

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



THE RACE OF THE DAY.

Entries—FAITH AND FREETHOUGHT. Jockeys—GLADSTONE AND INGERSOLL.
(Betting, 10 to 1 on Freethought).

GLADSTONE (to Ingersoll): "You prefer to ride an unbroken horse with the reins thrown upon his neck, instead of approaching the subject in a deep reverential calm."

INGERSOLL (to Gladstone): "It may be that 'to ride an unbroken horse with the reins thrown upon his neck,' as you charge me with doing, gives me a greater variety of sensations, a keener delight, and a better prospect of winning the race, than to sit solemnly astride of a dead one, in 'a deep reverential calm,' with the bridle firmly in your hand."

See Ingersoll's "Reply to Gladstone."

GOD IN HEAVEN.

"From battle, murder, and sudden death, good Lord deliver us.
—PRAYER BOOK.

PROVIDENCE doesn't seem of much use down in White-chapel. Two more victims have fallen beneath the knife of a homicidal maniac, and one of them is so bestially mutilated that words are inadequate to describe the horror. Yet the mad assassin has covered his track so cunningly that the police are helpless. He is safe in his lair, and probably chuckling over his crime, while a whole district of London is terror-stricken at the thought that he may sally out any evening and redden some dark spot with the blood of another victim. All sorts of schemes are propounded for the detection of this criminal lunatic. Bloodhounds, detectives drest as women, big rewards, promises of pardon to accomplices—such are some of the things recommended. But, strange to say, nobody seems to think of the one easy and infallible plan. Nobody looks to God, whose omniscient eye saw the murders, followed the maniac to his shelter, and still watches his every movement. Warren

is hooted at, Matthews is half cursed, and the police are derided as impostors; but nobody suggests that Providence is to blame. Among all the true believers who are ready to stone Atheists, not one perceives that God could "peach" on the murderer and give him in custody in less than five minutes. Their faith is a sham, their creed is a mockery. It does very well in church on Sunday, but outside church, any other day in the week, it is nothing but a delusion and a snare. Their God, who sees all, knows nothing; and able to do all, he does nothing. When he has a chance, when man's wisdom fails, when it is "God or nobody," the King of Kings is a mere King Log. Any community of savages would go straight to their god to solve the painful riddle. Knowing that he knew, they would seriously ask him to bestir himself and enlighten their ignorance; and if he were too lazy or indifferent, or misled them, they would probably cashier him, and perhaps give him a good thrashing into the bargain. But civilised religionists are less robust in their faith. They only believe that they believe. And civilised priests like to cultivate mystery, and surround their God with a "reverential calm," lest the worshippers

should cry out for something tangible, and the whole business be exposed as a mere Black Art for deceiving and plundering the multitude. Nay, worse; so far has the miserable sentimentalism of cloudy creeds eaten into us, that a paper like the *Star* can talk of "God's poor being slaughtered wholesale in London" by the Whitechapel murderer, without giving a thought to the question, Why does God allow them to be slaughtered?—or the other question, Why does God allow his "poor" to fall into such awful degradation that they will go out and prostitute themselves for a trifle in the open streets? Surely, if such things were winked at by the worst despot on earth, we should regard him as a miraculous monster. Yet we express no wonder when they are winked at by the despot of heaven, who claims control over our thoughts, and promises to damn us for our honest opinions, yet refuses to perform the first duty of a ruler—namely, to look after the public safety.

Here we pause to beg pardon. Our indictment is too sweeping. We were hasty, like David when he said that all men were liars. There is *one* exception, and that is Mr. Spurgeon; who did venture to address the Lord in this fashion on Sunday morning:—"Oh God, put an end to this, and grant that we may hear no more of such deeds. Let thy gospel permeate the city, and let not monsters in human shape escape thee." Such was Spurgeon's prayer, but up to the present it has not been answered. The Bishop of London has had no "tip" from head-quarters, and the detectives are simply flummuxed. Yet Jehovah could discover criminals in ancient days. When Achan appropriated that "goodly Babylonish garment," the Lord both revealed the theft and pointed out the thief. Why not imitate that performance now when there is infinitely more need for it? What is the value of a God who did a few useful things as many thousand years ago, and compensates himself for his dreadful exertions by doing nothing ever afterwards? Thomas Carlyle in his old age, as Mr. Froude tells us, complained that "God does nothing now." True, and it is about time for man to reciprocate the compliment, and enforce the rule of "No work, no pay." This would impoverish a lot of gentlemen who trade on kingdom-come, who take our solid cash and give us flash notes on the bank of expectation; but it would be an immense saving to the people, and it would give an immense impetus to human progress.

"Let thy gospel permeate the city," cries Spurgeon to his God. But why should there be any need for the prayer? Has not London been a Christian city for centuries? Has it not a multitude of churches and chapels and swarms of preachers? Has it not town missionaries and scripture-readers by the hundred? Do not the Queen's printers turn out Bibles by the million? Mr. Spurgeon is like the quack who kept the patient from getting better, and said he died from not taking enough of his pills.

"Let not monsters in human shape escape Thee." Does this imply that God can arrest the Whitechapel murderer? And if he can, and does not, is he not accessory to the crime? Nay more. Why did he who, being everywhere, was in Mitre Square that Sunday morning, allow the murderer's knife to sweep into that poor woman's throat? Why did not he who, in the story books, strikes blasphemers dead or dumb, paralyse the assassin's arm? Did God look on and yet not try to save? Did he see the sudden terror on the victim's face and the fiendish glee on her slayer's? Did he see the wretch dabbling in her very entrails? Did he behold it all without lifting a finger or raising his voice? Does he know the murderer's hiding-place and refrain from disclosing it? Is it not better to be an Atheist than to be tormented by such questions? Is it not better to believe with Lucretius that the gods, if they exist, are far off and indifferent to human affairs?

G. W. FOOTE.

MIRACLES MADE EASY.

To turn water into wine—dilute your claret.

To raise the dead—join a resurrectionist party of medical students.

To make the deaf hear—make a disparaging remark about him in his presence.

To make the lame walk—take him to the theatre and get some fool in the gallery to yell "fire."

To make the blind see—let him fall on the ice with full force on the back of his head. He will immediately see stars.

UNSECTARIAN OR SECULAR.

