

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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PRECIOUS PROMISES.

And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils.—MARK XVI., 16.

JUBILEE PARSONS.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY is one of the chief historic edifices in Europe. Every year it is visited by thousands from all parts of the world, and from all divisions of the English-speaking race, less because it is a church than because it is the Pantheon of our mighty dead. The visitors bow their heads with mingled pride and humility, rather before the tablets of heroes, poets, and statesmen, than in the presence of God. Freethinkers understand and respect this emotion; nay, they share it; and whatever Bethels decay and crumble as Christianity perishes, the noble Abbey, with its sacred dust, will be cherished and preserved. What constitutes its peculiar greatness is not religious, but human; yet the clergy imagine they have an exclusive and indefeasible interest in its glory; and the Queen, as head of the Church, claims the right to distort and desecrate it as she pleases. For weeks the national Valhalla has been closed to visitors and pilgrims by royal command. Builders and upholsterers have been filling it with timber and trappings for a single
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religious performance in honor of the Queen. Her Majesty is to approach the throne of grace in all the gorgeous paraphernalia of sovereignty, and she will confess herself a miserable sinner in the rags of pride. Several thousands of the privileged classes, and sixty working-class flunkeys selected by the judicious hand of Mr. George Potter, will assist at the show, the performers being the highest Church dignitaries, including the Archbishop of Canterbury. It will be the parsons' jubilee. The Queen of England and Empress of India will publicly thank the King of Kings for all his blessings, and the clergy will act as intermediaries between the earthly and celestial powers. The immemorial alliance of altar and throne will be emphasised afresh, and priests and monarchs shown to be in the same line of business, like the two gentlemen who flanked Jesus on the cross.

According to the newspapers, the clergy will head the royal procession: that is, they will be its head, or all the head it possesses. Perhaps the object is to apprise the Lord that the Queen is coming. But where will the Lord be? Will he be lurking in the crypt, with a telephone at his ear, or secreted under the altar? God should be visible on

such an occasion. He interviewed Moses and dined with Abraham, and we fail to see why he cannot assist at the Queen's Jubilee. But perhaps, as the deity consists of three persons in one, it would be difficult to provide him with an appropriate seat. Of old, however, he sat on a cloud, and he might bring a cushion of that kind on Tuesday. Why also are not the angels invited? There is plenty of room for them, for according to the Schoolmen millions of angels can dance on the point of a needle. At any rate, the archangels might be invited, without encroaching on the ticketed seats, for they are a species of fowl and could flutter overhead. We are likewise surprised that the invitation has not been extended to the cherubim, who would require no seats, having nothing to sit with. These wonderful creatures have four faces each, and as there will be some hundreds of professional politicians in Westminster Abbey, it would interest them to look at animals with twice as many faces as they possess themselves.

The Jubilee would be a still more striking success if the Lord provided fireworks for the people—we do not mean of the Sodom and Gomorrah kind. The Ministers say there are no funds to pay for such an entertainment, but it would cost the Lord nothing. He could easily furnish two or three extra moons in the evening and a multitude of new stars. The Holy Ghost might also descend again in the form of cloven tongues of fire, and Jesus Christ might jump off the Abbey tower, turn all the fountains into wine and all the stones into buns and sandwiches, and afterwards walk on the Thames, with his illuminated halo, from Westminster to London Bridge. That would be a Jubilee indeed, and even Republicans and Freethinkers would assist at the show.

But to return to our sheep—we mean the clergy. When they have taken up their positions in the Abbey, and her Majesty is seated, the Archbishop of Canterbury will commence the performance by asking a blessing on the Queen. What blessing does she require, unless she wishes to see another Jubilee? She has health, wealth, and a flourishing family, all maintained at the nation's expense, to say nothing of countless courtiers and unlimited flattery. What more can a modest woman desire? If God is disposed to grant a blessing, and the Archbishop is able to obtain it, let him seek out some hungry, sorrowing, anguished wretches, and implore the divine beneficence to lighten their misery. But this would be expecting too much both from God, who helps those who help themselves (often to other people's money), or of the Archbishop, who receives a salary of fifteen thousand a year to preach the gospel of poverty, and lives in a palace to represent the carpenter's son of Nazareth who "had not where to lay his head."

The music and the prayers have all been approved by the Queen. Even an Archbishop cannot venture to address the Almighty in her Majesty's presence without consulting her tastes. God might be pleased, but she might be annoyed, and her displeasure would outweigh his approval. How far the clergy can toady the Queen is seen in the fact that three of the musical selections were composed by the Prince Consort, whose genius in this line is apparently thought to dwarf Bach, Handel, and Beethoven into pigmies. Even the Litany has been altered for the occasion, although it is settled by Act of Parliament. Loyalty is above the law, and "the Queen can do no wrong."

The first petition, after the special one for the Queen, will be the Lord's Prayer. Thousands of rich people, worth hundreds of millions, who have had a fashionable breakfast and will be looking forward to a fashionable dinner, will ask the Lord to give them their daily bread. For the suppression of hypocrisy, and the growth of sincerity, we should like to see them reduced to live for a week on the portions sent them from the heavenly larder.

The twentieth psalm is selected for chanting. Her Majesty will be addressed by implication; she will be told, "We will rejoice in thy salvation," and "Now know I that the Lord helpeth his anointed." Apostrophising the Lord, the flunkeys will bid him "Remember all thy offerings: and accept thy burnt sacrifice." Offerings to whom? What the Queen has given the Lord we know not, but if it does not exceed what she has given her people, the remembrance of her offerings will be no great tax on his memory. The *burnt* offerings, we presume, will be offered up in Palace Yard, unless the Fenians furnish another illustration of the text, and the roast meat will

perhaps be served up cold to the children in Hyde Park. They will value it more than a mug with the Queen's "mug" on it.

The special lesson for the day is chapter six of the second of Peter, verses six to eighteen. There could not have been a more artful selection. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake," may be taken as oblique advice to the Irish tenantry to resist the blandishments of Michael Davitt. "Fear God. Honor the king," is one for the clergy and two for the Queen. It proclaims that priests and kings are of the same brotherhood. The altar is the best support of the throne. While men fear a tyrant in heaven they will bow to despots on earth. Thomas Paine was more inspired than any Bible prophet when he saw that the Age of Reason must precede the Rights of Man.

