

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



WAKING HER UP.

And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. . . And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway.—LUKE VIII., 52—55.

FREE EDUCATION.

SINCE the Education Act was passed, sixteen years ago, there has been an immense reduction in our criminal statistics. The number of convictions has diminished by one half, and this alteration is chiefly confined to boys and youths under twenty. Prisons that used to be crammed are now half empty, and the Government is able to turn some of its prison sites, like Coldbath Fields, into spaces for ordinary buildings, without having to erect fresh kennels for the "doggery" of our social system. That this change is entirely due to the Education Act is a position that cannot be maintained. Shorter sentences, and perhaps better police regulations, as well as more careful procedure in criminal courts, probably have something to do with it. But, allowing for these causes, there still remains a large improvement which is fairly attributable to education. Knowing something of prison life, we venture to assert that the vast majority of our gaol birds belong to the ignorant and illiterate classes. Many of them would never have worn a convict's dress if their intellects had been brightened by proper training.

Education certainly tends to diminish crime, and the British taxpayer, who has so many reasons for groaning, may congratulate himself on being obliged to keep schools instead of prisons. But there is another view of the case.

Education is a national necessity if we are to hold our own in the world. Other countries are spending heavily on their educational systems, and unless we imitate them in this respect we shall be left behind in the race of civilisation. All our capital will not avail us without skill, and the highest skill is impossible without a quick brain and well-trained faculties. Beyond this, there is of course the grander question of whether Englishmen are to be thoughtful or cloddish, educated or ignoramuses. What we do is one thing, and what we are is another and by no means inferior.

Whether the State should provide Education was once hotly debated. Now, however, the question is beyond discussion, with all respect to Mr. Herbert Spencer. The State *does* provide Education. Board Schools are impregnable facts, and the universal tendency of the civilised world is to increase and not to diminish them. Voluntary Schools, as they are somewhat paradoxically called, seeing that they are all more or less supported out of public taxes, are left open for those who prefer them, and to interfere with them would be an infraction of liberty. But Voluntary Schools are inadequate. They cannot, and never could, provide for the education of more than a percentage of our children; and as the children *must* be educated, the State is compelled to make provision for them; for we must always bear in mind that Education is enforced, not for the parents', but for the children's sake, as a measure of social

self-protection, as a national insurance against the positive evils of ignorance and illiteracy. Very mistakenly (as we think) the State orders Vaccination. You can have it done privately at your own cost if you like, but if you are too poor to pay, or decline to do it at your own cost, you can take your child to a Vaccination Station. In like manner the State orders Education. You can send your children to a private school if you like, but if you will not, there is the public school provided. True, it is not absolutely free, but it should be. State Education, like State Vaccination, should be free to all. To charge poor parents the full value for their children's education would be preposterous. They could not pay it. It costs eighteenpence a week to educate a child in London. How could a laborer, earning less than twenty shillings a week, pay six for the education of a family of four? The parents *cannot* be charged eighteenpence. Nowhere in London do they pay more than fourpence, and in many parts they pay only twopence. What is the use of troubling about that fraction? Why not pay the whole bill, and have done with it? The total school-fees in London only amount to a little over £100,000, and while we are haggling over that paltry amount we never kick at millions spent in the gunpowder-and-glory business. Look also at the worry caused to the poor by the exaction of the school-fee. "I cannot rest," said Mr. Chamberlain thirteen months ago, "until I see this cruel and abominable tax abolished, and until every national school is free throughout the length and breadth of the land." And if it were found that the ratepayer's burden was too heavy, Mr. Chamberlain significantly pointed to "those vast endowments which are now appropriated to the service of a single sect." Let us starve the priests and plump the schoolmasters: let us cease telling people to be good and train them to be useful.

The reactionaries on the London School Board, headed by the clericals, have recently been doing their best to bring public education into discredit. On the pretence of wishing a speedier remission of fees, they issued an inquisitorial circular for defaulting parents to fill up. Such questions were put as Why did you leave your last situation, and Who was your employer; and mothers were to say whether they were widows, deserted, or single. Worse still, the children who did not bring their fees were to be repelled from school, in violation of the very spirit of the Education Act. This flagrant injustice has been checked by the Metropolitan Radical Federation, on whose Executive we have the honor to sit. The Demonstration in Trafalgar Square set the London press writing on the subject, and the policy of the reactionists was universally condemned. Since then the Federation has waited on the London School Board and made a forcible protest against its action. We had the privilege of helping to draw up the Memorial, and after Mrs. Ashton Dilke's splendid speech in support of it we took a fair share in answering the controversial questions that were put to the Deputation. Some of the nineteen sky-pilots on the Board, who forgot or were ignorant that we are accustomed to answering questions, learned a lesson they will probably remember. Mr. Lobb, a pious member, and one of the worst sinners on the Board, asked whether the Federation wished to "sacrifice the independence and manhood" of the twopenny-fee fathers; to which we replied that it was hard to see "how it can pauperise a parent to be subsidised to the extent of one-and-sixpence, while his manhood is left if he be subsidised only to the extent of one-and-fourpence." Poor Mr. Lobb was the laughing-stock of the whole Board as well as the Deputation, his very colleagues in iniquity enjoying the hilarity at his expense.

The Federation has won. The inquisitorial circular is to be practically withdrawn, the fees are to be remitted wholesale, and the Board has issued a private circular to the teachers, telling them to exercise their *discretion* as to sending home the children who are in arrear. That is, the Board shuffles out of a bad job with as little sacrifice of its dignity as possible. Left to the "discretion" of the teachers, the fate of the little ones is safe.

We do not discuss politics in the *Freethinker*, but Education is not a political question. It transcends all party barriers. The real foe of Education is the priest. The London Radicals see this plainly enough, and not being overburdened with religion, they as plainly say so. At the next elections the parsons will be fought all along the line, and if they do not sing smaller on the next Board "there's witchcraft in't."

G. W. FOOTE.

NEW WINE IN OLD BOTTLES.

THE decay of orthodox belief has produced a school of Neo-Christians of which Mr. Ward Beecher and the Bishop of London may be considered as types. Their aim is to retain the emoluments of religion by accommodating it to the demands of modern culture. To reconcile Christianity with science and philosophy they throw overboard all that is distinctively Christian. The orthodox dogmas of the inspiration of the Bible, of the fall of man through the sin of Adam, of atonement through the blood of Christ, of the virtue of faith, and of the eternal punishment of the unbelieving and wicked are glossed over or repudiated. They offer a sort of secularised Christianity, which would not be recognised by Jesus Christ or any of his followers in the days when Christianity was a power in the world. They have learnt how to combine the worship of God and Mammon. They retain the old phrases, but accommodate them to a fresh interpretation. They devote much talent and ingenuity to showing that the Bible and the creeds never meant what our forefathers supposed them to mean. That book has been misunderstood during the ages when it was most accepted, and it has been reserved for the Neo-Christians, the advocates of "The New Theology," to show that it teaches all that has been discovered by disregarding its teachings. Every subtlety of interpretation is used to show it teaches something very different to what it was heretofore supposed to teach.

