

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY. THE FREETHINKER.

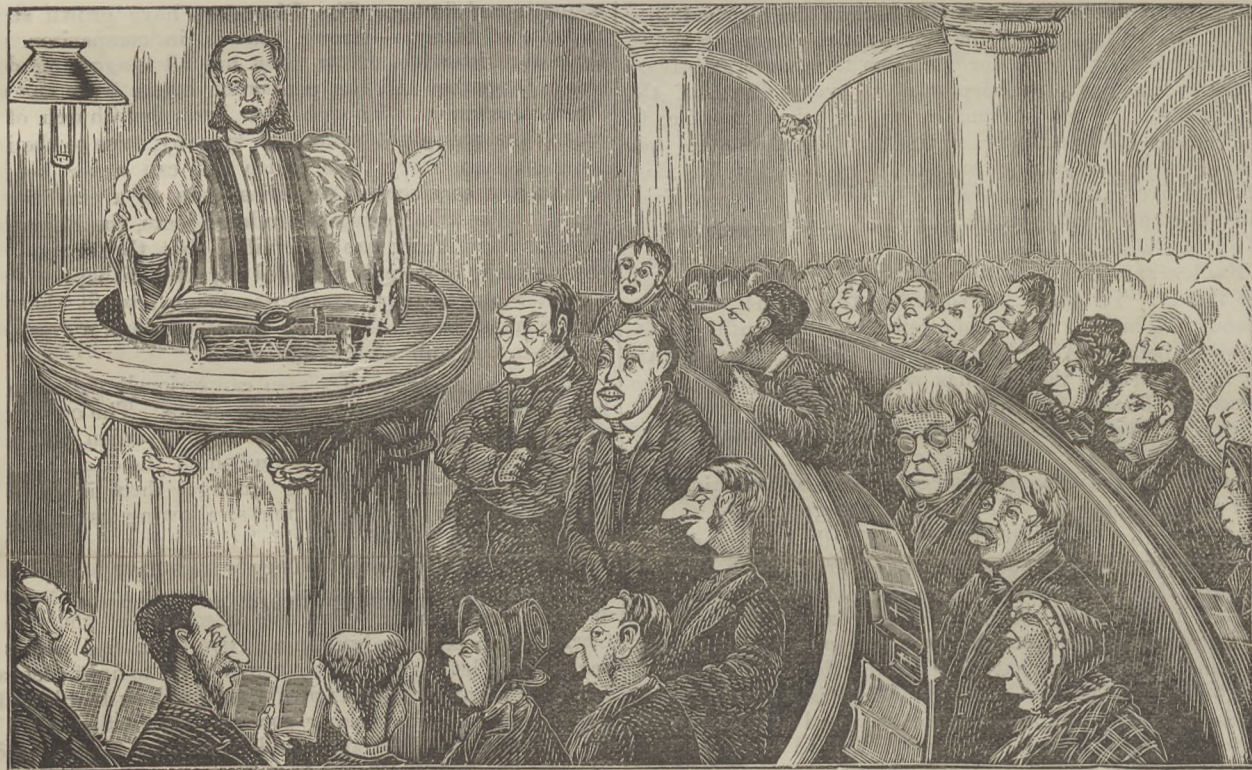
EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

“COMIC BIBLE” SKETCHES.—XLIII.



BLESSED RELIGION.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.—MATTHEW v., 2.

A PIOUS SHOWMAN.

WE all remember how that clever showman, Barnum, managed to fan the Jumbo fever. When the enterprising Yankee writes his true autobiography we shall doubtless find some extraordinary revelations. Yet Barnum, after all, makes no pretence of morality or religion. He merely goes in for making a handsome fortune out of the curiosity and credulity of the public. If he were questioned as to his principles, he would probably reply like Artemus Ward —“Princerpuls? I've nare a one. I'm in the show bizniz.”

General Booth is quite as much a showman as Barnum, but he is a pious showman. He is a perfect master of the vulgar art of attracting fools. Every day brings a fresh change in his “Walk up, Walk up.” Tambourine girls, hallelujah lasses, converted clowns and fiddlers, sham Italian organ grinders, bands in which every man plays his own tune, officers in uniform, Davidic dances, and music-hall tunes, are all served up with a plentiful supply of blood and fire. The “General” evidently means to stick at nothing that will draw; and we quite believe that if a pair of Ezekiel's cherubim were available, he would worry God Almighty into sending them down for exhibition at the City Road show.

Booth's latest dodge is to say the least peculiar. Most fathers would shrink from trafficking in a son's marriage, but Booth is above such nice scruples. The worst deeds

are sanctified by love of God, and religion condones every indecency.

Mr. Bramwell Booth, whom the General has singled out as his apostolic successor, and heir to all the Army's property, got married last week; and the pious showman actually exhibited the bridegroom and bride to the public at a shilling a head. About three hundred pounds were taken at the doors, and a big collection was made inside. Booth's anxiety for the cash was very strongly illustrated. Commissioner Railton, who has we believe been a clown in his time, was enjoying his long deferred opportunity of making a speech, when many of the crowd began to press towards the door. “Stop,” cried Booth, “don't go yet, there's going to be a collection.” But the audience melted faster than ever. Whereupon Booth jumped up again, stopped poor Railton unceremoniously, and shouted “Hold on, we'll make the collection now.” This little manoeuvre was quite in keeping with the showman's instruction to his subalterns, to have plenty of good strong collecting boxes and pass them round often.

Booth's facetious remarks during his son's marriage according to the Army forms were well adapted to tickle the ears of his groundlings. The whole thing was a roaring farce, and well sustained the reputation of the show. There was also the usual spice of blasphemy. Before Bramwell Booth marched on to the platform a board was held up bearing the inscription “Behold the bridegroom cometh.” These mountebanks have no reverence even for what they call sacred. They make everything dance to

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their tune. They prostitute "God's Word," caricature Jesus Christ, and burlesque all the watchwords and symbols of their creed.

One of Booth's remarks after the splicing was finished is full of suggestion. He said that his enemies might cavil, but he had found out a road to fortune in this world and the next. Well, the Lord only knows how he will fare in the next world, but in this world the pious showman has certainly gained a big success. He can neither write nor preach, and as for singing, a half a dozen notes from his brazen throat would empty the place as easily as a cry of "Fire." But he is a dexterous manager; he knows how to work the oracle; he understands catering for the mob; in short, he is a very clever showman, who deals in religion just as other showmen deal in wild animals, giants, dwarfs, two-headed sheep, fat women, and Siamese twins.