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." This is the last verse of the lesson. It is bad enough as it stands, but it would be far worse if the original were translated honestly. Servants should read *slaves*, and masters owners. Thus saith the Lord, "Slaves obey your owners." What an appropriate text! While the Queen, the Royal Family and the privileged classes, live at our expense and domineer over us to boot, they are virtually our owners and we are their slaves. We toil for them, live for them, and die for them. Would that we could preach the sermon in Westminster Abbey on Tuesday, with the doors locked, an impregnable pulpit, and all the Bibles and Prayer Books chained up. We would teach the titled and wealthy flunkeys a much-needed lesson, we would tell the Queen more truth than courtiers utter, and were our words reported in the press they would do the people more good than the Archbishop's canting nonsense.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE PULPIT AND THE CREEDS.

WHETHER ministers believe the dogmas they preach, and whether they preach the dogmas they are pledged to believe, are two distinct questions. The answer to the former is not always easy. Those who have in any measure studied the history of opinions or sounded the depths of human credulity, inconsistency, and superstition, will not hastily set down any man as insincere, however absurd, or even contradictory his opinions. There is always at least the alternative—"dull or dishonest." Nor is a man necessarily a hypocrite because he does not act up to his professions. Sincerity, as Hazlitt remarks, has to do with the connexions between our words and thoughts, not between our beliefs and actions. "He is a hypocrite who professes what he does not believe; not he who does not practise all he wishes or approves." One may really believe, in church (or believe that he believes), that he is a miserable sinner with no health in him, and yet may act as though morally sound and robust immediately he steps outside the building. Carlyle well remarks there is such a thing as "sincere cant," and "every form of worship ends with this phase."

The answer to the question—Do ministers preach the dogmas they are paid to inculcate? is not very difficult. Anyone who reads the representative religious literature can give a tolerably fair answer, without even entering a single church. The fact is glaring. The preaching of the orthodox churches is widely removed from the doctrines of the accepted creeds. Take the Articles of the Church of England. Whoever heard a sermon enforcing the doctrine "That works done before the grace of Christ and the Inspiration of his Spirit are not pleasant to God," or teaching that "They also are to be had accused that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that Law and the light of Nature. For Holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the Name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved"? Such sermons may be preached in obscure country places; they would not be listened to by an intelligent congregation, and they are never published where they would reach the free air of criticism.

In regard to the more important dogmas such as the Fall of Man, Original Sin, Predestination of the Elect, The Necessity of Belief, etc., etc., we see in all bodies a marked tendency to soften the asperity of traditional beliefs. Here is the Rev. H. D. Raunsley, Vicar of Crosthwaite Church,

Keswick, in last week's *Christian World Pulpit*, flatly declaring that the Gospel is not views about Christ, the atonement, baptism, or in short any of those articles of belief which he is sworn to defend, but simply belief "that we have a loving Father, whose mercy is over all his works, whose will and whose law is so lovely and so loveable that it is sweeter than honey." Honey without any vinegar, treacle without brimstone is what they offer us now. Satan is superannuated. Hell is unmentionable. Yet if there be a Devil and an eternal hell, these are most tremendous facts which should never, even for a single second, be lost sight of. The old Scotch beadle who declared that "a kirk without a hell is'na worth a damn," would be considerably disgusted did he attend the fashionable churches in any part of the country.

In the number of the *Christian World Pulpit* to which I have already referred, there is a sermon preached by Archdeacon Farrar, on Trinity Sunday, in St. Margaret's, Westminster. It is upon the subject of the Trinity, but so far from endorsing the doctrine of the Athanasian Creed, "which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled without doubt he shall perish everlastingly," Dr. Farrar repudiates anathemas "which if we understood them in the literal sense would appear to consign nineteen-twentieths of mankind to everlasting perdition," and refers us to "that most precious symbol of the universal Christendom, which we rightly call the Apostle's Creed," although not drawn up until the fourth century. He informs us that the essence of that creed is in the apostolic benediction (which is no part of it), speaking of "the love of God, the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit." That is, he avoids referring to the creed which defines correct belief as to the Trinity, and takes us to a creed which does not mention it. But does Archdeacon Farrar preach even the Apostles' creed? That Creed does teach the descent of Jesus into hell, and the resurrection of the body. Dr. Farrar and other divines may preach *about* these doctrines, but that they literally preach the doctrines themselves I have yet to receive evidence.

The same may be said of the Westminster Confession of Faith. That Confession lays it down that "God created or made the world in six days." Yet since the establishment of School Boards even Highland preachers have ceased to preach this. The more repellant doctrines of the reprobation of the non-elect, that is the predestination to hell by God of the immense majority of his creation, is carefully left out of sight, and even in pious Scotland emphasis is laid upon conduct instead of upon dogmas.

The truth is, as Mr. J. Cotter Morison points out, the Christian creeds were drawn up at a most barbarous period in the world's history, when the civilisation of Greece and of Rome had been overthrown by the new and pernicious superstition of Christianity. They represent ideas which the world has outgrown, and remain but as a string of canonised bones which no prayers can galvanize into life. Ministers whose duty it is to preach the dogmas of Christianity may possibly believe in them, but they do not preach them, for they feel they have lost vital hold upon the congregations. It is the simple fact that if every vestige of belief which distinguishes Christianity from any other religion were swept away from the world, the real every-day life of humanity need not be changed one whit. The work of the world would go on as before and the common virtues of life, the virtues which are necessary to the well-being of society would remain after the entire decay of Christianity, even as they existed before its establishment.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Catholic Universe* speaks of the British and Foreign Bible Society as "a criminal association," and affirms that it is "the most flagrant instance of systematised plunder, undertaken for the worst of motives and perpetuated [sic] by the worst of agents." How these Christians love one another.

In the recent panic in the Cathedral of Chihuahua, Mexico, two women and three children were killed. Thirty more were seriously injured and a large number sustained hurts of a less grave character. The worshippers beheld some of the drapery of the altar catch fire, and immediately rushed to the doors. Christians in the solemn presence of their God and under the influence of religious worship are quite as foolish and as cowardly as people at burning theatres or elsewhere. They certainly display no superiority of conduct. If religion were as ennobling as

is pretended, Christians should shine on such favorable occasions for testing moral courage and self-control.

THE *San Francisco Chronicle* reports that when Mr. S. P. Putnam, secretary of the American Secular Union, was lecturing at Ukiah, California, one of his Christian auditors, unable to bear his attack upon the faith, took up a lighted kerosene lamp and threw it at the lecturer's head. Fortunately, he was no better marksman than God was when he hit the Young Men's Christian Association rooms with lightning instead of Ingersoll's law office. The lamp passed through the window and exploded in the yard below. The frenzied Christian then took up another lamp to do further mischief, but he was seized. Some ladies fainted, but as soon as ever order was restored Mr. Putnam resumed his lecture.