From one point of view there is much to be said for the Broad Church School. They are on the road to Free-thought and they have only to keep moving to leave all supernaturalism behind. They remind one of a man seated at the end of a bough he is sawing off in the middle. Many will go to hear Beecher who would avoid Bradlaugh as the very devil. Once inquiry is aroused, it is not far to the discovery that if Beecher is right, not only Augustine and Athanasius, but Paul and Jesus Christ are wrong. It is all very well if your salary depends on it, to profess belief in evolution and special creation at the same time; to call stopping the sun poetry, but to profess faith in the turning of water into wine; to deny that everlasting means everlasting, except when it refers to everlasting happiness; to say the Bible is the word of God, and the word of man at the same time, and to leave to every one's reason and conscience, to determine which part is human and which divine. The plain reader finds no such appeals to reason or conscience in the Bible. On the contrary he finds reason decried and the will of God put forward as the standard. The teaching of the Neo-Christians is soon seen to be not only distinct from, but opposed to, that of Christ. They delight in showing that Christianity is profitable for the world that is as well as for that which is to come. Christ taught the resignation of even wife, family and friend that the kingdom of heaven might be attained. All that they depict as admirable were to him and the old Christians but snares of the Devil. Their Jesus is utterly unhistorical. Instead of being a Jew of Palestine under Tiberius, he is an enlightened Broad Church pseudo-scientific Neo-Christian. But the modern garb does not fit. Those who look soon discover it is a new craft under the old flag.

This sailing under false colors entails a deal of dishonesty. What an amount of sophistry is employed to show that the records of science and the Jewish cosmogony agree? The Bible is taken as a text-book, and expounded as a revelation by these Neo-Christians even while they deny its divine authority. They admit the difficulties, but fail to admit their consequences. They think nothing more is required than a revised statement of the old doctrines to make them palatable to the advanced thought of the age.

They mistake the issues now before men's minds. The question is not whether theological dogmas have or have not been properly stated, but simply are they true or false. Is there a God or not? Was Jesus, or was he not, born without a father? Did his death wipe away sins, or is there no connection between a doubtful historic event and salvation from sin? Nor will the world take as tidings of great joy the statement that God is not quite as bad as he has been represented to be, when it has come to question whether there is any God at all.

The Neo-Christians drop the Old Testament, putting aside Jehovah the father in favor of Jesus the son. The world is, however, getting equally tired of the whole

family. The Neo-Christians move, but they do not move fast enough. They have one foot in the ancient world and one in the modern, and they contrive on Sundays to make it appear that you can live quite comfortably in both worlds at once. During the week day you may live in the light of the nineteenth century, but on Sundays you must step a little back into the shadow of the Dark Ages. The old wonder-working brimstone pills are sugar-coated and reserved for extreme cases only. Hell is obliterated or, as Sheol and Hades, appears vastly milder in temperature. Heaven, its less definite counterpart, is supposed to be as certain and attractive as ever. Satan is superannuated, but his Divine Antagonist is as much a name to conjure with as formerly. Every dogma is refined until it becomes as nebulous as the Holy Ghost himself. But you cannot feed men on phrases, however energetically you fill them with new no-meanings. Practical men will not heed these sophistries; they will demand that the statements of theologians shall be accompanied by the same amount of proof as those of scientists. The Neo-Christian attempt to hold with the hare of authority and run with the hounds of free inquiry will not answer in the long run. When the opposing armies of Supernaturalism and Science meet in battle the Neo-Christians will find themselves between the lines of both fires. They should remember the saying ascribed to their Master: "No man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish: but new wine must be put into new bottles and both are preserved."

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

A CLERGYMAN at West Kensington has been made to pay tithes for the whole of the estate upon which his house stands. His brother clergyman who enforces the tithes replies that he is sorry if any injustice has been done, but he makes it a rule never to interfere with his collectors. The vicar, however, consoles his brother in Christ with the information that he has in his turn a legal right to recoup himself by destryaining upon all his neighbors for their share. When dog bites dog the sheep can afford to look on amused.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Christian Commonwealth* has been "informed that some of the members of the Manchester Young Men's Christian Association Gymnasium have entered the music hall profession. The same thing has occurred at the Polytechnic, London, several of whose gymnasts have been appearing as acrobats on the music hall stage."

COMMENTING on the fatal riots in India the *Christian Commonwealth* says it is evident that there is no lack of religion in India, but what is needed is the rapid dissemination of Christianity—as at Belfast we suppose. Instead of six people being killed we might then have a few hundred, thanks to the superior effects of Christianity in this direction. The *C. C.* perceives this difficulty and says there must not be a number of discordant sectarianisms, which will give rise to fresh fanaticisms in the name of Christianity in place of those now in vogue. But which Christian sects are to be repressed and how? Which body of Christians is to be the happy possessor of the pure Gospel and of all authority?

THE Rev. James Mackie has been found guilty of assaulting Mr. Carswell, one of his elders, during church service. The minister had previously called Mr. Carswell a beast and a child of the Devil, and had threatened if he still refused to allow his pastor and master to collect the offertory funds he would have to be carried out. The elder remaining *did* have to be carried out, for the enraged pastor stabbed him on the forehead and on the ear with a butcher's steel and tore his coat in several places with repeated stabs. If it had been proved that the prisoner took the steel to church with the intention of inflicting injury, the Recorder said he would have been sent to penal servitude without scruple. He will now be imprisoned with hard labor for three months, after which he will be bound over to keep the peace for twelve months.

MAGGIE HUGHES, described as a lieutenant in the Salvation Army, Middlesborough-on-Tees, was sentenced to three months' hard labor for petty theft. She had three previous convictions against her during the present year, yet still maintained her post in the Army.

A CURIOUS mixture of science and theology was found in the verdict of a coroner's jury at Coneythorpe, Malton. One of the servants at Castle Howard died suddenly at a concert, and the jury found that "Death was caused by syncope, by the visitation of God." God's only visits appear to be in questionable shape.

SEVERAL bishops and leading Churchmen are inviting subscriptions to celebrate the Queen's jubilee by building a "Church House." We understand that the Church House is only another name for a club for the clergy.

