

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 219.



HOLY GEOMETRY.

He stood, and measured the earth.—HABAKKUK III., 6.

CHRISTIAN CHARITY.

JESUS CHRIST told his disciples that, in bestowing alms, they were not even to let their left hand know what their right hand did. But this self-sacrificing method has not been generally approved, and comparatively few Christians "do good by stealth and blush to find it fame." They more often "do good for fame and publish it by stealth." Nay more, their "charity" is actually their boast in their controversies with "infidels." Look at our hospitals, they say; look at our orphanages, look at our almshouses, look at our soup-kitchens. It is a wonder they do not boast of their asylums, but perhaps they think it would invite the retort that they not only build them but fill them. Such boasting, however, is utterly absurd from every point of view. Since the world was in any degree civilised it has never lacked some kind of benevolent institutions. Mr. Wheeler has recently shown in these columns that hospitals are not of Christian origin; and there is hardly a country in the world, with any pretension to rank above barbarians, in which some species of provision is not made by the rich for the necessities of the poor. Every Mohammedan, for instance, is required by his religion to devote a tenth of his income to charity; whereas the Christian system of tithes is entirely for the profit and aggrandisement of the clergy.

Still more ridiculous, if possible, is the Christian cry, "Where are your Freethought hospitals, alms-houses, and orphanages?" Freethought is a poor, struggling cause; its adherents are comparatively few and scattered; it has no endowments to lessen the current cost of its propaganda; and it is unable to exact subscriptions by the

orthodox method of boycotting, or to acquire them in return for a good advertisement. Still, the Freethought party does manage to relieve its necessitous members; and the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund is not only well supported, in excess of all demands, but is probably the *only* Fund which is administered without a single farthing of expense. Besides this, Freethinkers support ordinary local charities, when deserving, just like other people; although frequently, as in the case of almost every hospital, religion is forced on the recipients of such charity whether they wish it or not, and religious tests are maintained in the administration.

As a rule, however, Freethinkers are not inclined to attach so much importance as Christians to organised almsgiving. At the best it is but a clumsy way of alleviating the worst effects of social disease. The Freethinker attaches more importance to the study of causes. He is like the true health reformer who believes a great deal more in exercise, fresh air, and wholesome diet, than in physic. For this reason Freethinkers are generally students of social and political questions. They are Radicals in the philosophical sense of the word; that is, they recognise that real, lasting improvement can only be achieved by dealing with the causes of poverty and degradation. Many Christians, on the other hand, thoroughly believe that the poor will never cease out of the land; and they seem to regard these unfortunates as whetstones, provided by a beneficent providence, on which the wealthy may sharpen their benevolence.

Christian charity, even in its highest form, is infinitely less merciful than science; a truth which Mr. Cotter Morison enforces in the seventh chapter of his *Service of Man*. Sanitation, medical science, free trade, popular education, co-operation, and such agencies, have done tremendously more than religion to diminish evil and mitigate suffering. On the other hand, it is indisputable that much of our boasted charity is worse than wasted, as it tends to produce the very helplessness and pauperism that furnish it with objects of compassion.

Charity is very good in its way, but what we really want is justice. Let us go in for justice first, and when we have got that we shall see what remains for charity to do. Probably it will be found that unjust laws inflict a hundred times more misery than charity could ever alleviate. If that be the case, the most charitable man, after all, is he who devotes some of his time, thought, and energy to political and social reform. Good health for the next generation is more valuable than medicine for the diseases of the present generation.

Charity, also, in its largest sense, is far wider than almsgiving. It is a questionable charity which gives you a shilling if you are hard-up, and persecutes you if you think for yourself. Most of us do not require soup-tickets, but we do require civil treatment, respect for our independence, and smiling rather than frowning faces. The man who lifts me up from the road when I stumble, deserves my thanks; but I doubt the sincerity of his kindness if, when he learns that I honestly differ from him on the Atonement, he knocks me down again. Assisting people who agree with you, and wilfully injuring those who differ, savors less of charity than of zeal. You may be a very good Christian, but I venture to say you are a very bad man.

When Saladin died he ordered charities to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan. Yet this brilliant ruler had to repel Christian attacks on his dominions, and to witness the most abominable cruelty wrought by the soldiers of the Cross. Where, in the annals of Christendom, shall we find such a noble example of true charity; of charity which overflows the petty barriers of creeds, and loses itself in the great ocean of humanity?

G. W. FOOTE.

THE OLD GOD AND THE NEW.

THERE be gods many and lords many, said Paul, and he might have added there are almost as many gods as worshippers. One understands by the term "God" quite a different conception from that held by another. Men try to paint a flattering likeness of themselves and call it God; but they usually exhibit a sorry caricature. Hence Ingersoll says "An honest God is the noblest work of man." Amongst the innumerable varieties of the genus "deity" we may select two specimens as representative. The first is the anthropomorphic God of the Bible, the second the modern Theist's deity, who is anything but anthropomorphic.

In the beginning men created gods in their own image, savage, arrogant, cruel, revengeful, and capricious. Many of these traits still remain in the Bible picture of the Jewish God Jehovah, and testify to the descent of the circumcised race from savagery. Jehovah describes himself as a jealous God. He is entitled "a god of battles," "Lord of Hosts" and a "man of war." He delights in blood and sacrifices. He smells a sweet savor, and is refreshed. He repents him that he has made man and it grieves him at his heart. He is gracious to his favorites and pleased with the butchery of all who will not obey his voice. His general conduct is that of a barbarous bloodthirsty irresponsible tyrant. So much like man his maker is he that he walks in the garden in the cool of the day. He makes coats of skins unto Adam and his wife and clothes them. He comes down to earth to see a city and tower men are building, and he confounds their language that they may not understand one another's speech. He commands Abraham to offer up his son as a sacrifice, and takes a meal and makes a covenant with him. He has a wrestling match with Jacob. With Moses he speaks face to face as a man speaketh to his friend, and even favors him with an exhibition of his back parts.

Matthew Arnold calls the God of the theologians "a magnified non-natural man." The Bible God seems, however, to us a very natural creation. We can understand how he was believed in, as we can understand how children believe in giants or fairies. All that was non-natural about him was his magical or wonder-working power, which in their ignorance men were ready to attribute to other men as well as to their deities. But we cannot understand men like Matthew Arnold representing this same Bible God as only "a deeply moved way of saying conduct or righteousness." Moreover we cannot understand the modern God without body, parts, or passions, who thinks without any organs of thought, sees without organs of sight, and hears without organs of hearing. This formless, colorless, scentless, tasteless, invisible, inaudible, impalpable influence, who is an infinite person and, at the same time, Our Father which art in heaven—is an altogether different, we cannot say distinct, conception to that of the Bible God, being in fact as close an approach to nothingness as a footless stocking without a leg.