A LADY superior of a convent has written to an eminent theatrical manager, modestly asking him for the loan of some thousands of pounds to complete the building. The Churches look down upon the stage, but they are not ashamed to beg from it.

HARRY ALFRED LONG, the rabid Glasgow Orangeman, whose condition should be a matter of anxiety to his friends now the dog days are approaching, dropped some of his pious pearls of truth and wisdom out in Australia, when he visited the colonies to "put down infidelity." One of Harry Alfred's pearls has been forwarded to us. Here it is:—"Christian debaters are to infidels what cats are to rats." Harry Alfred probably meant mice, but accuracy was never his forte. As to "Christian debaters," it is only eccentric adventurers like Harry Alfred who are eager for the fray. Now and then a Dr. McCann crosses swords with a Freethought champion, but the occurrence is so rare as to be almost a miracle.

MR. C. B. REYNOLDS was fined twenty-five dollars, with fifty dollars costs, for poking fun at the Bible. Sylvester Patterson, at Grand Rapids, Michigan, has to pay twenty-eight dollars costs for criminally assaulting Eva Morton, a girl of fourteen. The judge intended to inflict a fine of fifteen dollars, but he let the scoundrel off in consideration of his being a Sunday School teacher. Who wouldn't be a Christian after this? If you only teach in a Sunday School you may do as you like for a trifle.

WE are sorry to see a letter in the *Manchester Guardian*, signed by Moncure D. Conway, reflecting severely on Mr. C. B. Reynolds, who has been fined in America for "blasphemy." Mr. Conway calls him "a fellow," which is a curious sequel to a complaint of his "bad taste." Mr. Reynolds is also accused of using "Salvation Army methods." Well, what if he does? Are not those very methods patronised by Bishops in England? Is there not a Church Army as well as a Salvation Army, and are not the operations of both remarkably alike? The fact is, Mr. Reynolds simply carries about a tent, which he pitches and lectures in, halls being dear, and in many cases unprocurable for love or money. Jesus Christ and Paul did even without tents, preaching in the open air: yet Mr. Conway regards them as highly respectable characters for all that. Is it because they preached nearly two thousand years ago; and does distance lend such enchantment to the view that what was glorious then is vulgar now?

MR. CONWAY also speaks of Mr. Reynolds as "flinging his mud about." It was not mud at all. Several weeks ago we printed the principal passages for which Mr. Reynolds was indicted. Every one of them was a plain statement of some Bible absurdity, and several were taken verbatim from an article by Mr. Foote in one of our own Special Numbers. Perhaps Mr. Conway is obliged to make a concession to Bumble when he writes letters in an English journal.

ONE part of Mr. Conway's letter, however, gives us much pleasure. "As I write," he says, "the *Truthseeker* of this city is printing it [Mr. Reynolds's pamphlet] off by thousands for clamorous buyers." So long as "blasphemy" gets disseminated, advanced Freethinkers need not mind being called names.

THE income of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel stands where it did some ten years ago. The Church Mission Society has got on better but is now threatened with a break, its meeting on Monday having been largely occupied with a squabble over the appointment of the new Jerusalem bishop.

THE Bishop of Sierra Leone and the Archdeacon of Lagos wish it to be known that they have no sympathy with polygamy among the African converts to Christianity. These worthy divines, would rather have their converts put away all their wives together, than that they should be suspected of countenancing the customs of Abe, Ike, Jake and the rest of God's favorites.

THE American story of a pedlar named Meeter, who was driven mad by a visit from the Devil after imitating the Lord's Supper, is repeated in the *Catholic Times* as "another terrible instance of divine vengeance." The story has been exploded a long while ago, but this makes no difference. Falsehood will circulate so long as people can be frightened out of their money by such means. The story still asserts that the Devil appeared as "an

immense, ill-formed and foul beast, with great cloven feet," and "painted horns." It flashed fire, and so terrified Meeter's companions that their blood ran cold at the sight and the marrow froze in their bones. Meeter died in agony, according to this veracious specimen of religious imagination. Pretty stuff this, as representing the religion of the nineteenth century.

A CORRESPONDENT sends us a copy of a story with Spurgeon's name attached, which is evidently another version of the fabrication dealt with last week in "Pious Fiction Tested." This version appeared thirty years ago in the *Leisure Hour* for 1857, Vol. VI., p. 31. The story is more reasonably put together, but the main features are the same. A minister, anonymous of course, somewhere or other in the backwoods of Canada finds the platform of tree-trunks, lit by blazing pine knots, and occupied by a blasphemer who defies God to do his worst upon him, and who is greeted with thunders of applause from an admiring audience. The minister hesitates to address the people, but a man of middle age arises and tells a tale similar to that of the aged Christian in the version already dealt with. The middle-aged man is described as "hale and strong," and as "leaning on his staff"—which latter particular has probably furnished the foundation of the idea of the speaker being aged. Loosely repeated by different speakers such stories as these are sure to appear in various shapes.

THE *Pall Mall Gazette* prints a lot of nonsense under the head of an interview with Mrs. Sorabji, head mistress of the Victoria High School at Poonah. "The greatest thing you have brought us," she says, "is your religion, for though Mohammed's and Buddha's teachings, and that of all the other Indian deities, are pure and high and noble in many respects, they fall very short of the ideal, and there is not one among them whose teaching is to be compared to that of the Bible." What a jumble! Mohammed and Buddha are put down as Indian deities, which will be news indeed to every Orientalist. Buddhism is not even common in India, although that was the land of its birth; just as Christianity is not common in Palestine, although it was born there. Either Mrs. Sorabji is flattering our religious prejudices a little too grossly, or the *P. M. G.* interviewer is very much at sea.

AS for the teaching of Buddha not being comparable to that of the Bible, we cheerfully admit it. Buddha did not teach that God ordered wars of extermination and the wholesale debauchery of captive maidens. Buddha did not teach that God damned nearly everybody because two people ate an apple. Buddha did not teach that God drowned all his human creatures except eight for being what he made them. Buddha did not teach that God so loved the world that he made a hell to burn the vast majority of its inhabitants in for ever and ever. Yes, the lady is right. Buddha's teaching and those of the Bible are out of all comparison with each other.