THE sermon by the Bishop of Meath (Dr. Reichel) before the Church Congress on the subject of "The Reasonableness and Efficacy of Prayer" is reported in the *Record*. The Bishop says that to suppose God will not attend to the requests of his children is to charge him with obstinacy. That is, if he is unchangeable he is obstinately so. Dr. Reichel winds up a very flabby sermon by recommending the greater use of the Lord's Prayer. Fancy children always petitioning their Father in exactly the same words. And always asking him to lead them not into temptation!

THE Rev. Walter Davies, Baptist minister of Upton, on Severn, has had his claim to be placed on the list of voters impounded on the ground that the statements made therein were false. We are decidedly of opinion that Mr. Davies and all other taxpayers should have a vote without trouble to themselves, but as the law stands no one is justified in getting his name on the list of voters under false pretences.

THE Rev. Robert Thomson, well known as one of the ridiculous pious "characters" of Glasgow, is, it appears, in mortal fear of a big dog whose master he summoned. It, however, transpired that the dog was in charge of some boys and that the "meenster" roared and raged considerably worse than the dog, whom he threatened to shoot as well as its master. Altogether Mr. Thomson seems to be the party most in need of a muzzle.

ANOTHER burial scandal has occurred at Gringley on the Hill, where arrangements had been made with the vicar, the Rev. G. H. Scott, for the interment to take place on Oct. 6. The vicar did not turn up, and upon going to the vicarage no satisfactory explanation was offered.

THE New York *Freeman's Journal* says: "Mr. Beecher is like an electric eel with the electricity gone." "He represents one of the worst elements of American life—the emotional paroxysmal element—by which feeling and impulse, emotion and passion, are substituted for faith and duty." "His love of nature, his adoration of flowers and stars, furnish him with the usual similes and metaphors; but they do not conceal the emptiness of mind which strives to conceal the Pagan doctrine under a mask of Christian terminology."

WARD BEECHER doesn't believe in the hell-fire doctrine. After an address at the City Temple, his reply to a question on the subject created considerable sensation, and brought several ministers present to their feet in protest. He declared that anyone who believed in the doctrine of Retribution, and who got married or went into society, or even smiled afterwards, was a monster. He said that he himself preferred to work by the fear that sprang from love, than by the fear that was generated by the barbaric doctrine of Retribution.

SPURGEON evidently does not approve of the Neo-Christianity advocated by Ward Beecher, and in his last prayer gave the Lord a significant hint. "Lord," he is reported as saying, "shut the mouths of blasphemers, especially of those who pretend to be preachers of the Gospels and yet only blaspheme." Spurgeon has the gout and put a little of it into his prayer. At the same time Beecher speaks of the preachers of eternal hell-fire as blasphemers. The Lord seems to rather approve of Beecher since he is returning to America with plenty of English gold, while he sends Spurgeon a foretaste of heaven in the shape of rheumatic gout.

THE *Hull Critic* has been summoned for libel against the Rev. Hopper Joplin for writing the following hymn:

The devil went out one day,
In search of an impious preacher.
And he wasn't very long on his way,
Before he collared old Beecher.

Flushed with his grand success,
Satan the champion Copper,
Rushed along in his dusky dress,
And collared old Booth and Hopper.

Ought not the summons to have been granted to Satan?

THE Brighton bigots are howling because the band has been playing in Preston park on Sundays, and the orderly conduct of the people has forwarded the movement for the opening of the Museum, Free Library, and Picture Gallery. If the Sabbatarians dislike rational recreation, they can leave it alone, but what they object to is that there should be any rivalry to their churches and chapels.

THE Gainsborough Nunnery has got into bankruptcy, owing over £2,000 to tradesmen whom it is unable to pay. Upon the proposal that a receiver be appointed, the priests, Fathers Gorman and Cafferata, objected on the ground that "if the parents knew the state of affairs, it would materially injure the

school." Rather cool this. After living on the fat of the land and paying nobody anything, although, as the *Gainsborough Mercury* says, they have in all probability received money for that express purpose, they have the effrontery to say "Hush it up, or it will injure our school."

THE Reverend Principal Cunningham told his hearers at Crieff Parish Church last Sunday that they were greatly to blame for not having utilised Sunday for gathering in the crops, which now lie rotting in the fields through the neglect of the favorable opportunity. But Pastor Cunningham is correcting God. God said no manner of work was to be done on the Sabbath. Where is the consistency in teaching obedience to God's commands one minute and disobedience the next?

THE Rev. Dr. Thain Davidson, of Colebrooke Row Church, delivers a monthly sermon to young men. His last effusion was a warning against the "Infidelity which approaches you in many a varied guise." The worst form of infidelity was, in his opinion, that which appears in so-called Christian journals, which, "in the name of liberty of religious thought, are doing more to undermine the Evangelical piety of the land than all the infidel publications issued by the press."

THIS would be very gratifying if it were absolutely true. We suspect, however, that Dr. Davidson is well aware that the real danger lies in another direction. This is how he fumes over "coarse and blasphemous Atheism," or in other words, downright earnest Freethought: "Its filthy prints, by their profane ribaldry, obscene wit, and daring insults offered to the Lord we adore, happily defeat the end they have in view; for no gentleman, apart from the question of religion altogether, would permit such vile sheets to enter his dwelling. I shall not advertise them by naming them; but would like to tell those who gratuitously supply me copiously with such literature, that I refuse to defile with it either the waste-paper basket or the dust-bin, but consign it at once to the flames."

CONSIGN it to the flames! What a characteristic touch! When a man believes in hell, his one recipe is fire. Probably when Dr. Thain Davidson watches the *Freethinker* curling in the flame, he anticipates the delicious spectacle of its editor frizzling in Gehenna. But there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip, and Dr. Davidson may after all be disappointed in his charitable expectation. Anyhow, so long as the Dr. Davidsons of the world refrain from treating us to brimstone themselves, we are willing to run our chance of any quantity in the sweet by-and-bye.

DR. DAVIDSON hates "filthy papers" but he is said to be rather fond of "filthy lucre." Perhaps the latter explains the former. A word in conclusion. Dr. Davidson calls the *Freethinker* "filthy." We challenge him to pick out all the "filthy" passages he can find in our columns from the very beginning. Let him print them side by side with the "filthy" passages we will select from his infallible word of God, and circulate the documents in the vicinity of his own church. If that does not make a good batch of converts to Freethought, we are ready to take another dose of Holloway Gaol.

ACCORDING to *Sunday Words*, "Up to quite recently a member of the choir of one of the city churches—a noisy Atheist—used to beguile the tedium of the sermon by perusing a ribaldrous blasphemous sheet, the conductors of which, were, not long ago, punished on account of the disgraceful nature of their publication." This elegant paragraph emanates from one of the most unfortunate, ignorant and despicable sons of God—a printer's reader—the possessor of a countenance as generous as Calvin's.

