

# THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



EZEKIEL'S CHERUBIM.

"And every one had four faces: the first face was the face of a cherub [or an ox, see i., 10], and the second face was the face of a man, and the third face the face of a lion, and the fourth the face of an eagle. . . . And when the cherubim went, the wheels went by them."—EZEK. x., 14, 16. "And the wheels were full of eyes."—Ez. x., 12.

## BELFAST CHRISTIANITY.

"The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal."  
—SHELLEY, *Queen Mab*.

THE condition of Belfast of late has been a scandal to civilisation. Its citizens have been shooting, stabbing, and battering each other like savages; nay, worse than savages, for even among the lowest tribes of Central Africa men of the same community refrain from cutting each other's throats, or, if they attempt it, are quickly restrained and punished. These terrible scenes of bloodshed and disorder are the theme of countless leading articles in the public press, and every reason is assigned for them but the right one. The Gladstonians say the mischief is due to the sinister letters and speeches of that political heretic, Joseph Chamberlain; other Liberals say it is due to Lord Randolph Churchill's mad address to the Orangemen against the Home Rule Bill; while the Tories say it is all due to Mr. Gladstone's atrocious project of separation. So the changes are rung *ad nauseam*, without a single journalist daring to hit the mark. All the newspapers, whatever political party or faction they represent, are of the same religion. They universally agree to hold it in respect, to publish no word against its reputation, to conceal everything that tends to its disadvantage, to suppress every fact that tends to its discredit, and to screen it from the slightest

breath of criticism. They hold it as *tabu* with all the cringing deference of fetish worshippers. Like Jehovah's ark, it must not be touched by unsanctified hands, and every layman who approaches it is a kind of Uzzah. On an occasion like this, therefore, the truth is systematically burked. Yet someone should proclaim it, and what the orthodox journals will not or dare not do we hold it our duty to perform.

The root of this civil war in Belfast is *religion*. From of old this "sweet influence" has been a fruitful source of division and discord. The pretended fatherhood of God has hindered, instead of promoting, the brotherhood of man. With the name of the "father of all" upon their lips, men in all ages have gripped each other by the throat until the wet blood distilled through their fingers. Under the fiery spirit of bigotry, the strongest and the tenderest ties of humanity have alike been wrenched asunder, and patriotism, justice, dignity, and benevolence, have all been sacrificed on the altar of fanaticism. According to the old book, the very first quarrel in the world was about religion. Cain worshipped God in one way, Abel in another; and Cain settled the dispute by knocking out Abel's brains. In more recent, and more historical times, the same disposition has prevailed. Men believe most tenaciously where they are most ignorant, and quarrel most fiercely over what is most incomprehensible. From



Constantine's decree of death to all who held the Arian heresy that the Son was of a different substance from the Father, to William the Third's penal statute against all who say there are more Gods than one or less than three, there is a long unbroken line of religious madness, marked by tyranny and cruelty. The Crusaders wore a red cross. That is the true color of this malignant symbol, and it never excites greater adoration than when it shines on a sea of blood.

The rival mobs, who have been maiming and slaughtering each other in the streets of Belfast, have no personal quarrel. They hate each other in the mass. They are of the same country and the same city. There is every earthly inducement for them to live together in peace and amity. But religion interposes, and makes enemies of those who might be friends. Instead of love there is hatred, instead of mutual assistance there is mutual injury. These unhappy people are set against each other by rival priests, who all aim at the same thing, profit and power. If they had only the manliness and common-sense to think for themselves and obey the natural instincts of their hearts, they would soon take each other by the hand and smile at the follies which divided them.

It is a significant fact that the Belfast riots were resumed on the fifteenth of August, which is Assumption Day, and one of the eight feasts of the Virgin. Only two of these are kept by Protestants, who regard the other six as signs of flat idolatry. There could not be a more auspicious day, according to the calendar of bigotry, and it was seized upon for an exhibition of Christian charity; nor is the student of religious history surprised to witness the usual results of that pernicious sentiment, in the shape of bickering and bloodshed.

Let us now turn from Belfast to Chicago, where Mr. Michael Davitt has been trying to "sprinkle cool patience" on the fervid zeal of Irish Americans. One of these gentlemen, Mr. Finerty, who sits in Congress and aspires to greater things, concluded an incendiary speech with the following prayer. "I pray to God," he said, "that the time may come when upon some broad field, arranged in the form of battle, the Irish race will wipe out in honest warfare the stigma of the Boyne and the wrongs of Ireland." What a pious supplication! The battle of the Boyne was fought two hundred years ago, and because Catholic King James was defeated by Protestant King William, Mr. Finerty wants to smell the blood of an Englishman. Probably to such a man the wish is quite natural, and he is too hot-headed to inquire what share any living Englishman had in the rights or wrongs of the battle of the Boyne. Equally natural is his invocation of God to assist him in the "bloody business." With the intuition of genius, Shelley remarked in *Queen Mab* that "the name of God has fenced about all crime with holiness," and when he afterwards observed the workings of Christianity in Italy he found that it had "no necessary connection with any one virtue." Count Cenci implores the deity to curse his daughter for resisting his incestuous passion, and he does so with perfect sincerity; Mr. Finerty, with perhaps equal sincerity, implores the deity to co-operate in shedding innocent blood; and both are excellent Christians.

G. W. FOOTE.

### THE MASSACRE OF ST. BARTHOLOMEW.

THREE hundred and fourteen years ago August the twenty-fourth fell on a Sunday. Consecrated both to the Lord and his faithful apostle and martyr Saint Bartholomew, the leading Catholics in France determined the day should have a triple sacredness by witnessing the extermination of God's enemies. That the deed was premeditated there is abundant evidence. Michelet indeed tells us that the bishops Sorbin and Vigor had preached it for a dozen years. We need not consider the various proportions of guilt to be assigned to Catherine de Medici, Charles IX., the Duke de Guise, Tavannes, Cardinal Lorraine, and the Jesuits. The spirit of Christian bigotry, the Christian doctrine that misbelievers were accursed of God, was at the bottom of this, as of so many other crimes of Christianity.

With consummate hypocrisy the Huguenot chiefs were lured to Paris to celebrate the nuptials of their leader Henry of Navarre with Marguerite de Valois, the king's

sister. Hopes arose that this union would end the religious feuds which had spilled much of the best blood of France. Coligny was invited to become leader of an expedition against Flanders, and ready to show himself a Frenchman first and a Huguenot afterwards, the aged warrior was willing to join arms with the Catholics against the foreign foe.

