.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A PROPOSAL is mentioned to erect a monument to Robert Burns in Westminster Abbey. We shall be agreeably surprised if this does not provoke the outcries of the bigots. The time seems approaching when the grand old Abbey will be a true Pantheon for the illustrious dead of all creeds and none.

THE June number of *Good Words* will contain the first instalments of some papers on "The Place of the Old Testament in the Christian Church." Doubtless, as with the "Old Testament in the Jewish Church," the milk of the word of rationalism will be well watered for the benefit of weak stomachs.

THE Burnley Freethinkers are keeping the district alive, much to the disgust of the clergy, who hate competition as the Devil is said to hate holy water. One of these black dragoons, the Rev. R. H. Giles, has written to the *Burnley Express*, saying that the Freethinkers in that quarter ought to be dealt with in the Tunbridge Wells fashion. He cites several musty old statutes, and calls on the authorities to put them in force against the Secularists, whose "growing audacity" shocks his clerical heart. Mr. Giles is anything but a free-trader. He clamors for protection. His privileges as a church parson are not enough; he wants to have all rival tradesmen fined and imprisoned. What a modest gentleman, to be sure!

MR. GILES is very wroth with the Burnley Freethinkers for circulating copies of this journal, "especially amongst the clergy." He describes it as "a certain periodical which would be sufficiently ludicrous in its labored buffoonery, if it did not meddle with those eternal truths which most people of any education at all consider divine." Which means, we presume, that Mr. Giles could enjoy the wit of the *Freethinker* if it did not injure his business. Perhaps this indignant parson will kindly tell us what are the "eternal truths" he alludes to. Is the rib story one of them? If so, no man of education believes a word of it. Until Mr. Giles condescends to be explicit we must rest satisfied with having made him yelp. It shows he is badly hurt.

THE plucky editor of the *Hulme Gazette and Advertiser* has a capital leader on the excitement anent poor Ireland. It says: "Immediately after the terrible events of the 6th the Bishop ordered prayers in all the churches of his diocese. For what? The stability of the throne! Now who in all the nation had any idea that the stability of the throne was in danger? Besides, the Bishop knows very well that the thrones of this world are kept up and maintained by bayonets, not prayers. To excite the people in this way through religious ideas is panic-mongering." It is, moreover, a cowardly attempt to shift the stern responsibility of well-governing Ireland from our own shoulders on to the unseen and unknown.

GENERAL MACLAGAN called the attention of the Christian Evidence Society to the sceptical state of the Hindu mind, and regretted that the state of the funds of that society did not permit it to combat the infidelity there. We are acquainted with a few intelligent Hindus in this country, and they are simply filled with astonishment that a nation so advanced in scientific and material progress should in religious matters be so besottedly superstitious as to give any credence to Christianity.

WE gather from various quarters that the Hindus who have left Hinduism are far more ready to accept the Buddhist Theosophy of Colonel Olcott and Madame Blavatsky than the Christianity of the missionaries or Joseph Cook. This is certainly an improvement, but we should despair of the future of "the Koh-i-noor of nations," if we thought the Hindus would for ever resign themselves to dreamy theosophies again. They are too keen-witted to fail to see that the nations who succeed in the struggle for existence are those that relegate dreams to nothing more than a Sunday existence, and energetically devote themselves to the practical improvements of secular life.

THE Rev. Dr. McCann has made a funny mistake. It appears that the Christian Evidence Society has been devoting some of its spare cash to a series of lectures in Kilburn Town-hall, which have been miserably attended, only twenty-four persons having been present at one of them. Dr. McCann, however, describes them as very successful. But in doing so he inadvertently speaks of Kilburn *Baths* instead of the Town-hall, a place where Secular lectures are delivered every Sunday to good audiences. If Dr. McCann means that these are "successful," we quite agree with him. But if he really means the other lectures, we must beg to differ, unless he urges that twenty-four people are a large audience when you are only used to a dozen.

It is a sign of the happy affinity which there is in the minds of the modern Londoner between piety and sport that papers containing the result of the race for the French Derby were selling freely upon the steps of the churches last Sunday evening.

WHAT SHALL I DO TO BE DAMNED?

(Concluded from p. 168.)