THE recent Baptist conference at Bristol was attended by the Mayor in "full fig." The Rev. Mr. Williams reminded the audience that a century ago men were flung into gaol for holding the tenets of their sect. Baptists are safe enough now, and are content to forget that Freethinkers are in danger. How many of them, in remembrance of their old peril, would lift a finger to save an honest Freethinker from the clutches of Judge North and an Old Bailey jury?

ONE of the speakers at the meeting of the Baptist Union gave a list of the "five deadly sins." They are dancing, card-playing, novel-reading, theatre-going and drinking! We should think that conceited bigotry, sour-faced asceticism, religious tyranny, canting credulity and pious stupidity were far more deadly sins than the rational amusements denounced by this saintly kill-joy.

THE Mormons have been trying to get up an agitation by public meeting. Their "Bitter cry from the persecuted Mormons of Utah," though widely advertised, has met with little response, only thirty or forty persons being present at St. George's Hall to hear their weak and foolish speeches. A correspondent in the *Daily Telegraph* urges that the police should put down all public utterances of their peculiar views by these "polygamous outlaws" of a "profligate and tyrannical sect." How easily Christians forget their own Bible. Polygamy, as well as slavery, is sanctioned by God's Word, and far worse

tyranny than any ever exercised by the Mormons was commanded in it. If Mormonism is put down by police, much more should the Bible.

SOME thirty Roman Catholics have been visiting Westminster Abbey for the purpose of worshipping at the tomb of King Edward the Confessor on the anniversary of his death. Mr. McClure, the secretary of the Working Men's Protestant League, seeing the kneeling priest and devotees, loudly protested against this "infamous" desecration of a Protestant place of worship, and urged the police to interfere. Subsequently, meeting a number of Roman Catholic priests and laymen on leaving the chapel he again loudly denounced the "invasion" and said it was a disgrace to the officials that such conduct should be permitted. Who can doubt that religion promotes harmony and courtesy and kindly consideration for each other's feelings?

AT West Ham a magistrate described some stolen lobster tins produced in court as disgraceful, and tending to bring religion into contempt. They were covered with some thirty texts oddly mingled with trade notices, among them being "Whenever, therefore, ye eat and drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God," "None genuine without this label," "God is love," "Born again by faith," and so forth. Has Booth been selling Salvation lobsters, we wonder? If the contents of the tins have gone wrong it must be a great consolation to the swindled purchaser to know that "God is good" if his lobster isn't.

TINS of colonial mutton, we suppose, will be labelled, "Behold the Lamb of God," "Only 4d. per lb.," "Cheapest thing out," "Unless ye eat my flesh ye are not my disciples." If any of the tins are suspected of having been on hand too long with unpleasant results they may be suggestively labelled as "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world," with the additional remark "For my flesh is meat indeed."

MR. CORY, a man of "strong religious views," has committed suicide at Lewisham. He was a frequent attendant at the meetings of the Salvation Army and contributed thousands of pounds to its funds.

THE Commission investigating a servant girl's charge against the Rev. F. A. Dwyer, vicar of Grayrigg, near Kendal, reports that a *primâ facie* case has been made out for further proceedings against the clerical offender.

THE Rev. Mr. Herring, who is trying to Romanise his church in Liverpool, has an unpleasant time of it. The people hold indignation meetings and subject him to all manner of annoyance. The other Sunday his own officials so "upset" him, he says, in the vestry, that he was totally unfit to conduct the services that evening. He is forced on an unwilling congregation by the patrons, and, of course, he can see nothing wrong in accepting a good salary, however objectionable his views and conduct may be to the parishioners.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* speaks of the great American Freethought orator as "the notorious infidel, R. J. Ingersoll." The *Christian Evangelist* tells us that "the scoffing Ingersoll" "descends lower and lower into the bottomless pit." It accuses him of making money by the "defence of scoundrels" as a barrister. Christian discourtesy and Christian slander go naturally together.

THE *Spectator*, reviewing a re-issue of a work on the Apostolical Age by Professor Lechler, first published forty years ago, says that Lechler's view that Paul was not in opposition to the Apostles now holds the field in place of that of Baur. Some views, however, simply keep afloat, owing to the longevity of their exponents. Baur died twenty-six years ago. His pupil and opponent Lechler survives, but he has not yet answered the question, whose gospel Paul was contending against, if not that of the twelve, nor can he explain why there should have been any division between the Judaising and Gentile sections of Christians if Paul and the Apostles were agreed.

COMMEND us to parson Baxter, author of *Louis Napoleon, the Destined Monarch of the World*, for sound theological notions on the Second Advent, which he continually preaches is near at hand. In the sermon reported as delivered at Edinburgh, this worthy stated: "It was comforting to think that in ten years time from now some persons in that room might be going high up in air. There was one thing certain, that some would actually have to travel a distance of 12,000 miles; for whichever side of the earth Christ came on, those at the antipodes would have to travel one half the circle of the earth." Very comforting surely. Query, If the elect are going to sit with Christ on the right hand of the Father in heaven, won't they have to travel a good deal more than twelve thousand miles?

ONE Salvationist, not knowing what else to sacrifice during the self-denial week instituted by Booth, writes to his General that he has solved the problem by selling his "last pair of trousers." Probably he intends to perform in future in a suit of blacking as a converted Zulu or Hottentot.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Oct. 24, St. James's Hall, Oxford Street, Manchester; at 11, "Mansions in the Sky"; at 3, "Is Christianity True?"; at 6.30, "The Holy Ghost."

OCT. 31, Leeds.

NOV. 7, Hall of Science, London; 14, Milton Hall; 21, South Shields; 28, Hall of Science, London.

DEC. 5, Portsmouth; 12, Milton Hall; 19 and 26, Hall of Science, London.

CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

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

H. P. BOWDEN points out that there is no copy of *Prisoner for Blasphemy* in the British Museum. We thought a copy was sent; anyhow, we have forwarded one of the few copies left from the fire to the chief librarian. Our correspondent adds, with respect to our prison fare: "One morning, having a pair of scales, I cut and weighed exactly six ounces of bread and was appalled at the very idea of being limited to such a small amount. I also weighed the whole of the bread which I ate for that breakfast, and found it eighteen ounces, besides meat. The wonder is not, as you discovered, that the prisoners with such diet grow small by degrees and beautifully less, so that the clothes fit them in time, but rather that any live to come out and tell the tale."

W. COLE.—Received. You need not thank us; we have to thank you.

G. JACOB.—"Wine, which cheereth God and man," will be found in Judges ix., 13. We are not surprised at your Christian friend's denying that the Bible contained such a text. As a rule Christians know very little about the blessed book.