At the dawn of this eventful Sabbath the streets of Paris were filled with armed men. All wore white crosses on their garments. Many had images of the Virgin around their necks; for theirs was a work of religion. They first went to the house of Coligny, dragged him from bed, stabbed him, and threw him still alive into the street. Then the massacre began in earnest, similar scenes taking place at the marked houses of every Huguenot. Men and women were indiscriminately murdered; children were torn from their mothers and tossed on the points of spears. A contemporary historian, De Serres, gives the following account of these Sabbath devotions:

"Behold, then, this great city, in which there were nearly sixty thousand men, armed with pistols, cutlasses, pikes, poignards, and other weapons, perambulating the streets and sacking houses, in which they cruelly massacred all they met, without respect to sex, age, or condition. The streets were strewn with fragments of corpses; and the doors of the houses, palaces, and public edifices, were stained with gore. A horrible tempest raged of yells, mingled with the report of pistols, arquebuses, and the pitiable shrieks of the victims. The bodies of the dead were hurled from the windows of their abodes, and dragged along the gutters, amid hissings and shrieks. The windows were smashed in with hatchets and stones; the houses rifled. Carts traversed the streets, sometimes filled with rich booty, at others laden with mutilated bodies, which were flung into the Seine."

Blood inundated the streets and flowed even within the royal palace of the Louvre, where the guards and friends of Henry de Navarre were massacred by the Swiss, drawn from the Catholic cantons where Protestants were executed. "Mass or massacre" were the terms offered to Henry and the Prince de Condé.\* The king amused himself by standing at his window shooting the flying Huguenots. For the two succeeding days the slaughter continued in Paris, and for above a week it was followed in the provinces by the imprisonment, massacre and pillage of the Huguenots. The number murdered has been variously estimated from twenty to one hundred thousand. De Thou, who puts the number of slain at thirty thousand, is probably the safest authority.

The news of this atrocity was received at Rome with unrestrained delight. A universal jubilee was proclaimed by the Pope; the guns of St. Angelo were fired, and bonfires lighted in the street. Gregory XIII. and his cardinals went in procession from sanctuary to sanctuary to give God thanks for this crowning mercy. In the Bodleian library may be seen a copy of the prayers used at this solemn thanksgiving. Over the entrance of the Church of St. Louis was placed an inscription:

"To the most auspicious Pope Gregory XIII., to the sacred college of illustrious Cardinals, to the Senate and Roman people. Charles IX., the most Christian King, fired with zeal for the God of armies, like an exterminating angel divinely sent, having by a certain opportunity exterminated nearly all the heretical enemies in his state, in perpetual memory of this great blessing . . . and foreseeing that this auspicious event . . . portends and signifies a re-establishment of Ecclesiastical matters . . . renders grateful thanks to God in the Church of St. Louis . . ."

The subject was ordered to be painted as frescoes in the hall in which the Pope gave audience to ambassadors, and medals were struck at the papal mint to celebrate the pious deed. These were very rare, but the original dies have fallen into the possession of the Italian Government, and fresh impressions have been taken.† On the one side is represented a head of the Pope, on the other an angel with a cross in one hand and a sword in the other, pursuing and slaying a band of flying heretics.

An attempt has been made to exonerate the head of Christendom on the ground that he was misled by report, but the medal must have taken sufficient time in preparing to enable Gregory to inquire into the matter. It remains a standing proof of the horrible and treacherous enormities to which Christian bigotry will resort.

J. M. WHEELER.

\* "La masse ou la mort!" are the words attributed to Charles IX.

† The medal, I believe, may be seen upon application to Mr. March, keeper of the French Protestant Church, St. Martin's Le Grand.



## ACID DROPS.

God appears to be somewhat impartial in sending fires after all. In the *Christian Commonwealth* of August 12 we find the following editorial announcement:—"Last week the entire establishment where the *Commonwealth* is printed was thoroughly burned out. Everything connected with the paper was destroyed and we find ourselves in considerable difficulty to get our present issue out in good time and in good style." Kindly Christians who rejoiced over the destruction of the *Freethinker* office and stock by fire as a judgment from above, can now ask themselves why God also sent a similar disaster to his own friends.

THE other day Carl Robitscheck, a prosperous-looking Bohemian, went to the New York Naturalisation Bureau to declare his intention of becoming a citizen of the United States. Mr. Charles Underwood O'Connell filled out a form, and Robitscheck signed it. Then Mr. O'Connell handed him the Bible, and asked him to make oath to his declaration. "I will not swear upon it," Robitscheck said; "I am an Atheist." "Then I cannot take your declaration," said Mr. O'Connell. "The statute declares it must be made on oath." The clerk of the court was called in, and he supported Mr. O'Connell. Mr. Robitscheck fumed for a while, but he had to go away without making a valid declaration of his intention to renounce allegiance to the Emperor of Austria. The clerk made a memorandum as follows under the invalid declaration: "This applicant declaring that he is an Atheist, the declaration was refused."

WE expect to hear more of this pretty affair when the Free-thought papers arrive from the States. Meanwhile, we may remark that, to be logical, the Union should expel all Atheists, as well as refuse to receive them. If they are bad to have, they must be worse to keep.

A WOMAN named Robinson, arrested at Somerville, Massachusetts, for poisoning her son, is suspected of having murdered a hundred persons by the same means during the past four years. She is said to have disposed of some of them by poisoning the eatables at a church festival. Perhaps the Christian Evidence Society will note this as another illustration of the wonderful connection between religion and morality.

WARD BEECHER thinks England is getting pretty ripe for a Republic. He says it is certain our State Church will be dis-established in the next decade, and then the House of Lords will go. The Crown will probably last as long as the queen, but "after Victoria the deluge." All this is very interesting, of course; but why doesn't Ward Beecher, who is primarily in the gospel line, tell us whether Christianity seems played out here as well as the monarchy and aristocracy?

WE don't know much about the Working Men's Protestant League, but we dare say it has a score or two of members who find it pays. According to the Manifesto (by the way, manifestos are awfully cheap nowad ys) of this august body, "There is no doubt for at least the last thirty years vital religion has diminished, and that idolatry, superstition, and great irregularities have crept into all branches of the Church of Christ, and hence the Almighty has been inflicting judgments upon us as a nation in the form of war, pestilence, earthquakes and famine."

