

THE FREETHINKER

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

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PRECIOUS PROMISES.—II.

“And these signs shall follow them that believe. . . . They shall take up serpents.”—MARK XVI., 17, 18.

JUBILEE PRAYERS.

THE farce is over. Westminster Abbey will now resume its quiet dignity. The builders and upholsterers will remove their unsightly rubbish, and leave the mighty dead to their sacred repose. God and the Queen have been publicly introduced to each other by the Archbishop of Canterbury, though what they think of each other is still a secret. No matter, the time will come—when all shall be revealed. Meanwhile let us see what is the upshot of the business.

How much real piety there was in the religious performance at the Abbey may be seen by a single fact. Last Sunday morning, after lecturing on the Embankment, our friend Mr. A. B. Moss walked round the thanksgiving temple, and heard the sound of work going on. Getting into conversation with a workman, he found that the preparations for Tuesday were being carried on briskly, without even a pause during church time! The holiness of the Sabbath is a capital doctrine to keep William and Mary from enjoying themselves on their day of leisure, but of course it must be set aside when it interferes with royal convenience. Just as the Pope was always ready to grant easy indulgences

to kings and princes, so our clergy make exceptions in favor of the crown. God is a respecter of persons after all. Poor old Mrs. Sykes, of Southend, must be prosecuted season after season for selling sweetmeats on a Sunday, and Sir John Lubbock (our universal grandmother) aims at stopping *all* Sunday business. But when the Queen wants a building ready by Tuesday, who would dare to censure the employment of workmen on Sunday? In this case, the building was a church; so the clergy winked at God's commandment being broken in God's own house.

The newspapers contain but meagre reports of what occurred at the thanksgiving service. Reporters are not celebrated for piety; they have eyes for sensational effects; so the *object* of the service is forgotten, and the public is treated to glowing descriptions of pride, pomp, and circumstance. Even the religious atmosphere of the “sacred edifice” could not prevent the unsanctified reporters from noting the jewels and decorations of wealth and title, and duly recording them. The *Daily News* man, whose snobbishness is dashed with a gleam of humor, after letting his mouth water at “the diamonds and emeralds” of the Indian princes, notices the Maharajah of Kuch Behar sharing a prayer-book with his Maharani, whose view of the page is intercepted by her husband's following the text with his

finger. Then the *Daily News* man goes off again after blazing jewels and dazzling wealth. Alas, the newspapers give us none of the information we require. We must therefore take the printed programme as our guide. Our copy of this precious programme shall be carefully preserved, and forty years hence, if we live so long, popular progress will have made it a striking curiosity. We dare say the British Museum has secured a copy. Certainly one should be deposited at the Tower.

The programme is like the Psalmist's body; it is fearfully and wonderfully made. It reflects little credit, or rather much discredit, on the Archbishop of Canterbury and the other Church dignitaries who assisted in its composition. The prayers they have drafted are a wretched mosaic. Here and there is a fine cadence from the Prayer-book; then comes a bungling imitation, betraying the mark of the beast. Really the clergy, when such things must be done, should procure the aid of a poet, or at least of a person with shorter or more sensitive ears than they can boast themselves.

In the first prayer God is "humbly" thanked in pompous language "for our gracious Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria, unto whom Thou hast accomplished full fifty years of Sovereignty." Here is a sentence for you! Here is the English which is turned out by Church dignitaries, who are regarded as learned men, and paid several thousands a year, we suppose for ornament, for it would puzzle Omniscience to discover their use. What do they mean by the word "for"? Are they thanking God on the Queen's behalf, or because they possess her? Either meaning is compatible with their construction. Perhaps they left it to the Lord to pick out the meaning that suits him, while the people, having paid their money, may also take their choice. The dissonance of their last clause is worthy of a parish bull. Surely the Archbishop and his colleagues must have tried its euphony with mouths full of pudding. It would have startled the men who drew up the Prayer-book and the Authorised Version. They had ears, while our clergy have only appendages. We must also complain of their tautology. "Accomplished" means to "fill full," and "accomplished full" therefore means to "fill full full." William Cobbett used to delight in analysing the Royal Speeches as grammatical warnings to Englishmen. Were he still alive, he would find ample scope for his diversion in this programme.

Do the clergy think there is any miracle in the Queen's fifty years' reign, that they thank God for it, and God only? She came to the throne a girl, and she is not very old now. Had she been sixty-eight at her coronation, there would have been something miraculous in her Jubilee. We fail to see the hand of God in her living to be sixty-eight altogether. If the Lord wanted to preserve a life, he might have spared the workman who fell from the Abbey scaffolding and was killed on the spikes below. The poor fellow's name was unknown. He had been tramping in search of work, had found it that very morning, and found death before he could take his first day's wages. *There* was a chance for God! But he neglected it, as he always does.

Later on we find the exploded doctrine of Divine Right—"Thou didst set the Crown upon Her Head." Let it be noted also that they give a capital letter to the Queen's pronouns as well as to God's. The Lord is likewise thanked for "the abundance of Dominion wherewith Thou hast exalted and enlarged Her Empire." Does this refer to the semi-extirpation of the Maories, the destruction of Zululand, the virtual appropriation of Egypt, the bombardment of Alexandria, the wholesale massacre of the Soudanese, and our last act of international piracy, the stealing of Burmah? If it is right to thank God for these things, he is a Devil. But the clergy are only canting. God is no more a reality to them than to us; he is but the trade name under which they carry on business. Otherwise they would deserve to be whipped with scorpions.

"The spreading of Truth and Faith in Her times" is a joke. Truth has spread, but Faith is waning, as the clergy admit when they get into Congress. "Unhappy divisions" may mean Home Rule or High Church prosecutions. But the clergy are once more intelligible when they ask that the royal family may "live long and happy lives upon earth, and after death may obtain everlasting life and glory in the kingdom of heaven." What miserable vulgarity on such an occasion! Not a word about the royal family being wise, virtuous, and useful. It is simply "O Lord give them treacle here, and treacle hereafter. Amen." G. W. FOOTE.

