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PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY. THE FREETHINKER.

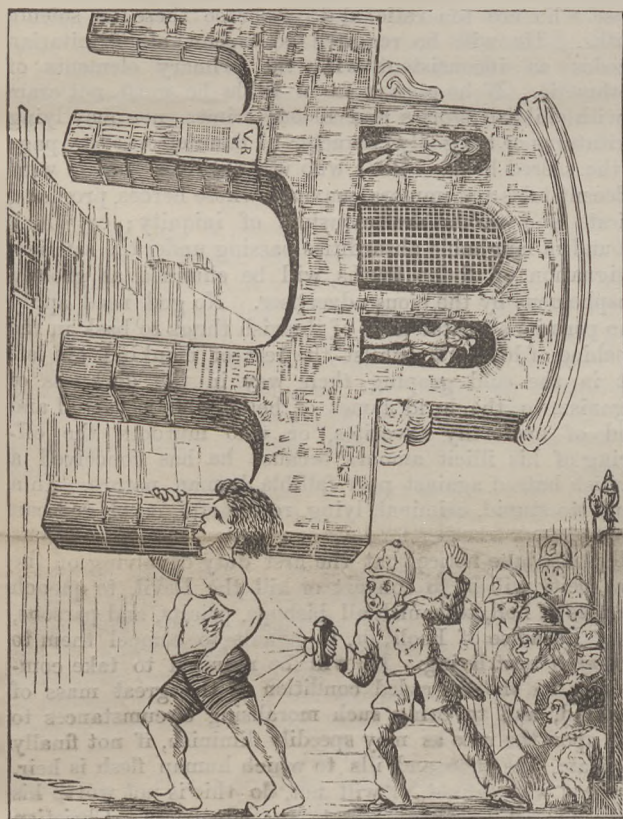
EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

“COMIC BIBLE” SKETCHES.—XXXIX.



A FEAT OF STRENGTH.

And Samson arose at midnight and took the doors of the gate of the city and the two posts, and went away with them bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders and carried them up to the top of an hill.—JUDGES xvi., 3.

AFRAID OF HEAVEN.

HEAVEN is our home, say the Christians; yet how reluctant they are to go there! They linger in this miserable vale of tears as long as they can, and never go aloft until they are plucked up by the vulture-beak of inevitable Death, whose black wings shed gloom alike on the sceptic and the pious. And when they have disappeared, are they not wailed over by desolate relatives and friends? Are not their corpses buried amid the sad solemnities of woe? Do the fictions of faith assuage the grief of the mourners, or lessen by one tear the tribute of sorrowing love? Are not all the consolations of religion mere mocking cloud-phantasms in presence of the stern reality of Death? The dear one, loved and lost, is only gone before; he has quitted this dark scene of misery for a bright and happy land; he has exchanged the sorrows of earth for the joys of heaven; he has finished his sojourning in alien places and reached his everlasting home, where all is rest and peace; his cup no longer holds the bitter dregs of mortal life, but overbrims with the rich wine of immortality. And they, who will soon rejoin him and share his bliss, should thrill with gladness and rejoice in his joy. Yet, strange to

say, they grieve as deeply as the worst sceptics. They act as though all they profess to believe were a cunning lie. And so it is. One cry of the human heart shivers all the creeds, and Rachel, mourning for her children, refuses to be comforted because *they are not*.

If the Christian really believed in heaven he would be anxious to go there; he would welcome Death as a kind deliverer and the best friend. But he does not believe. His interests and affections are rooted here, and cannot be torn up without anguish and tears of blood. He feels like other men that this world is after all better than any land of promise. He secretly agrees in his heart of hearts with the gentle Elia.

“I am not content to pass away ‘like a weaver’s shuttle.’ Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluct at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived; I, and my friends; to be no younger, no richer, no handsomer. I do not want to be weaned by age; or drop, like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave.”

Despite all the loud professions to the contrary, these are the actual sentiments of the vast majority of believers. A new state of being staggers them, as it did Lamb. They are *afraid* of Heaven, and would willingly remain on this side of it for ever.

The most eminent Christian in England has recently given us a fine illustration of this truth. The Archbishop of Canterbury, immediately after issuing a form of prayer for the safety of our soldiers and sailors in Egypt, was confined to his bed with a serious illness. Prayer was felt to be of no use to him unless well mixed with medicine. Dr. Alfred Carpenter tended him with the care which wealth and position always command, and the best nurses were obtained that could be had for love or money. No attention was paid to Saint James’s advice. Prayer was eschewed for science, and anointing oil for chicken broth.

During his Grace’s illness the Queen has had a daily telegram sent her as to his condition. Her Majesty is partial to warriors, whether of arms or of faith. She shows especial favor to her two armies. The black coats and the red coats appear to occupy nearly the whole of her attention. Even if it were otherwise, she would naturally be interested in Dr. Tait’s health. They are of one social family. Queens and Archbishops are in the same stream, and sink or swim together.

The newspapers have been full of eulogiums on his character. And what eulogiums! Dr. Tait is well liked in upper circles. As a Dissenter once bitterly and wittily said, he knows every lord except the Lord Jesus Christ. Being perfectly colorless himself, he is all things to all men, except the millions of the people. Nobody suggests that he has ever lifted a finger to help *them*. The panegyrist have dwelt on his being most welcome at lawn-tennis and garden parties, and on the grace with which he dispenses hospitality to the world of rank and fashion. Nothing more. It is well known that his intellect is of the most commonplace order, and that he has reached the highest rung of the ecclesiastical ladder by means of that pliancy of disposition so beautifully expounded by Sir



Pertinax MacSycophant. Genius and virtue never lead a clergyman to the see of Canterbury. It has for centuries been the reward of courtiers and parasites.

His Grace does well to cling to life. Death must be a terrible thing to an archbishop. What an appalling thought, to die and leave fifteen thousand a year! Jesus Christ must have suffered less at the crucifixion. He left nothing, poor fellow, but one dirty suit of clothes, which his executioners would never have troubled to pick up, if they had not been miraculously moved to do so in order to fulfil a prophecy. With one week's salary, Archbishop Tait might have bought up Jesus Christ and all the twelve apostles; and we have no doubt that if he had been high priest, with his present income, Judas Iscariot would have got a much larger sum for "selling" his master.