WHAT a capital joke, if war, pestilence, earthquakes and famine are laughable things! Evidently the Working Men's Protestant League agrees with Cowper that God *does* "move in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." England backslides in religion, and the Lord sets Germans and Frenchmen killing each other. England gets irregular in its religious duties, and the Lord sends cholera along the Mediterranean, playing the devil with Naples, Marseilles, and other foreign places. England dabbles in idolatry, and the Lord stirs up an earthquake in Spain or South America. England coquets with infidelity, and the Lord inflicts a famine on India. At this rate, we have little reason to fear "the anger of the Lord." We can pull his nose, pluck at his beard, set off squibs under his feet, and play him all the tricks our mischievous imagination can conceive; and he will simply retaliate by giving other people the stiek. Oh, what a world we live in, and what a time we're having!

WE read in the *Christian Commonwealth* that an old-fashioned Evangelical clergyman, who had to officiate for his Ritualistic son, took as his text "Lord have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic." This is enjoyable wit when directed by Christians against Christians. When employed by Freethinkers against Christians it is a criminal offence. It was more especially for this particular text and its illustration that old Mr. Ferguson was sent to prison. Thus Christians do as they would be done by.

SAM JONES says that honest men will never starve because "God will feed an honest man, if he has to put the angels on half rations." Then when a few million people are starved to death by famine in India and China all the men who perish are dishonest—according to the charitable view of such a Christian as "Sam Jones." If we talked about putting the angels on half

rations we should be guilty of blasphemy, but from an eminent revivalist such ideas are reverent piety of the most solemn and edifying kind.

THE *Daily News* reports a fresh case of religious madness near Briangon in the Hautes Alpes. Two sisters, named Marie and Catherine Olaguer, aged respectively forty-seven and forty-five, were both noted for their piety, and had a profound belief in miracles and the supernatural. Last Monday morning Catherine told Marie that she had had a vision in the night in which God appeared to her and demanded a proof of her obedience in sacrificing her sister. Marie lent herself to this idea, which did not appear to her at all strange. So after devoutly hearing mass on Tuesday morning she came home to prepare herself to be a sacrifice. Catherine got a sharp razor and cut with it into each of the arms in front of the elbow, and into the instep of each foot. The victim kept repeating "Jesus, Mary, my Hope, my Savior!" Catherine then collected the blood, to dry it and keep it as a relic. When Marie was lifeless, her sister dressed the corpse in white, and went with the will of the defunct to a notary, to whom she related what she had done. She also said that in obedience to God's command she had burned all the debentures and scrip belonging to her sister.

THE Rev. J. B. French put himself between two sandwich boards and marched through the streets begging for money for building himself a chapel in Camberwell. He was turned out of the City and the parks with the intimation that begging was not allowed. The result of his "tramp round London for £1,200," as he headed his placards, was that after a weary day's work he returned at night richer by 2s.8d., an amount which we believe has not encouraged him to repeat the experiment.

ONE of the writers in the *Christian Commonwealth* speaks of the various sects as "piebald Christianities." Another called the Wesleyan Association "the old boy," but an erratum subsequently recalls this apparently flippant remark. The Rev. W. J. Heaton spoke of "the old body," it transpires, and not of "the old boy," as the printer's devil had it.

THE Rev. Mr. Dickson, of Leith, is enraged at the thriving opposition to his business which is carried on by the steamboats crossing over to Aberdour and Burntisland on the Sabbath day. He declares they take people to hell for sixpence. The Scotch are a canny people, and would never submit to this extortion when they can book to heaven, per Mr. Dickson, for a few bawbees, unless there was some special attraction on the opposite shore. Can it be "whuskey"?

TALMAGE identifies Jupiter with the Christian God. He says: "Pompey thought there must be a mist over the eyes of Jupiter because he so much favored Cæsar. But there is no such mist. He sees everything. We say God's path is in the great waters." If Jupiter sees everything, the old pagans were evidently worshipping the true God when they worshipped him, and Christianity only rechristened the old deity with a new name.

TALMAGE says that it is a certain truth that God decides which road or street a man takes in coming to church. God is a sympathetic busybody. "He sits down beside you to-day, and stands beside me to-day, and no affair of our lives is so insignificant but that it is of immeasurable importance to God." Fine flattery this to human pride. The omnipotent sovereign of the universe is always waiting on each human being, and one's pettiest affairs are of "immeasurable importance" to him!

In the Scotch Island of St. Kilda the people are dreadfully religious. A visitor recently wanted some water to wash with one Sunday morning. He was supplied with a cupful, and was informed by the servant that Mr. Mackay, the minister, had declared that the drawing of water on the Sabbath was a violation of the fourth commandment. On Sundays the natives have to endure a two hours' sermon in the morning, another of the same length in the afternoon, then a Sunday-school course, and after that another service for the evening. If anyone goes to sleep under this intolerable infliction, the minister calls attention to the culprit by name, addressing the husband of a sleeping woman for instance thus: "Lachlan, waken your wife; she won't nod much in hell, I think." A stove was recently sent as a present to the congregation, but the conscientious scruples of the islanders would not admit of its being placed in the church, so it was returned to its donor.

SPEAKING of the Belfast riots the *Rock* allows that religious feeling when "allowed to degenerate into bigotry engenders the fiercest passions." Happily the "demon of religious fanaticism" has been at length overawed by the presence of a strong military force. Christians can keep peace while soldiers enforce it.

A NEW prophet by the name of Smith, has arisen in Missouri, and is working up religious insanity to the best of his ability. He announces himself as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. One of the conditions of salvation is the giving up of all property to the prophet. Smith already has the deeds of dozens of farms which his dupes have placed in his hands.



At Lowestoft the Rev. George Henry Turner, minister of the Methodist Free Church, has been charged with a criminal assault upon Harriet White, wife of the chapel caretaker, in the vestry on July 29, and an indecent assault upon her in the schoolroom on the 31st.

ONE of the attendants at the Baptist Chapel, Ryde, fell back suddenly while singing a hymn and expired. What a dreadful judgment this would have been if it happened in the Hall of Science.

WE learn from the *Truthseeker* that the ex-Rev. C. B. Reynolds, who has been travelling about the States giving Freethought lectures in a tent, has had his tent destroyed and been arrested for blasphemy at a place called Boonton, New Jersey. Mr. Reynolds asked for an adjournment, which was granted, bail being assessed at \$300. It is expected the case will fall through. We tender Mr. Reynolds our hearty sympathy and trust he will soon be enabled to continue his lectures as before.

