

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



AS HE IS.

THE TITHE WOLF.

AS HE SHOULD BE.

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.—Matt. vii, 15.”

THE CRUCIFIXION:

AN OPEN LETTER TO JESUS CHRIST.

DEAR SIR, DEAR GHOST, OR DEAR GOD,—You are reputed to be everywhere, and therefore I presume you will see this letter, although I am unable to send it through the post. I would have ventured on that method of conveyance, but I was deterred by the failure of a pious gentleman in Germany, who posted a letter to “God, in Heaven,” and had it returned as “insufficiently addressed.” A similar difficulty occurred to me a few years ago, when I was prosecuted by your zealous admirers for doubting your absolute perfection. I wished to call you as a witness in the case, but I found no one to serve the subpoena.

It is now more than eighteen centuries since you left this earth. Your exit was highly mysterious, and your biographers have wrapped it in a still greater obscurity. But whether you ascended to heaven from Bethany or Galilee, and whether within forty-eight hours of your resurrection or forty days afterwards, it is perfectly certain that no one witnessed that wonderful performance except your own disciples. Their testimony has, indeed, been accepted by many and imposed on more; yet there have always been a considerable number of honest people, with limited credulity, who ventured to doubt the truth of their statements. They have asked why your ascension was shrouded in such secrecy. They have enquired why you did not publicly appear to your accusers, your judges, and your executioners, after you rose from the tomb, and satisfy the whole world of a fact which it is expected to credit on penalty of eternal damnation. They have even suggested that your disciples never asserted either your resurrection or your ascension, and that both are the fictions of a later age.

Even with respect to your crucifixion there is room for doubt. Paul, whom you converted by a miracle or a sun-stroke, preached Christ and him crucified. Yet, in his epistle to the Galatians, he says that you became a curse for us, “for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” Peter (you will remember him—cock-crowing, S’elp me God Peter) in the Acts of the Apostles and in his first Epistle, repeatedly says that you were hanged on a tree. I am therefore unable to decide whether you were crucified or hung, but in either case you are to be pitied. Julius Cæsar, and other brave men, have agreed that a sudden death is the best. But the death of a malefactor in ancient times was both painful and ignominious. I really wish you had been allowed to die a natural death on a good feather-bed, and that the rich women, who subscribed largely to your expenses while you were on circuit, had given you a decent funeral.

One of the early Christian sects, the Basilidians, denied that you were executed at all. According to their theory, Simon the Cyrenean was crucified in your stead. You disappeared when he shouldered the Cross, and poor Simon, being miraculously made to resemble you, became a vicarious sacrifice. The idea is amusing, but I reject it. You were not remarkable for courage, but I scarcely believe you played the poor devil such a shabby trick. Another Christian fancy was that Judas Iscariot was obliged to act as your proxy. That at least implies a kind of poetical justice, and it might be called “Judas for Jesus, or the biter bit.”

Your biographers tell us that you were crucified on a Friday, and all of them, with the exception of John, describe it as the first day of the Passover. They must, however, have been mistaken; for no trials or executions took place among the Jews on any feast day; and, according to the Jewish calendar, the first day of the Passover never was, and never can be, on a Friday.

It is a singular thing that the anniversary of your crucifixion varies every year. You must have died, if you ever lived, on a particular day, which should be regularly celebrated. But Good Friday, as your devotees call it, is determined by the phases of the moon, a planet which is sacred to lunatics. Being decided by astronomical signs, the anniversary is probably borrowed from ancient sun-worship. Why do you not set our minds at rest on this point? It would cost you little trouble, and give us much satisfaction.

The hour of your crucifixion is equally uncertain. Two of your biographers say that you expired at three in the afternoon. According to Mark, you were crucified at nine; according to Luke, you were tried that morning; and according to John, the court was still sitting at mid-day. Some discrepancies may be reconciled, but you could not have been tried at twelve and executed at nine. Here is another point on which you might enlighten us.