NEW LIGHT ON THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIANITY.*

IT is evident that the old story of the supernatural rise of Christianity no longer suits the cultured mind. The fallacy of a Redemption, based on the figment of a Fall—a God born to be rejected and put to death by his own chosen people—a religion sundered from the great historic Pagan faiths which preceded and surrounded it—present too many difficulties to satisfy anyone of an inquiring disposition. Mr. Gerald Massey's *Natural Genesis*, his now partly published lectures, Mr. Lillie's *Buddhism in Christendom* (reviewed in the current number of *Progress*), and the anonymous work *Antiqua Mater* now before us all indicate that fresh study is being given to the question of how Christianity came into being. Their methods and their fields of research are widely different, but their result is the same. Christianity is not in any true sense an original system at all. Its legends, its doctrines, its ethics, and its ritual can all be traced to times anterior to the alleged prophet of Nazareth. Mr. Massey finds them in Egypt; Mr. Lillie finds them in the great missionary religion of Buddhism, which spread from India to Egypt and Syria over two centuries before the Christian era. Both these writers are agreed upon one important point, to which due prominence is given in *Antiqua Mater*, that it was what is known in the Church as the heresy of Gnosticism, which forms the connecting link with Paganism. Gnosticism alone shows the line of historical continuity, and for that reason, as well as for the acknowledged fact that it dates from Simon of Samaria, alluded to in the Acts as a contemporary of Peter, Gnosticism must be considered rather as the precursor of Christianity than as an heretical offshoot therefrom.

An account of the origin and affinities of Gnosticism is beyond my present purpose, which is to call attention to a new heretical work. The author of *Antiqua Mater* addresses himself to the task of investigating how much, apart from the books of the New Testament, can be learnt concerning the origin and early development of the "ancient mother"—i.e., the Christian Church. The result, he is fain to confess, is very meagre. The Pagan writers show no acquaintance with the particulars of the gospels, nor can they be found in the writings of the so-called "apostolic fathers." The alleged works of Clement, Barnabas, Ihermas, Polycarp, and Ignatius, as shown in my *Frauds and Follies of the Fathers*, bear no testimony to the events of the gospels, nor any acquaintance with them. Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, is the first authentic writer with a date, who cites similar facts to those recorded in the gospels. The scraps he gives us are not from any documents authenticated by names and dates. He simply cites certain *Memorabilia of the Apostles*; and, as the author of *Supernatural Religion* has shown in his exhaustive investigation, these memorabilia do not correspond in their contents as a whole with any work that has come down to us, nor are "the apostles" identifiable with any known historical persons. Christian evidence-mongers coolly assume that they were Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, although many particulars are given at variance with these evangelists; and neither Mark nor Luke were apostles. Justin Martyr, moreover, betrays a habit of inventing facts to correspond with poetical ideals. Because a prophet has been wrongly translated as saying "He shall dwell in a lofty cave of a great rock," he says that Jesus was born in a cave. Justin's works have been translated in the Ante-Nicene Christian Library, and, as our author says,

"Any person of ordinary clear-headedness has the materials of judgment before him; and if he takes the usual view of what Evidence is, and of what is *not* Evidence, he will, as we believe, come to the conclusion that Justin of Flavia Neapolis had no exact knowledge, whether of the apostles in general, or of him [Jesus] whom he calls the 'Apostle of God.' He had an ideal before his mind, but not actual persons, of whose life and teaching any accurate particulars had been recorded."

What will astonish many is that the author looks upon Paul as an Ideal, not an actual person. I believe that our honored friend, Mr. W. J. Birch, was the first to broach this theory in England. I confess myself unconvinced. Interpolated they may be, but the epistles ascribed to Paul, in especial the first four epistles, give to me the impression

* "Antiqua Mater. A Study of Christian Origins." London: Trubner and Co., Ludgate Hill, 1887.

of an individuality behind them. Nor can I construe the historic break with Judaism, which those epistles imply, without some powerful personality which may as well have been Paul, the alleged writer, as any one else. I am perfectly convinced that the Acts of the Apostles is a late and most biassed narrative, utterly unworthy the name of evidence, but it none the less represents tradition, and, checked by the epistles, affords some glimpse through the haze of myth of the Apostle to the Gentiles. The silence of Justin as to Paul may truly be a silence that speaks—not to the non-existence of any such apostle, but to the non-recognition of him and of his school by those from whom Justin received his Christianity.

But the author does contrive to throw new light upon the origin of Christianity if not by the boldness of his sceptical speculations, at least by bringing into prominence those features of the religion which occupied the minds of its earliest advocates, and which became obscured by the triumph of orthodoxy. That triumph was the result of a compromise between the Pauline and Petrine schools. We are too apt to look back on the numerous controversies of the first Christian centuries through the eyes of those who had the last word and who did their level best to stamp out all the writings opposed to the dominant view. It is in those stigmatised as "early heretics," but who in truth were predecessors of Catholicism, that we must look for the origin of Christianity, and in these we find a distinct amalgam of Judaism with the Paganisms which surrounded it.

Antiqua Mater is a solid and scholarly work, of which our chief complaint is that from its style and contents it is necessarily addressed only to the few.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

RICHARD JENKINSON, a Sunday-school teacher, has been sentenced to four months' imprisonment with hard labor for stealing a coat and various other articles from the vicar of St. Savior's Church, Poplar.

THE floods in Hungary still hold possession. The funds for the sufferers are exhausted and thousands of homeless creatures are exposed to hunger and cold. God wills it. But why don't he will something better than storms and floods and undeserved misery?

IN Roumelia he has sent an extraordinary hailstorm. Some of the hailstones were over a pound in weight. Several people and a large number of cattle were killed. The harvest is entirely destroyed. Strangely destructive freaks these for Omnipotent Benevolence to indulge in.

So formidable is the opposition to the tithe distrains in Wales that they can only be carried out by the aid of the military as well as the police. Four companies of the 22nd Cheshire Regiment were employed, and 100 police. The soldiers were furnished with a full supply of ball cartridge. At Mochdre large crowds hooted the combined force. Stones were thrown and the constables charged the mob, using their staves right and left upon the heads of the laborers, who were armed with sticks and in many cases made a stout resistance. After this battle had ended in favor of the police, the stone-throwing still continued, and there were numerous exciting personal encounters. At the end of the proceedings it was found that some eighteen or twenty men had been knocked down by blows of the policemen's batons and had their heads badly cut and bleeding. Truly Christ came to bring not peace but a sword. The Church that is supposed to teach love and brotherhood in words teaches the opposite in its acts. It seizes people's goods and uses the civil and military forces of the country to enforce its exactions.

THE Rev. Mr. Ward, of Englewood, New Jersey, who shot his wife, though not fatally, and then some time afterwards committed suicide, left a will disposing of property worth about 25,000 dols., the proceeds of his two former marriages. His widow's name is not mentioned in the will, though it was drawn two days after the shooting.