The more ignorant the Theist the more real is his God. Old Jahveh was always near at hand. One never knew how soon they might "get his monkey up." To put his ark straight when toppling over might mean sudden death. A prayer or sacrifice omitted would result in disaster. It was a capital offence to imitate his priest's pomatum. But the modern deity never manifests his presence. He remains as remote as though no sound of human sorrow ever mounted to mar his everlasting calm. Wherever science advances he retires. He is, indeed, so cloud-like and Protean as to elude analysis. This sublimated and superfine deity, like Shelley's Peter Bell, has "got so subtle that to be Nothing is all his glory." He is purely immaterial. Take a box four feet square and exhaust the air, and you have sixty-four cubic feet of the metaphysical deity. But he is not space, and does not exist in space or time either. He is a bundle of negations. He is infinite, yet a person; immaterial, yet existing everywhere, even where matter exists. Some, indeed, who see that personality and consciousness pre-suppose limitations and finite condition in their possessor, will not allow him to be a person. But arguments for a god which do not lead up to a person might as well lead to nothing and to nowhere. Who would care as much for an impersonal god as for a used postage stamp? Some there are who will have a God, even though he is a name and nothing more. It is so respectable to keep a deity. One who proclaims himself

"a Theist with an uncomprehended theos," revels in irrationality:

"I climb the heights, O God, to you,
By paths that Reason never knew."

The modern Theist ignores the Bible God as far as possible. Old Jahveh betrays too many traces of his savage origin. But avoiding the Scylla of anthropomorphism, he touches the Charybdis of pantheism. An infinite God must be identical with the universe. Pantheism is only a halfway house between Theism and Atheism, even as Agnosticism is Atheism in domino. An epigram on this subject is ascribed to Heine: "I began by believing in a God whom I could not see, but who could see me. I went on believing in one who could not see me, but whom I could see. I ended in believing there was no God whom either I could see or who could see me." The old God retains all the devotion that is left in the world. No one would think of worshipping a being who would bestow nothing in return. "Give us this day our daily bread," cries the voice of the old religion, while the new is teaching that it is in vain to pray for material blessings. Separate Theism from the old anthropomorphic special providence to which superstitious man turns in his hour of trouble, and nothing remains but a will-o'-the-wisp with no more reality than the metaphysical conception of a vacuum.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE DEVIL.

Who from the bliss of heaven was hurled,
And left to roam this wicked world
With nose that's long, with tail that's curled?
The Devil.

Who sports the legs of Bacchus hoar?
Who wears the horns than Pan once wore?
Who cribbed his wings from classic lore?
The Devil.

Who made man fall from high estate?
Who showed to Eve the tempting bait,
Yet knew the pippin sealed their fate?
The Devil.

Who played on Job such artless tricks?
Who sent him boils, and sold his sticks,
And left him in an awful fix?
The Devil.

Who climbed a tower like Steeple Jack,
And carried Jesus on his back—
Said if he fell no bone should crack?
The Devil.

Who forms the parson's stock in trade?
Who haunts the man and scares the maid?
Who makes the little child afraid?
The Devil.

When on a bed of pain we lie
Who waits to see if death is nigh,
And wags his tail when sinners die?
The Devil.

Who, when I spun my little top,
And bought the Sunday lolly-pop,
(I always feared) was near the shop?
The Devil.

Who, when I grew to manhood's prime,
Inspired me to this awful crime,
To write his history all in rhyme?
The Devil.

But who of faith and folly born,
When ridiculed and laughed to scorn,
Sneaks off to Hades all forlorn?
The Devil.

S. SODDY.

INSPIRATION.—A dogma which attaches to the crudest and least spiritual narrative of Genesis or Judges the same ethical value and supernatural infallibility as to the words of Christ, is the death-blow to all sane, all manly, all honest interpretation. Yet this dogma prevailed for ages.—ARCHDEACON FARRAR, *History of Interpretation*, p. 28, 1886.

OBITUARY.—We regret to announce the death at Sheerness, of Mr. J. W. Barker, of Reading. Mr. Barker was well known as a leading Freethinker and Radical, and was much esteemed by all who knew him. His funeral, which took place at Reading, was attended by upwards of 200 persons.

SOME WITTICISMS OF SOLOMON.

THE Christian reader will be duly horrified at the suggestion that any mere "wit" can be found in his dismal old book. He sees through his theological eye-glass "wisdom" deep as—hell; but wit, humor, facetiousness!—it is outraging his conceptions of holiness to tell him that, so far from the Bible being *Holy* without wit, it is certainly not *wholly* devoid of it, as I will endeavor to prove. That Solomon was consciously humorous I should not undertake to show, were it not for certain texts like the following: "It is an abomination to kings to commit wickedness." That, is, he would say kings naturally scorn to do a wrong! What can be more deliciously mirth-provoking? Obviously he did not expect any one to accept it literally. Another very humorous verse has been marred, I should say, by mis-translation: "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Substitute *war* for "peace," and the blessed text becomes witty and wise. Solomon is supposed to have been the son of David; David was the man after God's own heart. Presumably, therefore, his ways pleased the Lord. His enemies were not at peace with him, but at war, or in pieces! Hence my improvement of Prov. xvi., 7. Again, how naively witty is Solomon when he prophesies the higher intellectual attainments of women in the words, "The sweetness of the lips increaseth learning," and what congenial humor the devotee of the pipe can find in the apparently dreadful words "An ungodly man diggeth up evil, and in his lips there is as a burning fire"; and with what delicacy our newspaper geniuses might prompt the literary hack and encourage obesity by quoting Solomon's reference to their calling in the words, "A good report maketh the bones fat."

Jokes could be found in the book of Solomon's Humor relating to almost all the conditions of sublunary existence, and although there are no quips and cranks concerning "heaven above," the fact can be accounted for by remembering that Solomon, as a wise man, knew himself and court etiquette too well to carry his tomfooleries too far. The next *mot* to be noticed is a judicial witticism: "A faithful witness will not lie; but a false witness will utter lies." I venture to say that a quotation like that would do something towards banishing melancholy, if mistaken for something *original* on the part of our laughter-loving magistrates. It has the twofold advantage of being divine truth humorously enunciated. Notice further the genial sarcasm with which Solomon treats the barbarous practice of corporal punishment: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son." Many people are dense enough to accept the meaning which harmonises with feelings of vengeance. With all due respect to them, I must urge that such an interpretation makes the passage a falsehood, and Solomon had better be known to fame as a mad wag than live in history as a liar.