2. *A good life without Godliness.*—This is a famous way to go to hell. Many a noble man has landed there because he was less devoted to the service of God than to that of humanity, and more remarkable for goodness than godliness. Unfortunately for such as these, all our righteousness is as filthy rags in the eyes of God. Not only are good works without faith unavailing as a means of salvation, but the inspired David "describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*" (Rom. iv., 6). Many of those whose faith is so highly applauded in Hebrews xi. were lamentably deficient in the secular or social virtues of humanity. The choice of Jacob and Esau, one to love and the other to hatred, was avowedly made regardless of any good or evil done on the part of either of the two brothers (Rom. ix., 11). The favor of a God which is won in such a whimsical manner is not worth courting. Nobler far, hoping nothing and believing nothing concerning God, to live an unblemished life honorable to one's self and useful to mankind. It may be a gloomy prospect to the sceptic to know that such a life—man's sweetest sacrifice on the altar of humanity—should stink in the nostrils of God, because unseasoned by a suitable quantum of piety, and meet with no reward except the doom of hell and damnation; but gloomier far and more inglorious to go to heaven when you die, and be for ever with the Lord and become honored with "hail fellow well met," from all the repentant rapscallions that cursed the earth. Of two evils, choose the least.

3. Another excellent means of being spared the infliction of salvation is to crown a virtuous life by a death not preceded by an act of reconciliation with God. Christians, as well as Freethinkers, are free to avail themselves of this method. Many a pious believer, who had lived a life of uniform devotion to the highest principles of virtue, has, through falling into evil ways in moments of weakness, and dying in what is called a state of mortal sin, lost, so far as the next world is concerned, all the benefits of a former life of morality, and after death, has been instantaneously despatched, without benefit of clergy, to the infernal regions. On the other hand, many a pious ruffian, many a shameless profligate who, at the end of a pernicious career, has made a tardy and trifling atonement for his past misdeeds, by renouncing his former ways and embracing Jesus Christ, has been washed in the blood of the Lamb and gone away triumphantly to glory. God has a great weakness for repentant scoundrels, and heaven is largely stocked with converted thieves and blood-washed blackguards. Here we may remark that the Christian doctrine of Repentance, though eminently calculated to increase the population of the celestial regions, is greatly conducive to a diminution of true virtue here on earth. Where is the inducement to high-toned morality in a doctrine which, whilst it offers heaven and eternal bliss to all those who, even so late as at the ninth hour, cry out to God for mercy, damns to the lowest depths of hell those industrious toilers in the service of mankind who, through weakness or frailty, or some other cause, grow weary of well-doing, and fail to persevere even unto the end in the good work on which they had previously been so usefully engaged? It is in a case like this that the inequality and injustice of the Protestant scheme of future rewards and punishments, are flagrantly manifest, in contradistinction to that of the Roman Catholics, whose doctrine of Purgatory enables them in cases like those above quoted to make some attempt, at least, to meet the demands both of justice and common-sense. So much for the Christian's hope of damnation. As for the Freethinker, he will scorn to degrade himself by going through the farce of reconciling his soul to a God whom he justly regards as the embodiment of crime and ferocity. If, indeed, there be anywhere in the universe such a curiosity as a God who rewards man according to his deeds, the Freethinker will be quite content to present at the throne of God a life well spent in the cause of humanity as his claim and right to any recompense which this supposititious Deity may have to offer.

4. The last way of damnation which we propose to indicate is very efficacious. It is warranted on the highest authority as a short and easy method of being damned. We allude to that awful and mysterious act, the sin against the Holy Ghost, to which Christ (Matt. xii., 31, 32) so darkly alludes. Wherein consists the blasphemy against