PIETY is by no means the protection against accidents that some Christians pretend. Three hundred pilgrims crossing the Danube in Hungary, near Kalocsa, found this out by practical experience. They crowded recklessly into the ferry-boat until the edge nearly touched the water. A storm arose soon after they left the bank. The women became frantic with fear—which illustrates the calming influence of religion. A scene of confusion ensued. The boatmen lost their oars. The priest conducting the pilgrimage blessed his flock, and then jumped into the river and swam to the shore. He deserted his perishing people instead of remaining with them to control them. He trusted in swimming

more than in prayer so far as his own safety was concerned. The boat swayed about for a few moments and then capsized. Over a hundred corpses have been recovered and laid out on the grass. Eighty-six persons are still missing. Scarcely a year passes in Hungary or Austria without an event of this kind occurring to some of the numerous pilgrims to the shrines of saints. These people's trust in God is ill rewarded. Perhaps they will learn in time that piety is no safeguard against natural laws and prayer no preventive of the effects of folly and panic.

THE priest according to later news brought a child with him to the shore, so that his conduct was not so selfish as it at first sight appeared. He has since died. Was this a judgment on him for saving the child's life or for setting an example of panic and deserting his people?

THE Christians near Presburg in Hungary have been burning the Jews' Quarters. A hundred and fifty houses are burned down and hundreds of families had great difficulty in escaping with their lives. Foolish pilgrims and criminal incendiaries are products of Christianity that prove the piety of Hungary beyond doubt.

SKY-PILOTS always have an eye to earthly business. According to the *Church Times* it has been suggested that the offertories at all the churches where the Jubilee is in any way observed should be divided between the Clergy Relief Fund and the Church House. The Salvation Army has provided a large number of tin boxes for the occasion, inscribed with the legend "Jubilee Fund."

RESOLUTIONS against free education have been brought forward at several of the diocesan conferences. At Winchester Canon Heygate moved—"That this Conference believes a policy of gratuitous education in primary schools to be injurious to the interests of voluntary schools, productive of irregularity of attendance, and likely to cripple freedom of religious teaching." No voice was heard in favor of free education, but rather regrets that teaching had already drifted so much out of the hands of the clergy.

AN English clergyman expressed his horror from the pulpit because some youthful members of his congregation had visited the "den of perdition called Paris." M. Leon Jolivard, who shows he knows London well, fastens upon the utterance to dilate on the varied aspects of immorality which he beheld in the British capital. He succeeds in showing his countrymen that the Haymarket is a greater centre of depravation than the worst quarter of Paris, where painted pollution stalks abroad.

A PRISONER, named Hall, committed suicide in Derby gaol on Sunday afternoon by hanging. A Prayer-book was found in the cell with the entry in deceased's handwriting, "I am gone mad, completely mad." At the inquest a verdict of temporary insanity was returned.

WHEN the churches of St. Martin and St. Gregory, Canterbury, were opened on Wednesday, it was found that during the night they had been entered by thieves and completely ransacked. Churches are God's houses, but we presume the Lord was out or asleep that night. Why didn't he station a cherubim or a few angels on guard?

H. L. HASTINGS, the Yankee revivalist has been lecturing at Maidstone against Secularism. As the hall in which he lectured belonged to the Corporation, it was thought that in common fairness the same building should be available for a reply. Accordingly Mr. G. Pierson, President of the Maidstone Secular Society, asked for the use of the hall, and stated that the lecturer would be Mr. Foote. The Town Clerk acknowledges the receipt of the application and states that it cannot be granted. Another instance of Christian fair play!

WE are glad to see that the *Kent Times* publishes the correspondence between Mr. Pierson and the Town Clerk in full, and says that the Corporation has "shown intolerance worthy of the days of persecution." The *Kent Times* adds: "This is not fair play. When will people be judged by their lives and not by their pretensions?"

THE inhabitants of a community in Hindustan have celebrated the Jubilee by walling in a compound for a cemetery to be called the Jubilee burial-ground.

THE Congregationalist New College at St. John's Wood has, according to the *Christian World*, resulted in "a dismal fiasco." That paper, which represents the most go-ahead section of the Nonconformists, is dissatisfied because the teachers keep to the old lines of orthodoxy. It declares that "A kind of intellectual blight has settled upon New College and its Council," and opines that the Nonconformist colleges will get neither sufficient money nor men until they move out of the old rut.

A SERIOUS Salvation Army disturbance has occurred at Baillieston, seven miles from Glasgow. Whilst a branch of the Salvation Army was leaving its place of meeting it was attacked

by Catholics. Bricks, stones, and pokers were used. Twelve persons were injured, including the captain, a woman, who was struck in the face and knocked down. Several arrests were made.

THE Catholic *Weekly Register* is greatly rejoiced at the reception in England of Monsignor Kuffo-Scilla, Archbishop of Petra, as Jubilee Envoy Extraordinary from the Pope. It fancies this denotes a great change, and that the conversion of England to the faith of its forefathers cannot be very far off.

JAMES COLEMAN was charged at the Lambeth police-court with assaulting Charlotte Mays, and giving her a black eye, which necessitated her attendance at St. Thomas's Hospital. When taken into custody he said that he was a teetotaler and "belonged to Spurgeon's," and he "would not tell a lie for £5." The magistrate, however, took a less pious view of James Coleman's veracity, requiring two bail of £15 each during his remand.

MR. J. N. CARR of Carlisle, who told the story of a woman who consulted a witch and obtained a devil-ring, has been written to by Mr. T. W. Johnson, Workington, who has also in the public press asked him for some corroboration of his statement. Mr. Carr has not seen fit to answer either the public appeal or the private letter. The story is a good instance of how far the "believe-only" people will venture until they are called to book by some daring sceptic.

GOD, moving in a mysterious way His wonders to perform, has burnt down the town of Lulea in Sweden, including the church, the town hall, and other buildings.

FREDERICK MOYLE, of Crystal Palace Road, has been charged with committing an offence against Mary Elizabeth Latcher, at a house in Ulverscroft Road, Camberwell. There being other charges against the prisoner, the magistrate declined to accept bail, although certificates were produced from the Rhondda circuit of the Wesleyan Methodist Society, "showing the prisoner to be a local preacher and a consistent and useful member of the Christian Church."