Fortune has brought to our hands a copy of a private circular issued by "Commissioner" Railton, soliciting wedding presents for Mr. Bramwell Booth. With the exception of Reuben May's begging letters, it is the finest cadging document we ever saw. Booth was evidently ashamed to sign it himself, so it bears the name of Railton. But the pious showman cannot disown the responsibility for it. He will not allow the officers of the Army to marry without his sanction; he forbids them to accept any private present; he keeps a sharp eye on every detail of the organisation. Surely, then, he will not have the face to say that he knew nothing of Railton's circular. He has face enough for almost anything, but hardly for this. There is one damning fact which he cannot shirk. Railton asks that all contributions shall be made "payable to William Booth, as usual."

Railton spreads the butter pretty freely on Booth and his family. He says that their devotion to the Army has "loaded them with care, and often made them suffer weakness and pain." As to Mr. Bramwell Booth, in particular, we are informed that he has worked so hard behind the scenes, as Chief of the Staff, that many of his hairs are grey at twenty-seven. Poor Bramwell! The Army should present him with a dozen bottles of hair restorer. Perhaps his young wife will renew his raven head by imitating the lady in the fable, and pulling out all the grey hairs.

In order to compensate this noble family in some degree for their marvellous devotion to the great cause, Railton proposes that wedding presents *in the shape of cash* should be made to Mr. Bramwell Booth on the day of his marriage. Whatever money is received will go, not to the young gentleman personally, but to reducing the Army debt of £11,000. But as the Army property is all in Booth's hands, and Mr. Bramwell is his *heir* and successor, it is obvious that any reduction of the debt will be so much clear gain to the firm.

The General evidently saw that the case was a delicate one; so Railton sends out a private circular, which he excuses on the ground that "any public appeal would not be at all agreeable to Mr. Bramwell's own feelings." Of course not. But we dare say the wedding presents will be agreeable enough. As this is a strong point with the firm, Railton repeats it later on. "I do not wish," he says, "to make any public announcement of this." The reason of this secrecy is doubtless the same as that which prompts the General to exclude reporters and interlopers from his all-night meetings. Only the initiated are allowed in, and they of course may be safely trusted.

With the circular Railton sent out envelopes in which the pious dupes were to forward their contributions; and printed slips, headed "Wedding Presents to Mr. Bramwell Booth," on which they were asked to specify the amount of their gift and the sin from which the Salvation Army had rescued them. This printed slip contains a list of sins, which would do credit to a Jesuit confessor. Booth has we think missed his vocation. He might have achieved real distinction in the army of Ignatius Loyola.

The circular is a wonderful mixture of piety and business. Nearly every sentence contains a little of both. The cash will not only gladden the hearts of the Booths, but "make the devil tremble," and "give earth and hell another shock." This last bit of extravagance is rather puzzling. That hell should receive another shock is very proper, but why is there to be an earthquake at the same time?

We have said enough to show the true character of this cadging trick. It throws a strong light on the busines

methods of this pious showman. Booth is playing a very astute game. By reducing the Army to military discipline, and constituting himself its General, he retains an absolute command over its resources, and is able to crush out all opposition and silence all criticism. He wields a more than Papal despotism. All the higher posts are held by members of his own family. His eldest son is appointed as his successor. The property thus remains in the family, and the Booth dynasty is established on a solid foundation. Such an impudent imposture would scarcely be credible if it were not patent that there is still amongst us a vast multitude of two-legged sheep, who are ready to follow any plausible shepherd, and to yield up their fleeces to his shears.

G. W. FOOTE.

PITY THE POOR BEWILDERED CHURCHES.

[Concluded from p. 323.]

Now the churches feel the need of union. Where the Anglican sect used to curse and excommunicate now they coquette and flatter. The Dissenters have grown strong in spite of bishops—strong, that is, in comparison with their one bitter foe. Now they are all staggering down the hill together and the persecutor begs a truce and asks for reconciliation. Though even here the Church of the State, the pampered menial of tyranny, true to the intolerance and snobbery from which she can never be free, demands a sacrifice of the Dissenters as a condition of union. The Wesleyans, the Independents, the Romanists, the Salvation Army, are all invited; but they must wear the wedding garment provided by the bishops. To fit them for heaven they require no change; to fit them for the bishops, they need much transformation, a great deal of polish, and unlimited submission.

It seems amazing that men can seriously entertain the hope that the churches can ever unite. The only union possible is that of death—and that is a union will soon overtake them. The points on which the churches split are fundamental, if anything amongst them is so. One sect cannot enter another without swallowing its principles. What can they do? It would be a happy family, were they all to unite. Unite! They would have to be closely shut up in separate cages, like wild beasts in a menagerie or Zoological Garden. Put one of each of all the sects in Christendom into one building. Give them free access to each other; let them have no common foe to fight; let each celebrate his own religious rites when and how he pleased—leave them under no further control than that supplied by the Holy Ghost. Bedlam would be a home of peace and a temple of reason compared to it!

I suppose the bishops, however, are not seriously expecting any union. They must do something. They know well that their days are numbered. Three new bishops in a few years!—well, it does not argue strength. That is only a vigorous kick or plunge from a dying animal. There never was such a period as this in the Churches' history. They are on the defensive everywhere; they are attacked within and without. In one respect it is similar to the state of things during the first three centuries, when Christianity did little else than struggle for the right to live. But there are two points specially in which the present is essentially distinguished from the past. The old churches had faith, really believed in a god, in heaven and hell, and in their own divine mission. To-day faith is dead. The churches now have no living God; they have waited Christ's return to earth till they are ashamed and in despair; their heaven and hell are only empty names; their one great wish is to be rich and to stand well with the world. This paralyses them. Union without life is but union of the dead. Their life is gone, their power is evaporated, all except such power as nuisances exert.