Your biographers inform us that the sun was eclipsed for three hours at your crucifixion. Will you kindly explain why no Jewish or Pagan annalist ever heard of this supernatural darkness? Matthew informs us, in addition, that many dead saints rose from their graves, walked into Jerusalem, and publicly exhibited themselves. How is it that this unparalleled marvel escaped the notice of every profane writer? Did it really occur? And if so, did those resurrected saints return to their graves, or are they still an army of Wandering Jews? I am emboldened to ask these questions, because three of your biographers do not record the grave-splitting earthquake. I hope my curiosity is not blasphemous. I am sure it is natural. If the old telephone between heaven and earth is destroyed, kindly send a special messenger, and I will pay his expenses. But please warn him not to leave his message with the servant. If I am out when he calls, he can make an appointment for the next day, and I will pay his hotel bill. If he calls at my office, warn him against the printer's devil.

You might also tell me whether you cried out on the cross "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" If you did utter that ejaculation, were you calling to yourself or to another? Was it the cry of a deity playing a part, or the cry of a deluded enthusiast in the hour of despair? Was it a tragedy or a farce?

Pardon me also for inquiring why you allowed yourself to be crucified at all. It is obvious that Pilate tried to save you. Had you denied the charge of rebellion, he would have acquitted and protected you. But you rejected his assistance; you courted your doom; and your death was less a martyrdom than a suicide. What was the reason of this strange conduct? Were you stupefied with fear? Were you afraid to face the mob again, after their experience of your futility? Or were you disillusioned, and had life no further charm?

Such questions proceed on the supposition that you were a man. If you were a god, your death is still more amazing. You gained nothing by it, and we have profited as little. It may be possible, as the priests of your creed tell us, that your sufferings on the cross will mysteriously confer some benefit upon us in another world. But until you distinctly inform me so yourself I shall venture to doubt it. It appears to me that your omnipotence, and certainly your omniscience, would have been more judiciously displayed, had you exercised the creative faculty with which you brought the universe into existence from nothing. Surely the being who said "Let there be light and there was light" could as easily have regenerated the human race, without designing a monstrous drama, in which one man betrayed his friend with a kiss, and thousands of others assisted or connived at a judicial murder.

Judging from the history of the world since Christianity was established, I should say that your crucifixion has been more of a curse than a blessing. The Crusaders captured Jerusalem on Good Friday, and they entered the doomed city at the very hour of your Passion. They immediately proceeded to offer up a bloody sacrifice to their deity. Seventy thousand "infidels" were slaughtered, the Jews were burnt in their synagogue, and in the Mosque of Omar the blood was knee-deep and dashed up to the horses' bridles. Perhaps, however, you are not to blame for this. You would be if you were a god, but you were probably a man. In that case your life ended at the Crucifixion, and the priests are responsible for the excesses perpetrated in your name.

GOOD FRIDAY.

By ecclesiastical regulations which still unduly interfere with secular holidays, Good Friday and Easter shift with the moon. The Prayer-book contains elaborate tables and explanations showing how, with the help of various complicated and bewildering particulars, including magic "Golden Numbers" and "Sunday Letters," any one can calculate for himself the date on which Church fasts and feasts occur. But as I never knew anyone who had penetrated these esoteric mysteries, I shall not strive to penetrate them myself, having a shrewd suspicion that the result would not recompense me for the trouble. It is sufficient for my present purpose to observe that Easter Sunday ranges from March 22 to April 25 inclusive, and that Good Friday, Whitsuntide and other *holy days* or *holidays* as they were or became, necessarily vary in date with Easter Sunday. It seems rather foolish to commemorate the anniversaries of particular events such as the crucifixion or resurrection on moveable dates running backwards and forwards year by year over a total period of thirty-five days.