A CONTROVERSY which has been going on in the columns of the *Daily News* serves to display the illogical position in which the Nonconformist sects have placed themselves upon the education question. The well-known Methodist minister, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, who, through his organ, the *Methodist Times*, has repudiated the action of Dr. Rigg, the representative Wesleyan who signs the Majority Report of the Royal Commission, writes urging that Christianity should be taught in schools. He says, however, by all means, "let all human creeds be excluded," as though it was possible to teach Christianity in any other form than as a human creed. The dogmatists Mr. Hugh Price Hughes is so anxious to exclude must none the less be exceedingly obliged to him. For if you once assert the duty or even the right of the State to teach religion, you have virtually admitted its right to teach creeds, catechisms, and whatever the dominant party consider necessary for the enforcement of religion. If the Bible and simple exposition of the Bible may be taught, why not creeds founded on the Bible; why not the saving doctrines of the Catholics if they happen to be dominant? What logical opposition can Mr. Hugh Price Hughes make to the schools being opened with holy water and prayers to the Virgin in those districts where the Catholics are in a majority?

Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, who poses as an Advanced Liberal, further says, "let the children of Atheists be protected by a really efficient conscience clause." He ought to know that any such clause must practically become a dead letter. School arrangements must be made with reference to simultaneous attendance and a general programme. To put certain children apart for an hour is at once to make them the objects of persecution.

But, says Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, we are a religious people. "There is not a town, there is not a village in England, where Atheists as such command the support of the majority of the people." Quite correct. We never even said that the majority of the parents would not desire religious teaching for their children, especially when canvassed on the subject by the preachers. What we say is, that public and rate-supported schools have no right to give it. Even if the Secularist withdraws his children from religious instruction, he still is made to contribute towards the religious instruction of other people's children, and this is just as much an injustice as for the Dissenter to be compelled to pay Church rates to support creeds he does not believe in. If parents wish their children to receive religious education there are the denominational schools, or they can be taught at home, or in the Sunday School. But Mr. Hugh Price Hughes, although he thinks us such a religious people, evidently fears this will not happen. In a second letter he talks of "the appalling results of secular education." By appalling results he simply means indifference to the sky pilotage of Mr. Hugh Price Hughes and his tribe. Unless the mind is crammed with religious nonsense in youth it can rarely be brought to do more than laugh at it in maturity. *Hinc ille lachrymæ.*

A very good letter appeared in answer to Mr. Hugh Price Hughes from the pen of Mr. James Allanson Picton, M.P. Mr. Picton pointed out that in five European States there was no religious teaching, and that in the report of the Education Committee amongst the whole of the forty-eight replies from the progressive offspring of old England in the colonies and the United States only nine speak of "religious teaching" as part of the school lessons. In thirty-four cases the simple word "none" appears in the column under "religious teaching." In two cases the Bible is said to be read without note or comment, a practice which involves the worst form of comment, that of childish ignorance. In three other cases the summary of reply is doubtful, but quite inconsistent with such copious theological teaching as is given by the School Board for London.

These facts overthrow the assumption of Mr. Hugh Price Hughes that a religious nation will not consent to a division between secular and religious instruction. Further, as Mr. Picton points out, the settlement adopted by our sensible kinsmen of the new and better world sets them free from all the difficulties involved in any attempt to distinguish sectarian from "unsectarian" theology. They can give undivided attention to principles and methods of secular instruction. They live in no fear of such a portentous document as that report which now hangs, like a

cloud big with fate, over the educational field. Mr. Picton, might also have easily shown that where there was least mixture of religion there secular education is most effective. This is notably the case in France and in Australia. In our own schools the same rule obtains. Even the minority of the Education Commission admit "The results are higher, taking them all round, in Board Schools" while the minority say "It is undoubtedly true that, as a rule, large Schools are more efficient than small schools, and that the Board schools, as a class, enjoy that advantage over the voluntary schools."

Now are we to go on for ever devoting public money, public buildings and public servants to wasting the time of children and addling their brains with nonsense of no service to them in after-life? We need not do so if the Nonconformists would but stick to principle. Place your foot down on a principle and you need not budge till hell be turned into a skating rink. But such Nonconformists as Mr. Hugh Price Hughes build on compromise. The very principle of the non-interference of the State with religion which they uphold as against the Establishment, they desert as against the Secularists. To have such a principle is to have a future with you. Secularists may be beaten, but they will never surrender. The requirements of civilised society are on our side. In the competition between nations those in the long run must succeed who are unhampered with useless traditions of the past. Whatever the attitude of the sectarian unsectarians we will still assert our principle of purely Secular education in State schools, and though defeat may follow defeat, we may yet be certain of eventual triumph.

J. M. WHEELER.

ACID DROPS.

MR. JOHN LOBB is the proprietor of the *Christian Age* and a member of the London School Board. We doubt his fitness for the second position, though we admit his fitness for the first. Still, Mr. Lobb is entitled to his own opinion about himself. He means to sit on the London School Board again, if he can, and keep out Secularists, also if he can. His remarks on "the Infidels" in a recent pamphlet are very amusing, and show him to be an unconscious humorist. "What have Socialists and Secularists ever done," he asks, "to justify their claim to manage the Board Schools of London? Have they ever done anything for themselves? Have they one asylum in which they can put their demented heads in old age?"

WELL, we admit that Secularists have not been as 'cute as Mr. Lobb in "doing something for themselves." They have not made a pile of money out of superstition and bigotry. Nor have they emulated Mr. Lobb's co-religionists in building "asylums." But, on the other hand, they don't so much require those establishments. A good many readers of the *Christian Age*, we imagine, will require an "asylum" for their "demented heads," and we are glad to see that Mr. Lobb is resolved to make them a suitable provision.

ACCORDING to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, "There could not be a better representative of religion than Cardinal Manning, who is in fact, though not in name, the Bishop of London." This is rather rough on Bishop Temple, and not very smooth on some other folk. We should say that Cardinal Newman is a more favorable representative of religion than Cardinal Manning, if judged by intellect, character, and persuasiveness. At the same time, we admit that Cardinal Manning is as good a representative as you could find of that narrow, ascetic, persecuting thing which has usually been recognised as religion. Newman would persecute under the logical compulsion of his creed, but he would do it reluctantly, and he would exhaust every mild measure before he resorted to cruelty. But Manning would roast a heretic with as little compunction as he would fry a rasher or grid a herring. Thank—well, whatever ought to be thanked—that such ecclesiastics as Manning have no longer the power to turn England into a shambles, for the glory and honor of God in heaven and the Church on earth.