J. LIVINGSTONE.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A. SERCOMBE.—We are not quite sure. Perhaps you had better subscribe direct.

C. DAVIES.—Jokes are always welcome.

H. R. COOPER.—We also deserve some consideration, seeing we are still over £400 out of pocket by the fire. *Crimes of Christianity* has to be reprinted, and it would be ridiculous not to revise the work now the opportunity presents itself. The chapters which were arbitrarily limited to sixteen pages, for publication in parts, will extend according to the requirements of the subject. Our present intention is to publish the work as a whole. Had the fire not occurred, the work would have been issued in parts according to the original advertisement, but we cannot afford to lose fifty or sixty pounds to fulfil what we never guaranteed. Those who have bought parts have certainly had their money's worth.

A. ANDRADE writes: "Capital article of Mr. Ball's on Materialism. It has greatly amused my friends and caused much argument with others." We thank our correspondent for his suggestive sketch, although we fear the subject is one of fleeting interest.

J. W. P.—Your verses are meritorious, but something satirical would be more suited to our columns.

B. DAWSON.—Sorry to hear of Mr. Stitt's decease, but seventy is a ripe age.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are again warned that we cannot undertake to answer them.

B. BROWN (N. W. L. Branch).—We value the vote of thanks passed by your quarterly general meeting. We are anxious to see *Freethought* flourishing in the north of London, and shall always be happy to lend what assistance we can.

T. E. KEATES.—It is nonsense to say that we owe music to the Church. There was music in the world before Christianity appeared. What the Church did was to onlist music and other arts in its service. This was not done, however, till Christianity became Paganised and imitated the ritual of ancient religions. No doubt the early Christians would have regarded a mass or an oratorio, like a Scotch puritan, as a device of the Devil. Your Christian friend is quite wrong, too, in saying that no great composer was a Freethinker. Many composers have been of doubtful orthodoxy, and Wagner was an open Atheist.

J. T. HILLIER.—Morodith's *Prophet of Nazareth* and Soury's *Jesus and the Gospels* are both solid works. If you read Renan's *Life of Jesus* read it last; it is the work of a man of genius who takes the liberties of his order. Buckle's *History of Civilisation* is well worth study. Secondhand copies are rare.

A. H. G.—We prefer not to notice it. *Freethinker* advertisements are too valuable to be flung about gratuitously.

ARGUS.—Many thanks.

E. J. H.—Mr. Dunn's attempt to explain the Incarnation on some theory of "self-conception" is exceedingly rich. We recommend it as a subject for debate of the next general meeting of the Christian Evidence Society.

R. W. H.—Probably the nearest Branch to your residence is the Bethnal Green, which meets at the Monarch Coffee Tavern, Bethnal Green Road. Glad to hear you were so pleased with Mr. Moss's lecture last Sunday.

F. R. P.—Shall be dealt with next week.

M. PLACKETT.—Thanks for the cuttings. There is no work by Papias left. We have only the parts quoted by Irenæus and Eusebius. There are two volumes of Irenæus in Clark's Ante-Nicene Library.

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.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—*Liberal*—*Boston Investigator*—*Pall Mall Gazette*—*Liverpool Courier*—*Islington Gazette*—*Chat*—*Sheffield Independent*—*Liberator*—*Brighton Argus*—*Hunslett and Holbeck News*—*Sheffield Independent*—*Gainsborough Mercury*—*Yorkshire Post*—*Thinker*—*New South Wales Freethinker*—*Ironclad Age*—*Freethinker's Magazine*—*Truthseeker*—*Saturday Post*—*Deseret News*—*Salt Lake Tribune*—*Bedford Record*—*Glasgow Weekly Mail*.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Manchester Branch of the National Secular Society has engaged the St. James's Hall, Oxford Street, for Mr. Foote's three lectures to-day (Oct. 24). It is hoped that Freethinkers in the district will do their best to advertise the lectures and fill the hall. The subjects are striking and attractive.

DESPITE the incessant rain, there were good audiences at Mr. Foote's Nottingham lectures last Sunday. We are happy to see that the Branch is in a more flourishing condition, and bids fair to be very successful.

CHRISTIANS often boast that their creed abolished slavery. What Ward Beecher says about American slavery, however, does not support this view of the case. In an address at Westminster Chapel he said that "he lived in America when in the great majority of the Churches it would not be safe for a man to be known to be an abolitionist. He had lived in the Northern States when men who dared to pray for the slaves at a prayer-meeting were ejected from the church." This is quite in keeping with the declarations of Theodore Parker, that he had found the ministers of religion the greatest enemies of the Abolition movement, while its firmest friends were Universalists, Freethinkers and Atheists.

HENRY GEORGE, in his last new book, also says that even in the Northern States, where slavery did not exist, "abolitionist" was for a long time suggestive of 'Atheist,' 'communist,' and 'incendiary.'

SUCCESS still attends the new departure of *Progress*. The November number will be ready next Wednesday, and will contain a good variety of interesting articles. Mr. Foote will begin a series on "Four Great Essays on Liberty," commencing with Milton's *Areopagitica*. Mr. Wheeler writes on Some Real and Alleged Atheists, and continues his extremely valuable *Freethought Biographies*. Mr. Ball reviews Henry George's new volume on Protection and Free Trade, and S. Britton continues his admirable essay on Marlowe the Atheist.

THE *Freethinker's Magazine* for October has reached us from Salamanca, New York. It contains the first part of a criticism upon Professor Fiske's wishy-washy *Idea of God*, from the pen of Mr. M. D. Conway.

MESSRS. TRUBNER AND Co. announce a new work, *For Happiness*, by Alexander Calder, officer of the Order of the Legion of Honor, and author of *The Coming Era* and other Deistic works. It is said that the new volume will "vigorously attack superstitions."

THE *Daily News* of last Monday has a leading article on the Lick observatory, which it describes as "a brilliant example of the personal and unselfish endowment of science." In 1875 Mr. James Lick gave 700,000 dollars for the erection of an observatory on Mount Hamilton, California. The situation is said to be the finest in the world for the purpose, and the instruments are the most perfect procurable. The *Daily News* does not state that this most magnificent gift came from a Freethinker. Yet that Mr. Lick was a confirmed unbeliever is well-known in California.

A CORRESPONDENT writes: "It may afford you pleasure to know that the hold of Christianity upon the minds of the more intelligent members of this corps (the Royal Marine Artillery) is rapidly on the decrease. And not only so, but in its place a truer, nobler and happier belief is being accepted."

WE gather from a notice in the *Melbourne Liberator* that the *Freethinker* of Sydney is likely to amalgamate with that paper, under the joint editorship of Messrs. Joseph Symes and W. W. Collins. No doubt the scattered condition of the *Freethought* forces in Australia renders union desirable. We wish our co-workers at the antipodes all success.