A comical but useful piece of advice is this: "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee." Is the advice "Follow your nose" one whit funnier? I trow not. Yet one other piece of tremendous fun! In these words "And thou mourn at the last when thy flesh and body are consumed." The preceding scripture is a manifest allusion, in a spirit of ghastly humor to the ghost of some unconsecrated cobbler, visiting the scene of his earthly labors, and mourning because he did not stick to his *last* and leave juvenile follies to hoary sages and libertines like King Solomon.

W. C. SAVILLE.

ACID DROPS.

THE REV. W. M. FARLEY, vicar of Creetingham, in Suffolk, has been murdered by his curate, the Rev. A. E. G. Cooper. The vicar was 73 years of age. The curate walked into the old man's bed-room and cut his throat from ear to ear. The curate was High Church, but the vicar was Evangelical, and had lately advertised for another curate. What kind of moral will the clergy draw from this shocking affair? We know well enough how the pulpits would ring with denunciations of infidelity if the actors in the tragedy had been Atheists instead of Christian ministers. The last prominent case of murder by a Church of England clergyman was that of the Rev. Mr. Watson, who murdered his wife.

It has been decided that a Jew ought not to speak through a telephone or use an electric bell on the Sabbath; we presume because the one employs labor and the other kindles a spark of fire.

LOUIS HARRIS, a Jew, who was being arrested for perjury, was so religious that he wouldn't strike a match to read the warrant by because it was the Jewish Sabbath, and such an action, he protested, was against his faith. His piety, however, did not prevent him from snatching the warrant when the officer obligingly struck a match at his request. By the help of his friends the pious perjurer escaped. His friends have been arrested for the assault, but the faith of the strict observer of the Sabbath is still rewarded with personal liberty.

MR. MONTAGU WILLIAMS went out of his way, on the bench of Greenwich Police-court, to give advice gratis. He said, "Take my advice; when anyone tells you he is a Christian or a Blue Ribbonite, look out." From this we should suppose that no one is likely to make a mistake and take Mr. Montagu Williams for a Christian or a Blue Ribbonite.—*Echo*.

FÉCAMP is a shrine almost as well frequented by pilgrims as Lourdes. Fécamp is blessed with some of the "Precious Blood" of the Savior, which was scraped off a tree by some

ancient saint, and after various miraculous adventures was finally brought to Fécamp. There, according to the handbooks of devotion and the tales told by the pilgrims, it still works wonderful miracles and heals diseases which physicians have pronounced hopeless. Credulity is by no means confined to the past ages.

THE *Birmingham Post* says: "There is a place of worship in Newhall Street, over a suite of heterogenous offices, and the name-plate of one of the latter has, by an ambiguous arrangement, been so placed, and is so worded, that an irreverent person might mistake it for a description of the religious meeting-place. Over the porch are the words 'Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise,' and on one side of it you read 'Life and Fire Office.' Now, as the place of worship is not used by the Salvation Army or any other sensational body, I need not do more than draw attention to a juxtaposition which doubtless has hitherto escaped attention."

A FISHERMAN charged at Hull with importing tobacco on which duty had not been paid, put in the plea that he had bought it from the Mission ship. He was none the less fined the full amount of duty and costs.

MODERN warfare is becoming more expensive every year. It is estimated that the cost of firing one shot from a cannon of the largest size now made is sufficient to maintain a missionary and his whole family in China or Africa for more than two years. And it is still unsettled as to which will produce the greatest amount of mischief in return for the money spent.

A "VERY Christian man," named W. J. Pallett, has just been committed for trial at Edmonton. He is charged with taking away a Miss Hoy, who is under eighteen years of age. They used to frequent the same place of worship, and although the prisoner has a wife and five children he used to blow kisses to her, and wander about country lanes and fields with his arm round her waist. The girl subsequently left her situation and went direct to the defendant. They then ran away and lived together as man and wife until arrested on a warrant. Defendant and the girl both swear that nothing immoral has ever occurred between them, although they admit they lived in the same room. Religion evidently furnishes a good training in hypocrisy. Pallett was a prominent member of a mission and distributed hymn-books at the open-air services conducted by Mr. Carrington. This Mr. Carrington is the father of Miss Hoy, who evidently inherits her laxity of morals from her pious parents, who did not trouble to get married till after her birth. A "very Christian" set indeed these mission people appear to be.

A WRITER says that a celebrated preacher writes most of his sermons when travelling by railway, and adds: "We never think of doubting this assertion. Some of his sentences have evidently gone through several collisions, and have only been rescued in a maimed condition."

JULIUS N. S. FREELY, *alias* Julius Trevir, formerly a clergyman in Dublin, was sentenced to five years penal servitude as an habitual thief. In his clerical attire the prisoner frequented libraries and booksellers' shops, and removed books in inside pockets specially constructed for that purpose. A number of previous convictions were proved. When arrested he exclaimed, "The Lord told me to do it, for I could not starve." Why do the papers call him a "sham clergyman" and yet acknowledge that he was "formerly" a real clergyman? Is it to make friends with the Mammon of righteousness?

WILLIAM TURNER and ANN Keen, both understood to have been active members of the Salvation Army, were committed for trial at Lambeth on charges of robbery and forgery.

MR. G. S. KING, a prominent member of one of the dissenting chapels in Blackthorne, has been arrested on a charge of embezzling Corporation funds. He is a rate-collector, and his defalcations are said to amount to several hundred pounds.

THE incumbent of St. John the Evangelist, at St. Leonards, having had a fine church erected for him, now explains to his congregation that they have only half done their duty. He now wants of them the modest trifle of £1,000 for building him a residence, so that he may live rent-free.

THE educated Chinese cannot understand the Christian method of telling God all he ought to do, in prayers. A mandarin said to a missionary, "If a man came into my court of justice and spoke to me as you Christians speak to God, I should at once order him to be bastinadoed."

THE Black Congress is meeting in the Black Country to discuss such soul-absorbing topics as "The Relation of the Church of England to Eastern Churches," "Elasticity of Worship," "The Church in Africa." "Mysticism" was going to occupy its attention but it was found at the last moment that there was a lurking desire to ventilate the question of "Tithes," and that accordingly has been substituted.

THE Bill facilitating divorce passed by the New South Wales Legislature, despite the opposition of the church party, is denounced by the *Church Times*, which declares, "It will be disgraceful to her Majesty's Government if they allow so scandalous a measure to become law."