THE *Antiquary* has a paper on "Ordeals and Oaths," which has got copied into the newspapers. It does not mention that in the fifth chapter of the Book of Numbers the Lord himself directs a more barbarous form of the ordeal than any found among the most savage nations. Any man who was jealous of his wife could, without any evidence, bring her before the priest, who would cause her to drink "the waters of jealousy." These waters were so miraculous that they caused a horrible and violent death to any woman who was unfaithful, but had no effect upon one who respected the rights of her possessor. No doubt the Jewish ordeal provided a good opportunity of poisoning under the pretence of justice.

SOME people are a good deal troubled as to the location of other people when they leave this world. One of the inspired poets of the Primrose League has settled the destiny of the hated W. E. G., and written his epitaph as under :

" Good Mr. Gladstone has gone to his own,
Gone to his own in a chariot ;
He sits there in state on a fizzing hot plate,
"Twixt Pilate and Judas Iscariot."

A blasphemous Radical has added the lines :

" And Jesus is there ; " he descended to hell "
If the Creed gives us true information,
And, once in Nick's clutches, we know very well
He could never escape from damnation."

MR. G. BATES, of Chatham, is a Freethinker, and having the courage of his opinions, he exhibits any announcements of the local Branch of the N. S. S. His landlord, however, is a Christian, and noticing the desecration of his premises, he wrote to his tenant, informing him that his rent would be raised. Evidently Thomas Greenstreet is shrewd as well as pious. He is willing to let his cottage for profane uses, but at a higher rent ; in other words, he will risk damnation, but not at the ordinary market rate.

LAST Sunday men were openly at work on many public edifices. They were working at the preparations for the Jubilee. The streets, too, were full of people who were also desecrating the Sabbath by viewing the flags and designs and arches. Pious people were exceedingly shocked. One of them writes to the papers expressing a hope that he may never see such a profanation of the Sabbath again as long as he lives.

THE Jubilee motto at the Mansion House, " God guard your throne," is suggestive of some reflections. The ostentatious association of City corruption with piety and loyalty must be rather galling to some of the better kind of Christian royalists. The dying corporation probably speaks from a sense of its own desperate condition and seems to think that the Queen's throne is in an equally desperate condition.

According to the *Daily News* a Russian peasant, tired and weary with a long day's labor in the harvest field last year, entered a village tavern, and drank a glass of vodka. He was afterwards supplied with a small meat roll called a "pirog," which was so delectable that he exclaimed, " I would rather kiss the girl who made this pirog than the icon [image]." This being reported to the parish priest, the peasant was prosecuted for blasphemy and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. Appeal was made to a higher court, and the poor devil, who is described as " a middle-aged, jovial, and good-tempered looking man," was much relieved by getting his sentence reduced to a month. What a free country the Czar rules over ! Ingersoll's *mot* is as true as it is fine, that in Russia every mouth is a Bastille and every tongue a convict.

It appears that the blaspheming peasant's neighbors were not very much shocked by his exclamation. It was the parish priest who scented the blasphemy and started the prosecution. Blasphemy is, indeed, nothing but a priest-made crime.

THE *Fife Free Press* and the *Kirkcaldy Times* have been in the habit of advertising the Sunday steamers, but they have now resolved to share no longer in the mammon of unrighteousness. They decline to insert any more such advertisements. Whether this is a spontaneous act of piety, or done under the compulsion of the local bigots, does not appear. We fancy it is the latter, and can imagine the proprietors shedding a tear over the lost bawbees.

THE Vicar and the Corporation of Godmanchester have quarrelled over the Jubilee. The Vicar wanted the Corporation to attend the church. They consented on condition that a dissenting minister was allowed to read the lessons as a concession to the dissenting members of the Corporation. The Vicar then turned the wrath ecclesiastic upon the Mayor, who twenty years before had married his brother's widow, but who was a regular attendant at church. The Vicar said he " refused to consent to the presence of a man who was guilty of an incestuous and illegal union." The Corporation resented the domineering insolence of this uncharitable parson, and declined to go to church on Jubilee day without their mayor at their head.

ROMAN Catholic writers in this country endeavor to minimise the persecutions of the Inquisition, and to bring down the total of its victims as low as possible. But a clerical newspaper in Spain, *La Bandera Catolica*, which thinks the Inquisition an institution to be proud of, and desires its re-establishment, gave the following statistics in its number of July 29, 1883, in the course of an article expressing a hope that the restoration of the Inquisition might be speedy, and that it might do far more active and drastic work amongst Freemasons, Spiritualists, and anti-clericals than it had ever done in the old times between 1481 and 1808, when it was abolished. Total number of men and women burnt alive in Spain under forty-five Inquisitors-general, 35,534 ; total number burnt in effigy (*i.e.*, those who contrived to escape, and would have been burnt alive if taken), 18,637 ; total condemned to other punishments, 293,533. Gross total, 347,704.

THIS mixture of religion and tobacco smoke appeared in the *Evening Telegram* on the day of the ascension to heaven of Peter Smith, a murderer hanged in New York city on the 5th ult. It is descriptive of the ceremonies previous to the execution :

" Deep from the heart of this noble priest prayers kept wending their way up to the throne of grace. Frequently the voice of Smith blended with that of his spiritual adviser as he joined him in asking for mercy of God on the sins of his past life. When not listening to the consolations that the prayer-book and ritual of the Catholic church afforded him, Smith paced up and down the corridor with the death-watch, smoking cigars furnished by these kind-hearted deputy sheriffs. The smoke from their havanas united with his and formed, as it were, an incense that wafted the religious words that he not infrequently uttered to the great beyond."

We trust the prayers and tobacco smoke were acceptable to the Lord.

TALMAGE believes, or professes to believe, in a real hell of the good old-fashioned sort. He says : " I tell you, though you may escape in this world, you will be ground at last under the hoof of eternal calamities, and you will be chained to the rock, and you will have the vultures of despair clawing at your soul, and those whom you have destroyed will come around to torment you, and to pour hotter coals of fury upon your heads, and rejoice eternally in the outcry of your pain, and the howl of your everlasting damnation."

THE Rev. Mr. Schabehorn, of Nyack, N.Y., tried by the presbytery for drunkenness, confesses his fault, but pleads in excuse that " at every wedding, christening, and social event beer and wine flow freely, and if the minister refuses to drink he gives offence." He promises, however, to risk giving offence rather than get drunk any more. Another charge against Mr. Schabehorn is that he has been guilty of " criminal conversation " with women, and his confession on that point is awaited with interest.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S OPEN-AIR LECTURES.