We are aware that Dr. Tait's reluctance to die may be explained in a different way. A camel can as easily go through a needle's eye as a rich man enter the kingdom of heaven, and the archbishop is unfortunately a rich man. He is not afraid of heaven, as he does not expect to go there; but he dreads meeting the Master who said "Woe unto you rich." This explanation is, however, very fanciful. The truth is that the Archbishop of Canterbury believes in heaven like all his fellow Christians, and prefers a cottage here to acres of golden flooring in the New Jerusalem. So do we. But while we are called blasphemers for saying so, he is paid £15,000 a year for saying the very opposite. He has a palace and we are threatened with gaol. A mad world, my masters!

G. W. FOOTE.

WANTED — A GOD!

THE old one being worn out, and unfit for service. Unexceptional character indispensable. No omnipotent bully, no deified duffer, no revengeful fiend in the form of a god, no Greek, Roman, Jewish, or any other tribal or national God, need apply. No conjuring constructors of crude cosmogonies; no devil-making, sin-tempting gods; no gods who indulge in wholesale damnation for the sake of sour apples, or who are in the habit of damning and cursing, of drowning, plaguing, torturing, or murdering mankind, will be required. Must not frequent bad company. Any god who desires to "get on the job" must not employ gangs of cutthroats as his favorites, murderers or adulterers as his prophets, nor choose as his bosom friends a set of slaughtering knaves. Must be no respecter of persons, but equally kind and just to all, whether they be Greeks or Barbarians, bond or free. Applications from malignant fiends who decree the damnation of unborn infants, and prepare a fiery furnace wherein to eternally torture them after death, will be indignantly deposited in the waste-paper basket. Must be well acquainted with science, not as taught by Professor Moses, and be capable of rendering a rational account of the origin of things. Gods who pretend to make something out of nothing, to form men out of dust and women out of their husband's ribs; to make the sun go round the earth and to stop the daily motion of old Sol; to make snakes and asses talk, and whales to swallow prophets, and a variety of other funny but unscientific trifles, will be handed over to the nearest lunatic asylum. In like manner gods who parade a fictitious array of miracles, and pose as corpse-revivers, wonder-workers, prestidigitateurs, conjurers, magicians, mystery-mongers, and such-like, will be given into the safe custody of the police as humbugs and impostors. Gods who don't know their own mind for a minute together, who call a thing good one moment and curse it as utterly bad the next; who having sworn by a solemn oath to kill John Barleycorn, forthwith repent them of their purposed crime, are hereby advised to put off these childish things before assuming the airs and graces of an immutable god. Must be strictly moral. Any god who at one time asserts there is no other god beside himself, whilst at another he prides himself on his superiority above his rival gods; who preaches obedience to parents, but fails to practise the doctrine himself; who prohibits thieving but encourages his friends and favorites to acts of wholesale priggish and stealing; who denounces adultery, but employs and consorts with adulterers of the most scandalous type, and actually begets a bouncing boy after violating his own command; who denounces lying

in man but condones it when practised by himself and his "pals"—will be regarded as too bad to make a good God. A jealous god strongly objected to, and so are gods who persecute infidels for not believing too much, or plague the faithful for believing either too much or too little: who array bigoted parents against their heretical children; and incite their followers to pious acts of brutality against those who follow other gods or no gods at all. No intolerance, uncharitableness or bigotry should sully the character of the God who hopes to be permanently employed. Gods who reward the true believers with heaven simply because they swallow everything with unquestioning faith, or who damn sceptics because they vomit forth the nauseous drugs prescribed by priestly quacks, are hereby informed that their services are declined with thanks. No gods required who employ the services of ignorant, intolerant, and thick-headed priests, capable only of mumbling stupid prayers, preaching absurd doctrines, or of persecuting those who refuse to be either the tools or the dupes of priestcraft. He must not propound a series of doctrines full of sublime absurdities, and then damn all those who are too rational to embrace these as solemn truths. He will be required to eschew all Trinitarian puzzles as inconsistent with the primary elements of arithmetic. If he goes in for a Bible he must not cram it with childish stories and bloody crimes, nor may lying caricatures of his godly character be flaunted on every page of the sacred book. Gods who write Bibles replete with indecent tales and immoral maxims; whose heroes, prophets, priests and saints are monsters of iniquity; or which abound in laughable absurdities passing under the satirical designation of divine truths, will be shunned as grossly blasphemous by the pious advertiser. No god need apply who permits a brutal tribe of thievish thugs to bask in the sunshine of his favor, whilst the rest of mankind are left out in the cold groping their way in the darkness of paganism to the lurid flames of hell; who is partial and fond of unworthy favorites, or who murders the offspring of his illicit amours because he has conceived a fiendish hatred against poor fallible human nature. In a word, no stupid, criminal, lying, revengeful, cruel god can be employed, whether for love or money. Competing gods will please take notice that the first duty devolving on the new Deity will be to convert or kill the Devil, to quench the fires of hell, to banish all bishops, priests, and parsons, to the Paradise of Fools, or, in default to compel them to earn an honest living. He will be required to take compassion on the degraded condition of the great mass of mankind, and to bring such moralising circumstances to bear upon the race as may speedily diminish, if not finally eradicate, the thousand ills to which human flesh is heir. Any god who cannot, or will not, do this is not worth his salt, and will be of no use to the advertiser. Christian papers please copy.

Applications to be addressed to the editor of the *Freethinker*, or to
WILLIAM HEAFORD.

MY BLASPHEMY.

I HAVE paused for a brief half-hour in the racket and bustle of a busy, toiling life to question myself as to my position among my fellow men. I hold in my hand a paper issued from an office in a neighboring town, and that paper tells me of men whom I have learned to love for honesty's sake—men whom I call my friends, brought out before the eyes of an intelligent race as criminals—

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

Those men have dared to be honest, outspoken, earnest, and thought it not a crime. I find their thoughts are my thoughts, and their expressions have found an answer in my heart. I, too, have spoken as they have spoken. Are they, then, criminal? So am I! Are they blasphemers? So am I! In all I have only striven to be honest, and my heart, my conscience, as true and trustworthy as yours, oh Christian! have told me it was right. On my hearth there is no discord; in the street I make no foes. My dearest friends are pictures, flowers and books, and I revel in the great thoughts born of mighty brains, yet *I am a blasphemer*. A being am I from whom some men shrink; not honest, thinking men, but they who dare not face the sunlight of inquiry. What is my blasphemy?

I SPURN YOUR BIBLE.