the Holy Ghost, which we are to avoid at the risk of damnation? Nobody knows, and no one can tell. Many a crazy fanatic has gone mad because he imagined he had committed this mysterious crime. Yet no man can be certain whether such was the case or not. It was too bad of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost to leave us wandering in the dark, unenlightened on this important matter. Many a Christian would like to know the nature of this fearful crime, in order to be on his guard against ignorantly running into the arms of Satan, and never being able to get free again. On the other hand, many a Freethinker would like to add this blasphemy against the spectral parent of J. C. to his other impious achievements, in order to make his damnation doubly sure. On the whole, therefore, we feel we have a real grievance against the Lord for not vouchsafing to us this interesting item of news. We propose, therefore, to do what we can, in the following questions, to supply the deficiencies of divine inspiration: (a) Were the Ephesian disciples guilty of this foul offence when they made to Paul their charmingly *naïve* confession that they had not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost? (Acts xix., 2.) (b) Are not the Unitarians, and others who deny the deity of the Holy Ghost, guilty of speaking blasphemously against the Godship of the third person of the blessed Trinity? (c) Are not Freethinkers, who denounce the absurdities and immoralities contained in the Bible, and who consider that book to be an intellectual and moral disgrace to any decent God or man, guilty of the crime in question? (d) Shall we be considered blasphemers against the Holy Ghost if we affirm that the circumstances of the conception of Jesus Christ were rather hard on poor Joe, and somewhat inconsistent with the principles of the seventh commandment? (e) Or, shall we incur the like charge if we call in question the feasibility of the occurrence in question, having regard to the known conditions under which human beings are born into the world? (f) Are not the chances of damnation very much in our favor if we denounce as a gross piece of superstition the deification of an imaginary entity, whom we meet with in the Bible sometimes as "doing" a swim (Gen. i., 2); sometimes as flying about like a dove, and perching on Christ's head (Matt. iii., 16); at another time appearing as cloven tongues like as of fire, and enabling ignorant fishermen to speak languages which they had probably never heard of before? (Acts ii., 3, *et seq.*) (g) Surely, if we poke fun at the Holy Ghost, we shall have blasphemed against him. For instance, when he swims, does he take the side-stroke, or does he do a float? Was it in the form of a dove that he performed, for the delectation of his partner Gods, the feats of natation alluded to above? If so, did he spoil his fine feathers? Moreover, if the Holy Ghost is infinite, what did he do with the other part of himself when he assumed the mysterious metamorphoses which he underwent in Biblical times, and to which we have just made reference? Information on these points, and also respecting the blasphemous character of these interesting queries, will greatly oblige.

We have now, without the inflatus of the holy dove, expounded at sufficient length the Christian gospel of damnation. We have shown that salvation is not worth having; that the conditions imposed are unreasonable and dishonorable; that it is not at all desirable to be numbered amongst the elect, whom God, to the exclusion of the rest of mankind, has set apart from all eternity to be saved; and, finally, we have indicated certain infallible means whereby we may save ourselves from the indignity of being saved *à la* Jesus Christ. We have only to add, in conclusion, that the Salvation for which the Freethinker strives is that which is realisable, not in the regions of air and myth, but here on earth. Our salvation is secular, not spiritual. It consists in the dissipation of ignorance and superstition, in the practical performance on the platform of life of the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity; and in each man truly considering his status as a social unit, whose highest duty consists, not in the sordid pursuits of self-aggrandisement, but in living and working for the uplifting and regeneration of mankind. WILLIAM HEAFORD.

THE Rev. E. White, an eminent Congregationalist, opines that there must be a revolution among the working people before the churches and chapels can do any good with them. He is very severe on Sunday entertainments and excursions, and Sunday newspapers; and he complains bitterly that the women make Sunday "a day of special cleaning." The Rev. E. White would sooner see them dirty than godless. We put cleanliness first, and piety after—a long way after.

CHRISTIAN BENEVOLENCE.

WHEN a Christian has discovered the futility of trying to prove the truth of his religion, he not infrequently falls back upon its good works. "Look at our hospitals, almshouses, and orphanages," says he to the Secularist; "can you show anything of the kind?" It would be perfectly fair to reply by referring him to the jails, the gambling-hells, the gin-palaces, and the brothels, and asking him to place them on the other side of the account. It would be difficult for the Secularist to produce any such; they must therefore belong to Christianity! The fact is that the former institutions are the outcome, not of Christianity nor of Secularism, but of civilisation; the necessity for them is as apparent to him who is doubtful on the subject of the atonement as to the Salvationist or the Episcopalian. Is there any connexion between the crucifixion and the metropolitan sewer? between the "mystery of the incarnation" and the Thames Embankment? These latter public works, like our hospitals and hundreds of other establishments for the secular good of the people, have sprung from common-sense and feelings of common humanity. But, be it observed, the hospitals and kindred places are anti-Christian in their character. The consistent believer can have nothing to do with them. In case of sickness his proper course is quite plain. He is to send for the elders, who are to anoint the patient with oil and lay their hands upon him, and the promise is given by him "who cannot lie" that the prayer of faith shall save the sick. The treatment at the hospitals is quite different, and any medical man who pursued this divine method would soon find himself on his trial for manslaughter before one of the judges of this Christian country. Therefore, so far from these asylums for the suffering being "witnesses for the truth," they are monuments of the predominance of carnal reason over simple child-like faith.