THE Lord's Day Observance Society has earnestly protested to Mr. Henry Irving against his having permitted a full-dress rehearsal of "Werner" to take place at the Lyceum theatre on Whit-Sunday, and has made representations to the President and Fellows of the Royal Academy against the proposed opening of Burlington House on Sunday. The L. D. O. S. being composed of sky-pilots we can believe their protest is a very earnest one. It is a trade affair and they naturally dislike any symptoms of opposition business.

SOME parsons connected with Oxford House have taken to lecturing on Sunday afternoons in Victoria Park. The Rev. G. Vidal held forth on "Christ and Trade," two things that, according to the New Testament, had very little to do with each other. Jesus Christ lived as an itinerant preacher, and "rich women ministered unto him of their substance"; and he appears to have thought that, as he lived on the cheap, everybody else could do likewise.

THE Rev. H. C. Shuttleworth lectured last Sunday on "Christian Secularism," which is like a bitter sweet or a round square. By-and-bye the parsons will get so mixed that they'll have to toss up to find out what they are.

UNDETERRED by his own frequent exposures, unwarned by the overthrow of Mr. Gladstone when he ventured upon similar ground, Dr. Kinns goes to Guildford to lecture on "The Marvellous Scientific Accuracy of the First Chapter of Genesis." From the report it is evident his lecture is only a condensation of his book on Moses and Geology, in which he makes Moses see all the truths of science as if it were a vision. The marvellous scientific accuracy of the first chapter of Genesis is shown by its making the earth bring forth grass before there was any sun, making birds before reptiles and great whales before the land quadrupeds from which they are descended.

It has been suggested, that in order to give the Pope a definite *locus standi* in politics, he should be proclaimed King of Jerusalem. Many will think Babylon more appropriate, and earnestly wish that he would go and set up his court there.

THE Rev. D. Jones, Congregational minister, committed suicide last Monday morning at Cwmrhos, Breckonshire. He was found

hanging from a beam in a barn. He had been in a depressed state of mind for some time, and the precious promises of the New Testament were unable to raise his spirits. We are sorry for the poor fellow, but what *does* Talmage say now of Atheism and suicide?

OLD Newdegate's ruling passion was strong in death. He leaves his estates to General Newdegate, but if the tenant for life or in tail becomes a Roman Catholic (perish the thought!), the devise in his favor is revoked. Newdegate was a born bigot. He couldn't help himself. Even Mr. Bradlaugh will be inclined to forgive him. The victor can afford to be magnanimous.

NEWDEGATE lost a lot of money in prosecuting "Bradlaugh," as the Tories called the junior member for Northampton. Lord Halsford, late Sir Hardinge Giffard, and the other legal harpies bled him profusely; and when a subscription was got up to reimburse him the response was miserable. Lord Salisbury was one of the Committee who went cadging for the deficit, although his lordship could easily have written out a cheque for the whole amount.

THE Rev. H. H. Davies, the Welsh vicar who went bankrupt a short time ago, is vicar of three parishes. He draws from them the modest sum of £98 a year. But the patron of the livings, who does nothing whatever for his money, receives no less than £515 a year from these three parishes in the shape of tithes.

IN Cincinnati recently a spirit medium calling himself Professor Charles Wimans, was suddenly captured while acting the part of a materialised spirit. He had his shirt tied round his waist to represent a skirt. During the *séance* some one struck a match, when the attendant spirit struck at the offender and for his pains received a well-directed blow which brought his spiritship to the floor. Spiritualism isn't quite in as flourishing a condition at Cincinnati now.

THE fishwives of Clignancourt do not appear to have that respect for the cloth which becomes good Christians. The priest at the parish church passed by a girl who came to take her first communion without giving her the sacrament. Thereupon the girl's mother and aunt, two powerful fisherwomen, instantly left their seats and belabored him most unmercifully with their umbrellas.

GOD has killed 120 persons in Turkestan by an earthquake. The majority of these were children. The churches suffered severely, many being completely shattered. Almost all the buildings in the towns of Vernoe were destroyed. The inhabitants have fled to the open country.

FRESH shocks of earthquake have troubled Turkestan. Many towns besides Vernoe have suffered. The number of victims, it is feared, amounts to many hundreds. A large number of cattle also have perished. What quarrel has God with these dumb beasts that he destroys them so? And if he has a quarrel with the people couldn't he argue the matter in a more intelligible and humane manner than by the unsatisfactory method of earthquakes?

AN enormous number of cattle have also perished in the Hungarian floods. The despairing peasants often decline to leave their homes, and have to be forced to enter the boats by the rescuing soldiers. The people take refuge on the parts of the long dykes which have not broken down. God has sent a bitterly cold wind to comfort his homeless children, who huddle together along the embankments for warmth. They are thinly clad, and old people and infants are alike exposed to the weather. The scenes of despair and suffering are described as heartrending. But God takes no notice, and nobody knows what the next minute will bring forth in the way of further floods from the breaking down of the remaining dykes. Two towns are still in great danger, and large numbers of men are at work day and night strengthening the banks that confine the swollen rivers.

AT New Brompton, near Chatham, the Jezreelites or "new and late House of Israel," require a large force of police to protect them from popular attacks. They have commenced a huge stone building which is to accommodate 144,000 members. The sect was founded by John White, a private soldier. Since his death his wife, who styles herself "Queen Esther," has had the entire management. Continual internal dissensions have occurred. Large numbers of people have come from America and elsewhere and have given up all their goods to Queen Esther. Many of them have been turned adrift and are now in a destitute condition. One of these recounted his grievances to a crowd of people and charged the leaders of the sects with fraud. The crowd broke into a procession of Jezreelites, smashed their musical instruments and banners, and attacked their premises.

IN the *Christian Herald* a convert describes himself as having formerly been "a Deist; believing nothing." A Deist is one who believes in God. So that believing in God is the same thing as believing in nothing. The Atheist will agree with this even more emphatically than the Christian convert who was once an unbelieving believer in God and nothing at the same time.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 19, Midland Railway Arches, back of St. Pancras Station, at 11.30, "Is Christianity True?"

AUGUST 7 and 14, Hall of Science, London,

MR. FOOTE'S OPEN-AIR LECTURES.

June 19, Midland Arches; June 26, Peckham Rye; July 3; Kingsland Green; July 3, West Ham; July 10, Victoria Park; July 17, Clerkenwell Green; July 24, Central London Branch; July 31, Camberwell; August 7, Westminster Branch; August 14, Bethnal Green Branch.

TO 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. RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—W. T. W. Schweizer, R. Fox.

CASA BIANCA.—Always glad to receive your cuttings.