To me it is a most unholy, impure book, and my heart can never love unholy things. Your Bible tells me of murder, theft, drunkenness, debauchery, deceit, hate, intolerance, approved, and I call it foul! It speaks of childish and absurd occurrences; it tells me of strange and marvellous things done to vouch the word of a blood-shedding fiend who only grasped at power, while great and good things passed without a voucher, and I say it lies! It teaches things revolting unto nature, and I hold it up to scorn! It hints of things you dare not tell your women, and I say I'll never teach it to my child! Honest fellow man, I turn to you and ask you, "Must I go to hell for this?" "No!" all honest hearts reply, and man is nobler, purer than the gods.

I LAUGH AT YOUR JEHOVAH.

He, the great and awe-inspiring God, who stooped to order the fringe for a Hebrew's shirt; he who threw up walls of water when his rascal held a stick above the sea; he who murdered forty simple children because they shouted "Bald-head" at a priest; he whose *mighty* breast was filled with joy when a naked assassin danced before a box; he who turned a woman into salt because she dared to sorrow for her home; he who filled a world with pain and woe because a hungry woman ate an apple; he who thinks men cannot tell the truth unless they kiss a Bible. I laugh at the childish parables of a poor unworthy God! Must I go to hell for this?

I FOLLOW ONLY SCIENCE.

I find in that a purer joy than any creed can give; it lifts me to a bright and healthy sphere; it makes me master of the gods and frees me from their thrall; I learn to trust in the truth and skill of man, and I give up prayer for medicine when ill; I learn from it to shun the dangers which beset me and to do without a God; it binds me closer to the earth and man, and draws my imaginings away from gods, and harps, and golden streets. All this may seem a crime in pious eyes, but must I go to hell for this?

I WANT NO HEAVEN.

This earth with all its beauty is heaven enough for me. In every feathered minstrel that carols in the spring-time I hear an angel voice. In every breath of summer, perfumes wander o'er elysium fields unmatched by aught in cities which are not. I do not want a heaven when I can see the world all fair. Leave heaven for dreamy fools and malcontents—the earth, the earth is ours. What is my blasphemy? A love of all things savoring of truth; a hate of cant, hypocrisy and fraud. True it may be

I AM POOR,

But rich, so rich in freedom, truth, and love; I can afford to give up gods, priests, angels, harps, palms, crowns, and "everlasting glory." I want no god! I want no heaven! I dread no fiend! I fear no hell! I *do* want the friendship of all honest men! I want liberty! I want peace! I want knowledge! I want justice! Oh, this may be blasphemy; I cannot say it is not since I know not what that is; but must I really go to hell for this? I take the thought of true, brave, honest man—my brother, and *he* shall be my judge.

JOHN ROWELL WALLER.

CHRISTIAN CAROLS.

SIMON—(Pure and Unadulterated.)

[*He goeth fishing.*]

In a pretty little vessel, like a bird upon the sea,
Where the gentle ripples glisten on the sands of Galilee,
Sallied forth our hardy hero, who was guileless as a child,
To pursue the wary 'winkle and ensnare the bloater mild.

[*But catcheth nothing.*]

Oh! the wet and weary toiling through the dark and dreary night,
All in vain the fishers warbled, not a 'winkle came to bite;
So they hauled the empty nets aboard as day began to dawn,
And they went ashore to hear the gentle Jesus "toot his horn."

[*Jesus showeth them a wrinkle.*]

And he taught them many a wrinkle that was never known to fail,
And he showed them how to sprinkle salt upon the bloater's tail;
So convincing was his eloquence and excellent his plan,
That had Peter stuck to fishing he had been a wealthy man.

[*A great catch.*]

'Twasn't only theoretical, but practical as well,
For it coaxed the very sternest moody mollusk from its shell.
Till the net it had expanded to its uttermost extent
With the wary whelk and Yarmouth, and the tiddler too for Lent.

[*He leaveth fishing.*]

Peter's bumps of credibility and reverence, you see,
Were abnormally developed to a wonderful degree,
Which occasioned his retiring from the piscatorial scene,
And accepting an engagement with the crazy Nazarene.

[*Buyeth a sword.*]

Then our Simon, like a true and trusty servant of the Lord,
As a proof of his conversion he invested in a sword,
And to illustrate the logic to which Christians should adhere,
And convince an unbeliever he deprived him of an ear.

[*Is reprimanded.*]

Gentle Jesus reprimanded him, and bade him put away
The tremendous blade he flourished, for it filled him with dismay.
Then he lifted up the servant's ear, who roared aloud with pain,
And applied a bit of Holloway and stuck it on again.

[*He trieth natation.*]

Another time, when sailing with a free and flowing sheet,
Pete tried to rival Jesus in his great aquatic feat;
But the programme soon was altered, and his vanity was hurt,
For his hoofs were scarcely wide enough to carry all his dirt.

[*Raiseth ye dead.*]

He restored a pious person, known as Dorcas to the saints,
A party who had suffered much from colic, sweats, and faints;
Pious Peter, with a needle, thought he'd see if she'd revive,
He inserted it behind her and she soon was all alive.

[*Becometh a liar.*]

But a circumstance did once occur that ruffled Peter's fur,
And exposed him to the people as a sneaking, lying cur;
For when they hauled his manager before the sitting beak,
Pietro he denied him with the most unblushing cheek.

[*Killeth ye poor Ananias.*]

But although himself a liar, he was not the sort of man
To allow an interloper to encroach upon his plan;
As ancient Ananias found, for Simon, so 'tis said,
Most quickly spifflicated him and struck the rascal dead.

[*Succumbeth to ye Tyler.*]

He succeeded in preserving by his caution for awhile
His exceeding holy carcass from restraint in durance vile;
But at length he fell a victim to the Tylers of his day,
Who decreed that he for all his little blasphemies must pay.

[*Goeth to glory.*]

I believe the pious Peter was suspended by the heels
From a cross that was constructed from a pair of stoutish deals;
And as his heels were up above, his head of course was down;
And that's how Peter started off to wear the golden crown.

[*Comfortable reflexions.*]

Oh! brethren, how delightful when we meet him in the skies,
And cock our ears to listen to his very latest lies;
How lustily we'll roar again beyond the farthest star,
And as we don the golden crown we'll twang the light guitar.

ACID DROPS.