THE Bill is scandalous because in opposition to the divine law concerning divorce. But what is the divine law. According to Moses it read: "When a man hath taken a wife and married her and it come to pass that she find no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house."—Deut. xxiv., 1. This is plain and simple. All the power lies with the husband, He is not obliged to resort to any court whatever, and there is no similar permission for the wife to write a bill of divorcement. A very nice model for the Legislature of any civilised country.

HERBERT FREUND, the modern prophet who preaches the "City's Doom" to crowds near the Mansion House, or to the worshippers in St. Paul's Cathedral, is again in trouble, like so many of the Lord's people. He is locked up for disturbing a synagogue this time, on the Day of Atonement. Entering the building during the most solemn part of the service, he blew a penny trumpet, and shouted, in a loud voice, "You Jews, why don't you believe in the Messiah? Water! Damn you all! Fire, fire, fire!" When in court this modern Jeremiah began reciting scriptural quotations, but the magistrate ordered him to hold his tongue. On leaving the dock he exclaimed: "I think the Jews ought to know the great Atonement is our Savior, and that he is the only means by which we can obtain our salvation." Of course, the poor fellow is mad with religious mania, but so must the prophets of the Old Testament have been, for their excesses were far worse than those of the modern madman in question. Isaiah, for instance, walked about the streets stark naked for three years.

THE press exhausts its vocabulary of horror on the case of Jane Ann Sibley, who stripped a little boy, beat him severely, and then seated him on a hot stove. But what would the papers say, if they were only unmuzzled, of the orthodox God, who puts billions of his children in a hot furnace to shriek and shrivel there for ever? Mrs. Sibley has got eight months' imprisonment, thank to the interference of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. What would God get for his infinite cruelty if he perpetrates it, or for his awful terrorising threats if he does not?

THE Roman Catholic Spaniards have so persecuted the Protestant natives in the Caroline Islands as to cause a riot, in which several of the Catholic oppressors and many of the Protestants were slain. A Spanish expedition to Ponape destroyed many buildings, and the soldiers were allowed to plunder the property of the American missionaries and their converts. The United Government will make fresh claims for damages. The Spanish Government declines to make its dispatches public, probably because they show too clearly that the authorities are shamefully in the wrong.

THE Army of the Lord at Brighton are meeting with popular opposition of a very decided character. Last Sunday a free fight took place, and disgraceful scenes of violence occurred both within and without the building. At Acton another religious body, the Mormons, were assailed by a mob which effected a forcible entrance through a window. Orthodox Christians like to forget that these sects are part of the universal Christian Church and that the conflicts and riots they cause are cases of Christians fighting Christians.

THE Rev. V. H. Macy, rector of Oxhill, Warwickshire, has been summoned for the non-payment of poor-rate. His income is derived from glebe land, and as he cannot find a tenant he has to farm it himself. He declared that the net produce of this farm was not sufficient to pay the rates upon it. When other people farm land, clergymen always think they can pay tithes as well as ordinary rates and a heavy rent. The bench ordered the rate to be paid forthwith.

EIGHT Salvationists were sent to prison for causing an obstruction at Wigston. The street was blocked and they refused to move on when ordered by the police. Four members of the Army went to prison last week for a similar offence. Of course the Army rejoices that it is thus found worthy to suffer persecution from a Christian community. The members preferred to go to gaol rather than pay the fine of 1s. and costs.

RECENTLY the Plaistow Corps of the Salvation Army paid Albert Road a visit, and began making a noise unto the Lord outside a house in which an old gentleman lay dying. Despite this fact, of which he was duly informed, the leader kept up the godly row. At first the Corps shifted a few yards, but afterwards they actually walked past the house, singing and braying with exemplary piety. Evidently love for God is compatible with the most callous disregard of human feeling.

THE Rev. J. Ossian Davies, the Presbyterian minister of the London Scottish Church in Regent Square, vouches for the truth of the following story:—"A visitor to a Ritualistic London church found a priest catechising 200 children. He told them that if the Royal Family, the Peers, and all the members of the House of Commons were there, they would not have so much power as one poor priest; and then he asked why this was so. The children cried out, 'Because a priest can forgive our sins,' to which the parson responded 'Quite right.'" Quite right the children were too, according to the Service of the Church of England, which declares that God "hath given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins."

AN anonymous millionaire, who has made his fortune *somehow* in India has sent a big cheque to "Major" Tucker to promote the work of the Salvation Army in that country. What a pity the anonymous millionaire could not put the cash to a more useful purpose. What the Hindoos want is a little more education. They have plenty of superstitions already, and sending the Salvation Army is like sending coals to Newcastle.

By the way, there is more truth in this simile, as we use it, than is generally the case; for some portions of Christianity certainly came from India, and now "Major" Tucker is carrying it back as a brand-new article patented in England.

THE American Freethought papers print a funeral address drawn up by Dr. Titus L. Brown, of Binghamton, New York, which, by his direction, was to be read at his obsequies. He died as he had lived, a staunch Freethinker; yet his wife called in a Christian minister and had the Christian burial service. What would be thought had Mrs. Brown desired a special minister to read the Christian service over her, and her husband called in a Freethought lecturer and did all in his power to leave the impression that she died a Freethinker? But Christians have strange ways of interpreting the golden rule.

ANOTHER instance of Christian fair play is the malversation of Stephen Girard's endowment of a college for orphans at Philadelphia. By a provision of his will no ecclesiastic, missionary, or minister of any sect whatever is to hold any connection with the college, or even be admitted as a visitor; but the officers of the institution are required to instruct the pupils only in secular morality. Yet this provision has been overridden by hypocritical Christians under pretence of its being to the advantage of the children to have religious education.

AT Totnes, in Devonshire, the Rev. Oscar Oslachson, vicar of Cornworthy, was charged with stealing 200 apples on Sunday, Sept. 11. He is so unpopular that when he went to the church he found no one there to preach to, whereupon he proceeded to Mr. Parnell's farm and was seen by the police walking off with two baskets of apples. The defence was that the charge was a vindictive one and that the vicar had a right to the apples because Mr. Parnell rented the land of him. The Bench dismissed the case, but ordered the vicar to pay the costs—a most inconsistent decision, as would readily be seen if the culprit had been a poor laboring man and the dignity of the church had not been involved. Either the parson stole the apples, or he did not. If he did not, why condemn him to pay costs? God wasn't as lenient to Adam and Eve, and they by no means stole as many as 200 apples. Why didn't the parson take warning from the tale of apple-stealing with which his Bible opens the drama of human history?

MR. MARK, a Leek stationer, refuses to sell the *Freethinker* any longer for fear his assistants should read it and become polluted—by which, of course, he simply means *converted*. One of his Freethinking customers told him to give his assistants a Bible each out of the window and they would find plenty of immorality in the old Jew-Book.