THE chief witness against Mr. Reynolds was one Wm. Brown, who is understood to have been one of the ringleaders concerned in wrecking the tent. A portion of his deposition, as given in the *Truthseeker*, is rather funny: "Well he said that in a certain part of the Bible it said God made everything the Birds the Beasts the Fishes & everything out of water and in another place it says that God made Adam out of dust and he wanted to make a mate for Adam but the Old Man had used up all the Dust in making Adam so he did not know just what to do so he put Adam to sleep I don't know whether it was with Ether or Chloroform and took a rib out of Adam to make a Woman, now you all know if you took every Bone in a Man's Body it would not make the Jaw of a Woman. Who believes any such nonsense."

THE Catholic clergy of Boston are now allowed access to the convicts in the State prison. For twenty-five years the Protestant clergy fought to keep them out, although seventy-five per cent. of the convicts were Papists. Christians will fight each other about anything, but they are playing low down when they fight over the souls of professional criminals. Fancy squabbling whether Bill Sykes shall reside on the Catholic or Protestant division of the New Jerusalem!

THE *Examiner*, an American religious journal, says, "It is sad and humiliating that ministers of the gospel should fall into sin, and nothing is more common than to see the facts spread out in the newspaper press."

SOME Evangelical booby has, probably at his own expense let us hope, issued a warning against "Four Bad Isms." These are Atheism, Radicalism, School-Boardism, and Maryism. Maryism doesn't mean sweethearting, but popery; and in that sense it is a public danger. But the three other isms are excellent things, despite the Evangelical booby and his drivellings. Atheists, he says, are "simply fools." Well, if so, why warn people against them? You don't warn people against being deceived by the village idiot as they travel the highway. As for Radicals, nothing is sacred to them, "not even an oath." Dreadful, to be sure! School-Boardism actually worries poor people into sending their children to school; it is "an atrocious system," and it has "squandered over twelve millions of public money." No doubt the Evangelical booby, who is most likely a sky-pilot, laments that the twelve millions went to schoolmasters instead of priests.

DR. STUBBS, Bishop of Chester, has preached a sermon in which he denounces controversy as "a soul-destroying poison." No wonder! Controversy is found to be very inimical to priests and bishops.

A GENTLEMAN in Sardinia, named Ignazio Fiorentino, has been fined and imprisoned for causing a passing bell to be rung at the death of his dog. He stated in his defence that he was a believer in the transmigration of souls, and claimed the right to ring the bell. The claim was disallowed by the pious judge.

NOTHING is sacred to a sapper, says the French proverb, and it appears that "the interesting burglar" shows the same indifference to holy things. Two of these gentry broke into Hadley church the other day. All the valuables were safe in a big iron chest, and the burglars were obliged to turn their attention to the receptacle for alms, which they successfully rifled. As it was God's house, and he is supposed to be constantly on the premises, we wonder why he did not arrest the thieves himself or summon the police. How the times have altered since Uzzah had his hash settled on the spot for touching the Lord's trunk, though with the best of intentions!

KNOCK is an Irish town where the Virgin occasionally appears and miracles are performed regularly. A middle-aged woman, who pretended that she had just returned from a pilgrimage to that holy place, recently entered the house of Mrs. Phelan, at Waterford, and told her that she was suffering from a fatal

disease, which could only be checked by a miracle. According to her visitor, she was pursued on account of some silver she possessed, which was under a curse. Mrs. Phelan poured all her silver into the woman's lap, and the miracle-worker proceeded to mix it with the ashes under the grate. She then threw two handfulls of the mixture up the chimney, and the dust fell down again, but the money didn't. When the woman was gone Mrs. Phelan began to think she was duped. Losing by a miracle is a great incentive to scepticism.

POOR old Newdegate, who half ruined himself by trying to ruin Mr. Bradlaugh, is still on the stump. His latest bit of advice is "Don't abolish the House of Lords." He forgets that the House of Lords is abolishing itself, and that the bishops are quite enough to sink it to perdition.

WONDER of wonders! A church put to good use. At Harmony, near Oakland, Illinois, a colony of bees built behind the pulpit in a certain gospel-shop. Presently they drove out the preacher and his congregation and took complete possession of the building. When the siding was torn off, it was found that the bees had deposited honey to the depth of sixteen feet. Unfortunately the bees are now out and the sky-pilot is in. All his sermons are scarcely worth a pound of honey.

CHIEF-INSPECTOR BECK applied at Worship Street on Wednesday for a summons against a clergyman, assistant curate in the Roman Road, Bow, for causing obstruction on Saturday evenings in Roman Road, by preaching and singing. The summons was granted.

SAYS the ministerial Sam:  
 "If you don't accept the Lamb,  
 And the story of the ram  
 That appeared to Abraham  
 In the days of old I Am—  
 You can never bear a palm,  
 And the Lord in hell will cram  
 Every one of you, and slam  
 The gates upon you with a jam—  
 Burn you like an oriflamme—  
 Scorch and crisp you like a clam  
 Then we'll sit beside the Lamb,  
 Cheek by jowl, and ham to ham—  
 And we'll laugh and sing a psalm  
 Just to show the great I Am  
 Neither I nor brother Sam  
 For your torment care a d——n!"

THE people of Lowdham have had a little illustration of the petty trickery to which clergymen will resort. Lord Manners, the patron of the living, and the Rev. J. H. Browne, his vicar, jointly offered to give the parishioners some land for their cemetery on condition that the burial fees were raised so as to equal the rent of the land "given." The terms were accepted, but just at the last minute it was found that a clause had been secretly inserted in the deed of transfer by which no religious service except that of the Church was allowed and no dissenting minister could officiate. The Dissenters are highly indignant both at the trickery and the insult.

MR. W. THOMPSON listened on Clerkenwell Green to one of the scurrilous lecturers of the Christian Evidence Society, whose name we decline to print. Mr. Engstrom has had his attention frequently drawn to the man's bestial personalities, and as he takes no steps to check them he must be held an accessory. After the lecture, opposition was invited. Mr. Thompson advanced to the platform, but the chairman refused to hear him on the ground of his youth. Mr. Thompson is indeed only eighteen, but that is six years older than Jesus Christ was when he discussed with the rabbis in the temple. Subsequently Mr. Thompson wrote to the secretary of the Christian Evidence Society on the subject, and received the following reply which bore no signature:—"Your letter of the 12th instant (which appears to have arrived yesterday after office hours) shall receive attention. If it had been written earlier in the week we should have had time to see the persons named; but this is not practicable before to-morrow. Suppose you stay away to-morrow, you will not then hear what offends you. The matter shall be looked into and the other side heard."

WAS there ever a greater piece of nonsense? Mr. Engstrom is going to ask the culprits whether they are guilty. He might give the answer himself without troubling to put the question. We advised him long ago to send private persons he could trust to his own open-air stations and let them report to him. He will not do this, and the only conclusion is that he is satisfied not to know the truth.