C. J. WILSON.—Paper returned. We are obliged.

C. K. LAPORTE.—Shall appear. That star ought to be ordered up for Jubilee night.

H. J. STEVENS.—All we need to realise "continued success" in what you are pleased to call our "grand work of mental emancipation" is continued health, and fortunately that is something we may count upon, unless providence sends us an accident.

J. McCOMBIE.—That cock-and-bull story of divine vengeance on a blasphemer, has been going the round of the press for years. We dealt with it about a year ago, and it was exposed in the American papers. Still it lives, for as Ingersoll said, nothing flourishes like a good healthy, religious lie.

J. E. ROOSE.—Received with thanks. Shall appear in an early number.

L. CAVAGNAC.—We do not know him personally, but are pleased with your account of him.

FREETHINKER.—Glad to hear you are so far emancipated, and hope you will be completely so by-and-bye. When you say that "ninety-nine people in a hundred believe in a God," you forget to say *what* God. There be Gods many and Lords many. Anyhow, we don't care a rush for the opinions of the majority on such matters. They simply believe as they are taught. We think for ourselves. Counting heads is a poor way of ascertaining the truth, especially when they haven't much inside them.

S. BARRETT.—Thanks for the explanation. The doctrine is a queer hotch-potch. Dallying with such a question is playing with fire. Still, public opinion and not the law, is the proper judge of these things.

W. FARLEY.—Our readers hardly need such a warning. *They* are not likely to be to be imposed upon by praying and psalm-singing scoundrels. The letter J. Taylor of Stockton sent you is amusing. He is a curious crank. Ever since we were imprisoned by his co-religionists he has had a notion that we are a persecutor. The poor fellow reasons upside-down.

J. MAWSON.—We are obliged for the pamphlet, which shall have our best attention at the first leisure hour. The subject deserves more thought than it receives.

J. ELLIS.—A similar idea had already occurred to ourselves for the article in this week's *Freethinker*, or your little skit should have been inserted.

R. VAUGHAN.—The subject was dealt with in one of our old numbers. Thanks all the same. We would have answered before, but your letter got mislaid.

W. EISLEY.—Under consideration.

J. THACKRAY.—Jokes are always welcome.

WALLACE NELSON writes that on June 8 he performed the mournful duty of officiating at the burial of N. J. Ridgway, the veteran Manchester Freethinker whose death we recorded last week. There was an imposing array of mourners at the grave, and, after reading Austin Holyoake's service, Mr. Nelson delivered an address of his own, which was replete with fine feeling. Mr. Nelson has favored us with a copy, but we regret that it is crowded out of our columns by a press of other matter.

J. RUTHERFORD.—Will write to you shortly.

E. D. BUTLER.—Thanks. We shall make use of it in an early number.

E. WILKS.—You will see in "Sugar Plums" why we are unable to publish Colonel Ingersoll's speech this week. Thanks for your good wishes.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—South Wales Daily News—West Surrey Times—Open Court—Liberator—Jus—Honesty—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethinker's Magazine—Boston Investigator—Liberty—Truth-seeker—La Semaine Anticléricale—On and Off Duty—Monroe's Ironclad Age—Menschentum—Independent—Keene's Bath Journal.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was an enormous crowd round the Secular platform in Hyde Park last Sunday morning, the rival platforms having very scanty audiences indeed. Mr. Foote spoke for an hour on "The

Bible," every word being distinctly audible on the outskirts of the meeting. Perfect order prevailed, except at one point when the lecturer said that, notwithstanding the verse in Exodus, any credulous yokel who molested an old woman, believing her to be a witch, would probably be sentenced to "forty shillings or a month." "You ought to have a month," screamed a stout old lady about twenty yards from the platform. "My dear madam," said Mr. Foote, "I've had twelve of them." There was a roar of laughter, and the old lady couldn't help smiling herself. Good humor is always an excellent salt, but it is never better than at open-air meetings.

So many Christians wanted to oppose that the Chairman had to make a selection. Two speeches were allowed, there being no time for more. Critic number one was a Mr. Scott, who has an unenviable reputation as a coarse libeller of Freethinkers, although on this occasion he sang remarkably small. "Now, Scott, you'll be annihilated," shouted an auditor. The prophecy was fulfilled, though not literally, for Scott annihilated himself. The second was an eccentric but earnest old gentleman named Atkinson, who set up as a scientist, and talked some very extraordinary astronomy and physics. Both were answered, apparently to the satisfaction of the audience, for the meeting broke up with three ringing cheers for Mr. Foote, which startled the two policemen who had been listening more than was good for their orthodoxy.

To give some idea of the great exertion in addressing such a crowd for such a time, we may observe that after three-quarters of an hour's ride in an omnibus the lecturer's outer garments were still in many places wet through with perspiration. Fortunately he was all right again by the evening, though his voice was a little hoarse. The lecture at the Hall of Science on "God and the Queen" was well attended considering the brilliant weather and the intense heat, and the audience was exceptionally enthusiastic, especially at the close when Mr. Foote received quite an ovation. Feeling was so highly wrought that, at the end of the second line of a verse from Shelley, with which the lecture concluded, a gentleman in the body of the hall literally shrieked, and it was thought he was going into a fit; but it turned out to be nothing but enthusiasm.

With respect to this incident, Mr. H. J. Stevens writes: "I hope you did not think the loud shriek my friend favored the audience with was in any way antagonistic; on the contrary, it was owing to his intense appreciation. Of course he is very sorry, but he could not help it. He is very fond of Shelley, and those are favorite lines with him. He was quite in sympathy with you and enjoyed your lecture very much. I had observed him struggling to control himself, but when you began quoting the strain was too great for his nerves."

MESSRS. Foote and Wheeler are off to Ramsgate for a much needed change, leaving Mr. Ball to see this number of the *Freethinker* through the press. Their stay will be but brief, as Mr. Foote has to lecture in London again next Sunday. But the clearing off of work in advance has occasioned an unavoidable delay in *Bible Heroes*, numbers five and six of which cannot now be ready till next week. The explanation is made for the sake of the many who will be disappointed at finding their orders not executed.

Royal Paupers still sells rapidly. The second edition is nearly exhausted, and a third will soon be required. We should like to give a copy to the flunkeys who will praise God from whom all blessings flow, at Westminster Abbey next Tuesday, and still more to make them read it.