The *Church Times* complains that the Sacrament of Baptism is often rudely assailed. "Lucianus" says that so far from assailing it, he believes it was divinely instituted in order that the early Christians might be brought in contact with clean water at least once in their lives.

WE were much disappointed upon reading Sir John Lubbock's interesting volume upon "Ants, Bees, and Wasps." We had heard reports of the ants having an old blind beetle in their nests, to whom they offered tribute and paid adoration; and we had congratulated ourselves upon not being the only species of animal with the insanity of an unmeaning religious worship. But, according to Sir John, the blind beetle *Claviger* is only kept as a kind of pet, and although the ants feed it, they suck it in turn apparently with great enjoyment. He also suggests that it emits an odor which is pleasant to the ants. All these peculiarities are quite the reverse of the object of Christian worship.

CARDINAL MANNING has been telling the people of Newcastle that "the sole educator of man is Christianity." The cool impudence of this assertion is evident when we reflect that

three-fourths of the human race are not Christians nor even likely to be. We venture to say that the nations which have been "educated" in Christianity have done more lying, thieving and murdering, than all the nations which have been educated in other faiths.

THE wily Cardinal, after flattering Englishmen to the full, went on to draw a horrible picture of infidel France, who has resolved to educate her children without religion, and to let the school-master be independent of the priest. France seems to be in a dreadful state, according to Manning, but most of the other nations in Europe wish they had half her complaint.

CARDINAL MANNING made this admission:—"Instruction without Christianity in a little while will issue in a race of people who, as they have never been taught a knowledge of God in Jesus Christ at school, will certainly, when they grow up, not give themselves the trouble to go to worship in church." Exactly so. That is just what we maintain. Christianity is so belied by science, and so alien to our modern life, that it would die out in a generation or two, if the priests, who are interested in maintaining it, were debarred from stuffing their dogmas into the minds of children, who cannot judge for themselves, but believe whatever they are taught.

THE Free Church Presbytery of Aberdeen is greatly exercised in mind over the desecration of the Sabbath. They especially object to boating and bathing in the river Dee, and they have resolved to do their utmost to put down both. One of the reverend objectors to clean water on the Lord's Day, describes himself and his brethren as "ministers of Christ, acting in his name and using his authority." These worthy fellows need not pray the Lord to give them a good conceit of themselves. They have it already. Let them read the last chapter of Mark, and then see whether they can show any of the signs which shall follow them that believe. Can they play safely with serpents, drink prussic acid with impunity, or cure the gout and rheumatics? If not, they are impudent impostors, unless Jesus or his biographers told a big fib.

A COLONIAL Bishop has censured one of his flock for "falling so low" as to marry the daughter of a Methodist. The *Christian World* also publishes a note from a vicar, who declined to join in any movement with Dissenters, on the ground that "Dissent is a sin against God." They are a happy family, they are.

THE Public Prosecutor is a very nice gentleman. He made not the least scruple in granting Sir Henry Tyler his rotten fiat to prosecute the *Freethinker*, but he would not take up the gross case of fraud on a young lady by a money-lender, and so Mr. G. Lewis had to do his work for him. As this amiable official gets something like £2,000 a-year, there are several people who ask what he does for the money.

MR. MOODY visited a saint at Dundee, whom the Lord is "polishing up for his kingdom." This little operation has already lasted forty years. During the whole of that time the patient has been lying in bed with a broken back. Either he wanted a good deal of polishing, or the Lord is a very slow worker. On the whole we would rather dispense with his "polishing" and be saved or damned in the rough.

AT a recent meeting in London one professional soul-saver, named Murphy, unwittingly betrayed the secret of his craft. Said he, "God has been very gracious to me; best of all he has kept me." The Lord will doubtless find as many servants as he can keep.

IN noticing the Rev. F. O. Morris's "All the Articles of the Darwin Faith," a Christian contemporary calls it "amusing" and an "effective piece of sarcasm," and says that it treats the errors of Darwinism with "unmeasured ridicule." Christians may ridicule our views as much as they please, but if we ridicule theirs it is blasphemy, and we are in peril of gaol. This is what they call doing as they would be done by.

A LADY advertises in a Christian paper that she has had twenty-two years' experience with the care of the mentally afflicted, and has now vacancies at her home for "two or three who have faith in healing by prayer." She certainly seeks among the right class for people of that belief.

THE publicans of Wokingham are up in arms. The alderman who granted their licenses this year presented each of them with a printed circular, calling attention to all the Bible passages against the use of strong drink. They can easily dish him in his own sauce by the use of our *Freethinker* Tract on "The Bible and Temperance," wherein they will find plenty of texts in favor of John Barleycorn.

AN old woman has been locked up at Ipswich for telling fortunes and charging ten shillings for the job. Manning's

priests are allowed to take money for praying souls out of purgatory. Yet wherein do they differ from the old woman of Ipswich?

A NOTORIOUS ranting sky-pilot, in Nottingham, backed himself at billiards the other day, and was "let in" by a commercial traveller to the tune of three shillings. The fellow cannot speak proper English, yet he boasts of having beaten Ingersoll over in America. The Colonel wouldn't touch him with a long pole.

THE following handbill has been posted to us with initials, which we suppose stand for Tracy Turnerelli:—"£5 REWARD. Whereas it has been alleged that certain wicked and evil-disposed Jews, named Moses, Samuel, Ezekiel, Hosea, and others, are the authors of certain obscene and disgusting passages recently brought under my notice, the above reward will be paid on the discovery and conviction of the aforesaid offenders, who are supposed to have absconded after laying the blame upon an innocent old Hebrew gentleman named Jahveh.—T. T."

AT Harwich County Court on Saturday William Gibson, of Chester, a "captain" in the Salvation Army, was ordered to pay £50 and costs for assaulting a per. on who would not move for the army procession. Captain William is truly a militant Christian ready to "prove his doctrine orthodox by apostolic blows and knocks." This is the second time he has been had up for assault since he has been saved. General Booth refuses to pay his fine.

THE "General" was shortsighted in refusing to allow Gipsy Smith to retain his watch. The Salvation Army's receipts at Hanley have fallen from £30 to £3 weekly since the defection of the Gipsy. At Hull he got £28 weekly for the army. Now they only get £14. His sister, Tilly Smith, is an attractive singer and speaker, yet she only had 15s. weekly, which the General proposed to reduce to 7s. 6d. on the ground that she was usually boarded by friends. Money grabbers are often short sighted.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* says of the cosmogony in Genesis: "Perhaps it is a poem. Perhaps it was given to the narrator in vision." Perhaps he dreamt it! Notwithstanding these doubts of the literal truth of the creation story it says it can afford to wait for "a detailed harmony between Genesis and geology, astronomy and other contiguous sciences." We have not found so great a faith, not in all Israel.