Then again, the old churches had scarcely had an opportunity to show what was in them, and the world hardly knew what to make of them. Now we know them. They have had their day. History exhibits their character. For every good the world owes them there are a dozen greater evils. The history of Christianity is that of a dark cloud with no silver lining, streaked and flushed with the glare of burning thousands, or crossed with here and there a rainbow due entirely to the Sun of Reason casting his unwelcome beams even upon the dense blackness of super-

stition! Shine on, O sun! Blow, O winds! Till the smoke of Christianity and all its ghastly paraphernalia and its dark imposture shall vanish, and leave the world to the pure breath and light of truth!

JOSEPH SYMES.

POSTSCRIPT.—Since writing the above I have read the speech of Dr. Macfadyen, President of the Congregational Union, on October 10th, in Bristol (see *Bristol Mercury*, October 11th). A few brief quotations from that speech will tend to confirm my opinions respecting the unity of the sects:—"The ramparts of the Church are useless when they become breaches, through which its enemies may enter as they please. [That, reader, is a hit at the State-paid Church.] The strength of the Church is in the quality rather than the quantity of its members. There are many amongst us who appropriate the name Catholic. They fling at us the terms schism and schismatic with wonderful ease. They deny our standing in the Church of Christ. . . . Beresford Hope spoke of our churches the other day as 'little fragments—infinitesimal chips of religiosity' (Laughter.) In pursuing this policy, we give them credit for a certain wisdom. (Hear.) The spider weaves a web in which he has caught many an unwary fly. The unity of the Christian Church is a grand name to charm by. Nothing to a Christian is more heart-rending than the ease with which the Christian Church is divided. A rite, or a letter, or a word, has been sufficient at one time. Names of men have been made hissing shibboleths."

Another quotation may be made:—"We are told that the unity of the Church may be found in Apostolic Succession. The men who advocate this doctrine, sail, as they think, with their faces set like a flint to the East, while they are backing towards the West. We are not sure about the claim. 'The grace conferred is at best,' as Luther said, 'milk pressed through a coal bag.' (Laughter.) It is at once strained and stained."

Dr. Macfadyen's speech is evidence of what I contend for—viz., that Christian union is an impossible thing. Men may unite, men from different sects, but only at the expense of their Christianity. Christians, no doubt, love each other very dearly; but they cannot, for all that, bear the sight, sound, or smell of each other, poor things! What a hell of a place their heaven must be!—J. S.

CHURCH ESTABLISHMENTS.

A DOCUMENT issued "in name and by authority of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland," should be worth hearing as to ecclesiastical history, and as Freethinkers often show much interest in that subject they will not grudge a few minutes' attention to this new manifesto. After noting the emphatic protest that the authors do not desire "to awaken uncharitable feelings towards those who differ" from them (whatever appearances may indicate) it will be well to come at once to the main principle laid down. Here it is. "The chiefs and nobles who founded the endowments of each church and parish. . . . felt it to be a part of their duty to Almighty God to devote the tithes (or teinds) of their lands to the maintenance of his holy ordinances. . . . Our endowments, accordingly, are at once offerings that have been given to God, which it were sin him to secularise, and the property of the people of each parish." The idyllic simplicity of this theory is delightful. But from what Arcadian manse does it emanate? The well-known servant lass who was ordered to describe her mistress as "not at home," was anxious to know whose lie that would be at the day of judgment. Who then is responsible for this theory of tithes? Is it the Assembly in general or "William Milligan, D.D." in particular? If the former, of course it is all right: for is it not written that a man may believe a creed as a whole though he regard each several article thereof as unmitigated nonsense? And do we not sign creeds in the plural which we indignantly repudiate in the singular? Besides, there is some truth in the doctrine, after all, for the endowments are truly the property of the people of each parish—i.e., of the nation—the sleeping partner Jehovah having, fortunately, no *locus standi* in any of the courts. And hence it is that the nation claims the right to regulate and even appropriate them if it thinks proper. But in the main the Church's theory is absolutely false—so much so, that it is startling to meet it in plain black and white. What a miracle it would have been if all the landowners of

the country had spontaneously devoted exactly one-tenth of their incomes to the support of ordinances and at the same time extended their generosity so far as to deal in the same way with the incomes of their successors, none of whom have ever objected to the arrangement. The idea is too outrageous to discuss. The deduction of a tenth from all lands uniformly is so obviously taxation, that none but a priest would dare deny it; and surely none but a priest could be ignorant of our modern jealousy of the "dead hand"—a feeling very dangerous to all endowments even if they are private, pious and charitable. But of course we are not really meant to believe that the tithes belong to the people. Our author was speaking only of the religious classes, for he evidently considers his case proved by the fact that Dissenters are voluntarily outside of the Establishment, and might enjoy all its advantages if they chose. And yet he knows better the tendencies of modern thought than to suppose that sceptics are so weak that they may be ignored. He knows that the enemies of religion are boasting, and not without cause it appears, for "we see the great Christian doctrines under-valued or explained away" and "the faith of many Christians enfeebled." Will these serious indications disappear under the influence of a vigorous crusade against Disestablishment? Surely the churches would be wiser if they endeavored to combine against a common foe, instead of seizing one another by the throat. But, alas! it is in this direction that all our repositories of sacred truth are most active. Fear not for the poor after Disestablishment. They will still have a gospel preached to them, for when the satisfaction of saving a soul from hell begins to wane, there is still the joy of saving it from the rival parson. It is in the sweet and friendly emulation of the sects that our hopes for a pure gospel must rest. Dr. Milligan's plan is good, but it comes too late. There was a time when much pecuniary benefit might have been secured for the Church by some such quiet arrangement for sharing the plunder with Dissenters. Yet fear not little flock, for subscriptions will always flow while Christians so "love one another," and Freethought has still a great inertia of ignorance and thoughtlessness to overcome.

S.

ACID DROPS.

JOHN BLOSSET MAULE, Esq., has not yet commenced a prosecution against the *War Cry* and *Little Soldier* for bringing the Christian religion into contempt.

It is interesting to know what qualities in wine fit it to obtain the Real Presence of the Blood of God. We have it on the authority of the Rev. J. H. Blunt that "the essential qualities in wine for the Holy Eucharist are (1) That it should be a genuine, fermented juice of the grape; (2) That it should be as pure as possible. But it is desirable also (3) That there should be some amount of richness in flavor; (4) That it should have enough body to prevent the flavor from leaving the palate immediately; and (5) That it should be red in color."