RELIGIOUS mania is constantly producing suicides. Ann Fleming, of Perth, has killed herself by jumping from a cliff. Her father explains that her mind was upset by religion.

MARTHA STOCKER, a widow, committed suicide, but leaves a note in which she says: "I hope the Lord will forgive me. God bless you all."

JANE PRIESTLEY and Rose Bairstow, of Bradford, drowned themselves in the Chellow Dean reservoir. Both were Sunday-school scholars.

CONSTANTINE H. DE LORNE, who shot himself in a hansom cab in Liverpool, had written a letter to a friend in London, in which he prays God to watch over his relations, and says that he had been "a victim to an unknown power which he could not resist."

WHAT does Talmage say to this nice little list of religious suicides? We have no pleasure in recording such occurrences, but we are bound to do so while pious mountebanks teach the people that Freethought leads to self-destruction.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, October 9, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, E.C., at 11.15, "Dean Swift's Irish Writings;" at 7, "Great Christ is Dead."

OCT. 16, South Shields; 23, Portsmouth; 30, Hall of Science, London.

NOV. 6, Birmingham; 13, Liverpool; 20, Camberwell; 27, Sunderland.

DEC. 4, Nottingham; 11 and 18, Hall of Science, London.

JAN. 1, Milton, Hall, London; 15, Milton Hall, 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. 7d.

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.—G. K.

EX-ANIMO.—The Rev. C. J. Whitmore's tract has been exposed again and again; but, as Ingersoll says, nothing flourishes like a good healthy religious lie. We cannot undertake to work out arithmetical problems for you, or to be responsible for other lecturers' statements. Mr. Haslam is the proper person to explain Mr. Haslam's remarks.

A. G.—The verses you send us, as though they were your own, were written by William Denton. They were reprinted in our 1882 Christmas Number.

R. FOX.—Thanks for the cuttings. Will you send the book?

H. CALASKA says he has long been looking for something on the subject of Freethought and the education of the young, and he is extremely pleased with Mr. Foote's articles.

ANDREW LIDDLE.—Probably some Christian documents, such as the lost Gospel according to the Hebrews, did date from near the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. To us it is evident that the first three gospels were compiled from anterior writings by uncritical Greek-speaking Christians. The Gospel of St. John more cautiously omits the unfulfilled prophecy of Christ coming immediately after the destruction of the holy city.

APOLLYON.—Scarcely up to the mark. Sorry to hear your local newsgang is frightened.

H. D. KAYE.—Clodd's *Childhood of the World* is an excellent little book. There is a fine article on the nebular hypothesis in Spencer's *Essays*. See also Coke's *Creeks of the Day*.

FREETHINKER.—(1) The various Bible books have the same style because translated by the same persons at the same time. They represent documents extending from about the eighth century B.C. to the second century A.D. (2) We do not know what became of the ten tribes, and what is more we do not care. (3) The nearest antecedent to the "they" in 2 Kings xix., 35, is "the Assyrians." It reads one way but means the other.

W. C. HART.—Such sayings as "Sell all ye have and give to the poor," "Lay not up treasures," and "All ye are brethren," were evidently taken as socialistic by the early disciples who we read had "all things in common" (Acts ii., 44, 45). You may get Linton's *Life of Paine* from E. Truelove, 256 High Holborn; or perhaps Mr. Forder can supply you.

J. SAUNDERS.—Thanks.

W. B. T. sends £1 for the Open Air Lecture Fund.

G. H. HOLGATE.—The Science Classes, conducted by Mrs. Besant and others at 63 Fleet Street, are a step in the direction you refer to. Evening schools for working men, whose education has been neglected, are undoubtedly very desirable, but the Freethought party, with its limited resources, cannot be expected to do everything at once.

W. E. GARDINER.—You give your name, but not your address. We trust your Christian sympathy is sincere, but regret we cannot accept your advice. We get a lot of advice, especially from Christians, but we always act on our own judgment. Does it not occur to you that there is something ineffably ludicrous in a man, who has uttered more filth about us in the public streets than we would ever stain this paper with, turning round and complaining of gross slander when he is called a liar? At present, at any rate, we have no time to waste on gutter-snipes, or to advertise mediocrities. We have resolved to let these beings, after Bismarck's expression, stew in their own gravy.

T. H. PINDER.—Such private propaganda as yours is exceedingly useful. We have seen the report of the Seybert Commission in America. Any person well acquainted with savage culture knows that spiritism is a survival of barbarism in a civilised age.

THE CURE MESLIER.—Pleased to hear from you as a convert from Catholicism. Of course all we know of matter is what our senses convey to us, and what is logically inferred therefrom. You ask how can we prove that our senses do not deceive us? We answer like the Scotchman—How can we prove that they do? As a matter of fact, the evidence of the senses is found to be a good working basis all over the world. The less you trouble your head about eternity and infinity the better. At the best they are only negative conceptions. Science does not speak of the eternity of anything; it speaks of the indestructibility of matter and the conservation of energy.

A. B. MOSS reports that he stationed himself last Sunday morning, with note-book and pencil in hand, before a libellous Christian Evidence lecturer, and warned him that his slanders would be taken down. Of course the libeller found that, in the circumstances, discretion was the better part of valor.

R. E.—Afraid we cannot assist you in the matter. Last week's sketch was spoiled by bad printing.

W. PERRY.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fun and Gossip—Open Court—West Sussex Gazette—Western Figaro—Church Reformer—Universe—Chat—Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Le Journal du Peuple—Liberator—South Australian Register—La Semaine Anti-Clericale—Jus—Boston Investigator—Thinker—Union Democratique—Weekly Dispatch—Menschentum—Suffolk Chronicle.

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.

As morning audiences go, there was a good meeting at the London Hall of Science to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "Cromwell in Ireland." This morning (Oct. 9) Mr. Foote lectures on "Dean Swift's Irish Writings," a subject of great interest and much amusement. Swift was one of the wittiest men who ever lived, and his glance on men and affairs was like an eagle's.

MR. FOOTE'S evening lecture was well attended, the subject being "Thus Saith the Lord." Two curious critics afforded the audience considerable diversion, and the lecturer's replies sustained the excitement. This evening (Oct. 9) Mr. Foote lectures again on "Great Christ is Dead."

The Soirée in aid of the London Open-air Lecture Fund will take place at the Hall of Science on Oct. 26th. There will be a concert from 8.30 to 10.30, and dancing from 11 till 1. Tickets may be had from Mr. R. O. Smith, Mr. G. Standing, or any member of the committee, price 6d. None will be sold except to members of the N. S. S., and not more than three tickets to any one member.