NEW YORK hopes to soon have her museums open on Sunday, for part of the day, at least. The Directors of the American Museum of Natural History say they will open from 1 to 6 o'clock if they are given an additional 15,000 dols. per year. The *Truthseeker* states that it is twice or thrice what the extra service will cost, but it is presumable that the officials want something to salve their consciences, for you know they think it wicked to have the institution open on Sunday, no matter how much money they get from the city!

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S speech at the trial of Mr. C. B. Reynolds will be published by us as soon as possible, although we are unable to print it this week. According to the New York *Truthseeker*, "Mr. Ingersoll himself intends to have it printed in the near future, and prefers that it should not appear anywhere until then."

DR. E. B. FOOTE and his son have paid the 25 dols. of Mr. Reynolds's fine, and a fund is opened to defray the costs also. Colonel Ingersoll made a heavy sacrifice in defending Mr. Reynolds, and it will not do to let him incur the expenses as well.

WE have just reprinted our old tract "The Parson's Creed," of which many thousands have been circulated. Supplies can now be had at sixpence per hundred, or post free sevenpence. The *Protestant Standard*, by the way, reproduced the lines a fortnight ago, under the heading of "The Mission of Priestcraft," forgetting that they apply to sky-pilots of every denomination.

THE *Daily Telegraph*, writing in favor of a common understanding between Catholics and Protestants, says that "The fact is the members of all Churches and the believers in all creeds have found themselves forced or drawn together by the uprising amongst us of a section which is outside of all Churches and antagonistic to all creeds. The differences between Episcopalian and Presbyterian, between Catholic and Protestant, sink into insignificance compared with the contrast between Christians and Agnostics."

SOMETIMES it is remarked of our Profane Jokes that they have been told before. It is impossible in a collection gathered from all sources that each shall be new to all readers. One which is well known and which appeared in an early number of our paper, has, it turns out, quite an ancient and historic interest. It is of an American backwoodsman, who, upon encountering a grizzly, asked the Lord to help neither him nor the "bar," but to stand aside and he would see the darnedest fight he ever saw. A similar prayer was uttered by one of the crusaders at the siege of Ptolemais, in 1189. He prayed "O Lord, be neuter and the victory will be ours." Carlyle also notices that one of the generals of Frederick the Great—it was Duke Leopold of Dessau, at Kesseldorf, in 1745—prayed, "Dear God, stand aside to-day and we will rout them without your assistance."

AT the last meeting of the Nineteenth Century Club, New York, the Rev. W. S. Rainsford, of St. George's Episcopal church, said he did not believe the story of Elisha and the bears. Concerning which the *Sun* observes that this is substantially the position taken by Col. Robert G. Ingersoll.

THE Sabbatarianism of the North seems to be going the way of all other Puritanical institutions of the past, and a remarkable sign of the times in this connection is afforded by an occurrence which took place last Sunday afternoon at Kirkcaldy. While a religious meeting, attended by about 600 people, was being held on the pier to protest against Sunday pleasure sailing, an excursion steamer from Leith came into the harbor. In response to an offer by the captain of a free trip to all on the pier, some five hundred people forsook the meeting and crowded on board, leaving the protestors and their few remaining supporters very much discomfited indeed.

MESSRS. LONGMAN'S announce, as in the press, a new work by Andrew Lang, in two volumes, entitled: "Myth, Ritual and Religion."

THE census of the Birmingham *Times* of the attendance at places of worship in that city shows that the proportion is even less than in London. The Church of England boasts of only 18,513 and the total attendance, including Jews, Catholics, and Unitarians, only amounts to 40,843. In 1851, when the population was scarcely half what it is now, the attendance according to figures taken by Sir Horace Mann was 43,444, of whom 20,402 were Church of England.

THE *Literary World* recently noticing the Fourth Edition of Samuel Laing's "Modern Science and Modern Thought," speaks of the additional matter as a really merciless exposure of the weak points in Professor Drummond's "Natural Law in the Spiritual World." It says: "When once pointed out it will be widely recognised that Professor Drummond's scheme is simply our old friend, the 'Shorter Catechism' in a scientific dress, and the 'Natural Law and Spiritual World' is an attempt to tell us that the unknown can be solved by an analogy, more or less fanciful and far-fetched, to the natural laws which bind together phenomena which we really know. With perfect fairness, but as we have already said, with no mercy, Mr. Laing simply reduces Mr. Drummond's arguments to ruin."

THE *Atlantic Monthly* has a curious tale entitled "A Crucial Experiment," by J. P. Quincy. The experiment is to test whether a man has a soul, by placing the dying man on a bed supported on an exquisitely poised balance, which will show any remission of the downward pressure. It is supposed from the arguments of Joseph Cook, and the levitation of St. Francis, St. Theresa, Jesus Christ and Mrs. Guppy, that the body is lighter after the departure of the soul. But the experiment is not decided, for a materialistic doctor administers a drug which gives the patient new life. Mr. Quincy's queer story seems to be an allegory.

THE MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL.

WE regret to hear that legal difficulties are raised by the family of the late Mr. Spencer, who seem inclined to dispute the legacy of £500 he made to Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Payne. They had promised to invest it in the Secular Hall Company, and the money was to be paid over this month; but now litigation is threatened, or rather Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Payne will probably be obliged to sue for the £500. Anyhow the legacy is not available yet, and the purchase of the premises has to be completed on June 24. Shares or donations to the amount of £300 must be realised by June 21—that is, next Tuesday—or the directors will be placed in a quandary, and the scheme,

which excited such brilliant expectations, may be absolutely frustrated. We have increased our own investment in this emergency, although our means are very limited, and we call upon our fellow-Freethinkers to do their level best *at once*. Class B shareholders in arrears should pay up immediately. Class A shareholders should, if possible, increase the number of their shares by twenty-five or fifty per cent. June 21, we may remark, is Jubilee Day. The superstitionists and the flunkies will be in high glee. Freethinkers are made of sterner stuff than to participate in such imbecilities. Let them resolve to mark *their* sense of the Jubilee Day by resolving to carry the Manchester Hall Scheme to a glorious success, so that, while the clergy are masquerading at Westminster, the solid basis of a permanent Freethought institute may be laid in the capital of Lancashire.

Applications should be addressed to Mr. G. Payne, 20 Kennedy Street, Manchester.

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

THE approaching Jubilee, with its extortions of factory girls' halfpence for the glorification of a titled millionaire who has condescended to draw a stupendous salary for fifty years' of comparative idleness and occasionally of positive mischief-making, suggests the examination of our National Anthem as a matter worth a few minutes' attention once for all.