CARDINAL MANNING has followed up the Gladstone-Ingersoll controversy with an essay in the *North American Review* on "The Church its Own Witness," which we shall deal with next week in a special article. For the present, we only remark that Cardinal Manning has given his essay a singularly happy—and unhappy—title. "The Church its Own Witness." Yes, and for two reasons; first, because nobody else will be witness for it; second, because when you are your own witness you can give yourself any character you please. The liar can represent himself as a model of veracity, the thief as the pink of honesty, the murderer as a perfect sucking-dove.

PARSON WILKINSON, of St. Catherine Coleman Church, London, has a living worth £1,500 a year; and being what is called a missionary bishop, he relegates the chief portion of the work to a poor curate in charge. This unfortunate gentleman is allowed £50 a year for cleaning and general expenses, but the sum is absurdly inadequate, and last Sunday at the harvest festival a piteous appeal was made to the congregation for a collection in aid of the charwomen. The poor curate explained that he had taxed himself till he could bear the drain no longer.

THE Bishop of Sodor and Man has been replying to the *Freethinker*. Some one sent him a copy of this journal, which his lordship "did not greatly admire." Still, he appears to have read it, for he complains that one "able contributor" (N.B. this is sarcastic) sought to disparage the teaching of the New Testament because it included the immoral doctrine of taking no thought for the morrow. Now, says the Bishop, if you turn to the Revised Version you will find that the meaning is "Be not unduly anxious for to-morrow." But does the Bishop really assert that this is the meaning of the text, or is he skulking behind the Revised Version in order to avoid a discussion? If the Authorised Version is wrong, and the Revised Version correct, why don't the clergy demand the legal substitution of the latter for the former? It seems to us that they prefer two versions; the old one to sustain the old dogmas, and the new one to answer sceptics with. A pretty trick, and well worthy of their craft!

CANON ISAAC TAYLOR, in a noteworthy article in the *Fortnightly Review*, to which we shall direct further attention next week, points out that in India "it would take all the agencies put together sixty-four years to overtake the increase of the non-Christian people in a single year," while in China it would take the Church Missionary Society twenty-seven thousand years to do the same.

HORACE GREELEY was once approached by a missionary, who struck the great journalist for a contribution. "What for?" asked Horace. "To save sinners from hell," replied the missionary. "Not a cent," rejoined Mr. Greeley. "If God chooses to send sinners to hell, it is a sign that they deserve it. If they don't deserve it he won't send them there." But Christians wish to give the heathen a chance of damnation by rejecting the blessed gospel, since for the most part they do reject it.

THE Glasgow folk apparently need a great deal of religion. According to the *Christian World* this is the usual Sunday morning's fare. Prayer, Psalm, reading two Psalms, Prayer, Psalm, reading a longish passage from the New Testament, Prayer, Hymn, Sermon, Hymn, Fourth Psalm, Hymn, Benediction. This, it says, takes from 11 to 1, and there is another service at two. Those who have sat out the morning service, generally can hold on until evening before further partaking of the divine blessings.

THE *Rock* admits that "no one can deny the fact that many of the clergy have earned just censure and scornful contempt by their eager partisanship of selfish privileges and questionable principles in politics, and, say what we will, among the great masses of artisans the clergy are in ill favor, religion is at a discount, and the Radical club or secular hall proves a powerful rival to the Church and the mission hall."

THE Vicar of Brymbo says that "Dissent is schism, and schism is sin." We hope the Nonconformists appreciate this complimentary and charitable view of their nonconformity. But as the Church of England was formed by a schism, and as it still dissents from and protests against the main form of Christianity, the Vicar of Brymbo is as guilty of dissent as those he denounces.

THE Mercers' Company have granted £262 10s. to the Church House Corporation. That's how to fool away trust money. We are reminded of J. C.'s words, "Ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers"—or long subscriptions.

THE hypocritical character of the Christian demand that Freethinkers should "respect their feelings" might easily be proved by a collection of pulpit references to "infidels." Christian preachers claim the right to blow hurricanes while the wind is tempered to their susceptible sides. Mr. Spurgeon, for instance, would call us blasphemous, and thank God with extra fervor if he heard that we had been sent to prison for another twelve months. But he does not regard the coercion of opponents as morally involving any restraint on himself. Speaking recently at a religious meeting, he said that the modern God was a monkey, and the prayer of his worshippers began, "Our Father which art up a tree." Now we don't object to this sort of pleasantry, for we can take a joke as well as give one; but how on earth Mr. Spurgeon can indulge in such mockery, with his well-known views as to the infamy of "infidel scoffers," is like the peace of God—it passes all understanding.

WE have said that we don't object to this sort of pleasantry, and we now add that we are ready to go still further and follow Mr. Spurgeon's lead. Whether the evolutionist's God is up a

tree or not, there can be no doubt about Mr. Spurgeon's God being in that elevated but undignified position. Old Jahveh is very much "up a tree"—bankrupt in knowledge, morality, and sense. Down below, at the foot of the tree, is the big bull-dog of Science, and poor old Jahveh, who once cursed louder than a regiment of troopers, and slaughtered like a whole army of Whitechapel murderers, is afraid to descend lest the bull-dog's teeth should fasten upon his "glory."

QUERY—Is it Old Nick himself who is reducing the number of inhabitants in Whitechapel and baffling the efforts of the police to enjoy his society? Why do not the Christians offer up public prayers in their churches for the capture of the fiend, whether human or otherwise? Because, in spite of their loud assertions, they possess a sufficient amount of sceptical common sense to perceive the absurdity of the plan. In justice to Old Nick it ought to be noticed that the Bible never represents him as going about committing murders. It is the angel of the Lord to whom such work is entrusted.

JOHN WILD, who died in 1662, bequeathed certain lands, the income of which was to be applied in various ways. £6 a year was designed, for instance, for apprenticing poor boys, and £4 for maintaining a poor scholar at Cambridge. But these sums have not been so expended for some years, and now the Charity Commissioners propose to hand over the whole of the Wild bequests to the vicar and churchwardens of Edmonton for the benefit of the parish church. What wonder that the inhabitants are protesting against this villainous perversion of an old charity, and are extensively signing a petition against the scheme?