But suppose we concede to Christianity the credit of raising and maintaining these benevolent institutions, do their existence betray a spirit of philanthropy worthy of great boast? How are the necessary funds raised? In nine cases out of ten the *modus operandi* is something of this kind. A show is organised in principle similar to the one seen at a country fair. At the latter a woman with a beard, or a man with two heads, is probably the attraction: in the former, instead of a freak of nature, a social monstrosity is on view—a prince of the blood, for instance. If the man on the platform outside shouts, "Walk up; walk up," and beats the gong loud enough—in other words, if the fact that a prince is to be seen alive is sufficiently advertised—the thing is a success. Hundreds of people who have been hitherto vainly appealed to for funds, walk up and pay their guinea to see a mortal so extraordinary. Not a word, a look, nor a movement of this strange specimen of humanity is lost, and the interest in him is as intense as that which centres in a man who is being hanged! Sometimes the phenomenon shown is even greater than we have suggested: the Queen herself is to be seen by mortal eye, and Christians are willing to pay a still higher price to look upon a monarch face to face and live! A few months back the great Albert Hall was converted into a fair, and fashionable women in fascinating costumes were the great attraction. The money raised by the entrance fees, by the sale, to voluptuous dandies, of cups of tea that had touched the lips of aristocratic beauties, and by means equally worthy, was given to an orphanage. Is it possible that any person can be sufficiently Christian to regard this kind of thing as charity? Does the child who drops a coin into an aperture, for the purpose of setting a working-model in motion, take the flattering unction to its soul that it has thereby manifested a spirit of charity? Moreover, Christians find it necessary to devise similar means—bazaars, etc.—for raising funds to carry on their "means of grace," and we have ourselves in other times subscribed to raffles and lotteries, organised to promote the "kingdom of God!" It is quite true that civilisation is identified with many noble institutions, which ceaselessly dispense blessings upon suffering and needy humanity; but it is equally true, and the fact should somewhat sober our vanity in this respect, that their maintenance is due to a large extent, not to pure benevolence, but to the most sordid motives—in a word, to "GATE-MONEY."

T. E. C.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

ORIGIN OF MORALITY.—Not in the way assumed by our dogmatic teachers has the morality of human nature been propped up. The power which has moulded us thus far has worked with stern tools upon a rigid stuff. What it has done cannot be so readily undone; and it has endowed us with moral constitutions which take pleasure in the noble, the beautiful, and the true; just as surely as it has endowed us with sentient organisms which find aloes bitter and sugar sweet. That power did not work with delusions, nor will it stay its hand when such are removed. *Facts* rather than *dogmas* have been its ministers—hunger, shame, pride, love, hate, terror, awe—such were the forces, the interaction and adjustment of which during the immeasurable ages of his development wove the triplex web of man's physical, intellectual, and moral nature, and such are the forces that will be effectual to the end.—Tyndall "On Science," Birmingham, October, 1877.

DECLINE OF RELIGION.—But as the intelligence in any race of people increased, their religious fervor has grown more timid and parsimonious. Prayer and genuflexions have gradually replaced the burdensome peace-offerings and the bloody sacrifices. Sometimes, as in China, offerings are made only in effigy; paper images are substituted for the real objects, and are burned in their place. The primitive man, urged by some need or by some emotion, prays coarsely but sincerely. "Come and pray," a missionary said to an islander in Madagascar. "Pray for what? I am not in want of anything now," was the answer. After a while prayer becomes a formula read mechanically at stated times; rites and ceremonies are performed without warmth, without earnestness—simply from habit. This change seems to indicate that the age of faith will give way to the age of examination, that the age of ignorance will have to yield to the age of knowledge.—Dr. Chas. Letourneau, "Sociology based on Ethnology," p. 323. 1881.