A WRITER in the *Herald of Progress* announces the second coming of Jesus. It seems he put in an appearance at a Spiritualist *séance*, held at 1 Penfold Street, E. None but Christian Spiritualists were present. Jesus, however, left suddenly without stating when he would call again.

SURELY Jesus is coming quickly. The falling of the comet into the sun will not be a more portentous sign of the day when the angels will take the place of the ministers and blow their own trumpets, while the Lord descends "with a shout," than a curious fact noticed by the reporter of the *Leicester Daily Mercury*, when on a trip to Skogness. He observed the vicar of St. Clement's, a church "remarkable for its abominable ugliness" and rickety condition, engaged in the work of restoring the church. The pulpit itself was sanctified by the presence of paint-brushes he had been using. Actual work from a parson surely signifies the beginning of the end.

IN Canon Farrar's new highly-colored romance, "The Early Days of Christianity," he accepts the view that Nero was the Beast and the Anti-Christ of the Apocalypse, as put forth in Mr. Foote's "St. John's Nightmare." The wordy Canon, like most Broad Church Divines, exhibits profound ignorance of the consequences of his admission. If Nero was Anti-Christ and Beast, it follows that the whole book of Revelation, instead of being prophetic, is but a monument of unfulfilled prophecy, exhibiting the gross superstition of the apostolic author and the malignant hatred of the early Christians against their opponents.

ANOTHER instance of Canon Farrar's method occurs in his comments on the Second Epistle of Peter. Pointing out that that epistle was never quoted till the third century, he says (vol. i., p. 179) "If the writers of the first and second centuries did indeed know the Epistle, it is inconceivable that not one of them should have hinted at the authority which it derived from the name of its author," yet he winds up by saying (p. 207), "I believe that we may perhaps recognise in this Epistle the opinions, the influence, the impress, direct or indirect, of the Great Apostle of the Circumcision." This is to suggest that as with the Epistle to the Hebrews, if not written by St. Paul, it was, at any rate, by his friend Apollos. We think it was no friend who put his name to such rubbish. Of course the person who forged the second epistle put the name of the apostle who most impressed him. But it may have been forged a century after Peter's death for all that.

If the Christian Church had adopted the decision of the Council of Laodicea and rejected the book of St. John's nightmare, the world would have been spared a deal of religious lunacy. Every year brings forth a number of new expositions of the Apocalypse. One of the latest is "The A B C of the Gospel," by J. A. Moncrieff (Belfast: Marcus Ward and Co.) According to the author, London, Paris and New York are the three divisions of Babylon, and the millennium will come in 1992.

To date the millennium above one hundred years ahead is a safe but unexciting way of interpreting prophecy. F. Boyce (late of the London City Mission) issues from 48 Oak Village, Kentish Town, N.W., what he calls "a divinely-authorised proclamation to the churches," in which he boldly announces "The hour of God's judgment from 1881 to 1888," and gives full details of the same.

From this important revelation we learn that the burden of the Lord was laid upon F. Boyce "while specially engaged in public-house visitation." "After this he was called of the Lord to be His servant." "Strange as it may sound, scarce a day has passed for months without an entreaty from devils to the Lord to send His servant down to hell." Boyce was divinely authorised to publish the divine interpretation of Second Advent prophecies in the *Christian*, but the papers did not appear. Both the parable of the Last Supper and of the Virgins refers to Boyce's message.

HE tells us Jesus Christ is here already as a thief. He came in 1881. 1882 will see severe attacks on the social systems; "the present religious systems will all fall in 1883, and in 1884 the political systems will be torn to shreds. Early in the year 1885, when the sea of strife has reached its highest pitch of turbulence, Anti-Christ's deadly wound will be healed, and all the world (except the elect) then wanders after the beast. The kingdoms of the world are then given into his hand for forty-two months (Rev. xiii., 1-9), at the end of which Christ takes possession of the kingdom to rule it in righteousness." "He who denies this makes God a liar." Boyce tells us the secret of his insanity. He says, "The Lord's servant has studied the practical details of the Second Advent for the last seventeen years from the Scriptures, with deep thought and earnest prayer."

In the *Monthly Notes* of the Young Men's Christian Association, we read that at the recent Conference at Glasgow they had "the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit." They neglect to inform us how the somewhat nebulous third person of the Holy Trinity manifested himself on that occasion. Did he come in pigeon fashion as at Jordan, or did cloven tongues sit upon the Christian young men as upon the apostles when the multitude thought them full of new wine. "Achates," who asks what utensils the outpouring they speak of is done from, guesses the spirit manifested itself as whisky.

At the Secretaries Conference it was declared that to be a secretary a man "must have power with God and prevail—get at God." "Achates" would much like to "get at" him; he thinks he could put him up to a few wrinkles—in short, teach him to be decently just and not such a bloodthirsty old party as Holy Scripture represents him to have been in the sweet long ago.

Poor old Dr. Begg (of Edinburgh) is always in a fume. He has for the last twenty years been boiling over against the introduction of the "kist of whistles" into the Free Kirk. The idea of Sunday enjoyment sends him as mad with rage as old Jahveh himself, and he hates freethought rather more than Jahveh's adversary hates holy water. His cholera has recently been excited by the British soldiers in Cairo doing homage to the Holy Carpet. This he denounces as practising one of the grossest forms of idolatry, and he calls on the British Government and people to disown the act or dread the vengeance of the God who made his chosen people put all idolators to death.

THE Rev. J. G. Sydenham, a clergyman of the Church of England, is a worthy preacher of the Lamb. He had to be

summoned at Collompton for keeping seven dogs in an extreme state of starvation. The bench characterised the case as a very serious one, and fined the reverend defendant £5, or one month's imprisonment. Perhaps this lover of the Lord thinks with Paul: God hath no care for oxen—or dogs either. His concern for his own immortal soul does not permit attention to so trifling an affair as feeding his animals.

ON Monday the virtuous Varley gave a lecture "to men only" in the smaller Exeter Hall, which holds perhaps 500, and for which 3000 tickets were issued. As the substance of the lecture was very similar to that found in publications so freely distributed by quacks, only with more questionable physiological details, our readers will not expect any report. There are one or two matters, however, deserving notice.