It appears from the Emperor Frederick's diary, that when France was overthrown Cardinal Bonnechose visited him and proposed that, upon the establishment of the German Empire, the Pope should be allowed to retake possession of his territory, the King of Naples and the Grand Duke of Tuscany to be re-established on their thrones, and the King of Italy reduced to his own dominions. Thus he urged Germany would be supreme and reduce the forces of anarchy. Nice patriots these clericals.

MRS. HARRIET BEECHER STOWE said that her religious belief was "embodied in the Apostles' Creed given in the Episcopal Prayer Book," and as to the practical use she had made of it she referred to her writings—particularly *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. No doubt the good lady meant well, but all the same she was talking nonsense. There is nothing but dogma in the Apostles' Creed—not a syllable about morality. Further, the Apostles' Creed is a priestly fraud, as may be seen in the chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in *Crimes of Christianity*.

SPURGEON has been advising young men to look on the earlier years of life as the serious part of it. Mr. Spurgeon remarked that "he could not imagine what he would have been if he had not been the pastor of a church at sixteen." Surely Mr. Spurgeon would not urge all lads to go and do likewise. It would indeed be a serious world if many imitated him in this respect. We remember hearing one of these boy-preachers, aged about sixteen, who accused himself of having broken every article of the Decalogue. Of course he had been plucked as a brand from the burning, but he seemed a most melancholy spectacle.

WE saw on a bookstall recently, marked at a few pence that would not pay the cost of binding, *An Exposition of Mr. Darwin's Fallacies*, by Dr. Bree. This person, some twenty years ago, was much patted on the back by the clerical world, and had the insolence to "hope that the book [*Origin of Species*] will speedily be withdrawn from circulation."

THE *New York Independent* publishes the reports of membership of the various churches in the United States. It gives the numerical strength of the united churches as a little over nineteen millions. Of these the Roman Catholics claim 7,200,000, Methodists 4,699,529, Baptists 3,971,685, and Presbyterians 1,186,685. Then follow Congregationalists with 457,584 and Episcopalians 446,784. We are, however, gravely informed that implicit reliance cannot be placed upon these estimates, which are given by the churches themselves rather to cheer the hearts of the faithful than as examples of scientific accuracy. One significant fact is that the gain upon last year's reports is only four per cent., which is considerably less than the increase of population. Another fact is that all these members are returned as "communicants." As only a small proportion among Christians become actual communicants, or partakers of the Lord's Supper, the heading is obviously an error or a falsehood.

THE *Globe* reviewer says: "In the *Sunday Magazine* Archdeacon Farrar figures again, his subject being 'What made Pagans Christians?' a disquisition suggested by Mr. Marion Crawford's story of 'Marius the Epicurean.'" "Marius the Epicurean," as it happens, was written by Mr. W. Pater. Any one who knew that writer's style would never confuse it with that of F. Marion Crawford.

THE Mahomedan and Hindoo religious festivals fell at the same time this year, and troops and volunteers have consequently to patrol the streets to keep order. At Agra, Ghazipur,

and Coorg conflicts between the rival religionists were only averted with difficulty, and at Nujibabad the mob turned upon the authorities. The police had to fire upon their fanatical assailants, and several of the crowd were killed and wounded. These religious disturbances, and the "threatening attitude" which the Hindoos and Mussulmans display towards each other, show clearly that religion is the great peace-maker.

HERBERT JAMES, formerly a Sunday-school teacher, is charged with stealing a mail bag containing £6,000 in money and securities from a train between Batley and Leeds.

AFTER all the efforts of the various Bible Societies, according to the Rev. Dr. Gould, there are still 560 languages into which the Scriptures have to be translated. Jehovah never thought of this when he came down and confused all the languages.

PASTOR GREEN, of Chicago, will never get as many wives as Solomon. The law has clutched him now that he has only two.

THE Rev. S. M. Richardson, of South Carolina, protests against the nomination of the Hon. G. W. Dargan for Congress, on the ground that he is an Agnostic. This, he thinks, is a sufficient warrant for exclusion. America, however, is happily not a Christian country, but every office is open to every citizen whatever creed, or no creed, he may profess.

THE curate of St. Sepulchre's fell out with the organist, and as a sort of punishment, or sign of wrath, omitted the sermon. The congregation are probably praying for a continuance of the strife which has so happy a result.

THE Rev. Henry Pitman, an American clergyman, pleaded guilty to a charge of theft from the Civil Service Stores in Queen Victoria Street. He took an umbrella from a stand, put it under his coat and walked away with it. The Lord Mayor sentenced him to seven days' imprisonment with hard labor.

A PRIEST caught three burglars in a Roman Catholic church in Clarendon Square. He fought them gallantly, felled two of them, and seized the third, who only escaped by leaving half of his waistcoat in Father Ryan's hands. The gallant representative of the church militant pursued him and captured him just as the police came up. We hope Father Ryan's superiors will grant him absolution for not turning the other cheek also in the fight, and for taking half the thief's waistcoat instead of giving him a coat also. We also hope the magistrate will agree with his notion of not forgiving this erring brother unto seventy times seven.

REV. PRINCIPAL CUNNINGHAM, of St. Andrew's, hasn't too high an opinion of his fellow-clergymen in Scotland. He says that it is his secret opinion that if a thousand of their churches were burned, and a thousand of their ministers banished from the country for ever, it would be a great Godsend to the country. Cunningham is not far out.

THE Pope only celebrated his grand Jubilee mass for the dead on Sunday. The tickets of admission, however, were not in demand, and the church presented rather an empty appearance. If the living did not take much interest in a matter which did not immediately concern them, the faithful will readily suppose that the souls in purgatory must have been in quite a flutter of agitation. Cannot the Pope give us a return showing how many thousands marched or flew out of the purgatorial district straight up to heaven at the conclusion of the ceremony by which the absolution of the dead was duly secured and guaranteed? A newspaper correspondent's report of this exodus, or a photograph of the flight taken on the spot, would excite much greater interest than a mere specimen of a kind of mummary which is pretty nearly played out.

THE sacristan had to eat some of the consecrated wafers and drink some of the wine before the Pope partook of them. This immemorial precaution against poisoning descends from a time when rival ecclesiastics paved the way to power by poisoning each other with the body and blood of Christ.