DIABOLISM AND CHRISTIANITY.—During the early centuries of Christianity, demoniacal possession indeed becomes peculiarly conspicuous, perhaps not from unusual prevalence of the animistic theory of disease, but simply because a period of intense religious excitement brought it more than usually into requisition. Ancient ecclesiastical records describe, under the well-known names of "dæmoniacs," "possessed," "energumens," the class of persons whose bodies are seized or possessed with an evil spirit; such attacks being frequently attended with great commotions and vexations and disturbances of the body, occasioning sometimes frenzy and madness, sometimes epileptic fits, and other violent tossings and contortions. These energumens formed a recognized part of an early Christian congregation, a standing place apart being assigned for them in the church.—Dr. Edvard B. Tylor, "Primitive Culture," c. xv., vol. ii., p. 127, 1871.

NO ANALOGY TO CREATION.—Alike in the rudest creeds and in the cosmogony long current among ourselves, it is assumed that the genesis of the Heavens and the Earth is affected somewhat after the manner in which a workman shapes a piece of furniture. . . . Now, in the first place, not only is this conception one that cannot by any cumulative process of thought, or the fulfilment of predictions based on it, be shown to answer to anything actual; and not only is it that in the absence of all evidence respecting the process of creation, we have no proof of correspondence even between this limited conception and some limited portion of the fact; but it is that the conception is not even consistent with itself—cannot be realised in thought, when all its assumptions are granted. Though it is true that the proceedings of a human artificer may vaguely symbolise to us a method after which the Universe might be shaped, yet they do not help us to comprehend the real mystery; namely, the origin of the material of which the Universe consists. The artisan does not make the iron, wood, or stone he uses; but merely fashions and combines them. If we suppose suns, and planets, and satellites, and all they contain, to have been similarly formed by a "Great Artificer," we suppose merely that certain pre-existing elements were thus put into their present arrangement. But whence the pre-existing elements? The comparison helps us not in the least to understand that; and unless it helps us to understand that, it is worthless. The production of matter out of nothing is the real mystery, which neither this simile nor any other enables us to conceive; and a simile which does not enable us to conceive this may just as well be dispensed with.—Herbert Spencer, "First Principles," c. ii., sect. 11, pp. 33, 34. 1867

PROFANE JOKES.

YOUNG lady to apparitor: "Would you please show me a good seat?"—"Somewhere near the pulpit?"—"I don't care where. I am a milliner, and I have come to see the bonnets."

"Ah! Sam, so you've been in trouble, hab you?"—"Yes, Jim, yes."—"Well, well, cheer up, man; adversity tries us and

shows up our better qualities."—"Ah! but adversity didn't try me; it was an old vagabone ob a judge, and he showed up my worst qualities!"

In setting the Ten Commandments to music, Haydn, with grim humor, stole a melody for the eighth.

A ST. CATHERINE'S, Canada, jury of twelve enlightened and thinking men, who were called to judge the facts of a case wherein a murder had probably been done—its victim a woman—came to the fore with the conclusion: "Died by the visitation of God under suspicious circumstances."

WHEN a bashful young candidate for a preaching job was asked by the examiner to give a short Bible story in biblical language from memory he got flustered, and mixed the material thus: "And when they had come nigh unto the city they saw Jezebel looking out of a window, and the prophet said unto them that stood by, 'Throw her down,' and they did so; and he said do it a second time, and they did it a second time; and he said do it a third time, and they did it a third time, yea, unto seventy times seven; and they took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full, and they did eat, and were filled."

A CERTAIN clergyman was born in the parish of Dull, brought up at the school of Dunse, and finally settled as minister in the parish of Drone.

THIS story is told at the expense of the cloth. Some years ago there was to be at New Rochelle, N. Y., a ministerial convention composed of delegates from the various denominations of the Christian church. A resident brother, who always entertained the shepherds when they convened in town, having to be absent from home on the week during which they were expected to arrive, left the following prudent directions to his wife: "When the Unitarian minister comes, give him the run of the house; he's all right. When the Presbyterian arrives, show him to his room, and keep your eye on the servant girl. When the Baptist shows up, lock her in her room, and keep the key; but when the Methodist parson gets here, let the maid sleep at the neighbor's across the way, lock your own door, and send for me."

MR. SYMES'S ENGAGEMENTS.

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