Sunday, June 26, Peckham Rye, 3.15, "Is the Bible True?"

July 3, Kingsland Green (morning); July 3, West Ham (evening); 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.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

AUGUST 7 and 14, Hall of Science, London,

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. 7¹/₂d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 5d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—R. Fox.

W. CABELL.—It was a misprint, owing to our absence from town. We were quite aware of the passage in Josephus. It is the universal belief of savages that the soul goes in and out of the body at the nose, and of course demons use the same channel of communication. Our artist made the devils come out of the patient's mouth to give them a freer passage.

AJAX.—Apply to the Liberation Society, Sergeants' Inn Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C. The secretary will send you a list of publications relating to Church property and revenues. There is a good pamphlet on tithes by Earl.

H. P. BOWDEN.—Many thanks for the budget of jokes. The leaflet is one that we hardly like to notice, but, as you say, the marked sentences are instructive as illustrating the benefit of Sunday schools. The "historical" books of the Old Testament are no doubt partly genuine and partly legendary. The Jewish histories as they stand, do not date beyond the captivity; their narratives were made up from tradition, and perhaps from earlier rude documents that were afterwards lost or destroyed.

G. GRIFFITHS.—Pleased to hear you have found *Royal Paupers* so useful. You will find an instructive list of the votes of the bishops during the present century in the *Financial Reform Almanack*.

E. M.—If you scratch a Christian you generally find a bigot. It gives us pleasure to learn that you defeated the recantation-monger with *Infidels Death-Beds*. That little work is full of facts. The Christians will never reply to it; they know that reply is impossible.

J. M. TAYLOR.—We are very much obliged.

H. MCMILES.—Such cuttings are always welcome.

T. HOLME.—Glad you were so highly pleased with our article on "Jubilee Parsons." The lesson for the day was wrongly printed. It should have been 1 Peter II., 6-18.

T. J. BOORMAN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." What was the result?

J. T. THACKER writes: "The Leicester Sunday Cricket Club played on the pasture last Sunday morning for an hour and a half without opposition." He adds: "We intend carrying on the campaign until we win the public of Leicester over to our views." We should be glad to hear that the Leicester Secularists also intended to "carry on the campaign" by means of thorough-going Freethought lectures.

A. KELLAW.—Jokes are always welcome. It takes a lot of collecting to keep up our budget.

S. HAZLITT, who writes for a dozen *Royal Paupers*, says: "When leaving home on Saturday last, a friend placed in my hand a copy of your valuable little work, which I have since read. I like it so well that, although I am only a working man, I have decided on this purchase, in the hope that I may, by placing them in the hands of some honest (political) farmers of Radnorshire, help the cause of true Democracy."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Exeter Evening Post—Kent Times—Just Great Thoughts—Boston Investigator—West Cumberland Times—Lucifer—Western Figaro—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Christian Herald.

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 a capital meeting at the Hall of Science last Thursday evening to organise the open-air propaganda in London. Nearly every London Branch sent delegates, and among the visitors were Mr. G. Standing and Mr. A. B. Moss, both of whom addressed the meeting. Mr. Foote broke his brief holiday and ran up from Ramsgate to take the chair. A resolution was carried unanimously that a Committee should be formed, consisting of one delegate from each London Branch. Mr. Foote was requested to work with the Committee this season; Mr. G. Standing was desired to act as Secretary *pro tem.*; and Mr. R. O. Smith consented to act as Treasurer. The first meeting of the Committee was arranged to take place on Friday, June 24, at 8.15 p.m., in the Minor Hall. Mr. Foote will make a point of attending, and some practical work will be done immediately.

MESSRS. FOOTE, HISCOCK, and ELLIS were appointed as a financial sub-committee to raise funds for the open-air work. It is intended to distribute Freethought literature widely at the stations among the audiences and the passers-by, and the expense of this effort is more than the Branches can bear. In some cases (Clerkenwell Green for instance) the whole burden of the work falls upon a handful of working men, who have to tax their pockets heavily at present, besides giving a great deal of their time. This is wrong, absolutely wrong. Well-to-do Freethinkers should at least contribute a little money if they cannot give other support. Whatever sums are sent us will be acknowledged in these columns. The following subscriptions are already received:—G. W. Foote, 10s. 6d.; T. Fleming, 2s. 6d.; S. Ogden 5s.; S. Smith, 3s. We hope to print a longer list next week.

MR. FOOTE had a very large audience at the Midland Arches last Sunday morning, and there was a lively sale of literature, including several dozens of *Royal Paupers*. A good collection was also made for the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund. Of the opposition after the lecture the less said the better. Jesus Christ must be in a bad way if he cannot send better champions than a lunatic and a blackguard.

Z. B. WOFFENDALE has given up preaching at the Midland Arches and taken to singing. He brings down his choir, gets near the Freethought platform, and sings hymns for half-an-hour without intermission. The result is universal confusion. Woffendale's crew sing down every speaker without doing any good themselves. We advise the Freethinkers to start an opposition choir, and sing the Marseillaise directly Woffendale's crew begin their hymns. Christians have no sense of fair play. The only way to teach them is to dish them in their own sauce.

THIS afternoon (June 26) Mr. Foote delivers an open-air lecture on Peckham Rye by way of starting the Branch afresh. As there has been, at various times, considerable disorder at this station, owing to the attempts of Christian rowdies to break up the meetings, we shall be glad if Freethinkers within a reasonable distance will make a point of attending and help the lecturer to hold his own against any malicious opposition. The lecture will commence at 3.15. Courteous critics will be allowed ten minutes each.

WE are delighted to learn that the Manchester Freethinkers have struggled gallantly against the sudden obstacle to the success of their Hall scheme. More shares have been taken up, a considerable sum has also been temporarily advanced by shareholders, and those in class B have largely paid up arrears. Mr. Payne writes to us in a sanguine tone; but as the purchase is completed after we go to press, we are unable to state the final result. Next week we hope to state without reservation that the Manchester Freethinkers are secure in the possession of premises, in and from which they will be able to operate with increased vigor and success.

A FURTHER supply of *Royal Paupers* has been printed from the plates of the second edition, which ran out with unexpected rapidity, leaving no time for alteration or revision. This makes the sixth thousand. When the Jubilee is over a fresh edition will be prepared for permanent sale as a Republican pamphlet.