A national anthem should be noble in tone, wide in sympathies, and of the best though simplest workmanship. It should be full of good feeling, good sense, and national dignity. Is there anyone who contends that "God save the Queen" possesses any of these attributes?

It commences thus:

God save our gracious Queen,
Long live our noble Queen,
God save the Queen!

What a splendid affluence of rhyme! And this, moreover, is not the only part of the composition which evidently belongs to the barbarous kind of poetry in which assonance of any kind is sufficient.

What a beautiful spirit of toadyism and flattery in the public description of as commonplace a woman as ever lived as "gracious" and "noble"! This formal falsehood is solemnly proclaimed to the supposed omniscient and all-perfect being who is truth, and who loves truth above all things. And the falsehood would be proclaimed to him by the whole nation just as solemnly and unhesitatingly if the Queen were the basest and most disreputable of her kind.

Why is God asked to "save" the Queen? This evidently does not mean saving in the theological sense, the Defender of the Faith being supposed of course to be already "saved" so far as her soul is concerned. Neither is the saving of the less exalted kind, for which the thrifty old lady is noted. And as no particular danger of any kind threatens the poor old soul so far as I know, unless it may be drink or old age, the word "save" must be accepted as the melodramatic or quasi-poetic equivalent of the ordinary word "preserve."

In continuing the grand anthem I will take the liberty of perfecting some of its elegant rhymes. Burlesque is really all the intrinsic merits of the piece deserve.

Send her victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign *or*ious,
God save the Queen.

Why is God to *send* her victorious? "Send" is a verb of locality. Whither is God to send her? If nowhither, why is the word used? If the meaning is "Send her . . . to reign over us," why do we ask God to send a person whom he has already sent some fifty years ago, and whom he must soon take away?

The succeeding verse is the gem of the collection. It actually boasts of seven full rhymes where the first stanza can only glory in two; and its sentiment, like its language, is—well, truly British, truly pious, and truly contemptible.

O Lord our God arise,
Scatter her enemies,
And make them fall;
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks;
On thee our hopes we fix,
God save us all.

"Make them fall" is elegant, but it is beaten both in vulgarity of language and of sentiment by that which follows. With the almost infinite arrogance of piety and

patriotism combined, we assume as beyond doubt that our Queen must always be right and those who oppose her always wrong, while the Almighty of course sees all this, acknowledges our infallibility, and takes his instructions from our conceited brayings-forth of our own utter want of a sense of international justice and fair play. Is it not possible for a Briton to conceive that the enemies of the British Crown are not necessarily always in the wrong? The brave and wise "rebels" who achieved the independence of America were honorable and far-seeing men. Many races who struggle against British usurpations are deserving of great sympathy, and of far more active help than the deity of the big battalions cares to afford them. In our quarrels with great European nations we are probably as often in the wrong as our enemies are. Why then should the God of all nations and the Father of all peoples, be asked to "confound their politics" however wise and good they may be? Why do we ask him to frustrate *their* knavish tricks without also asking him to frustrate *our own* knavish tricks too? Perfidious Albion, as Europe styles us, openly signs her own certificate as cad, bully, bigot, and ass in one. She quietly assumes as a matter of course that all the justice, and perfection, and infallibility is on her own side, and all the villainy and wrong-doing on the side of those upon whom she levies war. We forge false treaties, as Clive did, and thank God we are not as other men. We shatter towns, and ask God to frustrate the knavish tricks whereby the inhabitants try to save their homes from being burnt over their heads. If there is any wisdom, any justice, any honor, any common sense left in us, hadn't we better ask, or seek, for *our own* enlightenment and *our own* moral improvement; before we ask for the destruction of those whom we arbitrarily choose to condemn untried? Hadn't we better base our thoughts and our acts upon the strange proposition that it is possible that we may occasionally be in the wrong, and our enemy in the right? What is wanted is not a dreadful victory on either side, but adjustment of difficulties, mutual understanding, mutual conciliation and concession and arrangement. The headstrong assurance of Jingo patriotism and unreflecting piety, as taught in our National, but certainly not Rational Anthem, is the greatest hindrance to wisdom, peace, progress and happiness. It is the chief source of the terrible wars that devastate the earth. It is mischievous and contemptible beyond expression. It substitutes the unreasoning assurance of passion and bigotry and hatred and prejudice and pride and cant for calm reflection and judicious settlement of international discords.

W. P. BALL.

(To be concluded.)

THE ABBEY JUBILEE SERVICE.

The great Lord God Almighty must a *proud* God feel this day,
For England's Queen and Empress comes, with all her slunkkeys gay,
To London's grandest temple, lined with wooden tiers of peers,
To compliment Him on the sense, He's shown for fifty years,

The poorer people need not try a "service" of their own,
Because they cannot dazzle God with slunkkeys from a throne;
They need not try to melt Him with their starving children's tears
That He may be a better God to them next fifty years.

Poor common folk who work for bread, and often work in vain,
Must keep their sorrows to themselves, nor of their lot complain;
They ought to know that when the Queen and noble dames and peers
Are patting God upon the back it is no time for tears.

What if the workers have been starved, and common folk have wept;
The gilded idlers and the great, in fatness have been kept.
Let Hunger hide its hollow cheeks while wealth its grossness roars,
To compliment God's management of things for fifty years.

A common, democratic God would ne'er have had the sense
To pamper swells, for fifty years at poorer folks' expense;
Let all aristocrats then praise this Gentleman Divine
Who has displayed, for fifty years, a taste so superfine!

If this West-End and masher God were Christ of old Judoe,
Who had not where to lay his head, I think this Jubilee
Would be a thing quite different from a farce of Church and State;
The poor would have the front seats, and the starved would jubilate!
G. L. MACKENZIE.

Great Thoughts has the following: "What was Elias while he was in the wilderness?" "I dunno what he was while he was in the desert, unless he was a deserter," replied the hopeful pupil." The great thoughts collected in this pious journal are evidently not always exclusive of a little profane frivolity.

CHRISTIAN LANGUAGE.