THE long-promised *Life of Charles Darwin* by his son will be published before the close of the year. There will be an "autobiographical chapter" occupied mainly with an explanation of his religious views. We shall give our readers an account of the book immediately on its publication.

THE following appears in the *Boston Investigator*: "My little four-year-old daughter has recently heard, from the older children with whom she plays, the word God. At various times she has spoken this word, and not always with due regard for the orthodox connection. Desiring to ascertain just how much of the theology of the word she had imbibed, we asked her 'what

God was?" Pointing upward, she answered: "God is a great, black cloud." It would be hard to find a better definition for the imaginary Being who has filled the breast of humanity with fear for so many years. God has indeed been a 'great black cloud' hanging over the world, and casting a shadow on the lives of men and women. This word has stood for something terrible, something awful, in almost every age, and when we hear the word spoken to-day it suggests a 'black cloud' in the heavens of human intelligence.—L. K. WASHBURN."

LORD LONSDALE, who plays the part of *cavalier servente* to Violet Cameron, does not appear to be treated so gingerly in America as he is in England. A writer in the *New York Critic* is appalled at the notion of this aristocratic theatrical manager having the right of presentation to no less than forty livings in the Church of England, and this is how he eases his mind on the subject: "That a dissolute fellow who leaves a wife at home while he tags round the country at the heels of a variety actress, the wife of another man, should be responsible for the appointment of forty clergymen to as many parishes—that he should select the spiritual advisers for some sixty thousand souls, is so flagrant an absurdity, that I cannot but wonder at a social system that makes it possible, and the temper of a people who can submit to it."

"INGERSOLL District choice cream cheese," which gained the first prize and medal at the Amsterdam Exhibition in 1884, is being advertised for sale in London by E. R. Parker, of 44 St. John Street, Smithfield. Ingersoll District is named after "Godless Bob," and is almost entirely populated by Freethinkers.

MR. G. STANDRING has just written and published an interesting *Life of Ingersoll*. It is not a biography, but a collection of characteristic "bits." The price is one penny. Copies can be had at our publishing office.

By the way, Mr. Standring gives the wrong date for Ingersoll's birth. He was born in 1833, not in 1830. Three years are a consideration when a valuable life is on the shady side of fifty. It is a curious fact that Bradlaugh and Ingersoll were both born in the same year.

GOD ON THE DEATH PENALTY.

THE laws of Nature, according to modern Christian teaching, are necessarily the laws of God. These laws, as seen in disease, famine, death, volcanoes, earthquakes, and so forth, are often terribly harsh and cruel in their operations. But it is not of these pitiless natural laws that I now wish to write, but of laws alleged to have been actually given in a verbal form by God himself. I propose to notice only those divine statutes which inflicted the awful penalty of death for causes which modern good sense and humanity perceive to be shockingly inadequate. These laws, it must be remembered, were, if the Bible be true, part of a code revealed by an omnipotent and all-wise Being. They were binding on men's consciences above all unrevealed truths, and above all moral axioms derived only from man's experience in this vale of tears. They were laws to be obeyed, not criticised or ignored. Let us try to vividly realise what they meant, for the imagination is dulled and conscience blunted with the unreal and archaic biblical style and tediousness till divine expressions like "killed" and "put to death" seem mere commonplaces of but little weight or meaning. Remember that living beings like ourselves actually bled and suffered and died in agonies under such inhuman orders from above.

Among divine laws not specially religious many were frightfully severe or unjust. Thus all witches were to be executed (Ex. xxii., 18) and the same fate was to befall the foolish dupes who consulted them (Lev. xx., 6). Any one who ate of an animal that died a natural death, or had been torn by hunting dogs or wild beasts, died for his offence unless he underwent purification (Lev. xxii., 8, 9; xvii., 13-16). The flesh of diseased animals might, however, be sold for food to foreigners (Deut. xiv., 21). A woman who was unfaithful, or apparently unfaithful, before marriage, was put to death (Deut. xxii., 20, 21), but God assigns no penalty for a similar fault on the part of men. Vicious and disobedient sons were to be stoned to death (Deut. xxi., 21). To curse a father or mother was death (Lev. xx., 9). Priests' daughters who went astray were to be burned alive (Lev. xxi., 9).

But it was in religious matters that God was most severe. One imagines him replying, like Draco, that the slightest offence deserved death, and that for the graver offences no heavier penalty remained. God's mild and beautiful laws made it death to offer sacrifice to an idol (Ex. xxii., 20)

or to persuade others to do so (Deut. xiii., 5; xviii., 20). A father was to be first to inflict death upon his own wife or daughter or son or friend for such an offence (Deut. xiii., 6-10). If a city changed its religion its inhabitants were to be utterly destroyed with the edge of the sword (Deut. xiii., 15).

It was death to do "ought presumptuously" in opposition to the judgment of the priest (Deut. xvii., 12; Num. xv., 30); death for offering sacrifice without the priest's aid (Lev. xvii., 8, 9); death for killing cattle without bringing an offering to the priests (Lev. xvii., 2-5).

So jealous of the dignity of his Church and ceremonial was God, and so cheap did he hold human life, that he made it death to approach his tabernacle (Num. xviii., 22). Even the stranger who incautiously drew nigh was to be "put to death" (Num. i., 51). It was death to draw near the clergy during divine service (Num. iii., 10); death for approaching the priests' dwellings (Num. iii., 38); death for entering the holy place (Num. iv., 20); death for going near the holy candlestick (Num. xviii., 3); death for touching a holy thing (Num. iv., 15); death for even the high-priest to enter the holy place without giving notice to God by the sound of tinkling bells hung on his dress (Ex. xxviii., 34, 35); death for entering the holy place without linen breeches (Ex. xxxiii., 42, 43).

Working on the day of atonement, or not afflicting one's soul on that day entailed the penalty of death (Lev. xxiii., 29, 30). Working on the Saturday, even to the extent of lighting a fire or picking up sticks, was death (Ex. xxxi., 14, 15; xxxv., 2, 3). Blasphemy of course was death (Lev. xxiv., 16). Death was the punishment for innumerable infringements of petty ceremonial laws and observances. Thus it was death for not being purified (Num. xix., 13, 20); death for eating certain food a day too late (Lev. xix., 8), or after touching pork or entering the house of the dying (Lev. vii., 21); death for not keeping the passover (Num. ix., 13); death for eating ordinary bread during the passover (Ex. xii., 15); death for eating fat (Lev. vii., 22-25; iii., 17); death for eating blood (Lev. vii., 27); death for not being circumcised (Gen. xvii., 14); death for imitating a particular ointment or using it on a stranger (Ex. xxx., 33); death for making a certain perfume (Ex. xxx., 38).