AN English missionary the Rev. H. Lansdell, author of "Through Siberia," has been arrested in Russia on a charge of circulating Nihilistic literature. He proved that he was only distributing Bibles. The Holy Czar, being head of the Russian Church, is about to have a revised version made expunging the passage stating that the early Christians had all things in common, and printing in extra large type the passage which says, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers; the powers that be are ordained of God."

THE London correspondent of the *Manchester Examiner* drew attention to the organised interruption of the Freethought meeting in Hyde Park. Thereupon the Rev. A. J. Harrison, who is Honorary Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society for the North, wrote to the same paper, stating that he had communicated with the headquarters in London, and that if any agent of the C. E. S. were guilty of "interrupting a Secularist meeting he would be instantly dismissed." Mr. Harrison, we are sure, means all he says. He is a gentleman. But he does not know the low, scurrilous, and violent agents of the C. E. S. in London.

It is calculated that the Egyptians will lose over £70,000,000 by the present war. The cotton crop alone, which is entirely gone, would have been worth nearly £40,000,000. While all this wanton destruction is going on abroad, our clergy are dumb dogs. Hardly a word of protest comes from them. Even the *Echo*, which has been so unfair to Freethought during the great struggle on the Oath Question, is obliged to admit our service to the cause of peace. It says that the future historian will tell how "at an important period in the history of England, ministers of a religion of peace vindicated an aggressive war; whilst the unbelieving and the Atheistic, almost to a man, condemned a war which cost so much treasure and blood."

A GENTLEMAN at Nechells, Birmingham, has eloped with a neighbour's wife and deserted his own. The absconding pair got thick together at Sunday School, the lady being a teacher, and the gay Lothario superintendent. The forsaken husband knew nothing of his wife's flight until he found a note from her, piously advising him to "put his trust in God." She did not say what the Lord would do for the two children she left motherless.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Mr. FOOTE lectures twice to-day (Sunday, September 17th) in London: Morning, at 11.30, Clerkenwell Green, on "Blasphemy and Blasphemers;" Evening, at 7, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., on "The Bible and its Defenders."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

September 23rd Beeston; 24th, Nottingham.

October 1st, Claremont Hall, London; 5th, Hall of Science, London; 8th, Leeds; 12th, Hall of Science; 15th, Halifax; 19th, Hall of Science; 22nd, Manchester; 26th, Hall of Science; 29th, Portsmouth; October 30th and 31st, Southampton.

November 5th, Heckmondwike; 12, Liverpool; 19th, Hall of Science, London; 26th, Claremont Hall, London.

December 3rd, Huddersfield; 10th, Bradford; and 17th, Grimsby.

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Publisher, 15 Harp Alley, Farringdon Street, E.C.

LITERARY communications to the Editor, Mr. G. W. FOOTE, No. 9 South Crescent, Bedford Square, London, W.C.

W. BINNING (Edinburgh).—There is no complete edition of Ingersoll's works in book form. Mr. Orr can supply you.

R. BARROW.—In the face of all history to the contrary, it is an impertinence to claim for Christianity the credit due to modern civilisation.

J. KENT.—Colonel Ingersoll and T. B. Wakeman practice at the bar. S. Putman, G. Chaîne and G. Milne are converted clericals. Many of the medical profession are Freethinkers in America as elsewhere.

W. MACDONALD.—The accounts of the ages of the patriarchs are on the face of them fabulous. The Jewish mythographers did not care a fig for facts or figures so long as they told a big story.

S. B. ("A Young Freethinker") thinks it a great difficulty that "the Eternal Son of God" is of the same age as his Father. S. B. should read his Bible and enlarge his faith. By carefully comparing 2 Chronicles xxi., 21, with the two first verses of the following chapter, he will discover that Ahaziah the youngest son of Jehoram was *two years older than his father*. To doubt is blasphemy.

R. BROWN.—The succeeding numbers of Mr. Wheeler's "Frauds and Follies of the Fathers" will deal with their evidential value for the Gospels.

LEANDER.—Your verse is too ornate. It reminds us of the revised version of Dr. Watt's "Twinkle, twinkle, little star"—

"Scintillate scintillate globule vivific,
Fain would I fathom thy nature specific;
Loftily poised in æther capacious,
Strongly resembling a gem carbonaceous."

R. YOUNG.—Mr. Moss has already written on the subject. We are glad to know that the notice in last week's *Freethinker* brought you so much support in Hyde Park, and we willingly ask the lovers of fair play to muster again to-day at the Achilles statue at three o'clock.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS:—A Socialist.

D. LEMOND.—Collecting-sheets sent. We hope all your good wishes will be fulfilled.

A. TUCKS, 53 Chichester Road, and H. HOOPER, 23 Pembroke Road, Kilburn, sell the *Freethinker* and all Secular publications.

THE Bootle and Kirkdale Branch of the N. S. S. meet every Wednesday evening at 136 Westminster Road, at eight o'clock.

R. B.—The address is properly given this week. See the advertisement.

H. PAINE.—The dirty little catchpenny rag isn't worth notice. It is just fit to stop a hole in one of its reader's garret windows, and its name seems to imply that it was partly intended for such a purpose.

T. G. F.—As we don't believe that the sun, moon, and stars were made, we are not prepared to say who made them. *Made* is a term of art. In nature things are not made; they grow. Of course we cannot give lessons in physical science. Any book on astronomy, up to date, will tell you all you wish to know.

C. DELOLME.—Cuttings are always welcome.

G. MIDDLETON.—We are glad to hear that the *Freethinker* is such a success in Aberdeen. As you say, it is impossible to please everybody, and we don't intend to try. We just mean to please ourselves.

W. PICKARD.—Many people were shocked by our illustrations at first who enjoy them now. The power of old association is very strong. We have known Freethinkers who shrank from playing cards on a Sunday for a long time. Our circulation improves every week, and it has now reached a point that would have been thought impossible twelve months ago.