THE parsons' palaver at Manchester is chiefly notable for its selection of Mr. Arthur Balfour, coercionist, and author of *A Defence of Philosophical Doubt*, Sir Charles Warren, and Mr. Celestine Edwards, the scurrilous black anti-infidels of Victoria Park. The Trinity must be all attention to what comes from such a trio as this.

THE *Echo* must be hard up for copy when it devotes a column of large type to the outpourings of a Hyde Park orator of the Christian persuasion who rejoices in the name of Dick. Mr. Dick is quite unknown to fame, or was so before the *Echo* tried to immortalise him. But he must be a man of remarkable powers, for he settled Bradlaugh in five minutes. Some very clever people—the present Lord Halsbury for one—have spent years in trying to settle Bradlaugh, without success. Yes, Mr. Dick is a genius, and Bradlaugh had better look out.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, October 7, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, at 7.30, "Bible Morality: a Reply to the Royal Commission on Education."

Thursday, October 11, Blue Ribbon Hall, Marsham Street, Westminster, at 7.45, "God."

Oct. 14, Milton Hall; 18, Westminster; 21, Newcastle; 25, Westminster; 28, Hall of Science; 30, United Radical Club.

Nov. 4, Leeds; 11, Middlesboro; 18, Portsmouth; 25, Birmingham.

Dec. 2 and 9, Hall of Science; 23, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

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

R. W. HUGHES.—Glad to hear the Peckham Rye meeting last Sunday morning was so successful, and that Mr. Heaford got through his lecture despite the interruptions of the pious rowdies headed by the elegant, eloquent, and modest Jones. You deserve great praise for your patience and perseverance, and we hope the next season will be as great an improvement on the present as the present has been on the past.

W. K.—We agree with much that you say. The situation is very trying for both countries. Sorry to hear there is such trouble in getting the *Radical Leader* at Ipswich. The fault seems to lie with the wholesale agents. Most of them detest new papers, and few of them like radical papers. Glad to hear you can obtain Freethought publications more easily.

INCOG.—You improve, but you still need practice. You should also study some good models.

R. W. (Glasgow)—We do not discuss politics here, but we stand up for morality. Home Rule is a matter to be discussed on its merits. There are able men for and against. But when you say that the past conduct of the Irish members towards Mr. Bradlaugh is a reason why they should be punished now we are bound to tell you such a policy is immoral. Revenge is not justice, and two blacks do not make a white.

H. P. BOWDEN.—Many thanks for your batch of jokes, though it may be some time before they can be inserted.

CLAREMONT HALL, PENTONVILLE.—The members of the North London Branch are requested to meet after Mr. Millar's lecture, October 7.

H. C. JACQUES—"A Few Words to a Christian" is not in print at present. It will be included again in our next issue of Tracts.

D. POTTAGE reports that £1 1s. was collected last Sunday at Milton Hall for the London Secular Federation's School Board Election Fund.

J. EDMUND.—Herod the king reigned over Palestine from B.C. 40 to B.C. 4. He was called great because of his magnificent court, and for building Caesarea and other cities. On his death Herod Antipas, one of his sons, received a fourth part of his kingdom with the title Tetrarch. A Roman governor was placed over him A.D. 6, and in A.D. 12 Augustus made Judea a Roman province. These dates may assist you. We appreciate your regard for accuracy.

JAMES CLARKE sends 3s. for the School Board Election Fund.

INVICTA.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

SIMPLE SIMON.—Always glad to receive jokes or other cuttings.

H. M.—Verse returned as desired. It is good in some parts, but several lines halt badly, and the whole is rather too long for our limited space.

FREETHINKER.—All the miraculous parts of the Bible, as well as the Creation story, are opposed to science. Galileo was not burnt. Bruno was, as an incorrigible heretic. There was a capital exhaustive paper on cremation in the *Radical Leader* for September 15.

J. M.—Always pleased to hear from our readers. Your letter needs no apology.

D. J. ANSON.—The salaries of the Bishops are not fixed by the Church, but by the State, and the State pays them, inasmuch as Church revenues are national property, disposable by Act of Parliament, and held under Act of Parliament.

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.

THE synopsis of the letters on our Illustrations cannot be published this week, as we have no space for the article which must accompany it. We shall find or make room in our next.

THE Camberwell Branch opened its winter season most successfully last Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured to a very full house. The audience, which comprised many strangers, was attentive and enthusiastic; and, in response to Mr. Thomas's appeal from the chair, several new members were enrolled. There was also a collection for the School Board Election Fund.

MR. FOOTE'S debate with the Rev. H. Chapman certainly did some good. One gentleman, who regularly attended Mr. Chapman's church, has ever since attended the Secular Hall. He has become a member of the Camberwell Branch, and he brings his friends to hear the Secular gospel.

AFTER a long absence, Mr. Foote revisits Milton Hall this evening (Oct. 7), when he lectures on "Bible Morality: a Reply to the Royal Commission on Education." The subject is of the very greatest importance in view of the approaching School Board elections, and the Freethinkers of the district should make an effort to bring their friends. All that they can do should be done to influence votes in favor of the "secular" ticket.

AFTER a successful open-air campaign at old Pimlico pier during the summer, the Westminster Branch has with much difficulty obtained a meeting place for the winter. It is a small hall, capable of holding from two to three hundred people when skilfully packed, but something less than two hundred in ordinary circumstances. Mr. Foote has undertaken to give a course of three Thursday evening lectures on October 11, 18, and 25, his subject being "The Roots of Christianity—(1) God, (2) The Soul, (3) The Bible." Those who want front seat tickets should apply to Mr. J. Taylor, 50 Vincent Square, S.W. The Blue Ribbon Hall is in Marsham Street, Westminster, and the lecture begins on each evening at 7.45.

DURING the winter the London Secular Federation will do its utmost to assist in multiplying week-night lectures in the metropolis. It is little short of scandalous that so few lectures, between Sunday and Sunday, should be delivered in a city of five million inhabitants. If the Branches wake up they will soon receive good support.

It is probable also that the Federation will make an effort to provide a training class in Christian Evidences and Freethought Criticism, especially for the young aspirants to platform honors and the outdoor lecturers who wish to make themselves more proficient.

JOSEPH SYMES'S *Liberator* is still healthy and vigorous. The last number to hand reprints an article by Mr. Ball from our columns. We observe that over at Sydney £700 has been raised to build a Secular Hall, but a good deal more is wanted. Newcastle has managed to run up a building.