MR. GERALD MASSEY, who, according to the Epistle of John, has the characteristic of Antichrist, in that he denies that Jesus Christ came in the flesh, lectured last Sunday afternoon at St. George's Hall, Langham Place, on "The Testimony of the Catacombs to Christianity." Mr. Massey contended that the drawings in the catacombs were by Gnostic artists, that they were pre-Christian, and so far from offering proofs of the alleged historic events of the Gospel, afforded positive disproof, since they could only be explained by Egyptian typology. This Sunday Mr. Massey gives his discourse on "The Historical Jesus and the Mythical Christ."

OUR energetic friend, Mr. A. B. Moss, is contributing a series of papers on the "The Bible and Evolution" to the New York *Truthseeker*. Mr. Moss is determined to be heard of on both sides of the herring-pond.

COL. R. G. INGERSOLL'S eldest daughter is said to have a remarkably fine soprano voice. She is likewise beautiful, and is compared to a Greek goddess.—*American Paper*.

A NEW philosophical and literary *Jewish Review* is announced. It will appear quarterly and be edited by Claude G. Montefiore, and Israel Abrahams. We hope it will be bold enough to tell the truth as it is in Judaism concerning the founder and foundation of Christianity.

AT the annual dinner of the City Liberal Club, Exeter, one of the mottoes which conspicuously adorned the walls of the dining-room was a quotation from the *Age of Reason*, "The world is my country, mankind are my brethren, and to do good is my religion." The Exeter *Evening Post* thinks such patronage of Thomas Paine as one of the teachers of the Radical party betokens national ruin like that which overtook Belshazzar's kingdom after the handwriting on the wall.

"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

(Concluded from p. 199.)

THE British bully, after setting God on to his enemies just as he would his bulldog, winds up with the heart-warming, conscience-soothing piece of cant, "God save us all." That this apparently noble wish is mere cant, that is unconscious hypocrisy, is evident from the fact that the "all" only includes our own side, right or wrong. If we had first asked to be saved from waging cruel and unjust wars and from oppressing and deceiving other people, if we had asked for universal justice, peace and harmony, instead of selfish success in crushing those whom we hate or whose lands we covet, the expressed prayer might be worthy of a National Anthem. As it is, it is only deceptive and mischievous. It hides our evil wishes from us with a soul-salving pretence of a catholicity of sentiment which we all along trample under foot.

The last, and least objectionable, verse runs thus:

Thy choicest gifts in store,
On her be pleased to pour;
Long may she reign!
May she defend the laws,
And ever give us cause
To sing with heart and voice
God save the Queen!

The chief fault here is the diversion of what should be rational and humane sentiment from its proper objects to the semi-deification of a particular person. This concentration of public interest and devotion in the person of the chief was useful and even necessary in earlier and more barbarous stages of social evolution, but it is far from representing the aspirations of to-day. The welfare of the nation and of all mankind, should be the object of devotion, not a person or a post. Why should not the choicest gifts be poured on the nation itself, or on the whole world, rather than on the favored idler who receives half-a-million a year, and abundant extras, out of the nation's choicest gifts in store, and so, one would think, does not need many more special blessings besides? We pray to God to preserve the figure-head of the ship of state, as if the ship and the passengers were of an exceedingly secondary importance. If we are to pray nationally, surely it should be Parliament and its ministers, the individuals who actually govern us, that we should pray for, and not the comparative nonentity who is more a rudimentary or vestigiary organ in our social organisation than a real active essential part of it.

Why should we call upon God to cause the Queen to defend our laws for us, when we ought to defend and amend our own laws for ourselves by our own representatives in Parliament? Surely self-reliance is a nobler and more needful lesson. One of the prominent mottoes displayed in the Mile End Road, during the Queen's recent visit to the East-End, clearly inculcated this lesson. In bold two-foot letters it substituted "People save the People" for the customary "God save the Queen" of the thoughtless and superstitious. The newer phrase is not a particularly happy one, but the sentiment is thoroughly sound and practical.

Summing up, I find that our National Anthem, more even than *Rule Britannia*, is unworthy of the position it holds, both for its mechanical and poetical structure and for the arrogant sentiment that it inculcates.

Its structure as a piece of poetical composition is so faulty that, out of twenty-one nominal rhymes, only eleven are true ones. *Voice* is made to rhyme with *cause*; *Queen* is rhymed with *reign*; *over us* with *glorious*; and *enemies* with *arise*. Even the passable rhymes are usually forced and artificial; thus the words *in store* are purely redundant, being appended to "Thy choicest gifts" solely to obtain a rhyme to *pour*. The introduction of knavish *tricks* to rhyme with confounded *politics* is a piece of bathos that would ruin any piece of poetry except comic doggerel or a national anthem.

Its sentiment, which of course is infinitely more important than its intrinsically mean and meretricious composition, is equally of a low and hopelessly vulgar order. Possibly this is its one virtue; it has been honestly representative of national snobbishness of thought and expression. Hence its success. I am afraid the average standard among all nationalities is a low one, but I should greatly prefer that the leading minds would lead them to higher standards and shame them out of their ignoble cock-crowing and dunghill arrogance. Our Anthem,

written by Carey to music originally by a real John Bull, commenced "God save great George our King," and we have kept up the same strong mixture of piety, flattery, jingoism and cant ever since for want of a better substitute. This Royal Anthem, for really it is not a National Anthem any more than it is a moral or humanitarian one, substitutes false ideals for true ones. For the nation it substitutes a Queen; for humanity it substitutes God; for the brotherhood of man it gives us hatred and contempt and slander of those whom we seek to injure. It appeals to our insular prejudices and feelings, and confirms and strengthens them with the sanctions supposed to be of the highest validity. It excludes Atheists and Republicans from the national song. It founds itself on three dying and cognate ideas—(1) God in heaven, (2) his vicegerent the Queen on earth, (3) international hatreds. Hence whatever it may have been in the past it cannot be the national anthem of the future.

W. P. BALL.

A CLERGYMAN'S ESTIMATE OF INGERSOLL.

THE following passages are selected from a long report issued by the Rev. Dr. Jones of America. They are the more valuable as coming from a theological opponent.