SUPPOSE you stay away! What a paltry piece of advice. Instead of checking the scurrilities of his underlings, Mr. Engstrom advises those who object to such things not to listen to them. No doubt that is excellent advice, but it comes with an ill grace from the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society.



## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Aug. 22, at 11.15, at the Battersea Park Gates, near the Albert Palace; subject, "Bible Blunders."  
Evening, at 7.30, at the Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C.; subject, "The Holy Ghost."

AUGUST 29, Hall of Science, London.

SEPT. 5, Liverpool; 12, South Shields; 19 and 26, Hall of Science.

OCT. 3, Ball's Pond; 10, Birmingham; 24, Manchester; 31, Leeds.

## CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

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

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—R. Fox.

MR. L. HILL, 18 Kirchen Road, Ealing Dean, has back numbers of all Freethought publications issued for the last forty-five years. Any reader desirous of purchasing should communicate with him.

ARTHUR says: "I hope all Freethinkers will do what they can to help you in this misfortune."

W. H. A.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

ABROAD writes from Germany: "I have read with emotion your appeal in the *Freethinker*, and I have decided to lend you £6 10s., the interest on which will pay for the *Freethinker* you send me." It is pleasant to find that our efforts are known and appreciated on the Continent.

W. C. S. L.—Thanks for subscription. We have forwarded the 10s. you enclose for Mr. Bradlaugh's election fund.

A WORKING MAN sends his mite from York, and says he has never missed a copy of the *Freethinker* from the very beginning.

A. BROOKE.—We refrain from printing your too flattering remarks. Pleased to see you agree with us that political reform is a poor thing without Freethought. It is, as you say, building on sand.

RENROC has only been a reader of this journal for six months, but he values it very highly, and hopes "Freethinkers will support the editor who has done so much for the cause."

MAHOMET.—The story has appeared already in our pages. We explained our position with respect to the Insurance Company last week.

H. S. ASHFORD, in sending a subscription, expresses a hope that old Jahveh will deal more kindly with us for the future. We hope so too. What with the imprisonment and the fire, to say nothing of more private affairs, the old fellow has cut up pretty rough so far.

MARK NIXON.—Thanks for your good wishes as to health and strength. The Lord hasn't done us any harm in that respect.

A. T. (Brighton) writes: "I have read some of your literature, and it has driven the poisonous creed out of me and left me happy. Before that the dread of the Devil and everlasting hell-fire nearly drove reason and life out of me. I beg to offer you a loan of £5 for two years, and you can send me a copy of *Progress* monthly for interest."

W. JACOBS.—Mr. Bradlaugh is an Atheist; Thomas Paine was a Deist—that is, he believed in God, but not in the Bible.

J. C.—We quite agree with you that the *Freethinker* is the main thing, but the pamphlets and books we publish contain matter that cannot be printed in a small weekly paper, and they contain it in a permanent form, whereas a journal is cast aside, torn up, or lost when it is once read. Some, of course, keep this paper for binding, but they must naturally be a small percentage of its readers.

H. COURTNEY.—It was taken chiefly from Mr. Symes's *Liberator*, but he quoted from Australian papers. Not having the number by us now, we cannot give any further reference.

W. DODD (South Benwell) says: "I have attended the open-air meetings of the Spiritualists and distributed *Freethinkers*, etc. Freethought is not in a very healthy way here."

J. WILSON.—We thank the Halifax Branch. The N. S. S. Branches are not very forward in such matters. Even when poor old Mr. Ferguson was in peril of dying in gaol for "profanity" the funds for his defence came almost entirely from individual sources.

W. T. LEEKEY states that no literature is allowed to be sold in Regent's Park, nor are any kind of tracts allowed to be distributed. The authorities carry out the rule with strictness and impartiality. Mr. Leekey is delighted with the immense audience at Mr. Foote's lecture, and he points out that two park-keepers and two policemen formed an appreciative section of the audience.

H. KENNEDY sends a practical "expression of sympathy," and hopes "the fire may turn out a blessing instead of a curse." We don't quite see how, but, like our correspondent, we are of a sanguine disposition.

A. BLOOMFIELD.—Are there not enough societies already? Would it not be better to strengthen the old ones instead of starting new? "Go On."—An excellent motto, which we intend to observe.

B. M. SMITH says: "I hope you will be enabled to continue your work of active attack on superstition and clericalism."

G. COCKMAN, in sending subscription, writes: "I am only a poor railway clerk, and would spare more if I could. I trust that every Freethinker will deem it his duty to help you a little at least. The brightness your lectures and writings have put into my life can never be repaid."

BRISTOL ARTISAN.—Glad to hear you approve what we did. Such business is unpleasant, but we don't shrink from it when necessary.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Rationalist—Sheffield Evening Star—Staffordshire Sentinel—Manx Sun—L'Independant—Bath Daily Chronicle—Liberal—Western Times—Thinker—Liberty—Truthseeker—

Freethinker's Magazine—Boston Investigator—New South Wales Freethinker—Glasgow Herald—Western Daily Mercury—Weekly Dispatch—Leicester Athlete—Yorkshire Post.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current number. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

A CATALOGUE of the Progressive Publishing Company's Works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THIS morning (Aug. 22) Mr. Foote delivers an open-air lecture at Battersea Park, to make up for the disappointment he caused the Branch the Sunday morning after the fire. There will be no disappointment this time—bar accident, of course; and the "big crowd" that went away empty on the former occasion will come again and be filled. In the evening Mr. Foote preaches the gospel of Freethought at the Hall of Science, Old Street, his subject being that mysterious personage, the Holy Ghost.

A VERY large crowd gathered round the Secular stand in Regent's Park last Sunday morning. For the first time in his life Mr. Foote lectured from a chair. He was obliged to explain that if he suddenly disappeared in the middle of his discourse, it would not be that the earth had swallowed him as it did three ancient Jews, but because he was unused to such a restricted platform. No mishap occurred, however. Mr. Foote spoke for over an hour, every word being perfectly audible on the outskirts of the crowd, which grew larger and larger every minute. Several ladies were present and seemed to enjoy the lecture. There was no opposition, despite the repeated invitation of energetic Mr. Leekey, the chairman, whose pathetic pleadings for an opponent might have moved a heart of stone.

THERE was quite a revival in the evening, when Mr. Foote lectured at Milton Hall. Audiences have been very poor there of late, but on this occasion the place looked more lively and cheerful, being better filled than it has been for several months. We earnestly hope the Milton Hall Committee will strain every nerve to bring back their old prosperity. A little judicious advertising, and a little more activity in various directions, will work wonders.