THE "Liberator" Company issues a sixpenny reprint of James Thomson's (B.V.) *Story of a Famous Old Jewish Firm*. But it calls the author *Joseph*. We noticed this ridiculous blunder before, but it doesn't appear to have caught Mr. Symes's optic, or it would hardly be continued in the advertisement.

MR. WHEELER'S *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* will be issued in sixpenny monthly parts. The first part will be ready on November 1. Those whose purses are not too big and well filled should purchase the parts as they appear, as the volume will be somewhat high priced for the general literary market.

MR. FOOTE'S speech to the jury before Lord Coleridge having been long out of print, and being still often asked for, a new edition will shortly be issued at a low price. This edition will contain a brief preface, explanatory footnotes, and a few extracts from Lord Coleridge's summing up.

WE have recently come across an anecdote of Henry Thomas Buckle, which is, we think, not in the usual biographies. It appears that when young he lived in Mecklenburgh Square, where Edward Irving was a frequent visitor. He was present on one occasion at a friend's house when Irving attempted to raise the dead. The ill-success of the preacher took strong hold of his mind, and perhaps implanted the seeds of the scepticism and contempt for priestcraft for which he was noted.

THE *Hindu* reviewing Sir William Hunter's article on Christianity in India in the August number of the *Nineteenth Century*, stoutly contests his assertion that the shaking off of the old trammels of superstition among the Hindoos is due to missionary effort. It says, "This is due to the progress of knowledge and correct ideas among the people, not to the influence of Christianity." It proceeds to carry the war into the enemy's camp by showing that in Europe, as well as in Asia, the improvement of Christianity is due to civilisation, not civilisation due to Christianity.

THE *London Star* is devoting some space to the question, "Is Christianity a Failure?" Up to the present the letters have not been very edifying. The correspondents air their own religious beliefs instead of dealing strictly with the subject. They do not decide what is Christianity, nor what it proposes to do and how far it has succeeded or failed. Unless they condescend to be logical and practical the discussion will be barren. One correspondent, however, is an exception to the generality. He signs himself "Historicus," and is evidently a practised writer. His letter concludes as follows:—

"The *raison d'être* of Christianity is individualism. It is the religion of the individual and of another life. The keynote of the ethics of

the movement of which Christianity was the ultimate historical expression is the individual character and its relation to the supernatural. It is consequently introspective and personal before anything else. The same applies to the other less historically successful religions claiming a personal founder (Buddhism; then, later, Zoroastrianism, etc.). Now, the question—Is Christianity a failure?—if it means has Christianity failed to indoctrinate its votaries and Christendom generally with the notion that duty in the last resort is an affair between the individual soul and the Divinity—must certainly be answered in the negative. It has succeeded only too well in diverting moral earnestness into the channel of personal introspection and asceticism. If, on the other hand, the question is to be taken as an inquiry whether this sort of morality fails to produce fruits of social utility, it must be no less answered in the affirmative, and the highest forms of the morality of democracy shows a tendency to revert in one respect to the early form of the old pagan morality, which centered itself in political and social life, and took scant interest in the "spiritual" concerns of the individual soul. The only difference is that, whereas the ethics and religion of the ancient world were mainly confined to a limited society supposed to be based on kinship, near or remote, that now dawning upon us knows no limitations of race or frontier."

HERESY is spreading gallantly in America. The *New York World* says that at a literary meeting the other day it was remarked that women, the moment they had a career outside the home, became Agnostics, Freethinkers, or something as radical.

THE *Brighton Times* devotes considerable space to a review of Mr. Ford's little book on *Christianity: its Mythical and Pagan Origin*.

MR. CATTELL, of Birmingham, announces a new edition of *Thoughts for Thinking*, which consists of extracts from various writers on important topics.

THE *Boston Investigator* gives a full report of an able lecture entitled "Intellectual Slavery versus Intellectual Liberty," by the ex-Rev. C. H. Sims.

AMONG literary items of interest to Freethinkers are the announcements of a new volume of essays by Professor Huxley, of Mr. Grant Allen's long deferred work on "Force and Energy," and Mr. William Sharp's Sketch of Heine in the series of "Great Writers."

La Paix Sociale, the French organ of the League to oppose the principles of Atheism, speaks of the activity of those engaged in propagating what they combat.

THE *Weekly Dispatch* has just woke up to the fact that a copy of Ingersoll's *Reply to Gladstone* was sent it for review. The brief notice it gave last week was late, but "better late than never."

THE *British Weekly* says, "It is noticeable that the *Freethinker* is consulting its readers as to whether the illustrations should be dropped." This is a little exaggerated, but it is a sign of the times that anything we do should be "noticeable." We used to be too vile to mention.

DESPITE the coldness of the weather, our Woolwich friends are going to have some Sunday afternoon lectures this month at the Arsenal Gates, Beresford Square. Mr. Marchant lectures to-day (Oct. 7) at 8, and we hope the Freethinkers of the district will turn out and support him.

CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

I.—TURNING WATER INTO WINE (JOHN II., 1-11).

JOHN describes the feat of turning water into wine as the "beginning of miracles" worked by Christ. But as Peter and Andrew had already been called, and as Luke describes miracles which preceded their calling, this miracle was apparently both Christ's first miracle and not his first—a kind of conclusion which frequently results from an examination of the gospel records. As John is the only evangelist who records this feat, we had better accept the story just as he tells it.

John describes this anti-tetotal miracle as occurring at a wedding feast to which Jesus and his mother and his disciples had been invited. The wine was apparently consumed rather freely, and presently ran short. The mother of Jesus, finding that wine was wanted, turned to her son and said, "They have no wine." Evidently this remark was intended to bring about a display of miraculous power, but as Jesus had never hitherto displayed any such powers how could Mary be aware of them, and anticipate that on this particular occasion her thirty-year-old son would begin to manifest them, and would manifest them, moreover, in the direction of providing wine for a company who had apparently already had sufficient?

The son's reply to the mother's observation or reminder was a model of ungraciousness amounting to positive insult. He turned upon his mother with the moody or self-absorbed conceit of an ambitious dreamer, and snubbed her with these contemptuous and fanatical words, "Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come." The mother, accustomed perhaps to her son's peculiar method of obeying the fifth commandment, took no notice of his disrespectful language, and merely said to the servants, "Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it." Evidently she was still expecting and preparing for a miracle by some strange prophetic instinct which strikes one as little less miraculous than the miracle thus heralded.