THE story succeeding that of "The Atheist on his Knees," in the *Christian Herald*,* differs widely from that pious narrative in being probably a true one. It is entitled "The Officer's Defeat." Its hero is a Christian gentleman, who is reading his Bible in a railway carriage amidst a party of officers, whose smoking annoys him. The grand achievement of this hero consists in repeatedly telling the officers that if they don't believe in Jesus they will be damned. The concluding word would be both profane and insulting if uttered by ordinary lips, but coming direct from a Bible-reader it is the very climax of religion, and the strongest proof of sincerity and piety combined. The account runs thus:

"Quietly looking the officer in the face, he said, 'If you don't believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll be damned.' 'Who asked you your opinion? don't be annoying us.' 'My not annoying you will not alter the fact; if you don't believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you'll be damned.' 'What business have you speaking to us? We don't want your cant.' 'Your not wanting my cant does not alter the fact; if you don't believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you'll be damned.' 'Let us sit on him.' 'Your sitting on me will not alter the fact; if you don't believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you'll be damned.' 'Shove him out of the window.' 'Your shoving me out of the window will not alter the fact; if you don't believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you'll be damned.' It was soon evident that it was getting too hot for the young fellows, and the train coming to a station, they cried—'Let us get out of this into another carriage, and leave the old hypocrite to himself.' He fearlessly followed them to the door, and spoke aloud after them—'Your leaving the carriage does not alter the fact; if you don't believe on the Lord Jesus Christ you'll all be damned.'"

The officers must have been tolerably forbearing not to have retaliated by physical violence when thus driven from the carriage by the old fanatic, whose behavior is set forth by the *Christian Herald* as such a shining example of a faithful insistence on Gospel truth. If such manners as these are to prevail, Christians will have to be shunned as nuisances or as irresponsible lunatics. But there are many men who will answer repeated insult and annoyance with a rough tongue and a heavy fist. Our Christian saints had better forget the teachings of the *Christian Herald*, and of the *Christian*, from which it extracts the story. It will hardly be wise to presume too much on a comparatively mild and gentlemanly reception of their abusive piety, seeing that ordinary men will be likely to resent the insults more actively than the officers did, and perhaps may even give the insolent saint in charge.

FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN.

A YARN dies hard. The pretty little story about the picture of President Lincoln and his son Tad reading the Bible is now corrected for the one-hundredth time. The Bible was Photographer Brady's picture album, which the president was examining with his son while some ladies stood by. The artist begged the president to remain quiet, and the picture was taken. Truth is better than fiction, even if its recital conflicts with a pleasing theory.—*Boston Globe*.

THE post-office in India is regarded as so miraculous an agency by the more ignorant natives that in some out-of-the-way places the very letter-boxes are worshipped. In one case a man posted his letter in a box, and shouted out its destination, to inform the presiding spirit whom he supposed to be inside. Another native humbly took off his shoes as he approached the box, went through various devotions before and after posting his letter, and finally put some coppers before the box as a propitiatory offering, retiring in the same attitude of humility.

IN England the Episcopal Church includes nearly a half of the total number of religious worshippers. In the United States, where it has no help from the State except in the form of remission of taxation, it only includes a little over two per cent. of the total number of worshippers. This shows the difference made by the establishment and endowment of our national Church. Without this systematic State support it would probably dwindle as Episcopacy has done in America. Despite this discouraging effect of the voluntary principle in religion, the American Episcopalians are sufficiently strong to talk of building a cathedral at New York at the estimated cost of six million dollars. It is a pity they cannot find a better use for the money.

REVIEWS.

The Jubilee Craze. A Plea for the People. By One of Themselves. —A vigorous bit of Radical rhyme. Copies can be had of the author, J. D. Richardson, 1 Railway Street, Hull, at 1d. each, 8d. a dozen, or 4s. a hundred.

Chriticismism. A first epistle to Churchmen. By A Seat-holder. London: James E. Wilson, 121 Tufnell Park Road, W., 1887. A sober and moderate attack upon orthodoxy. The author writes in a reasonable and scholarly fashion, although his arguments are hardly likely to be new to our readers.

* See "Pious Fiction Tested," in last week's *Freethinker*.

PROFANE JOKES.

A CLERICAL ERROR.—A minister kissing a parishioner's wife.

MARY ELLEN CHASE says "there will be three women to one man in heaven." Something like a fashionable summer resort, perhaps.

A SCIENTIST has now discovered that the home of the soul is in the tip of the nose. It sometimes certainly shows where departed spirits have gone.

A BANTERING acquaintance of the other sex remarked to a woman: "I never heard of seven devils being cast out of a man." "No," was the reply, "they've got them yet."

A SMALL BOY was heard one night addressing the following petition: "O God, please bless mamma and papa; but the less you have to do with Aunt Maria, the better. Amen."

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL teacher asked a little girl of her class if she had been baptised. "Yes," said the little girl, "two times." "Two times? Why, how could that be?" "I didn't take the first time," said the little girl.

THE late Dr. Macadam used to tell of a tipsy Scotchman making his way home on a bright Sunday morning when the good folk were wending their way to church. A little dog pulled a ribbon from the hand of a lady who was leading it, and as it ran from her she appealed to the first passer-by, who happened to be the inebriate, asking him to whistle to her poodle. "Woman," he retorted, with that solemnity of visage which only a Scotchman can assume—"woman, this is no day for whustlin!"

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List of Freethinkers dealt with—Lord Amberley, Lord Bolingbroke, Giordano Bruno, Henry Thomas Buckle, Lord Byron, Richard Carlile, Professor Clifford, Anthony Collins, Condorcet, Robert Cooper, Danton, Diderot, George Eliot, Frederick the Great, Gambetta, Isaac Gendre, Gibbon, Goethe, Henry Hetherington, Hobbes, Austin Holyoake, Victor Hugo, Hume, Littré, Harriet Martineau, J. S. Mill, Mirabeau, Robert Owen, Thomas Paine, Shelley, Spinoza, D. F. Strauss, John Toland, Vanini, Volney, Voltaire, James Watson, John Watts, Thomas Woolston.

"Special thanks are due to Mr. G. W. Foote for his new pamphlet. The sketches of the various Freethinkers are very readable, and a double end will be achieved in refuting pious slanderers and reviving the memories of our dead."—*National Reformer*.

"Mr. Foote's little manual cannot fail to be of great service in refuting the ancient and silly death-bed argument..... We should be gratified to hear that the little book meets with an extensive sale."—*Secular Review*.

"Mr. Foote is in his element in *Infidel Death-Beds*, and his carefully-stated facts about the last hours of well-known unbelievers ought to be in the hands of every Freethinker."—*Our Corner*.

"This excellent work..... Many valuable thoughts on the subject."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

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- Giordano Bruno.—II. By G. W. Foote.
- Buddhism, Essenism, and Christianity. By J. M. Wheeler.
- The Decline of Piety.—II. By Alter Brown.
- Anne Gilchrist and her Circle.—II. By G. W. Foote.
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