VARLEY set out by saying that, according to the Bible, were it not for immorality the Moabites, Amalekites, and Canaanites would never have existed. He forgot to mention that but for incest the human race would have come to an end with Adam's family. Nor did he inform his audience that but for immoral connexion Jesus Christ would not have existed. We allude not to the pécadilloes of the Holy Pigeon but to such acts of J. C.'s progenitors as David's adultery with Bathsheba, whence came another worthy ancestor, Solomon. (Matt i., 6). If ever a man had a shady lot of ancestors it was the Lord Jesus Christ.

VARLEY denounced the theatre. He said the motive of many plays was to pander to lust. Upon "Names" being called for by the audience, he mentioned, *Nemesis*, *Frou-Frou* (which he pronounced *Frou-Frou*), and the *Grand Duchess*. We know nothing of the first mentioned beyond having seen it praised in the journals. In regard to *Frou-Frou* the aspersion is false. The motive is as virtuous as Varley's self, and its matter not more questionable than his own. In the *Grand Duchess* the motive is to furnish a libretto to Offenbach's music. But to the impure all things are impure.

VARLEY declared himself ashamed of the Lord Chancellor for permitting such plays. That high functionary is the pious Selborne, who used to teach in Sunday School, and who has compiled a selection of hymns. It was too bad to saddle him with the responsibilities of that festive anachronism, Her Majesty's Chamberlain.

THE *Norwich Argus* reports the case of a woman driven mad in that city by the excitements of the Salvationists. Festus is said to have remarked that much learning drove Paul mad. We would never have said this of any in the modern Salvation Army.

THE Salvationists boast of the conversion of a Secularist at the Grecian. Will they let us have his name and address? We have usually found these persons to be those who allege having been to a Freethought hall, but with no witness who ever knew them as Freethinkers.

THE *Morning Post* says of the dean and clergymen who went out of their way to give a friendly address to the Congregationalists: "In terms that are simply astounding they say 'we have one Lord, one faith, one baptism.' These words are astounding because they are not true. That the two bodies have one Lord is not denied. But as to 'one faith,' they contradict each other flat on points of fundamental importance. As to 'one baptism,' no two things could be more contradictory than the teaching of the Congregationalists and that of the Church Catechism."

AN horrible instance of the effect of Bible belief was brought before the Hanley magistrates last week. Elijah FINDER, a Methodist class-leader, was summoned to pay for the support of the child of his daughter, of which she alleged him to be the father. He "justified his conduct by quoting a passage from the Bible referring to Lot and his daughters." The Stipendiary said the case was one of the most painful he had ever heard, and made an order for 4s. per week. Those who venture to repudiate the contents of a volume that can be used for such filthy purposes are punishable by law. Truly we live in a Christian land.

WE see from a report of the South London Open-Air Mission that it was stated that an infidel advocate had been converted, "who had since burned volumes upon volumes of the *Freethinker*." We are as yet only in our second volume, and should like to be made acquainted with the name and address of the "infidel advocate" who had so liberally supplied himself with our volumes.

THE seventh centenary of St. Francis has been held in high celebration in all the Catholic churches. The *Weekly Register* states that at the Baddesley Clinton Church the Bishop gave the relic of St. Francis to be kissed by the clergy, the nuns, and the crowded congregation. It omits to mention what the relic was, whether an old tooth or a shirt-tail.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE lectures three times to-day (Sunday, Oct. 22nd), in the Assembly Rooms, Grosvenor Street, All Saints, Manchester:—Morning, at 11, "England's Fourfold Curse;" Afternoon, at 3, "Christianity Played Out;" Evening, at 6.30, "God and His Friends."—Monday, the 23rd, Oddfellows Hall, Stalybridge, at 7.30, on "Poverty, Priestcraft, and Privilege."—Thursday, the 26th, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C., at 8.30, on "John Ruskin."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

October 29th, Portsmouth; 30th, Southampton.
November 5th, Heckmondwike; 6th and 7th, York; 12th, Liverpool; 19th, Hall of Science, London; 26th, Claremont Hall, London.
December 3rd, Huddersfield; 10th, Bradford; and 17th, Grimsby.
January 7th (1883), Claremont Hall, London; 14th, Manchester; 21st, Hall of Science, London; 28th, Claremont Hall, London.

CORRESPONDENTS.

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RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—Scrutator, Robert Harding, Achates, C. Bell.
J. TYLER.—The apocryphal books of the Old Testament are: 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, History of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Song of the Three Children, 1 Maccabees, 2 Maccabees. Among lost books are: Wars of Jahveh, Jasher, Nathan, Gad, Shemaiah, Iddo, Ahijah, Jehu, Hosai, Uzziah, and 3000 Parables of Solomon. All these are referred to in the Old Testament, and many more by the Fathers. For New Testament Apocrypha see No. 3 of Mr. Wheeler's "Frauds and Follies."
B. D. complains that he leaves the *Freethinker* in a coffee-shop and always finds it gone the following day.
J. W. HAMILTON.—We keep an eye to the American press but have heard no such story of the conversion of an American infidel lecturer.
H. ROOME, 69 Cannon Street Road, Commercial Road, E., sells the *Freethinker* and all Secular literature
WITTIWON.—Contributors must give us their kind indulgence if they have to wait long. Our columns are usually over-set.
B. MORGAN.—Irenaeus is said to have lived at the end of the second century. The book against heresies is usually dated about A.C. 192.
J. BILFORD.—See Acts xiii., 6; xvi., 16; xix., 13—16. Galatians v., 20., Rev. ix., 21; xxii., 12; Acts viii., 9, admits Simon the sorcerer bewitched the people of Samaria.
F. G. KILSBY, newsagent, etc., 29 Winstanley Road, Clapham Junction, S.W., sells the *Freethinker* and all Secular literature.
M. PLACKETT.—Many thanks.
D. R. BOW.—Our readers cannot assist us better than by sending us newspapers or cuttings when they observe any item of interest.
E. DAWSON.—Keep pegging away. We thank you for your efforts to promote our circulation. We have much bigotry to contend with, and we need all the help our friends can give. Cuttings are always welcome.
SOUTH LONDON desires to correct our statement that the evangelist from Newman Hall's chapel complained to the police about the sale of the *Freethinker*. We must have misread his letter.
A FRENCH REPUBLICAN, of Paris, writes to express his surprise at such a thing as a blasphemy prosecution in a country like England.
DODO.—Thanks. We have watched the case.
A. LORNE.—There is now practically no difficulty as to an Atheist's testimony in court.
J. MILLAR.—Perseverance is the law of success. When we issue our next batch of *Freethinker* Tracts we will remember your suggestion as to plenty of satire. Our present Tracts go a good way in that direction.
J. CADDICK.—It was impossible. Mr. Foote only reached Leicester in time to dress for the lecture.
D. OPPENHEIM.—Thanks for the jokes.
ALL subscriptions to the "Defence Fund" wait for acknowledgment until next week owing to press of matter.