Jesus then felt that his hour *was* come, although he had just said it was not, and he ordered the servants to fill six large waterpots of stone with water, which was straightway done—the curious dialogue between mother and son having apparently taken place in the kitchen, or at least not in the guest chamber or feasting room. Jesus then told the servants to draw the water and bear it to the governor of the feast. They did so, either having tasted the liquor first or else having sufficient confidence in the hitherto untried powers of the young village carpenter to induce them to risk the punishment which might have attended the foolish practical joke of handing water to the guests as if it were wine. Happily, the conscious water which saw its God and blushed—as the Christian poet puts it—blushed to such purpose that the governor of the feast was surprised at its superior quality. Congratulating the bridegroom on the excellence of his last supply of wine, he observed, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now." Thus it appears that the guests had already "well drunk" when Christ thus "manifested his glory"—as St. John puts it—by wasting on them a miraculous supply of exquisite liquor, which they would have appreciated far better at the commencement of the drinking. Let us hope that the hundred or hundred-and-fifty gallons of wine did not tempt them to excessive indulgence, and that they all managed to get home before the milk in the morning, and without the seeds of headache and repentance so commonly the result of too large a supply of alcoholic beverages.

The encouragement given to drinking customs—concerning which an incipient God might at least be neutral—can hardly be reckoned a good point in the "beginning of miracles" at Cana of Galilee. Surely, too, a miracle less like a common conjuring trick, and with a grander and more useful purpose than the encouragement or prolongation of a doubtful kind of joviality, might have been chosen as the inauguration of the mighty career of a wonder-working God whose great central thought is the redemption and elevation of all mankind. The miracle is trivial and paltry. In its best aspects it is hardly worthy of an omnipotent and all-wise being, and in its worst it may have been positively mischievous.

Not till the age of thirty did Jesus use his power of working miracles. He displayed such admirable self-control that all the cases of suffering and starvation which he could not help seeing or hearing of in the course of thirty years entirely failed to move his pitying heart until his hour was come. The first thing then that touched his feelings to the miracle-working pitch was the deplorable fact that after a number of guests at a feast had drunk up all the wine they still wanted more. W. P. BALL.

WHERE IS GOD, AND WHAT DOES HE DO?

THAT is a problem on which many scientific and philosophic minds have been engaged for several thousands of years. To-day we, as an enlightened and civilised generation, are no nearer the mark than was the naked savage of many centuries ago. He believed that God was above the earth, and listened to his wants and supplications; and so does our present orthodox Christian. Ask any believer in the Bible where his God resides, and you may be sure that you will be told without any wavering or hesitation that the omnipotent lives in heaven, and that in his house are many mansions (?). Ask him to point out the probable direction in which this heaven may be found. He will look at you with a sorrowful sort of expression overspreading his countenance, no doubt pitying the density of your understanding, and as certain as the needle of the compass will point to the north so will his hand point upward towards the sky. He has always been told that the celestial city was somewhere up beyond the clouds; for did not a certain fellow of Jewish extraction,

named Jesus, travel upwards when he went to heaven. Did not Elijah travel through the air in a chariot of fire. That is enough for him; heaven *must* be above our heads, and no amount of argument would convince him to the contrary. He does not understand science, and what is more, he does not want to; because the teachings of science can never be reconciled with the dogmas of the Bible. Although our telescopes have penetrated space for trillions of miles, yet never have they discovered the shadow of the great white throne, or the gates of heaven. The more powerful the telescopes, the farther does this heaven recede from our imagination. Nevertheless, the Christian believes and is satisfied.

Secularists, as a rule, do not take everything for granted that they are told; yet sometimes, for the sake of argument, they admit that there may be a God in a heaven up above. Then, naturally, a train of questions presents itself at once, the chief of which is—"What does this God do?" If he resides somewhere in space, then we must naturally arrive at the conclusion that this omnipotent being must be doing something; for we cannot bring ourselves to believe that an almighty being could exist, and yet do nothing! "Ah," says the Christian, "God does everything that is good. He bestows innumerable blessings upon the inhabitants of our world. He leads the faltering steps of the blind, and fills the mouths of his children. He observes the fall of the sparrow, and clothes the lilies of the field." All very good for those who believe it; but somehow or other we have not sufficient evidence that such is the case. The Bible tells us that God is everywhere (Psalm cxxxix., 7); yet we cannot believe the assertion. Who has ever seen him? Who has spoken to him in this century? What is he doing for our welfare? All these questions are unanswerable when carefully considered with a clear brain. Yet every Christian will affirm that God is good, that he has bestowed wonderful blessings on humanity in general, and himself in particular. We differ. The good that has been done on earth has been accomplished by the willing hands and brain of man. Never has there been one sign of heavenly interference. When slaves were freed it was only through the instrumentality of man, yet God gets the praise. When a war is ended, praises and thanks are offered by the victorious army for the aid which he is supposed to have afforded them.

The fires of the Inquisition were put out by man, not God. God, who is everywhere, does not fill the mouth of the starving; he does not clothe the naked; he does not lead the blind; he does not tend the sick; he does not soothe the dying; he does not bury the dead. No! man does all this: God does nothing. The millions of pounds which are spent annually on the clerical brood, could be utilised to better advantage if they were spent on our poor and needy. The sky-pilots preach this heaven and this God to an ignorant portion of the community, knowing that if they do not do so, then their living would be gone. They propagate this superstition, knowing very well that by so doing they can live in idleness. They keep the people in ignorance, they teach an imaginary heaven and a God to match, and they delude our poorer brethren with the belief that God will help them from their troubles.

G. E. C. NAEWIGER.

THE SINNER'S CONVERSION.

COME hither, thou Christian, and tell me—without smacking thy oily mouth and upturning thy sanctimonious eyes to the heavens—by what divine impouring didst thou become "saved"?

Didst thou not first enter one of God's houses, and sit under some paid agitator for Christ, some canting, frothy-mouthed ranter, who wildly gesticulated, and flung the "fear of the Lord" in thy blanched face?