E. H. JAMES.—In answer to a few lines of ours you send us a letter as long as a leading article. We regret that we cannot insert it, owing to want of space. You have slightly misunderstood our question. We did not say that alcoholic drinks were good or bad;

we merely questioned the doctrine that the moderate drinker is responsible for the immoderation of the drunkard. To ask one man to forego enough lest another should take too much, is very much like asking him not to shave lest another should cut his throat. This policy, if carried out all round, would mean the tyranny of a few over the many, and would compel society to live according to the needs of weaklings and fools. All actions are right or wrong in themselves. As a matter of fact, nearly every Freethought lecturer is a moderate drinker. They all work very hard, and they mostly enjoy very good health. We deny altogether that the abuse of drink has anything to do with its use. The causes of drunkenness are as numerous and varied as the physical and moral defects of our civilization; and we believe that teetotalism and preaching are as much use against it as whistling against the wind. The remedy must go as deep as the causes.

E. G. C. HARVEY.—In our next.

G. BARNES.—The whole will appear next week.

B. WARD.—We thank you for your efforts to extend our circulation. By distributing a dozen copies weekly you advertise the paper most effectively.

OWING to press of matter all acknowledgments of subscriptions to our Defence Fund stand over till next week. We shall then include everything up to date. As it is now only six weeks to the trial, we hope our friends will be specially active with the collecting-sheets, which we shall be happy to forward to any address.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. FOOTE is seeing through the press a large pamphlet on the Blasphemy question. It is entitled "Blasphemy no Crime," and goes over the whole ground, dealing with the subject from the standpoints of history, law, religion, and morality. It also deals fully with the *Freethinker* prosecution. No pains have been spared to make it a complete handbook for use in the present crisis. A copy will be sent to every newspaper in Great Britain and Ireland. The pamphlet will be ready for sale next week.

At the London Hall of Science this evening, Mr. Foote will deliver his last lecture there before the trial. He will have something to say on the legal aspects of the case after the lecture, and will be glad to meet as many of the London readers of the *Freethinker* as can attend.

THE Central London Branch of the National Secular Society, after providing in the most liberal spirit for everything in connection with the children's excursion, retained a balance of 14s., which they have handed over to the Freethinkers Benevolent Fund.

Mr. EDWARD STACK, in his "Six Months in Persia," says that a residence in that country begets a positively "Lucretian hatred" of religion. At Lar he made the acquaintance of Safi Ali, who is retained as poet and wit at the governor's court. The Governor himself is a man of the austere piety, but his poet laureate entertains the travellers with profane and blasphemous songs and jests. On one occasion, when a friend sought his spiritual guidance, he composed the following rule of life:—"You can go either to hell or to heaven according as you choose your company. If you care for the company of straight-faced mullas and frowzy saints, you can find plenty of them in heaven. But hell is peopled with bold fellows and brave spirits, who have some fun in them. So make your choice. If you prefer heaven, go and sit with Mohammed and Ali, beside the stream of Kaurar, and drink its brackish waters." The Persian poets have always been an irreligious set. Safi Ali has some of the spirit of Omar Khayyam. He is evidently a jolly good fellow, and we should like to have a quiet chat with him about very many things.

THE Rev. E. Payton Hood is very sorry he missed hearing Ingersoll out in the States. "On my way out," he says, "an accomplished barrister—a man of large, and it seemed, in a sense, of universal culture—had said to me he believed he had listened to every great orator of our day—to Gladstone and Bright, and Spurgeon and Ward Beecher—but he regarded this Ingersoll as beyond them all."

THE *Christian Herald* is evidently bent on showing up General Booth. Probably Baxter is a little envious of his successful rival. It appears that the "General" is not above accepting presents himself, although his subalterns are forbidden to take any. When at Chester the other day he was presented by some fishermen with a very fine salmon, and as the fish is not to be found at headquarters it is inferred that the Booth family devoured it. Two years ago a lady named Harvey, at Leamington, left him £2,000 to purchase or erect barracks in the town. Booth hasn't bought or built the barracks yet, but he says that the money is safely invested. No doubt.

PARSON: Have you ever been in a church, my man? *Workman*: Yes, sir—once. *P.*: Why did you not go again? *W.*: Because I came to the same conclusion as the psalmist, that a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.

THE city of silk ribbons and Lady Godiva processions has been much stirred by the Anti-Vicar's Rate Agitation. On Monday and Wednesday last attempts were made to sell the goods which, to the value of above £70, had been distrained from thirteen Nonconformists, for rates amounting to about £13. The affair has excited much disturbance in this usually quiet city, and large indignation meetings have been held.

It seems that the vicar of Holy Trinity is empowered to levy one shilling in the pound on all property in the parish, including that of Dissenters, Jews, and Freethinkers. This rate, which in Dean Hook's time only produced £250, now amounts to nearly one thousand annually. The Coventry dissenters have only to take the advice of the *Coventry Times*: "Let no Nonconformist pay anything to this iniquitous tax." and the matter will soon end with the entire abolition of the obnoxious vicar's rate.

DESPITE the abolition of compulsory Church rates there are still many places scattered throughout the country where by ancient or local Acts of Parliament the Church is empowered to levy rates on all parishioners. Wherever the parsons attempt this Nonconformists will do well to at once send them to Coventry.

THE Sixth Annual Convention of the New York Freethinkers, held at Watkin's Glen, Seneca Lake, was a great success. Among the speakers were Charles Bright (of Australia), Mr. D. M. Bennett (of the *Truthseeker*), ex-Rev. George Chainey, ex-Rev. A. B. Bradford, ex-Rev. S. B. Putman, T. B. Wakeman, J. B. Mendum (of the *Boston Investigator*), Mrs. H. S. Lake, Dr. T. L. Brown, Prof. Peck, and others. The proceedings were conducted with the utmost harmony, each successive convention proving more thoroughly the strength and influence of the Freethought party in America.

MR. GRANT ALLEN, in the *Fortnightly Review*, endeavors to answer the question "Who was primitive man?" He says "We may not unjustifiably picture him to ourselves as a tall, hairy creature, more or less erect, but with a slouching gait, black faced, and whiskered, with prominent prognathous muzzle, and large pointed canine teeth. His forehead was no doubt low and retreating, with bony bosses underlying the shaggy eyebrows, which gave him a fierce expression, something like a gorilla. But already in all likelihood, he had learned to walk habitually erect, and had begun to develop a human pelvis, as well as to carry his head more straight on his shoulders." The clericals, who have so readily accepted Darwinism as in entire harmony with Scripture, are quite content to take Mr. Grant Allen's description as a correct portrait of Father Adam.