TO OUR READERS.

OWING to an accident to the machine as the last number of the *Freethinker* was being printed, there was a considerable delay in supplying the trade, and we fear that some of our readers did not obtain their copies at all. They can, however, obtain them now by renewing their order. We regret the misfortune, but these things will happen. Our

greatest dread was that a rumor might get afloat that we were funkng. There is no fear of that. We take this opportunity of thanking the many friends who advertise the *Freethinker*, and we are happy to inform them that despite all obstacles its circulation increases every week. We have clearly hit the right nail on the head.

SUGAR PLUMS.

J. A. FARRER, writing on "Some Solar and Lunar Myths," in the *Cornhill*, says: "The popular mythology of our own day is but a corruption of conceptions that have always been as irrational as they have always been plausible." For mythology read religion.

A HAMPSHIRE incumbent reports having heard the following from a blushing bride who had got up the marriage service. She vowed "to 'ave and 'old from this day fortnight, for betterer horse, for richerer power, in sigerness health, to love cherries, and to bay." She probably understood this extraordinary vow as well as the old woman who derived such comfort from the blessed word Methusalem.

PROF. GOULD, of the chair of New Testament Interpretation in the Baptist Theological Institution of Boston, has been dismissed for being too Liberal.

HERESY is rife in the American theological schools. The President of the Ohio Methodist University has been charged with denying the Trinity, the divinity of Christ, and the resurrection of the body. At the Lane Presbyterian Theological Seminary, two of the Professors are accused of teaching the students the fact that the Pentateuch, as a whole, was not the work of Moses. The orthodox churches will all the sooner come to their *quietus* if they kick out all their heretics, so we heartily wish more power to their knees in the matter of kicking.

THE first number of *Lessons for the Day*, a periodical conducted by Moncure D. Conway speaks thus in reference to our prosecution:—"The belief in witchcraft is not a whit more irrational than the belief in blasphemy. There can be no such thing as blasphemy. The law describing as blasphemy denials of the existence of God, the divinity of Christ or of the Holy Ghost, the authority of the Bible, and punishing them as misdemeanors, is a law coming down from the same era as the law against witchcraft, and is equally absurd and barbarous. A man has a perfect moral right to deny those dogmas; the greatest men now living in the world have denied some or all of them. A man has the same right to caricature them as another has to caricature infidelity. It may be coarse, it may be bad taste; just as it is coarse and in bad taste to insult the opinions of believers in evolution with gibes about apes. That is another question. When laws protecting a man from libel or insult from another are invoked, each case is to be judged on its merits. But the blasphemy-law is a thing quite distinct from laws that protect man. It is a law to protect God, the Trinity, the Bible. The notion that supernatural beings have rights among men, or need legal protection, is a superstition as gross as any our late African visitor left among his Zulus."

MR. CONWAY promises "that if anyone is prosecuted for this fossil offence, he will not be alone. If that is made a test of liberty good men will go about blaspheming as a patriotic duty."

THE *Leamington Chronicle* is in a furious passion over Mr. Foote's "Blasphemy No Crime," which "it does not doubt is circulated by thousands or tens of thousands." It says that if the Christian sects would only "cease squabbling and turn upon the common enemy, a grand result might be obtained." But it "despairs of this ever happening." Meanwhile it looks with some hope on Tracy Turnerelli's anti-atheistic society. Tracy is going to put Freethought down. The hero of Dizzy's gold wreath has now taken the Lord under his patronage.

TRACY's letter anent his new society is a curiosity. He warns the godly that unless they wake up, and "promptly and resolutely arrest this march of impiety," they must prepare to see belief in God utterly extinguished. Then, he says, the Bible will be "superseded and replaced in our homes by the *Freethinker*, and our Christian Churches converted into Temples of Reason, with Darwins, Bradlaughs, and Besants as our high priests and priestesses." May the Lord hasten the day.

ONE of Tracy's abominable high priests of Reason, namely Darwin, is actually buried in a Christian Church. Perhaps the other two will be buried there also. Who knows?

MR. J. T. RAMSEY asks the Tottenham Freethinkers to meet at the same time and place as last Sunday, and if there is any disturbance to carefully watch the man Bloomfield. We hope the friends of Freethought will muster strong and defeat the clerical rowdy and his accomplices.

WE are pleased to see the Halifax Freethinkers making such good headway. The audiences in the Gaiety Theatre are larger than hitherto, and the list of members is constantly increasing. One of the most hopeful signs is the accession of young converts, who work side by side with the old veterans like Mr. Crowther and Mr. Spencer.

MR. E. C. EDWARDS, a Secularist confectioner of Tunbridge Wells, was warned by the police that he had better stop selling on the Lord's Day. He at once had some large posters printed, informing the public that he should still keep open "in defiance." Then the police summoned him. The Town Hall was crowded when the case came on. Mr. Edwards flummoxed the Court by his clever and witty defence, besides giving his confectionery a splendid advertisement. He was fined 5s. and 10s. costs. The fine he paid in threepenny bits, but refused to pay costs. As they refused the fine without the costs, he picked up his threepenny bits again, and told the Bench to distrain if they liked, promising them that he would have no goods and chattels when they came. He defied them to put him in the stocks as the law requires. They had better let Mr. Edwards alone. He is one too many for them.

"SOUTH LONDON" disposed of a large batch of *Freethinkers* last Sunday morning at the foot of Westminster Bridge. They went off all the more rapidly in consequence of the advertisement of William Benson, Evangelist, who held a copy in each hand and denounced it with all his might. These people save us a deal of money.