Did he not tell thee that God Almighty, whose name is Love, had righteously damned thee to eternal torture, to be lashed and scourged in a fiery hell, to be flung shrieking into a lake of seething brimstone, where the sulphur would break in crested waves into thy gasping mouth, and the foul fumes would fill thy livid nostrils with filthiness, whilst the angels in heaven above sang "For his mercy endureth for ever"? Did he not tell thee that the Almighty had mercifully ordained that neither death nor unconsciousness should bring relief from his thundering, soul-scorching snort of damnation?

Did he not, with his lank hands, dangle a dirty stoker-devil before thee, gaunt, ghastly, and black; his greedy, rolling eyes, fiery cinders; his hands, five searing leaping flames wherewith to clutch thy skinny neck? Did he not show you this eager, sinner-grabbing imp of Satan, with all his battery of hell-tortures, and tell thee, with eyes aglow with the fire of his "sacred office," that unless thou didst believe in God, and that "God is love," thou wouldst assuredly suffer these dire punishments? And was it not under the spell of the excited preacher, with his wild arm-flinging and rapid flow of words, and influenced by the devotional surroundings, and the people eager to catch each honeyed drop of God's glorious message, that thou wast worked up to the essential state of tearful religious fervor?

Then something whispered that belief was easy, and thou couldst, by belief, dodge these awful punishments. Death might come at any moment, aye, even before that night, and then thou wouldst be hurled at once to hell. "Sinner, save thyself from the damnation to come," said the preacher. And after a gentle closing hymn, and a silent prayer on bended knee, boldly didst thou march into the quiet vestry, and in the madness of religious ecstasy didst fling thyself down before the minister, and bless the Lord, that by his means thou wert a sinner saved from hell, a brand plucked from the burning!

After a while, thy name was perchance entered in the church list and fearlessly didst thou stride into the streets—at last a Christian! "A Christian!" How holy a word it seemed, and thy heart bounded within thee for very joyousness, as thou didst think of the valiant battles thou wouldst fight for thy Lord and Master. How grand, how noble it would be, to "go about doing good," to stand, firm as a rock, before the jeers of the sordid, pleasure-seeking world. Thou didst uncton thy trembling soul with the pleasing thought that the Church register, whereon thou wast enrolled, was an authenticated copy of the Lamb's Book of Life.

Bah! thou egotistical self-saving little mortal! Was there ever such a selfish life-insurance religion as thine, where thou wouldst fain pay the small premium of tolerable goodness in this world, for the sake of the lump sum of happiness to be thereby possibly obtained for all eternity? Thou self-conceited barterer, thou art *not* bold and fearless, for at one paltry tweak of persecution, or one cold un-Christian shoulder thrust in thy half-hearted face, thou wouldst groan as if thou wert a martyr at the stake, and soon wouldst treat thy religion as the apostles did their Lord and Master when they all forsook him and fled. Then doff the tawny lion's skin from off thy naked shoulders, and put thy bleating head into some soft calf-skin. Nay, throw aside the moth-eaten vestures of the past, learn common sense, and go about thy business. Abide by reason, live a pure life, "do good to every man as much as in thee lieth," and thou wilt not be damned by any righteous God.

FRANK LOVELL.

CORRESPONDENCE.

GOD'S GRANDMOTHER.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—Your last *Freethinker* contained an excellent article on "God's Grandmother," by your outstanding correspondent, W. P. Ball. Two things will bear referring to.

1st. The Church of England and the Church of Rome both celebrate St. Anne's praises on July 26, and not June 26, as you have it. Many English churches are dedicated to her and the Romanists do not entirely ignore her. At the same time her service is only a "double of the second class" which is the same rank as that of God's grandfather, her husband, St. Joachim, father of the Virgin Mary, whose festival is August 16. The English Church skips him.

2nd. On the shore of the Bay of Biscay, near the little town of Auray (Morbihan), there is a magnificent church in which are scores of paintings representing God's grandmother dropping through the clouds in white clothes to succor the drowning, burning, sick and other unfortunates who catch her eye. This is her chief temple and pilgrims from all parts of Franco crowd there in July, and priests and bishops innumerable sing masses and do wonders. There is a sacred fountain with healing powers whose waters you can purchase cheaply. A stone summer-house is also miraculous somehow. If curiosity leads you to explore you must mount its steps on bended knees. I did it and only found a lazy fellow resting up there: so I did not kneel it down. In the church is a huge image of St. Peter, whose big toe I reverently and devoutly kissed. Fortified with an introduction by a dear old bishop, whose acquaintance I made in those parts, I had a peep at the relics including, if I remember right, a part of the Virgin Mary's dress.

If Brother Ball wants a miracle worked and will go to God's grandma in the right spirit, he will always find her at home in the village of St. Anne d'Auray. Nobody else seems to bother about her.—Yours religiously,

SAM. STANDING.

P.S.—By the way, did you know the three wise men of the East are on view at Cologne Cathedral?

OBITUARY.—On Saturday afternoon last the remains of the late John Thomas Moss, aged 85, of Hammersmith, and formerly of Norwood, were interred at Hammersmith cemetery. Mr. Edward Trulove was among the mourners. Mr. Moss had been associated with Robert Owen in his younger days; he was moreover an ardent Freethinker and social reformer for more than fifty years of his life. The Vestry Clerk objected to a Secular Service being read, but as the burial took place in unconsecrated ground, I disengaged his objection, and read the address and no one interfered.—ARTHUR B. MOSS.

REVIEWS.

Buddhism and Christianity Compared. By Alexander O. Jayasakoro. Galle. 1888.—This pamphlet, which reaches us from India, seeks to show in the form of a catechism the similarity between the lives and teachings of Jesus and Buddha. The author, who seems to be an astrologer as well as a Theosophist, gives the horoscopes of both teachers.

Against Christianity: Showing its Theory Incredible and its Practice Impossible. By CHARLES C. CATTELL. London: Freethought Publishing Co., 63 Fleet Street. Price 6d.—Mr. Cattell boldly urges that a reversal of all the injunctions of Christianity as to belief and practice, would be better than obedience.

PROFANE JOKES.

"Have you heard the news, Pat?" said a jester to an Irishman, "An' phwat's that, sor?" "The devil is dead." "Tako that, sor, it's all I have by me, or I might do better," said Pat, handing him a penny, "I never send an orphint away empty-handed."

The cloak of religion is to be known sometimes by the fine nap it has during the sermon-time.

"Papa, I guess there ain't any plumbers in heaven," said a six-year-old youngster one rainy day. "Why not, my son?" "'cause the sky seems to leak so easy."

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