THE SALVATION ARMY.

A sacred din comes from afar,
From folks in music skilled,
And though not drunk, they'll own they are
With holy spirit filled.

And though they have not got the blues,
Yet they can devils see;
And (how it does amuse my muse),
They say there's one in me.

Who are they, pray? What can they do?
It's nonsense inspiration?
Hush! hush! my friend, I thought you knew
The Army of Salvation.

Don't laugh at them, for you will hear
Their gospel's mostly sound,
And so can't rotten be, 'tis clear;
You'll own that, I'll be bound.

They come out thus to take folks in,
And often are put out,
When trying unsaved souls to win
From unbelief and doubt.

They say they're helping God, O clowns!
But I say, God help them!
For they prefer the silver crowns
To starry diadem.

They'd rather have a half-crown here
Than a whole one in the sky;
And *War Crys* want to sell, no fear,
When they sing "Buy and buy."

Well, let them fool themselves away,
All folly runs to death.
And if they can't save souls, they may
Soon learn to save their breath.

WITTWON.

REVIEW.

The International Library of Science and Freethought. Vol. IV., "Genesis: its Authorship and Authenticity." By CHARLES BRADLAUGH. London: Freethought Publishing Company, 1882.

THIS completed volume deals not only strictly with the authorship and authenticity of the book of Genesis, but with its contents. It is, in fact, a Freethought commentary on the early Jewish myths, which lie at the very basis of orthodox Christianity. Although it only takes the reader through the first eleven chapters, these chapters, as everyone knows, comprise the important legends of the Creation, the Fall, the Sin-Flood, the Genesis of Nations, and the Confusion of Languages. Upon each of these points Mr. Bradlaugh supplies not only the various renderings of the Hebrew text, and the interpretations and accommodations of orthodox commentators, but also the results of the critical labors of such men as Cahen, Colenso, Davidson, Geddes, Kalish, Rénan, Tiele, and Van-Bohlen. Nor is the recent able work of Ignaz Goldziher, upon "Mythology among the Hebrews," forgotten. The work is indeed a storehouse of rational criticism, and a great part of its value lies in bringing within narrow compass the vast array of evidence which utterly discredits these Jewish fables. Whole libraries have been consulted and distilled, nor has the application of common sense and logical argument been omitted. The results as stated by Mr. Bradlaugh are:—

"1. That the Book of Genesis is unhistoric, that it is not the work of any one writer, but is made up of several documents, belonging to different ages, pieced together after the lapse of many centuries, often clumsily, and sometimes without regard to relevancy. 2. That the narrative is sometimes self-contradictory, and that it is often contradicted by other books of the Bible. 3. That its chronological statements are, on the face of them absurdly inaccurate, and that they are overwhelmingly contradicted by history and modern discovery. 4. That the Genesiac teachings on ethnology, geology, astronomy, zoology, and botany, are flatly in opposition to the best knowledge in each of these sciences. And, 5. That such teachings of the book as relate to morality would be destructive of human happiness, if generally adopted."

These conclusions, utterly destructive as they are of the whole fabric of orthodox Christianity, are gradually being accepted by all who investigate into the matter, and we venture the prediction that they will be supported by those who will go through this book divested of prejudice. We heartily commend it to all students of the Bible narratives. Those who have neither leisure nor means for a more extended survey, will find it a reliable text-book on the main points of controversy. That amid his many avocations and constant battling with the enemy, Mr. Bradlaugh should have put out a work embodying so much research is a striking testimony to his restless energy and industry. The value of the work is enhanced by a good index.

A SHABBY ROBBERY.—It was a shabby robbery, says *Grocott's Penny Mail*, and everyone we have spoken to on the subject concurs in the remark. The Bible, which for years without number discharged "well and faithfully" an important office in the Magistrate's Court, on Tuesday morning, after his Worship had taken his seat on the bench, was not forthcoming, and gently the sad news was broken by one of the Court officials, that some miscreant had stolen it; that its dear but tattered cover and time-stained pages were gone from the Court for ever, and that the charming and beautiful lines, reminding one forcibly of happy childhood against the crime of theft, "Fearing the gallows would be your end," which decorated the title page, had not the good effect intended. Another Bible has been procured, and, to say the least, it looks a venerable one; but, then, a little paste will set the covers all right.

THE *Echo* is waking up. It describes Talmage as "a colossal platform impostor," expresses a small opinion of Gough and Booth, says that there are hundreds of Britishers who can preach and sing better than Moody and Sankey, and wonders how it is that these American adventurers get on so well. Our answer is simple. They know how to work the oracle. Plenty of excitement, unlimited "cheek," and dexterous puffing will do wonders with the mob, especially the Christian mob.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ROWDY CHRISTIANS IN HYDE PARK.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—Last Sunday was a regular field day for London Secularists. They had been threatened with violence from the pretended supporters of the "meek and lowly" Nazarene, and they were resolved to do their best to resist this altogether gratuitous and unpleasant evil. Accordingly a goodly number of them met at Achilles' statue in Hyde Park at three o'clock, and walked determinedly to the spot where they had decided that the lecture should be delivered. At my suggestion we chose our position a few yards from the place where our meetings are usually held, and thus eluded our opponents; this also gave us an opportunity of forming a good strong ring of friends, so that all who came up afterwards had to take their place in the rear. My lecture was delivered with very few interruptions, and among my most attentive hearers was a fine body of police, bent on securing for us the right of holding our meeting in peace. When the lecture was finished opposition was invited, and up walked Mr. Mitchell, his face, white with fear. For a quarter of an hour he was allowed to descant on the immorality of Atheists and a number of other topics in no way relating to the subject of the lecture. Then I arose to reply. This was the signal for the bigots to begin their rough play. At one time it seemed that the meeting would be utterly broken up, but our friends stuck close together, and after the police had courageously lugged the ringleaders, among the roughs, out of the crowd, a hearty cheer went up, and looking round I saw that the ring remained unbroken. I then finished my reply to my opponent's remarks, and the meeting quietly dispersed. In defeating in this way the rowdy bigots we have won a moral victory. As some of your readers will doubtless be anxious to know how we got on, I send you this brief account for their benefit and instruction.—Yours truly,
ARTHUR B. MOSS.