According to the divine scale of punishment murder and adultery are no worse offences than eating a hot-cross bun on Good Friday or consulting a fortune-teller, no worse than eating suet-dumpling or putting a particular hair-oil on a foreigner's head. Nay, in many cases murder itself is made a sublime virtue, while perfectly rational actions and absurdly trivial breaches of superstitious ceremonial are treated as crimes that can only be sufficiently met by the solemn penalty of death.

What have Christians to say of a God who would punish a man for eating a black-pudding with the same severity that he would punish the most atrocious parricide? What would be thought of a modern statute sentencing our country cousins to be hung by the neck till they were dead merely because they had happened to approach too near the unspeakably holy precincts of St. Paul's Cathedral? What would a jury say if the Bishop of London guillotined mothers of families for making pies on a Sunday morning? What would congregations now say if forced to brutalise themselves by acting *en masse* as public executioners or murderers by flinging flints and granite cubes at old women who picked up sticks on a Saturday? Christians will urge that Christ repealed such laws. Is it a sufficient justification for barbarous and sanguinary commands to repeal them after fifteen hundred years have elapsed? Were holy murders no crime because centuries after they were committed the Being who ordered them thought fit to withdraw his ferocious commands? But did he repeal them? And if so where, and in what words? Christians exterminated witches and heretics for some sixteen centuries after the alleged repeal of the code authorising such action, and during all that time they regarded the divine orders as ample justification for their judicial murders of innocent women and intelligent men. Why was the repeal so vaguely given that none could understand it? Why was Christendom thus left in error till the secular progress of civilisation forced the idea of repeal upon them as the best excuse they could find for the heavenly author of a cruel and bloodthirsty code fit only for superstitious barbarians?

W. P. BALL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

"TYPES OF CHRIST."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Ball's reference to the passage in Tertullian may perhaps be doubted by those unacquainted with the filth of the Fathers. The passage may, however, be found in Tertullian's fourth book against Marcion, chap. xxii., p. 272. vol. vii., *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*. It will be seen the Father makes a play on the Latin words of the text, Exodus xxxiii., 23 :

"Then Moses said 'Show me Thy glory.' And the Lord with like reference to the future replied, 'I will pass before thee in my glory.' Then at last he says 'And thou shalt see my back parts (posteriora).' Not loins, or calves of the legs, did he want to behold, but the glory which was to be revealed in the latter days."

Origen (*De Principiis*, bk. ii., chap. iv., § 3) has a reference to the same transaction, ridiculing the fables "invented by ignorant persons respecting the anterior and posterior parts of God" (p. 96, vol. x., *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*). Irenæus, in his book against Heresies (bk. iv., chap. xx., § 9, p. 446, vol. v., *Ante-Nicene Christian Library*) says :

"And the Word spake to Moses, appearing before him 'just as anyone might speak to his friend.' But Moses desired to see him openly who was speaking with him, and was thus addressed: 'Stand in the deep place of the rock, and with my hand I will cover thee. But when my splendor shall pass by, then thou shalt see my back parts, but my face thou shalt not see; for no man sees my face and shall live.' (Ex. xxxiii., 20-23.) Two facts are thus signified: that it is impossible for man to see God; and that, through the wisdom of God, man shall see him in the last times, in the depth of a rock, that is, in his coming as a man. And for this reason did he [the Lord] confer with him face to face on the top of a mountain, Elias being also present, as the gospel relates, he thus making good in the end the ancient prophecies."

Lot was another type. Irenæus, speaking of the Christ, says (bk. iv., chap. xxxi., § 2, p. 3, vol. ix.) :

"At what time, then, did He pour out upon the human race the life-giving seed—that is, the Spirit of the remission of sins, through means of whom we are quickened? Was it not then, when He was eating with men and drinking wine upon earth? For it is said 'The Son of man came eating and drinking; and when He had lain down, He fell asleep and took repose.' Now this whole matter was indicated through Lot, that the seed of the Father of all—that is, of the Spirit of God, by whom all things were made—was commingled and united with flesh—that is with his own workmanship; by which commixture and unity the two synagogues—that is, the two churches—produced from their own father living sons to a living God."

I have a large collection of similar passages from the early Christian Fathers, which may some day be published for the edification of the elect.

LUCIANUS.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—I think that the following beautiful exhibition of Christian charity and good breeding may, perhaps, interest you and be worth a note in the *Freethinker*. My brother, a lad of seventeen, lately entered the employ of Mr. James Hartley, of Bishopsgate Street, publisher. We are all Freethinkers—for which happy and fortunate state of things the *Freethinker* itself is to be largely thanked—and it is his custom to bring it each week from the city. To-day, in his absence, his employer found the enclosed copy in his desk. Upon his return he was violently abused by this Christian gentleman—who protected himself from possible contamination by grasping your awful publication with the tongs, after crumpling it and tearing it across—and he was at once dismissed from his post without notice, Mr. Hartley informing him that he considered him a disgrace, expressing some considerable surprise that he had not feloniously possessed himself of a cheque which he was yesterday sent to collect, and winding up by informing him that he should utterly refuse to give him a character. Fortunately, I may add for my brother's prospects, this makes not the slightest difference as he only entered the service of this shining light as a temporary matter, and was to return in a week or two to the service of his former employer, a gentleman who is himself a Freethinker and a reader of your paper and who gave my brother two years' most excellent character. He laughed heartily both at the behavior of Mr. James Hartley, and at the crushed-up copy which had been the victim of this gentleman's wrath. As, but for chance, this man might have gone far towards blasting my brother's business chance at the very beginning of his life, I thought that it might have some interest for you. I may add that we have no parents and that Mr. Hartley knows it. With apology for so long a letter,

—I am, sir, faithfully yours,
CLARA L. ANDREWS.
67 Parkholm Road, Dalston, E., October 14.

OBITUARY.—It is my painful duty to record the death of my genial kind-hearted old friend Hugh Stitt, which took place at Spennymoor, Oct. 16, 1886. He was seventy years of age. He had the misfortune to fall from a load of hay in August last, and has never recovered his usual health. He leaves a widow and large family to lament his loss. He was a staunch Secularist, and respected by all who knew him.—B. DAWSON, C.M.N.S.S.

"BURNT OUT" FUND.

SUBSCRIPTIONS.—Dr. Laing, £1 1s.; A True Friend, £10; J. Carter, 10s.; Nottingham Friend, 1s.; B. M., 7s. 6d.; W. Reynolds (Utah), half a dollar; J. T. Hillier, 2s. 6d.; J. Pattison, 3s.; E. Freeman, 2s.; S. Watts, 2s.