*Infidel Death-Beds* will be ready next week. The work is very much larger than *Death's Test*, only two or three pages of which have been retained. Besides rewriting all the histories of infidel latter-ends in the old pamphlet, for some time out of print, Mr. Foote has added twice as many more. As the little volume stands at present, it promises to meet, and thoroughly meet, a long-felt want. Almost every historic Freethinker, about whose death any information could be gleaned, is included in its pithy pages.

*Letters to Jesus Christ*, by Mr. Foote, will not be ready till September 1. Owing to the disorder and want of accommodation in our temporary premises, the printing proceeds very slowly until we can re-enter No. 14 Clerkenwell Green, which cannot be for at least a month. *Letters to Jesus Christ* will be a curious and unique production, the idea being perfectly novel, and the execution in the author's best vein. Two of them have already appeared in the *Freethinker*; all the rest are entirely new.

OUR general rule is to pitch anonymous correspondence into the waste basket, but we occasionally make an exception. "A Disgusted Christian," having just heard of our fire, sends a cheerful note, although he omits his name and address as probably of no consequence. He says, "I am very sorry that you and all your precious crew were not burnt to a cinder. It would not have been a bit more than you deserve, and I trust that you will meet with a speedy death somehow or other."

COMING from a disciple of the meek and lowly Jesus, this epistle is very comforting. It affords us great pleasure to see these cattle kicking their heels and lashing their tails. All the disgusted Christian has to do to realise his charitable wish is to pray to the Lord, who has promised to grant whatever his dearly beloved ask of him. We have made our will in readiness for the worst.

A LETTER from the Rev. H. W. Parsons, who is out in Minnesota, to the editor of the *Daily Western Times*, complains thusly: "Clergymen have not the persuasive power here that they have in the Old World. Everybody here claims to be a law to himself. Sunday, then, is occupied in hunting, 'base ball' playing and buggy driving, and in this town and others where I preach there perhaps is not to be found on the Lord's Day more than one in ten who thinks of entering a place of worship."

THE *Thinker*, of Madras, gives the first place in its columns to a reprint of Mr. Wheeler's paper on Unfulfilled Messianic Prophecies.

THE August number of the *Freethinker's Magazine*, of Salamanca, New York, contains a capital paper on The Myth of the Great Deluge, by J. M. McCann. Miss Helen Gardener writes on Christianity versus Woman's Education. She traces woman's



mental degradation to her belief that religion authorises her humiliation and man's contempt for her simplest rights.

A BRAHMIN from India named Gopal Vinayak Goshee has been lecturing at Concord and letting the American missionaries see themselves as others see them. He says: "In America they circulate absurd stories about my country. They report that Hindu mothers throw their babes into the Ganges. They report that men sacrifice themselves before Juggernaut. They say that women are tortured and put to death. They report that the heathen know no God; that they are ignorant, superstitious, and idolatrous. This is all false. The missionaries fabricate stories in order to raise funds in their own country for their support in foreign lands. They do not work, but live like potentates, surrounded by luxuries and comforts. We do not envy them, but let them not misrepresent facts and tamper with our religion."

THE Rev. Sir George W. Cox is in the happy position of being elected to the bishopric of Natal, without being able to find any other bishop to consecrate him. The Archbishop of Canterbury has politely but firmly refused to do so. The Church at Natal is, thanks to Bishop Colenso, extremely liberal. Sir George Cox has been chosen as one of the broadest of the Broad Church. He is a strong opponent of everlasting punishment, and an advocate of Church Reform by instituting parochial Church boards, and he is believed to have been concerned with Thomas Scott in producing the *English Life of Jesus*.

THE National Sunday League kindly offer to Working Men's Clubs and Institutes the loan free of charge of 3,500 chairs during the winter months. Early application to Mr. H. Saveriaux, 89 New Oxford Street, is necessary.

### BURNT OUT.

WE again thank the subscribers and lenders who have, during the past week, generously responded to our appeal. The prompt assistance rendered us in our hour of need will always be a pleasant memory, and it will nerve us to fight the old battle more vigorously than ever.

It is not our intention to keep the Fund open very long. We therefore trust that all who intend to render us aid will do so without delay. We press this especially on those who contemplate *lending* us any sums of money. Of course it is not always easy to remit at a particular moment, and the times are hard for a great many, but in an emergency like this, promptitude is the quintessence of generosity.

Besides subscriptions, which have just been swelled by a munificent hand, we have received £228 in loans. More is promised, but we acknowledge nothing until it is received. Mr. Payne, whose letter we published a fortnight ago, thought £500 might easily be raised. We still hope so, and look forward with expectancy to the coming week. Stamped vouchers are sent in every case, immediately on receipt of the loan, entitling the lender to recall his money at any time by giving six months' notice.

Until No. 14 Clerkenwell Green is rebuilt our hands are partially tied. It will be a month or two before we get into full swing. Meanwhile we must do our best in the circumstances. Fortunately the stereotypes of *Bible Contradictions* and *Bible Absurdities* were recovered, and we have printed a fresh supply of these useful pamphlets, which enjoy an excellent sale. The Foote-McCann debate is also in the press, and will be ready for sale in a few weeks. Of most of the other works new editions will be prepared. One of these is *Bible Romances*. Some numbers will be entirely re-written, and every page will be carefully revised, without impairing its pungency. The whole work will be republished at once in a handsome volume. We may add that no Freethought volume, except Paine's *Age of Reason*, was ever sold so extensively. Thousands of the shilling volume have been circulated, and over thirty thousand of some of the single numbers.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—Mark Nixon, 5s.; H. S. Ashford, 5s.; Ship Canal, 1s.; Colne, 10s.; R. Nichols, £5; Collected by a Friend, £100; D. Bocoock, 5s.; — Pope, 5s.; J. U., 5s.; Renroc, 5s.; W. H. A., 1s. 10d.; A Working Man, 2s.; Arthur, 2s. 6d.; Trio S. L., 17s. 6d.; John Phillips, 10s.; Halifax Branch N. S. S., 10s.; A. Daniell, 2s.; James Gray, 1s.; A Bristol Artisan, 2s.; G. Cockman, 5s.; B. Michael Smith, £2; Go On, 10s.; H. Kennedy, 10s.; R. J., 1s.; J. J., 1s.; F. S., 1s.; H. S., 1s.; G. Scarrott, 2s. 6d.; James Weston, £1 1s.

LOANS.—A. T., £5; H. Crawshaw, £10; John H. Powe, £15; X., £100.