CHRISTIAN BIGOTRY AT BALHAM.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The bigotry among so-called Christians is surprising. At Balham, as a Secularist, I take an active part in open-air work on Wandsworth and Streatham Commons. I take charge of the literature, and on Sunday last sold 104 copies of the *Freethinker*. My landlady upon hearing that I was an Atheist, and that Mr. Thurlow was blaspheming her Blessed Savior, came in on Monday and told us that she had had all sorts of people but never had an infidel before. She hoped we would get out of the house as soon as we could. She would in future ask what religion people were of before taking them in. She would rather have a confirmed drunkard, or have the place empty for seven years, than have an infidel. I suggested it might be empty for some time as nearly half Balham were infidels. She said, "Oh, what will become of your dear little baby," and when my wife told her that her name was Annie Besant, and that she was named by Mr. Bradlaugh, at the Hall of Science, on the Sunday of the Demonstration in Hyde Park, she stepped back and put her hand to her heart as if about to faint with fright. Such is the bigotry prevailing in the present age. The sooner it is done away with the better.—Respectfully yours,
H. POWELL.

CETEWAYO has departed, having easily humbugged "my mother the Queen," the Temperance people, and the missionary societies. These latter are still agog as to whether Zululand is to become Baptist, Congregationalist, or Church of England. We would remind them that it is not enough that the Zulus should find the Prayer Book "the very book they are wanting" as Cetewayo expressed it, or that they should howl Dr. Watt's hymns instead of their ancient war songs. To become truly converted they must resign the savage vice of stealing and substitute the Christian virtue of cheating.

ONE windy day a few slates were blown from the roof of Parson Brown's house. To save expense he made up his mind to repair the damage himself. He thereupon called his gardener to fetch the ladder, and placed it by the side of the house. Up went the parson and began to survey the extent of damage done. He had managed to climb to the ridge, and was about returning by the other side, and owing to the extreme slanting position of the roof, he began to slip. "Lord save me!" he cried, and succeeded in stopping himself for a moment, but he began to slip again, crying all the while, "Christ save me! Lord have mercy upon me!" But in vain. He had finally arrived at the edge of the roof, and finding it was no use to call any more upon his Lord, he called out to his gardener, "Charles, now for the crowning bump."

WHAT was Christ's reply when the Devil tempted him to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple on to the stones beneath?—I'll be dashed if I do.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

DEISM.—A bald Deism has undoubtedly been the creed of some of the purest and most generous men that have ever trod the earth, but none the less on that account is it in its essence a doctrine of self-complacent individualism from which society has little to hope, and with which there is little chance of the bulk of society ever sympathising. In truth, one can scarcely call it a creed. It is merely a name for a particular mood of fine spiritual exaltation; the expression of a state of indefinite aspiration and supreme feeling for lofty things. Are you going to convert the new barbarians of our western world with this fair word of emptiness? Will you sweeten the lives of suffering men, and take its heaviness from that droning piteous chronicle of wrong and cruelty and despair, which everlastingly saddens the compassionating ear-like moaning of a midnight sea; will you animate the stout of heart with new fire, and the firm of hand with fresh joy of battle, by the thought of a being without intelligible attributes, a mere abstract creation of metaphysic, whose mercy is not our mercy, nor his justice our justice, nor his fatherhood as the fatherhood of men?—*John Morley*.

PIOUS WRANGLERS.—There is scarcely a text in the Holy Scriptures to which there is not an opposite text written in characters equally large and legible; and there has usually been a sword laid upon each. Even the weakest disputant is made so conceited by what he calls religion, as to think himself wiser than the wisest who thinks differently from him; and he becomes so ferocious by what he calls holding it fast, that he appears to me as if he held it fast much in the same manner as a terrier holds a rat, and you have about as much trouble in getting it from between his incisors. When at last it does come out, it is mangled, distorted, and extinct.—*W. S. Landor*, "Imaginary Conversation between Melancthon and Calvin."

PRIESTLY IMPUDENCE AND HYPOCRISY.—The philosopher Antisthenes, as the priest was initiating him in the mysteries of Orpheus, telling him that those who profest themselves of that religion were certain to receive perfect and eternal felicities after death: "If thou believest that," answered he, "why dost thou not die thyself?" Diogenes more rudely, according to his manner, to the priest that in like manner, preached to him to become of his religion, that he might obtain the happiness of the other world: "What," said he, "thou wouldst have me believe that Agesilaus and Epaminondas, who were so great men, shall be miserable, and that thou, who art but a calf, and canst do nothing to purpose, shalt be happy, because thou art a priest?"—*Montaigne*, "Apology for Raimond de Sebonde."

PROFANE JOKES.

A HIGH CHURCH parson asked a Low Church parson, "Do you have Matins in your church?" The latter replied, "Oh dear no; kamptulicon right up to the communion-table."

EVE was the first, and we reckon the only woman who did not gather up her dress in both hands and yell at the sight of a snake. Poor thing! she had no dress to hold up, and the true secret of her fall, and all men's woe, is that the dear grandparent of all the sex wanted to see how she would look when dressed.

AN Englishman, boasting to an American of how he had been mistaken for the Prince of Wales, said: "I was walking down Bond Street the other day when someone slapped me on the back, saying, 'Albert Edward, how do you do?'" "Wal I guess that's nothing," said the Yankee; "I was walking down Broadway some time ago, when a fellow seized my hand, and looking me straight in the face, said, 'Jesus Christ, is that you?'"

A DIVINE of the old school in the "lang toun" of Kirkcaldy, when reading and commenting on the cxvi. Psalm, came to the verse, "I said in my haste all men are liars." Casting his eyes slowly round his congregation, he impressively added, "Aye Dauvid, if ye had lived in our toun ye might hae said it at your leisure."

"What's wrang wi' ye, Tammas?" inquired a Scotch farmer of his son, who entered the house crying and displaying a large bump on his forehead. "Jock struck me on the heid wi' the Family Bible, because I wanted tae see the pictures," sobbed the injured Tammas. "Mon, I'm proud o' ye," said his Father, clapping him on the head; yer the only aye in ma family the word o' God ever made an impression on."

THE NATIONAL SUNDAY LEAGUE'S Last Excursion this season will be on Sunday, September 17th, by the Brighton Railway, to St. Leonards and Hastings, from London Bridge (only) at 9 a.m., calling at New Cross, Norwood Junction, and East Croydon. There and Back, 5s. Children, 2s. 6d.

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