DR. MONROE'S *Ironclad Age* (Indianapolis), the oldest Freethought paper in America, after the *Boston Investigator*, reprints the entire preface to *Crimes of Christianity*, and says that "the work should be scattered like autumn leaves."

THE *Truthseeker*, edited by the Rev. J. P. Hopps, gives the *Crimes of Christianity* a place among its book notices. Messrs. Foote and Wheeler are described as "two keen writers," and it is admitted that they "find no difficulty in showing that multitudes of 'Christians' have been systematically cruel, furious, and viciously ignorant." But it is urged that Christianity is not to be blamed for this. We reply that it is to be blamed. All the crimes related in that volume were done by Christians in the name of Christianity, not by a few isolated ruffians but, as Mr. Hopps says, "systematically." What is the use, then, of trying to set up an *alibi*?

THE bigotry of the New South Wales Government in threatening the theatres with loss of their licences if let on Sundays for Freethought meetings, has led to the formation of a company for the erection of a Freethought Hall in Sydney. Nearly five hundred five-pound shares have been taken up. The purchase-money was to be paid on Sept. 8 and the building commenced without delay. The new hall is said to be excellently situated, and we understand that Mr. A. B. Wakefield is going out as a new lecturer to Sydney on the opening of the new hall. Evidently our antipodean friends inherit the traditions of Freethought, which has always met its oppressors with spirit and risen with fresh energy after every blow.

THE religious prejudice against just and reasonable legislation is gradually being fought and overcome in Australia at last, which gives hope of a similar hopeful condition of things in England in a not very distant future. A new Divorce Bill has been introduced by the Government of New South Wales, and has been passed through the Legislature. The clergy will fight against it tooth and nail. They will try to induce the Crown to take the very serious step of refusing its assent to the law desired by public opinion. They also threaten to resist the Bill after it has become law. The new Bill allows divorce for habitual drunkenness, or for confirmed habits of wife-beating, or for an attempt at wife-murder, or for serious crimes, or for continuous desertion by either party for three years. It is this last clause which excites the greatest opposition among the clergy.

THE Marriage Law Reform Association reports that the vast majority of our men of light and leading are in favor of legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister. Among those who desire to see this reform are Tennyson, Arnold, Browning, Swinburne, Meredith, Huxley, Spencer, Tyndall, Thomson, Roscoe, Gladstone, Bright, Morley, Lecky, Max Muller, Jowett, Dowden, Blackie, Gosse, Masson, Sayce, Besant, Black, Stevenson, Sala, Payn, Gilbert, Symonds, Sims, Proctor, Grant Allen, Irving and Ruskin. Farrar is of course for retaining the existing law, and the Archbishop of Canterbury agrees with him; but these two are a poor offset to the rest, even if we join to them Blackmore and Shorthouse, the novelists.

By the way, how is it that the clergy are such sticklers for the old law? Jacob married two sisters, not in succession, but

together, yet God loved him. Are we to understand that marrying two sisters in succession is incest, while marrying them together is godliness? We beg the clergy to explain.

A BUILDING for cremation erected in the famous cemetery of Père La Chaise, Paris, will be ready for its work in November. The building is situated in the north of the cemetery, near the Jewish and Mussulman enclosure. It is shaped like a parallelogram, and is three stories high, surmounted by two chimneys in white stone. Over the facade are three domes, which give the building the appearance of a religious edifice. The facade will be in black and white marble, and a large vestibule is also to be erected. Dr. Brouardel, in a report which he has drawn up on the subject, estimated that the furnaces will be able to consume 4500 bodies annually. No Catholics will avail themselves of the "crematory," but it will doubtless be used by the Freethinkers of Paris.

It is estimated by a competent authority that just now 10,000 anglers leave London every Sunday morning to pursue their favorite sport. Of these nearly 8,000 go by excursion trains along the course of the Lea.

THE COLLOQUIAL "DEVIL."

WHO the devil is the Devil? The Devil of the Bible we know as a definite personage who wanders about as a roaring lion, or as a serpent, or as a biped, passing under the *aliases* of Satan, Beelzebub, Apollyon, Lucifer, the Evil One, etc. At present I will not trouble about this practically extinct animal, although we may legitimately wonder how the devil he got to this earth, and why the devil he selected this particular planet as the scene of his curious exploits. All I wish to study just now is "the devil" of ordinary conversation, the "devil" of popular idiom. What, in short, do we mean by the word "devil" in our general use of the word?

I think we shall find that the feelings of awe and dread inspired of old by the arch-fiend have been thoroughly sapped and that the "fallen angel" is indeed fallen in the public estimation beyond redemption. A few expressions like devil-fish, sea-devil, and so forth, may recall the repulsive horror of the biblical and mediæval personation of evil, but the general associations of the word are becoming trivial or humorous rather than terrible. Light mockery replaces the overwhelming fear of the ancient bogey with hoofs and horns. A regiment will even delight in calling itself "The Devil's Own" in a spirit of "dare-devil" bravado, and nobody except "old women of both sexes" dreams of troubling about the daring impiety of an expression which would be the very essence of blasphemy if people really believed in the Devil.

The printer's devil is now a more or less mythical personage, who occasionally takes shape as the errand-boy worrying for more "copy," but who more commonly remains in obscurity as a purely imaginary scapegoat for the fancies of the editorial brain. Formerly he was a more definite individual, and presumably black with ink from assisting in the rougher and dirtier part of the printer's work. Evidently the name, as in so many other cases, is appropriated in a spirit of comic defiance of the terrors supposed to be inspired by the supreme enemy of souls. Considering the original hostility of the monks to the printing-press, and the enormous influence it has in undermining and displacing religion, the title of printer's devil still remains a tolerably happy one.

Firework-makers also are no more afraid of borrowing Old Nick's generic appellation for trade purposes than they are of mimicking his fire and smoke and burning sulphur. They have "blue devils"—a phrase which is also used to express a miserable state of mind, ranging from ennui to *delirium tremens*. Then there are pyrotechnic "water devils," which dart in and out of the water as if in frantic search of a more congenial element. "The Devil among the Tailors" is a more complicated firework, which finishes up with a loud explosion and a grand volcanic eruption of serpents and crackers. Evidently pyrotechnists are destitute of a becoming sense of the awful seriousness of the dogma which they treat so irreverently. And as the names tickle the public, and are in fact employed for that purpose, it is clear that the pyrotechnically-inclined members of the community are also tolerably emancipated from the saving sense of diabolical terrors; for otherwise they would not thus enjoy the frivolity of taking the Devil's name in vain.