### G O D I N H E L L.

IF God is everywhere, as Christians allege, he must be in hell as well as in heaven and on earth, and men might as well pray to "Our Father which art in hell," as to "Our Father which art in heaven." As some Christians will frantically object to the logical but outrageous conclusion that God lives in the infernal regions as well as in heaven, it will be as well to let God's own Word declare the fact, and so take the responsibility for this shocking piece of blasphemy from off our shoulders. He makes the Psalmist say: "If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (Psalm cxxxix., 8). Holy writ thus distinctly confirms and sanctifies our otherwise unpardonable contention that God must be in hell. The Christian, moreover, cannot logically restrict or limit an infinite spirit either in time or space; and as their Creator and Governor of the Universe is *always* everywhere, he must be always in hell.

Does God suffer pain in this awful fire? Or does he escape suffering because he is only a spirit—in which case all the condemned will equally escape because they too are only spirits? Orthodox Christianity, it is true, sends men's actual bodies to heaven or to hell as the case may be, but it is evident that these bodies would soon be burnt to ashes at a temperature beyond that measurable by any pyrometer yet invented. Will Christians contend that the bodies of the damned are made of a kind of spiritual asbestos, and are therefore incombustible?

Putting aside the question whether physical pain is experienced by God in hell, we may ask the still more serious question whether he suffers moral pain or spiritual pain while thus animating and guiding the volcanic flames of Hades by his infinite and all-controlling presence. He evidently sanctions the enormities of hell as of earth by his presence and by his non-interference and by permitting a fearful misuse of the power he created and maintains. Is he so callous that the torture of writhing wretches is pleasant in his eyes and their groans and shrieks as sweet music in his ears? Is his heart hard as the nether millstone, brutally unflinching as an inquisitor's, that he can endure, nay cause and perpetuate, such agonies by the energy and action of his ever-present will and personality? Can he, as orthodoxy supposes, actually rejoice in this as being "all for his glory?"

The consideration of God's infinity and personality will lead us into many difficulties, for they are utterly irreconcilable attributes. What kind of a consciousness or mind can he have? He is simultaneously hearing the glorious praises of his saints in heaven and the equally glorious curses of his victims below, besides all the prayers that reach him from the earth and other planets. What a curious Dutch medley the result must be thus concentrated in the single mind or thought or consciousness of one person! A strange "Tom Noddy, all *mind* and no body," the Lord must be.

Who is master in hell, God or the Devil? If God is not supreme there, or on terms of equality with Satan, then he is present as an inferior, and the Devil is so far his master. If the Devil only acts as head stoker by God's permission and by God's deputed power, then the Devil so far is an obedient servant of God, and ought not to be in hell.

The writers of the Bible do not readily take to the idea of their omnipresent deity being always in hell. They habitually speak of him as residing in heaven only, but as exercising power over hell when he chooses. The prophet Amos shows that his hand reaches down to hell, just as Jesus shows that while sitting enthroned in heaven his feet rest on the earth as his footstool—God apparently, like a spiritual spider monkey, having arms of even greater length than his extraordinary legs. Christ, in his localised or concentrated personal form, went to hell, we know, when he died, but this was only a temporary visit. He did not find the attractions of the place sufficient to induce him to remain there permanently in his bodily and human form. Nevertheless both Christ and the Holy Dove, being infinite God, are always present in hell in their more spiritual and divine essence. Neither Father, Son nor Ghost can escape this doom without ceasing to be infinite and omnipresent. As the easiest way out of the difficulty, I would recommend them to abolish hell entirely. The advantages of this bold and decisive policy would be so unspeakably great that all humane Christians ought to solemnly urge the grand reform



upon the original Maker of Hell when they "pray without ceasing" for all manner of petty and personal boons. Otherwise Jesus and his Father will have to remain in hell for ever. The poor Dove will have his feathers dreadfully singed. The whole nations, too, that are "turned into hell" may well ask for a celestial Act of Parliament abolishing the use of torture, as civilised men have done on earth already. Let the churches appoint a day of intercession and wrestle with the Lord for so universal a boon—a boon even more needed probably by themselves than by outsiders.

W. P. BALL.

### SHOCKING THE NATIVES.

FOR the past two weeks I have been preparing for the winter campaign by recruiting my health at the sea-side and reading up some of my favorite authors.

Bamsgate, as most Londoners know, is one of the most popular resorts of the "Children of Israel." The late Sir Moses Montefiore resided there for many years, and the Jews seem to regard it as a sort of Holy Land. Being reasonably near to London, Christians and unbelievers of all kinds flock to this excellent picturesque and sea-side place in the summer months for a pleasant change after the incessant toil of the winter.

On the sands in the morning there is every variety of entertainment: the children's friend, Mr. Punch; niggers with bad voices and very little sense; the great and only "fire-eater;" vocalists who describe themselves as comic, but who if they possess that quality succeed remarkably well in hiding it; and all sorts of religious performers, from the unscrupulous Mr. Nott to the egotistical and equally unscrupulous Rev. Z. B. Woffendale.

People go to the sea-side to enjoy themselves, but the Christians think they cannot properly do so unless, after a dip in the deep blue sea, they wind up with a general wash in "the blood of the Lamb." The Jews seem to have no regular preacher on the sands, but occasionally there is an enthusiastic gentleman who has a few "kind words" to say about those rich Christians who profess to be followers of the poor Nazarene, but will not practise his teachings.

While this gentleman was "holding forth" the other day a number of rabid Christians surrounded him and interrupted him by calling upon him to give chapter and verse for all his statements. At the height of the interruption I came to the poor enthusiastic Jew's rescue, and the Christians almost immediately left him to deal with me. I criticised the Bible in the severest fashion, and denounced so-called Christians as hypocrites; and when some of them suggested I ought to be burned, I told them that the learned revisors of the New Testament had revised hell out of it. One gentleman asked me if I would teach my child the doctrines which I held. Certainly, I said; I am not ashamed to teach my child anything which I believe is true, but I should be ashamed to teach him that the Bible was the word of God, and that God inspired men to write that which was neither scientifically, historically nor morally true. Then I found I was in a "hornet's nest," but I stood my ground, defied the bigots to do their level worst, kept my temper and came out triumphant. Of one thing I am sure—I succeeded in shocking the natives.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

### NEWS ABOUT ELIJAH.

THE following appeared—or at least ought to have appeared—in the *Christian Lyre* of August 1, 1886:

"Last Monday, the inhabitants of the little town of Slocum-cum-Sea were stirred up into extraordinary activity by the announcement made by the local astronomer, that a comet, meteor, or something of the sort, had appeared in the heavens, and was travelling towards our earth with surprising velocity. The news spread like wildfire through the town, and all trade was at a standstill the day the announcement was made. Everybody was discussing this phenomenon, and various hypotheses were advanced by some of the members who formed the community of Slocum-cum-Sea, but were as soon abandoned as projected. Everybody declared—after a lot of discussion—his inability to solve this problem; but they all unanimously agreed that it was something, for had not their local astronomer said so? They at last came to the conclusion to wait until the evening, to see, if possible, this remarkable appearance with their own eyes. The local professor of astronomy had, in the mean-

time, acquainted the London 'Society of Star-gazers' of this singular phenomenon, and begged of them to come down to Slocum-cum-Sea and give their opinions on the matter. This they accordingly did. Towards the evening, the whole of the inhabitants began to gather around the Observatory, and cheered enthusiastically and vociferously, as some members of the Society of Star-gazers elbowed their way through the crowd towards the stairs leading to the Observatory. Great enthusiasm seemed to pervade the whole crowd, with the exception of some members of the Christian Evidence Manufacturing Society, who declared that the end of the world was at hand, and exhorted all sinners to fall down and be converted. But the sinners would not do so. They had some sport with these exponents of religion, by turning their hats into shapes resembling that of a concertina. The Star-gazers were busy with their telescopes, and at last found the object for which they searched. It was ascertained—by reckoning the speed with which this object travelled—that it would reach our earth within four hours; that is, if it did not meet with any accident. No further information could be gleaned from them. The people were told to wait a little while longer, and then they would be able to see this phenomenon with their naked eyes. At last the object came in view—first like a small red speck; then like a comet; then like a fire-balloon; and finally it had the appearance, and really turned out to be a hansom cab, drawn by two powerful horses—both horses possessing wings of enormous length. A kind of awe seemed to have turned the people into stone. None allowed a sound to escape their lips. At last, the horses alighted exactly in front of the Observatory, flapped their wings, snorted, then flew away—minus the cab. The people were then all released from their spell. They rushed towards the cab, when another surprise awaited them. The cab contained the skeleton of an old man, whose shoulders and body were barely covered with an old tattered garment. His whole bearing and appearance betokened a member of the tribe of Israel; somewhere in or near the time of David. The mayor now put in an appearance; and, in the name of the Queen, commanded his sheriffs to bring the vehicle and contents to the Town Hall. This was done according to the order. The astronomers were invited to investigate, and give their opinions concerning this wonderful discovery. The mayor sat at the head of the table; the sheriffs at his right and left side; and the astronomers sat facing the mayor and sheriffs. The bawle of the parish, took gently hold of the body (or rather skeleton) and placed it in front of the above-mentioned company. A note-book was found in the only pocket of the garment which covered the body. An entry in Hebrew was found in it, as follows:—

"Wonder how long this journey is going to last. Tremendously cold up here; sorry I dropped my mantle on earth, it would have helped to keep this confounded cold out. Shouldn't wonder if that old cuss Elisha has found it. Wonder if the horses have lost their way; they are a long time over their journey. Heaven is further off than I thought. Poor Elijah! it's nearly up with you, you'll soon be frozen or starved to death. You'll never see your—"

Here the note stopped. Nothing else was found on his person. Everybody's concluded that this skeleton was the remains of Elijah, who was supposed to have gone to heaven in a fiery chariot, but the horses had lost their way, and had, no doubt, been travelling through space for a few thousand years; and had found our earth again; and, after depositing their burden, had flown away. The mayor closed the meeting somewhat hurriedly. The chariot (or cab) was handed over to the Christian Evidence Manufacturing Society, as a mighty weapon against Free-thought. The skeleton was buried with great pomp and ceremony at Slocum-cum-Sea. Thousands of Christians are daily flocking to Elijah's burial-place. G. E. C. NAEWIGER.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

### "GOD AND HIS BOOK."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your last week's issue you charge the above work with stating that the Fall legend reached the Hebrews *immediately* from India. Here you have, no doubt unwittingly, made a mis-statement. You, moreover, seem to imply that the legend reached the Jews through the medium of Persia. Were this the time and place, I might be prepared to join issue with you upon that point; but, let it pass.—Yours truly,

SALADIN.

[We did not use the word *immediately*. Saladin stated that the legend was derived from India, although the Jews did not obtain it direct. We differ from him, and hold there is overwhelming evidence that the legend was borrowed from Persia.—ED.]

## REVIEWS.

*The House of Lords.* By W. H. BROWN. Haines: Mile End Road, E.—A useful compilation, impeaching the Upper Chamber. The author does not, however, appear to know that the House of Lords was abolished in 1649 as "useless and dangerous."

*The Age of the Earth and of Animal and Vegetable Life, with special reference to the views of Sir J. W. Dawson.* By C. C. CATTELL. Birmingham; twopence.—Contains a number of well-chosen extracts from various authorities upon the subject of which it treats.



## PROFANE JOKES.

An excellent old gentleman had a very strong desire to make a balloon ascent. "What!" said one of his friends, "at your age?" "Certainly, my friend," he replied, "it is solely for the purpose of accustoming myself to quit this earth."

"Mr. Jones, you seem to be evolving that translation from your inner consciousness." "Well, Professor, I read in the Epistle to the Hebrews last night that 'by faith Enoch was translated,' and I thought I would try it on Horace."

SCHOOLMASTER: "Class in history, step up. Are you ready on the questions?" "Yeth, sir." "Billy, who was the first hunter?" "Noah!" "Why?" "Cause he collected all the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and saved 'em from being drowned."

"Where are you going, my dear?" "I'm going shopping, hubby." "Did you see what Sam Sawbones, the evangelist, said about women who go shopping?" "No, what was it?" "Well, he said hell is full of women who spend their time shopping." "Did he? Why, I had no idea it was so delightful a place."

LADY ERMINE: "Have you really been to church, Sir George?" Sir George: "H'm, ya-as; obliged to go. There's the parade after service, you know." Lady Ermine: "Well, tell me, is it not better to go to church than play billiards on Sunday?" Sir George: "It's not ba-ad. I'm not so bored as I expected, now that I've had a few novels bound up like prayer-books. The worst of it is, you're obliged to get up and down so often, and that rather spoils your reading!"

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Historical Sketches of Freethought in England. By J. M. Wheeler.  
Praise and Blame. By M. M.  
The Christian Miracles. By Lucianus.  
The Lover's Return. (A Poem.) By B.V.  
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