"The committee, you will recollect, gave me instructions to inquire particularly as to the real influence which the speeches and writings of Colonel Ingersoll have had in producing the paralysis of faith among the people, over which we all so deeply mourn, and for which we desire to find a remedy. I was personally acquainted with this man's father in days gone by, and have often wondered how by the law of inherited characteristics his son has become so errant from the footsteps of the flock. His case is a paradoxical one. There is not in the whole country a citizen so well known and so thoroughly popular as Ingersoll. The genial nature of the man, his undoubted honesty in his views of religion, his amazing eloquence, flavored as it is with the Attic salt of wit, and his sublime courage in attacking a system of religion which has strengthened by the growth of eighteen centuries, have given him the highest place in the admiration of his countrymen. Notwithstanding all our devices to limit his hearing, and dull the edge of his weapons, he commands the largest audiences wherever he goes. Christians in full communion, as I know to be the case, will leave their own churches of a Sabbath night and give any price to hear him, and, what is worse, will cheer to the echo, with the rest of the audience, the most savage thrusts he makes with his deadly rapier into the very bowels of our theology."

"His works form a library of themselves, and they are read everywhere. Were he a member of the church, or did he conceal his sentiments in regard to religion, as so many of the politicians do, he could have any office or honor he wished. I went on two occasions to hear him, and to find out if I could the secret of his power which has so appalled us. I noticed other ministers in the audience whom I knew, and who, I suppose, came from the same motive that took me there, and they laughed as loudly as the rest when he held up to ridicule some of the most sacred doctrines of the Christian creed. I saw scores of intelligent and respectable-looking people standing on their feet in a crowded room for two mortal hours and more listening to this man. They would not stand ten minutes in such uncomfortable circumstances listening to Dr. Hall, Dr. Crosby, or any other orthodox minister."

"Ingersoll's audiences are obviously composed of the most intelligent people, who would go to sleep in fifteen minutes under the soporific influence of the usual orthodox sermon on the Sabbath, but who never seem to grow weary in listening to him in his attacks upon the Church and Bible. I think I am safe in saying that the eighteen hundred years of the Church's history has produced no enemy to Christianity to be at all compared in ability and success among the people to this man."

"One thing that gives Ingersoll a mighty advantage before the unconverted world, and even before the half-Christian world, is the fact that, layman as he is, he marches up and down before the serried ranks of the Christian ministry, Catholic and Protestant, composing an array of officers, from generals down to corporals, eighty thousand strong, daring them to meet him in a combat on the evidences of Christianity, on which topic they are supposed to be perfectly at home. But among us all there is not a single David with his sling and stone who has the courage to accept the challenge of this proud and self-confident Philistine, and the skill to bring him to the ground."

"Numbers of our young men, baptised members of the church, ask why, if Ingersoll is doing so much harm by his lectures and writings, our able ministers who assume to be watchmen on the walls of Zion—commissioned and salaried defenders of the Gospel, soldiers of the cross, panoplied from top to toe in the truth—do not meet and conquer him. I have often been interrogated after this fashion, and I admit I am at a loss to reply. They say it looks as though the clergy were conscious of having a bad case; and the presumption, without argument, is that Ingersoll is much more than half right in his views. They say their preachers are very brave in opening fire upon him from their

pulpits, but they are always sure when they do so that he is a thousand miles away."

"Another alarming fact is that some of the most intelligent women in the Church are beginning to give way in their faith and zeal. Women in all ages have been the mainstay of the Church. The secret influence they exert upon their husbands and children is incalculable as a whole. If they should desert the churches, as the men do, the death-knell of religion would soon be heard sounding its melancholy tones all over the land. No wonder, then, that I noticed with astonishment and alarm, when I attended Ingersoll's lectures, that the women in the audience were not only as numerous as the men, but appeared to be remarkably intelligent, and to belong to the higher classes of society, such as you would see in our most fashionable churches on the Sabbath."

"Ingersoll is in dead earnest, and so are all those who are associated with him. So far as good morals are concerned, if the Infidels generally, and the lecturers particularly, were not persons of irreproachable lives, the press of the country, with its sharp eyes and keen scent, would soon publish the fact, and give the evidence, as it does in the case of other transgressors. But these men brave unpopularity, accept poor pay for their services when they could make fortunes in other vocations, and devote themselves to their work because, strange as it may appear to us, and horrible too, they believe religiously that the Church now is, and always has been a drawback to civilisation; that her religion has no foundation in either fact or reason; and they are as sincere in their zeal to extirpate both, as the old Crusaders were to deliver Jerusalem and the holy places from the dominion of the Saracens. And I fear that unless we arouse from our lethargy, and arm for the conflict, they will succeed."

In the course of his report the Rev. Dr. Jones strongly condemns the abusive tactics adopted by Talmage and others. He acknowledges of Ingersoll that "his character as a man seems to be without blemish" and that "his life is absolutely stainless."

THE BETTER CREED.

I HEAR thee speak of a better creed,
Where reason and science are taught, instead
Of fasting, and prayer, and faith, and grace.
Mother, O where is this better place?
Is it richly endowed, and upheld by the State,
And only free to the rich and the great?
Not so, not so, my child.

Is it far away 'neath the sunny sky,
And the balmy breezes of Italy,
Whose despot rulers are monkish knaves,
And the priest-ridden people, wretched slaves?
Can it be from the halls of the Vatican
That truth and science are taught to man?
Not there, not there, my child.

Is it nearer home, where on Sabbath days
The hearers yawn while the minister prays,
Or nod assent while he dares to tell
That honest inquirers are doomed to hell?
Is it truth they teach, dear mother, say,
From the Protestant pulpits on Sabbath day?
Not so, not so, my child.

Eye would not see it, could they prevent,
Ear would not hear with their consent,
The little band still struggles away,
Waiting the dawn of a brighter day;
When the hoary fabric of error shall fall,
Then shall flourish the Freethought Hall.
It is there, it is there, my child.

JOHN WILSON.

THE Liverpool *Echo* reports Mr. W. J. C. Day, superintendent of the Boys' Farm Industrial School, Standon Bridge, as giving the following as answers to actual examination questions. Some of them look to us remarkably like old acquaintances:—

"What do you know of the patriarch Abraham?"

"He was the father of Lot and 'ad tow wives—wun was called Hishmale and t'uther Haygur. He kept wun at home and he turned t'uther into the desert, where she became a pillow of salt in the daytime and a pillow of fire at nite."

"Give the names of the books of the Old Testament?"

"Devonshire, Exeter, Littikus, Numbers, Stronomy, Jupiter, Judges, Ruth," &c.

"Who was Moses?"

"He was an Egypshion. He lived in a bark maid of bullrushers, and he kep a golden calf, and he worshipt braizen snakes, an he hot nuthin but kwales and manner for forty years. He was kort by the air of his od while riding under the bow of a tree, and he was killed by his son Absolon as he was a-hanging from the bow. His end was pease."