From a practical point of view our national holidays appear to be greatly misplaced by Christian influence. Good Friday and Easter occur too close together, so that the bulk of the working people for whose benefit the general holidays are more especially needed, have to work on Good Friday to earn the money to spend on Easter Monday. Then the Easter Monday, the chief summer festival of the people, is placed much too early in the year, often occurring in cold and changeable weather. What else can be expected in March and April? Girls, especially of the poorer classes, are tempted out in their summer finery only to have the insidious seeds of consumption sown in them by exposure to the bleak and treacherous winds so common in spring—when, as the punster reminds us with a little more sense than usual, the wind is east but the season is Easter. This year, however, Easter Monday occurs under the most favorable circumstances. It comes on April 26, the latest day possible. The subsidiary holiday occurring forty-nine days later on Whit Monday, and ranging from May 11 to June 14, is better placed, but even this is early, considering the uncertain and backward nature of the English summer. National holidays should be regulated by secular considerations. They should be fixed so as to occur on certain immoveable dates as far as possible. The secular or practical tendency of the age is shown in the comparatively recent introduction of a Bank Holiday on the first Monday in August. Sir John Lubbock has thus given the nation a festival at the most suitable time of the year. Previously there were no really national holidays from Whitsuntide to Christmas, and the best part of the year was wasted because Christianity had crammed the feast days into the spring and had neglected the summer and autumn. I hope that future legislation will make the first Monday in every month from July to October a Bank Holiday, and that Easter, very suitable doubtless for outdoor rejoicings in the warm regions where Christianity arose, but not sufficiently suitable for colder climates like that of England, will become only a religious festival. If religious people help in thus secularising our national days of recreation their susceptibilities will not be so deeply offended as they are at present by the public desecration of solemn days like Good Friday and Easter Monday.

The *Christian Commonwealth* has discovered that Good Friday comes on a Thursday, and that "Good Friday and Easter no more mark the true date of the Crucifixion and Resurrection than Christmas Day marks that of the Nativity." It asserts that Christ was crucified on a Thursday, on or about April 5, and not on a Friday; and in a long leading article on "The Lost Wednesday," it endeavors to prove its point. Archbishop Thomson, like other orthodox writers, in tracing out the events of Passion Week day by day, finds Wednesday a blank, and he has to fill it up by saying, "This day was passed in retirement with his disciples." The *Christian Commonwealth* holds that commentators have no right to invent this blank day in order to foster the Christian mistake that the crucifixion took place on a Friday, which orthodox traditional view leaves no "three days and three nights" before the resurrection. As Christ had prophesied that he would lie in his grave "three days and three nights," like Jonah in the whale's belly, the *Christian Commonwealth* is perfectly sure that the crucifixion took place on a Thursday in order to

give time for the fulfilment of this express prophecy, and it greatly regrets that Christian writers should pander to popular notions instead of speaking according to truth and common sense. The lamentation continues thus: "Alas, the Sceptic and the Infidel, the Atheist and Rationalist all know how to rejoice in the fatal tendency of ecclesiastics to pay homage to venerated superstitions."

The *Christian Commonwealth* holds that this assumption that Christ was put to death on a Friday "delivers" those who maintain it "into the hands of triumphant infidel advocates;" and it effectually demonstrates that if Christ's prophecy was fulfilled then he could not have died on Friday. Yes, but if he *did* die on Friday, what becomes of Christ's prophecy, and of Christ's truthfulness, and of Christ's claims? The Gospels show us that the day of the crucifixion was Friday, because it was the "preparation day" before the Jewish Sabbath, which is identical with our Saturday. The hypothesis, however, is advanced that this Sabbath was a special kind of Sabbath, and not the ordinary weekly Sabbath. This discovery is ingenious, but why have Christians been in error all this while? And why did not the Gospel records make the matter clear? If, as our Christian editor writes, "this was the only sign Christ would vouchsafe to those who clamored for endless miracles," and if he "staked all on the facts of his sojourn in the sepulchre," why is everything left in a "choking fog," which has deceived the orthodoxy of the past, and has made it adopt a suicidal interpretation? Why are the Evangelists' accounts so delusive that modern writers, like Neander and Farrar, are left to "painfully and hopelessly . . . flounder" in the "mists of the Good Friday myth?" Is this satisfactory as the "only sign" of the godhead of one who "staked all" on such obscure or disputed "facts"?

Besides this, I would remind our Christian "reconciler" that as the resurrection had already taken place before early dawn on Easter Sunday, Christ, if he kept his word, must have lain in the grave during the whole of Thursday, Friday and Saturday as the three days, and must thus have been crucified on a Wednesday. I trust this zealous reconciler will correct his correction accordingly and that henceforth he will keep and teach others to keep Good Wednesday instead of Good Friday. That this conflicts with the gospel narrative in minor respects matters little. It saves the personal credit of Jesus Christ, and this is everything.