The devil most feared by English fishermen at the present time is the devil employed by fishing vessels which are usually assumed to be of Belgian nationality. This devil hangs from the bow of the vessel and has sharp blades like sickles for cutting a way for the vessel through the long lines of netting spread out over the ocean by those who practice that form of fishing. At one time the devil was an instrument of torture used by the Spanish Inquisition. If there was any humor in this application of the name it was of a rather grim character.

The devil's tattoo is nothing very serious. It is, I presume, a mere beating or tapping with foot, or finger, or stick, from sheer impatience or disgusted weariness of waiting.

The "devil's coach-horse" is the common name given by children to a black kind of beetle which carries a pair of pincers in his rear and is fond of elevating them in a very threatening attitude when disturbed.

In skittle-pool the devils are little black skittles placed tantalizingly close to white skittles of tempting numerical value. In this somewhat anti-theological game the player who knocks down a devil loses everything, but on the other hand he can "star" again as often as he pleases—the skittle devil not being quite as relentless as the theological Devil whose name it borrows.

Devilled bones, etc., are simply grilled. It is evident that no one with a due sense of the dreadful solemnity of the doctrines of hell fire and its head stoker could jest in this light manner, and devour with relish the food subjected to treatment thus associated with unspeakable horror and everlasting anguish. The fact is that people do not believe in the Devil. Otherwise this frivolity of expression would be utterly inexcusable in its heartlessness.

W. P. BALL.

(To be concluded.)

THE AUSTRALIAN POLITICIAN'S PRAYER.

(BY A DEMOCRUBICAN REPUBLICRAT.)

OUR father—whether in heaven or hell

We hardly know—

Look down (or up) to where we dwell,

And while our supplications swell,

Thy gifts bestow.

Give us the victory of the votes

Election day;

Let none of our men turn their coats,

But send the opposition boats

Salt river way.

Let slander, malice, fear and fraud,

This autumn fail!

But *if* such tricks should be abroad,

Expose our enemies, O Lord!

Let ours prevail.

If base repeaters cheat the polls,

Their crimes betray!

Strike terror to their guilty souls!

But write their names on Mercy's rolls

Who vote our way.

Give us by honest means success

In all the fight.

But if, misled by bitter stress,

We save the state through crookedness,

Lord, make it right.

But if the people should decide

Against our case,

Let naught of evil me betide;

Help me to join the other side,

And get a place.

F. W. CLARKE.

THE religious papers are still quarrelling as to the extent of heterodoxy among the Dissenters. A correspondent of the *Nonconformist*, who appropriately signs his communications "Charitas," says that Mr. Spurgeon's allegations are astounding for their "mendacity," which, it is charitable to hope he does not know, means "deliberate lying." The Rev. E. White, well-known as an advocate of "conditional immortality," says Mr. Spurgeon is quite right as to the heterodoxy which is helped by "the unreasoning, uncritical dogmatism of the school in which Mr. Spurgeon has so many humbler and less worthy imitators."

CHAUCER has the following line of the Pardoner, "And in a glas he hadde pigges bones" (Prologue 700). It is explained to mean that he palmed-off pigs' bones as those of some human saint, or possibly they belonged to the two thousand swine who ran violently down a steep place in the country of the Gadarenes, and were choked in the sea.

FREETHINKERS IN JAPAN.

In a work on Japan and the Japanese, by Captain Galowain, he says: "There are Freethinkers among the Japanese as among us, and perhaps they are as numerous. I have not heard that there were Deists among them, but there are Atheists and sceptics. Our friend Teske was of this latter class; he frequently conversed with us respecting his opinions. According to his notion, man only knows what has happened to him, the past and the present; the future, both in this world and after death is always hidden from him: therefore the doctrines of all religions on this subject are liable to the greatest doubts, and deserve no credit." An interesting article by Leighton Parks, in the *Century* magazine, for July, 1886, entitled "A Bozu of the Monto Sect," also shows that some of the Buddhist priests in Japan are Freethinkers. Speaking in English, the argument turned on design. The Buddhist priest denied that God could make matter. Asked how it goes into its present shape he said: "Probably by *trying*: the matter went this way and that way through a great many ages, and at last took this form." Mr. Parks pulled out his watch. The Buddhist bozu laughed. "Oh," said Mr. Parks, "You know Paley's argument?" "Yes," he said, and laughed again. So Mr. Parks put back his "ticker," and remarked: "Well, it don't matter whether we take a watch or a temple, they all show design." "No," said the Buddhist; they do not all show design. Only *artificial* things show design—only things which can be made." "What do you mean by saying thing shows *design*? You only mean that by trying a man could make it. A watch shows design, a temple shows design, everything *made* shows design. A temple shows the builder; does the *wood*? does the *stone*? You show me a gold ring; the ring shows design, but not the gold. When a man can *make* a world, then they can prove that this world shows design, for the only way they know of design is by what they *make*."

EXCITING EPISODE IN A SALVATION HALL.

Down in Croydon the other day a "Billy" goat of good temper and size, and with a sweet expression and big horns, assisted at a Salvationist meeting. The goat was a great pet in the neighborhood, and liked to toy with people in that frolicsome fashion so common to pet goats. His favorite pastime was feeling for things about the coats-tails of the male inhabitants, and sizing up the overskirts of the ladies. Willie had a beard on him like Aaron's, and a pair of immense horns. It was Sunday, and the family had gone to church. Knowing the innocent playfulness of the goat, they shut him up in the kitchen, lest he should wander into the highways and byways, and hurt the feelings of those with whom he was not acquainted. Like all goats with a Christian education and a prying disposition, William pried open the window and escaped.

The Salvation captain had just got all the Christians on the floor in piles and heaps, praying that the sinner might be converted during the meeting, when there was a lull for only one moment, and then the shouting began. When the shouts first broke out, the visiting major who had preached that day, thought it was the result of his effort and he shouted, "Bless God, brethren! Let it come!" And it did come, but not from where he expected. It took him in the rear, and lifted him up over the first six seats. It was that goat. He had heard the singing, and went over to enjoy himself and lend his humble aid in making things lively. He succeeded.

As William walked up the aisle he spied the brother who was leading in prayer throwing his arms around like the fans of a windmill, and he took it for a challenge. Willie had been trained up not to take a dare, so he put his head down and struck the devout sergeant-major in the small of the back. The prayer was cut off right in the middle of the word "damnation." It caused a sister to raise her head with a frown of horror. Willie took this as a playful nod, and he knocked the sister silly with one butt. It was at this point the shouting made the preacher think he had raised the Spirit, and when William so rudely sent him over the seats he landed on top of a fat brother, who yelled like a steam siren, and used language which never ought to be used in church.