"What is a miracle?"

"Don't know."

"If you saw the sun shining over head at midnight, what would you call it?"

"The moon."

"But if you were told it was the sun?"

"I should say it was a lie."

STANLEY AND THE MISSIONARIES.

STANLEY, in his adventurous expedition up the Congo for the relief of Emin Pasha, is discovering some of the bad qualities of the Christian missionary. A letter has arrived, in which he describes their shiftlessness and indolence in not growing food, and the want of common sense and common kindness displayed by some of them. A state almost of famine prevails in the district around Stanley Pool, and it was incumbent on him to remove his men onwards as speedily as possible. Nevertheless Mr. Billington, of the Livingstone Inland Mission, refused to lend him the Mission steamer for forty days. The steamer was to lie idle on the stocks for a couple of months, to be repainted, while Mr. Billington went down the river to be married to some lady whose photograph he had seen. As matters became more desperate, Stanley sent again. The missionaries declined. Mr. Billington argued that he had consulted the Bible and had found therein a command not to assist Stanley's expedition, and besides he must get down the river to marry his wife that was to be. A third appeal was made, but Mr. Billington only replied that he had "prayerfully wrestled even unto the third watch," and was confirmed thereby in the opinion that he was doing wisely and well. Stanley, after representing the serious condition of affairs and the frivolous nature of the missionaries' objections to the Governor of the infant State, sent a guard of Soudanese to seize the steamer if necessary. He heard that Billington had been secretly removing and hiding the valves and pistons of the steamer, to render her useless. Under the influence of the Governor, however, Mr. Billington finally allowed Stanley to hire the steamer at £100 a month, which is at the rate of 30 per cent. per annum upon the estimated value of the vessel. And these are the people sent out to Christianise the natives whom they live upon. Stanley had to feed some of these missionaries out of his own scanty stores. He may well exclaim "What ungrateful people some of these missionaries are!" "Faith," he says, "they may have in superabundance—in hope they no doubt live cheerfully; but of charity I do not find the slightest trace."

"WHAT A CHRISTIAN SHOULD BE."

THERE have lately been posted in and about Exeter Hall large bills announcing a series of "Bible Readings" by a Mr. F. E. Marsh, on the above subject. The greater portion of the bill is devoted to the following acrostic upon "What a Christian should be:

C onfident
H appy
R eal
I ndustrious
S eparate
T eachable
I nstructive
A ssociating
N othing.

The literary power at Exeter Hall must indeed be at a low ebb to have to resort to such unintelligible drivel as this. An institution with any number of well-paid officials (including a secretary with several hundreds a year) ought surely to afford some literary ability, however insignificant. We do not expect great things in this respect from the prayer and prog shop known as Exeter Hall, but this production is so extremely ridiculous that we are surprised the Committee ever sanctioned its publicity. Have they been hoaxed? Has any Freethinking wag taken advantage of their guileless simplicity? Upon reflection we are afraid not. The composition could not have been the work of a Freethinker. Its palpable stupidity is an incontestible proof of its Christian authenticity. A serious point, however, remains for consideration. Such compositions are dangerous. There are many who could not survive the perusal of an atrocity of this description. A good constitution alone saved us. Messrs. Kennedy, Burson and Bond, who represent the soul and body of the place, ought in common humanity to protect the public from any future inflictions in the nature of pious acrostics. Let them stick to prayer and chops.

As an antidote we present them with the following. Not that they are the characteristics of every Christian, but merely "What a Christian may be." We reserve no copyright. Exeter Hall can therefore use and circulate.

C anting, curning, and cringing.
H eadstrong, harmful, and hypocritical.
R ecorous, rabid, and rapacious.
I diotic, insipid, and inhuman.
S elfish, sheepish, and spiteful.
T houghtless, trickish, and transgressive.
I gnorant, illiberal, and illogical.
A busive, aggressive, and artificial.
N arrow, noxious, and nonsensical.

P.S.—The above is not in any manner intended to apply to an eminent Yankee evangelist whose late performances at Exeter Hall have totally eclipsed the fame of the lamented Ananias.

VERITAS.

REVIEWS.

Jubilee Number of the "Comet." By Republicus: Aberdeen; Middleton. (Price 1d.) An open letter to the Queen, which we suspect she will never read. Smartly written, and deserves a good circulation.

The Blackley National Provident Insurance Schems. A Protest and an Appeal. By the Rev. J. FROME WILKINSON, M.A. London: Swan, Sonnenschein, Lowry and Co. (1s.)—A thoughtful, careful, and able defence of voluntary Provident Societies, and a protest against national insurance, such as Bismarck has inaugurated in Germany, the land of political slaves. Mr. Wilkinson's little volume contains a mass of valuable statistics.

PROFANE JOKES.

The woman whose favorite hymn is "I would not live always," has spent £230 for patent medicines during the last ten years.

A Methodist minister in Connecticut is reported as saying that there will not be as many Congregationalists in heaven as there are icicles in the other place.

"Did you pass the hat, deacon?" "Yes." "What's in it?" "Well, fortinately, parson, the linin' is still thar. First time it ever happened, parson. I reckon the boys is getting religious at last."

"Haven't you been in jail once before for stealing chickens?" "No, sah; no, indeed, I hain't. Praise the Lawd for his infernito mussy, nobody hain't cotched me yit. It seems as ef I was pertected by the higher powers."

"Mother, have I got any children?" asked little Johnny Fizzlotop. "Why, no, child; what put that into your head?" "You read in the Bible about children's children. That's what put it into my head."

In the New Hebrides, a savage went to the priest with his two wives to ask his blessing. "Two wives!" exclaimed the priest, "impossible; one is all the church permits." A day or two later he returned with one wife, with the same request. "Where is the other?" asked the priest. "I've eaten her!" was the reply.

Mr. G.: "How are matters progressing in church, Uncle Rastus—flourishing?" Uncle Rastus: "I hain't preachin' da no mo,' sah." Mr. G.: "Why, what's the trouble?" Uncle Rastus: "Hit's all owin' ter de drought, sah." Mr. G.: "The drought?" Uncle Rastus: "Yes, sah. Yo' sees, I prayed fo' foah Sundays in concesshun, sah, an' da didn't no rain come, an' so de membahs ob de congregashun axed for my resignashun on de groun's of disincability."

INFIDEL DEATH-BEDS.

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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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