WE have received with unspeakable satisfaction a copy of the "Constitution of the Irish Secular Society," of which Mr. E. O'Neill is Secretary. It is a very characteristic document and bears traces of the fine fervid spirit of old Ireland. Some of our more sluggish English societies might take a lesson from it. The Irish Secular Society's rooms are at 51 York Street, Dublin. We wish it all success. Freethought is just what Ireland wants.

KNOWING TALMAGE.

"I know that David cracked the skull of the giant with a pebble well slung, and that three hundred Gibeonites scattered ten thousand Amalekites by the crash of broken crockery."—Sermon by Dr. Talmage, in the *Christian Herald*, August 30, 1882.

O knowing, truthful Talmage dear,
Thy faith I envy much;
Pray, is its fountain wine or beer,
Or lunacy's sad touch?

Say, is it an attempt to gull,
By blatant mockery—
This stupid yarn anent a skull,
This crash of crockery?

O prince of prating, whining wights,
Sweet Reason thou dost rile her;
Ye gods! ye devils! shining lights!
O heaven! O hell! O Tyler!

Those pots and pans, all gone to smash,
Dear Tal will no more wash;
Like to thy sermons, they are trash,
Unmitigated bosh!

And well I know your own soft skull
Is twice as thick, or trebble,
As poor Goliath's, or a "mull,"
Had followed David's pebble!

Pots, jugs, cups, mugs may crash away,
And skulls may get cracked too;
But they're *most* cracked, I boldly say,
Who place their trust in you!

W. D.

OBITUARY.—With deep sorrow I record the death of my brother Alfred Moss, which took place at his residence, 28 Montpelier Road, Kentish Town, on Sunday morning last. He was only thirty-seven years of age. He lived an active, useful and pure life; was a good husband, a kind father, and loyal friend. For many years an ardent disciple of Freethought, he died with a firm conviction of the truth of the principles which had inspired and sustained him through life. He was a great sufferer from an insidious disease of the lungs, but his sufferings were borne with great courage and fortitude. He leaves a widow and three children to mourn his loss.—ARTHUR B. MOSS.

"AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART"

"You go not till I set you up a glass,
Where thou may'st see the inmost part of thee."

Shakespeare.

IN the wasted years of my childhood, when my feet were easily led, came the fire-fly decoys from the doubtful past to lure my feet to the marshes. How they dazzled my eyes with visions of the future, in a rose and gold land under sunny skies on the other side of death; poor deluded child, I sat me down on the high-road of life, to waste the spring-dawn of my little day while I tried to catch a glimpse of the beauty through the shadows, and strained to catch some echoes of the music.

There were beauties in abundance "*over there*" my fancy thought. On the golden streets trod the earth-wearied feet of "*the pure in heart*," a host of saints and martyrs who had gone to reap the sweet reward of the good deeds "*done in the body*."

Could my life be modelled after one of these patterns, the pious told me, I too should share this heaven by and bye. Then they placed in my hands the register of the deeds that had won the glory, and I took the *best* and *greatest* for my model—

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

Oh! he was great and powerful, was my hero, my pattern; from the sheepfolds he had come to grandeur and to honor. A warrior he stood in the war-field, bold, brave, erect, defiant. In his chariot he stood behind the proud and prancing chargers, while the charioteer, with tightened thongs in hand, reined back the noble brutes upon their haunches, and the heralds called aloud;—called to the eager host who waited but to bow before that regal form whose brow so well became the jewelled diadem. The order came to march. On to Rabbah, with a noise like many waters went the mighty host to battle for my hero, my king, great David.

Oh! woeful day for Rabbah when the conquering army left it, for "he took their king's crown from off his head the weight whereof (the crown, not the head) was a talent of gold, with the precious stones, and it was set on David's head. And he brought forth the spoil of the city in great abundance."

Nor did this end the triumph of the day. A mightier victory followed. "He brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws and under harrows of iron (in the gentleness of his nature,) and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick-kiln (in his godlike, tender mercy) and thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon."

Then with a flourish of trumpets, with hymns of praise, with prayer and thanksgiving, on to Jerusalem with my prince, my hero, my pattern—

A SCOUNDREL AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

Again I saw my model under the most sublime inspiration, dancing and flinging his kingly limbs about in all the grace of enthusiastic piety: dancing before the approving maidens of Israel in an extremely scanty attire, while his heart-wrung and disgusted wife watched him from a window with contempt in her looks; blasphemous woman! she refused to see the sublimity of the action; "And David danced before the Lord *with all his might* (kicked and stamped and "toed" and "heeled" and "double-shuffled" with all his might) and David was girded with a linen ephod."

Surely my model was a paragon on the "light fantastic toe" and could well delight the eyes of his god. If heaven was to be won, I must go in training among Butterworth's minstrels and go in strong for linen ephods.

Again I saw great David before Achish the King of Gath, playing the role of hypocrite and coward in the most virtuous and delightful manner, "he changed his behavior before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrambled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard."

So majestic, so lofty and imposing he appeared,—my prince, my hero, my pattern—

AN IDIOT AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

Oh! how my young heart was filled with self-reproach when I read "Thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do only that which was right in mine eyes."

I resolved to know more of this holy man and of the great things he had done. Then I saw the beautiful Bathsheba stolen and sullied by my thief, my libertine, my ruffian, and my love for my model began to sink and to wane; I knew my fate was closing. I knew damnation was coming. I knew heaven must be lost to me when I began to hate great David's bright example, and my knell was sounded when I saw Uriah placed in front of the enemy purposely for death, for then my young heart said,—Come, doubly welcome hell with all its fearful torment if heaven holds holy David, for I cannot sing a song of joy and love in the hated presence of

A MURDERER AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

JOHN ROWELL WALLER.

REVIEW.

Letters from the Albany Penitentiary, by the EDITOR of the *Truthseeker*. *The Book of the Chronicles of the Pilgrims in the Land of Yahweh*, D. M. BENNETT (scribe). *The Godly Women of the Bible*, by an Ungodly Woman of the 19th Century. New York: D. M. BENNETT, 141, Eighth Street.