By this time there was a general stampede. Women began to scream, old men to yell and rush for Willie, and the latter would meet them on half-way ground and toy with each one a moment, and frisk them about and mix the sisters and brethren up in a style that was scandalous. Next he proceeded to jump on the mourners, and batter the younger sisters, and lam the life almost out of the officers who tried to put him out, and carried on as if he was initiating a whole community in the sacred rites of Masonry instead of assisting in a religious meeting. Finally the owner of the gay and frolicsome goat rushed in and called William to him, and confidence was restored. The goat was bought next day by the local Freemasons. He is now acting as High Grand Bouncer to the lodge.—*Sunday Chronicle*.

PREACHING on preachers, Mr. Spurgeon was tolerably lively the other evening at the Tabernacle. He warned Evangelists against sending their congregations to sleep with long, dry sermons. He said: "It was true that Eve was taken out of Adam while he was sleeping, but they could not take original sin out of a man in that way. (Laughter.) There were some preachers who ought to have two pounds of Chapman and Hall's gun-powder sewed in their trousers when they got to 'secondly,' (laughter), and there were some brethren he was afraid to ask to speak because never knew whether they would leave off in this world or the next. (Laughter.)"

IS LIFE AFTER DEATH DESIRABLE IF CHRISTIANITY BE TRUE?

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. xii., 36). These words are said to have been uttered by the Son of God—the "Savior of mankind." If they are to be believed the death of those we love would be rendered doubly painful, by the consideration of their having to undergo this terrible ordeal—an ordeal, too, before a judge who thought it no disgrace to say that it would be better in the day of judgment for those who had committed the most odious crimes, than for those who had merely refused to listen to ignorant itinerant preachers (Matt. x., 15), and who thought it no infamy that a man possessed of such magnanimity of soul, as enabled him in the extremest agony of torture to offer up a prayer for the welfare of his friends, should be condemned to suffer in hell for ever (Luke xvi.). The same great authority on those matters also tells us that there will be few saved (Matt. vii., 14; xx., 16; xxii., 14), and that at the judgment day there will be no distinction made between those who have sinned much and those who have sinned little, but that all mankind will be separated into only two divisions—sheep and goats. The few to be saved, our Savior distinguishes by the appreciation of sheep, and all the rest he stigmatizes as goats. These latter, he informs us, he will thus address, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. xxv., 41). Surely it is better to think of a departed friend as one whose troubles are over, than as one having to render an account of every idle word to a judge who is represented by his own words, to be ignorant of justice and so cruel as to foredoom the vast majority of the human species to eternal torture. When it is remembered that the few saved will have to spend all eternity in glorifying a tyrant, and in gloating with him over the tortures of the damned (Rev. xiv., 10, 11), it must be acknowledged that this Christian "scheme of redemption" is not an inviting one, nor one likely to offer comfort to a reasonable mind in regard to bereavements by death. J. E. ROOSE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE TEN LOST TRIBES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—In answering one of your correspondents I observe you say that "ten tribes revolted under Jeroboam. They were afterwards carried away as captives to Assyria, and it is not likely they ever returned." I presume you take this statement from 2 Kings xvii., but the account given there is undoubtedly a priestly interpolation to the prejudice of the Samaritans. We now possess the records of the king who captured Samaria in 722 B.C. Sargon II., in his inscription at Khorsabad, says: "With the help of the sun, who aided me to vanquish my enemies I besieged, I occupied the town of Samaria, and I brought into captivity 27,280 persons. I took before all parts over them fifty chariots, the part of my kingdom. I took them to Assyria, and instead of them, I placed men to live there whom my hand had conquered. I instituted over them my lieutenants as governors, and I imposed on them tributes like over the Assyrians" (see *Records of the Past*, vol. vii., p. 28). The same statement is repeated in other inscriptions. Even the Rev. A. H. Sayce, in his *Fresh Light from the Ancient Monuments*, says: "The comparatively small number of Israelites who were carried into captivity shows that Sargon contented himself with removing only those persons and their families who had taken part in the revolt against him; in fact, Samaria was treated pretty much as Jerusalem was by Nebuchadnezzar in the time of Jehoiachin. The greater part of the old population was allowed to remain in its native land. This fact disposes of the modern theories which assume that the whole of the Ten Tribes were carried away."

In the same inscription Sargon II. tells us that the Samaritans revolted two years later at the instigation of Yahu-bihdi, king of Hamath; and Esarhaddon I. informs us, in his annals, that in 680 B.C., he received tribute from Manasseh, king of Judah, and Abibaal, king of Samaria.

It is therefore clear that the whole story of the captivity of the Ten Tribes was fabricated by the followers of Ezra and Nehemiah to throw discredit on the Samaritans, and at the same time explain their worship of Jahveh in a different manner to themselves. It will be remembered that the Samaritans were subdued by the Maccabees and their temple destroyed. Their Pentateuch, too—if they had one—was no doubt made to correspond with the Torah of the Maccabees at the same time.—Yours truly, "CHILPERIC."

PROFANE JOKES.

A Sunday-school teacher asked a little girl of her class if she had been baptized. "Yes," said the little girl; "two times." "Two times! Why, how could that be?" "It didn't take the first time," said the little girl.

A COUNTRY minister, who, in addition to his clerical duties, followed the profession of a photographer, was called upon to perform the marriage ceremony. "Now, then, young man," he said to the bridegroom, who was nervous and excited, as all grooms ought to be, "just keep your eye on that crack in the wall, and try and look pleasant."

A BRIGHT little fellow is not very brave in the dark. One night his mother was putting him to bed, and it grew dark enough for a lamp, but our small friend made decided objections to be left alone while the lamp was found. In vain his mother protested, "But you won't be alone darling. God will be here." There was a short silence, and then, struck with a bright idea, the small boy exclaimed, "I say mother, send God for the lamp, and you stay here with me."

THE CARNALISED CHRIST.—In spite of all the efforts of the Evangelists of the second century to humanise Christ, to bring him into intimate relations with flesh and blood, the outline of the story remains ghostly, spiritual, supernatural in the proper sense—the story that could alone, as we hold, have stirred the pulse of mankind.—*Antiqua Mater*, Preface, p. xvi., 1887.

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PROGRESS

THE

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The OCTOBER Number contains

Guyau's "Irreligion of the Future" (concluded).
By G. W. Foote.

The Phases of Current Thought.—I. By James Leatham.

Richard Jefferies. By G. L.

Is Survival of the Fittest Desirable? By W. P. Ball.

Early Opponents of Christianity. By J. M. Wheeler.

Two Leaves of a Fadeless Rose of Love. By James Thomson (B.V.)

Review.

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