REVIEW.

The Agnostic Annual, 1887. London: W. Stewart and Co.—Mrs. Lynn Linton opens with an article on "The Modesty of Agnosticism," in which she suggests doubts that in the mind of her readers will have passed into positive disbelief. R. Bithell writes on "Agnosticism in the Churches." He has the innocence to fancy that when theologians say we cannot comprehend the nature of God they are on the high road towards Herbert Spencer. Albert Simmons has a gossip article on the vocabulary of Agnosticism. W. Stewart Ross reiterates in two pages the metaphysical truism that all we positively know is our own consciousness. Dr. Hardwicke contributes a vigorous criticism of the Bible. Poetry is represented by some characteristic stanzas by William Maccall. Lady Robinson writes gracefully on "Darwin and Evolution." On the whole the Annual is ably written but dull, and dry as a remainder biscuit. There is too much on one subject, and that not especially attractive. These Agnostics are always itching to gird at religion, but when Atheists do the same thing they are vulgar Iconoclasts.

FREDDY ON WHALES.

Papa: Freddy, I have been thinking seriously of entering you for the Church.

Freddy: Enter me for the Church? Will you enter me like Jonah did the whale?

Papa: No, my boy. You misunderstand me. I mean to bring you up for the Church.

Freddy: Oh, golly! "bring me up"! Do you mean like the whale did Jonah, papa?

Papa: Never mind Jonah just now. Keep your mouth shut and listen to me.

Freddy: Must I keep it shut like the whale did when it had Jonah inside it?

Papa: Don't be stupid. Who put that ridiculous notion into your head?

Freddy: Which notion, papa? The Jonah notion or the whale notion?

Papa (frowning): Bother Jonah and the whale. I'm sick of them.

Freddy: I know how you feel, papa. You feel sick like the whale did when it had swallowed Jonah.

Papa: Freddy, such remarks are profane, and you will have to throw them up.

Freddy (laughing): Throw up my words? Throw them up like the whale did Jonah? I must be a whale then (*floundering about*). Pa, put the garden hose on my back and make me a water spout!

Papa: If you cannot be reasonable and quiet, I will put something else across your back, and that is the strap.

Freddy: Mustn't I talk about Jonah, papa?

Papa: Not another word. I forbid it.

Freddy: Nor about the whale either?

Papa: No; neither of them.

Freddy: Why can't I talk about Jonah nor the whale, papa? It's hard on a little boy.

Papa: Because you say most absurd things.

Freddy: Is that about Jonah and the whale "absurd"?

Papa: Go to bed this very instant!

Freddy: "Go to bed"? Must I go to bed because Jonah and the whale is "absurd"?

Papa: Will you be off!

Freddy: Yes, pa. But what is a whale? Does it grow?

Papa (getting strap): I'll just make a few on you, and you will be able to judge how you like them.

(Freddy retires at electric speed, saying: "I'll go now and ask ma what a whale is.")

SWINDLING A CLERGYMAN.—"Yes," said Gus de Smith, "these saloons should be closed on Sunday. They do more to break down the churches than everything else put together." "How is that?" "Well, now, for instance, that saloon-keeper on the corner near the church in which I worship swindles my poor pastor out of fifteen cents every Sunday. It's a sin and a shame." "Yes, but how does he do it." "You see, he keeps open on Sunday morning when I go to church, and as he has no confidence in church people I have to pay cash; so he gets away with the fifteen cents I've put in my pocket for the contribution-box. That saloon-keeper robs the church funds of that much every Sunday. He ought to be ridden out of town on a rail." "I'll tell you how you can head him off. When you go to church take the street above. There is no saloon on that." "Yes, but if there ain't any saloon on the street to church, it will hardly be worth while for me to go to church at all."

PROFANE JOKES.

LAMB was once asked at a public dinner to say grace. He stood up and said: "Is no clergyman present?" "No." "Thank God!" "Ah!" sighed the bereaved Mrs. Jones, "we are all in the hands of the Lord." If this be so there is plenty of room for conjecture as to what size gloves he takes.

BIBLE-BANGER: "Young man, do you know the road to heaven?" Yeung Man (scratching his head): "I'm afraid I don't. You see I'm a stranger in this town."

"Taking them one with another," said the Rev. Sydney Smith, "I believe my congregation to be most exemplary observers of the religious ordinances; for the poor keep all the fasts, and the rich all the feasts."

A SWEEP-ING SURPRISE.

AN amusing anecdote is related of two sweeps named Tim Parsons and Joe Lord, who one night, after a hard day's work and many miles of weary tramping, came upon a farmhouse in an outlying district of Plymouth, and, seeking the master, earnestly besought a night's shelter in his barn.

The good-natured farmer readily gave his consent, and was leading the way thither, when a sudden thought seemed to strike him.

"Nay, an' I'm not sure that you can sleep there," he began, slowly. "My barn is occasionally occupied by some Ranters who hold service there in the early morning, and—why—yes—I'm pretty sure that there is to be a meeting held there early to-morrow. But there is the hayloft above; that's entirely at your service. 'Tis pretty nearly chock full of hay, and as snug as you'll want, I reckon."

The two men thankfully availed themselves of the kind offer, and half an hour later found them comfortably resting their weary limbs in the aforesaid place.

Their slumbers were peaceful and undisturbed, until about four o'clock in the morning, when our friend Joe started up, half-awake and half-bewildered, though dimly conscious that some one was calling him from below.

"Parsons, wake up. Someone wants me," Joe cried, shaking his companion, who was slumbering heavily.

Parsons sat up and rubbed his eyes. "What's the row, Joe? Have you been dreaming?"

"Dreaming? No. Some one has been calling me. I heard 'em, plain as I hears you."

"Nay, nay, old pal; you must be joking. Why, they don't know your name, so how could they?"

But further speech was interrupted by a thunderous voice below calling out:

"Lord, come down! Make haste, Lord. Come down."

"I'd better see what they want," said Joe; and with the next thunderous "Lord, come down," our friend rushed to the trap-door, and quickly began to descend.

As may have already been guessed, the thunderous voice proceeded from none other than one of the Ranters who had been engaged in prayer.

The congregation consisted of seven or eight men, and as many women, and the consternation of all may be easily imagined when, at the speaker's earnest cry, a long, thin man, covered from head to foot in soot, began rapidly to descend the ladder. They thought it was the Evil One himself, and all fled as for their very lives, save one poor old woman, who remained rooted to her place. She was lame, and very aged. At length she stammered out, in mortal terror:

"Oh, master, for heaven's sake don't take a poor old gal like me! I—I don't b'long to they, master; I'm only a 'hanger on!'"

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