WE have recently received the above volumes from America. In the first, having, thanks to Sir H. Tyler, jubilant expectations of incarceration ourselves, we naturally took great interest. Life behind the bars, as Mr. Bennett relates it, is anything but a joke. That in the Great Republic, a man who had done his fellow beings no injury, but whose only offence was the publication of what he deemed a benefit, should have had to suffer thirteen months hard labor, suggests some mournful reflections on the Christianity of the age. As most of our readers are aware, Mr. Bennett, after coming out of prison, was sent by the readers of the *Truthseeker* on an all round the world trip from which he has recently returned, well in health and in spirits, after a twelve months tour. The *Chronicles of the Pilgrims in the Land of Yahweh* recounts his doings in the so-called Holy Land, where he had at least one notable adventure, being much baptized and nearly drowned in the Jordan. His visit to the sacred places affords Mr. Bennett an opportunity of testing many of the Biblical narratives on the spot, and the Jewish legends are dealt with in a most interesting manner. Mr. Bennett treats all nonsense about the Bible heroes and the land flowing with milk and honey with downright honest speech. He brings to bear on every subject he takes in hand the insight of a shrewd observer and the sound common sense of an American upon whom clap-trap can make no impress. The *Godly Women of the Bible* takes a survey of all the heroines of the Holy Book. It is written by an enthusiast who finds the Bible has been and is a chief instrument in the degradation of her sex.

CORRESPONDENCE.

RELIGIOUS INSTINCT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—You will perhaps allow a small space in your journal for one who believes in the truth to air his views, although I am sensitive how dry and difficult the hidden treasure is to unearth.

In the first place, I utterly disagree with the present orthodox state of religion, but I as strongly believe in the religious instinct of mankind—that is, man is, and always has been, with very few exceptions, a worshipping being—it matters not whether to stone, wood, sun, moon, or stars, etc., he has strongly manifested that instinct. I will, if you please, admit that he has changed his religious tenets according to his mental progression: as the old faith became obsolete he erected a new faith on its ruins.

The Polytheist worshipped a multitude of gods with as much piety and reverence as the most advanced Christian worships his triune God, proving that the worshipping instinct is as strong as it ever was, although his creed has to some extent been totally changed or greatly modified.

I therefore submit that whatever sect or creed excludes the religious instinct, as Secularism seeks to do, can never become popular on account of its narrowness, because the whole instincts and aspirations of mankind will have to be embraced and provided for, otherwise that sect or creed excluding this instinct must inevitably fail.

I am sincerely of opinion that Freethought provides for these, and how you can consistently claim to be a Freethinker when you exclude and ignore the religious instinct I am at a loss to understand. However, I will patiently wait your explanation and subscribe myself,—Yours respectfully,

S. WHITEHEAD.

NOTE.—We neither exclude nor ignore religious instincts, as S. W. may see by referring to Mr. Foote's "Secularism,"

but we combat and seek to eliminate the lower forms. We only attack what we believe to be superstition and that is the purpose with which the *Freethinker* was started.

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS.

THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS.—Their credulity was unbounded They had a sublime disregard for truth; not so much from perversity as from carelessness, and indifference to its sacred character. Their unscrupulousness when seeking for arguments to enforce their positions is notorious; as well as the prevalence among them of what are known as pious frauds.—*Judge C. B. Waite*, "History of the Christian Religion to the Year 200," p. 432; Chicago, 1881.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.—Distasteful though to many, criticism must pronounce a fair estimate. Ingenuity may try to lessen the force of the internal evidence against John's authorship, but reason refuses to be satisfied. The gospel is still a theological more than a biographical composition, and reflects an Alexandrian atmosphere foreign to Galilee. It overpasses the Ebionism of the synoptists, and mars the human portraiture.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii., p. 417; 1882.

THE GOSPELS.—That no writer before Irenæus has named these writings or seems to have known either them or their writers, save two or three notices of St. Paul found in works of suspected antiquity, can hardly lead to any other conclusion than that these books were written immediately proceeding the time when they are first mentioned.—*Rev. Dr. Giles*, "Christian Records," chap. li., p. 418; 1877.

CASTING OUT DEVILS.—It is important to remember that the theory of demoniacal possession, and its supposed cure by means of exorcism and invocations, was most common among the Jews long before the Christian era. As casting out devils was the most common type of Christian miracles, so it was the commonest belief and practice of the Jewish nation. Christianity merely shared the national superstition and changed nothing but the form of exorcism.—"Supernatural Religion," vol. i., p. 145; 1879.

PROFANE JOKES.

UNPROFITABLE.—"Sam, why don't you talk to your master, and tell him to lay up treasures in heaven?" "What's de use of him layin' up treasures up dar? He neber see um again."

AT a christening, while the minister was filling up the certificate, he forgot the date, and happened to say, "Let me see, this is the thirtieth." "The thirtieth!" exclaimed the indignant mother; "indeed, but it is only the eleventh!"

A SCOTSMAN who came back after a long absence declared after going to the Kirk, that the whole kingdom was on the road to perdition. "The people," he said, "used to be reserved and solemn on the Sabbath, but now they look as happy on that day as any other."

THEOLOGICAL INTELLIGENCE.—Father O'Hagan made a pastoral call at the O'Rafferty mansion a few days ago. To his horror he saw one of the little O'Raffertys playing at the head of the stairs with a razor in his hand. "Merciful heaven!" ejaculated the priest, "if the little boy were to tumble down the stairs he would cut himself in two entirely. How can ye be so careless, Missus O'Rafferty?" "Indade, Father, I'm not careless; I rely on the child's guardian angel. What else has the bye's guardian angel to do but to take care of the bye, and catch him before he gets to the bottom of the stairs, be jabbers, with the razor?" "Ah, but Missus O'Rafferty," responded Father O'Hagan, gravely, "ain't you afraid of the guardian angel being cut with the razor in his efforts to save the child from falling? Who is there to purteck the guardian angel?" "I niver thought of that," responded Mrs. O'Rafferty, and she removed the child from the razor and put it away in the bureau drawer.

A LITTLE three-year-old had fallen down and hurt her knee, and as she sat rocking in her little chair, pitying and rubbing the injured part, she suddenly looked up and said: "Did God make me, mamma?" "Yes, dear." "Well" said she, "if he's got any pieces left, I wish he would mend my knee."

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