W. P. BALL.

ACID DROPS.

THE *Anti-Infidel* gives us some "Facts in Human Life." It tells its readers that "there are 1,000,000,000 inhabitants in the world, and of these 33,333,333 die every year. But Europe with about 400 millions, India with 240 millions and China with 360 millions would alone make up a population of 1,000 millions, without any addition for the population of the remaining countries of Asia and of the whole continents of America, Africa and Australasia. How strange, too, is the "fact" that so curious and artificial a number of people as 33,333,333 should die every year. The *Anti-Infidel* is at least half-a-century behind-hand with its stale "facts" and antiquated arguments.

THE Free Church minister who has charge of spiritual affairs in the lonely island of St. Kilda, has been playing an unjustifiable trick on the benevolence of the public. He sent a message in a bottle committed to the sea waves—apparently the usual method of communicating with the outer world during rough wintry weather—and in this message he besought help for the starving islanders, who, he said, were out of everything and were anxiously waiting supplies from the mainland. A Government vessel was accordingly sent to the rescue. But the provisions are unneeded. Each family in the island has an abundance of salted sea-birds and mutton. There are eighteen cows in the island and plenty of potatoes. The minister has simply been guilty of hoaxing the public, who, next time, will not be ready to respond when the case is one of genuine distress.

THE St. Kildans, it seems, are particularly religious in the true Scotch fashion. They author "Luman hymns" and all musical instruments, except the bagpipes. Even whistling is "strictly forbidden."

THE Christians say that a Mrs. Boyd, who has just died, aged 85, visited the house of "Tom Paine, the Infidel," when he was dying, and that she frequently asserted that "Paine did not die a disbeliever, but called on God in his last hours." The promulgators of this little story forget that Mrs. Boyd was only nine

years old when Paine died in 1809. And they make a little mistake in overlooking the fact that Paine was a Deist. As he believed in God, why should he not call on God when dying? It was Christ and the Bible Paine rejected. The story, to have any point, should allege that Paine called on Christ.

WE clip the following from an article on "The Decay of Pulpit Power," in the *Islington News*:—"Sunday after Sunday do we get a repetition in the same hackneyed phraseology of feeble, common-place thoughts, interspersed with a superfluity of Scripture incidents—detailed with a minuteness as if hitherto unheard-of things, known only to the speaker. 'Daniel in the lion's den,' and the youths in the 'fiery furnace,' are still given to us as things that actually 'happened;' and the discourse is 'padded out' with the story of how the shepherd-boy became king, and how he slew the giant. The awful legend, or 'old folk story,' of how Jael slew Sisera by bringing him into her tent under false pretences, and then driving a nail into his temples, I have heard spoken of as a deed instigated by the Almighty, and a judgment on his enemies."

THE Church of England Book Society publishes a pamphlet on Disestablishment and Disendowment, by the Rev. Mr. Brass, incumbent of St. Matthew's, Redhill. The name is appropriate. It begins by saying that the Church should be supported by all the nation's influence and wealth, and ends with the warning, "Take care that you do not disestablish and disendow your own soul." The arguments are of a like brazen character. Disendowment is unscriptural, because Levi, who was yet in the loins of his father, paid tithes to that mysterious individual Melchizedek, who was, like the Devil himself, without father or mother, beginning of days or end of life. It is unjust because the churches and cathedrals were the offerings of pious men to the Roman Catholic Church, and inadvisable, for only the infidels would be the gainers by it.

CHARLES BRUTON, of Manchester, a bankrupt dealer in stationery and hardware, when examined as to the state of his affairs, attributed them to spiritual manifestations, by which God gave him to understand that Jesus was his Savior. For that reason he declined to associate with his brothers and his father in business, but set up for himself, making a sad mess of it under the guidance of his spiritual directors. Hopeless insolvency should be expected by any one who trusts his business affairs to spiritual direction.

ACCORDING to a letter published in the *Daily News*, human flesh has been sold for pork in Hayti. One of the women implicated is mentioned as having taken the Communion but a little previously. Possibly partaking of the imaginary flesh and blood of Jesus led to a further taste for such dainties.

THE *Birmingham Post* thinks it about time some new Bibles were obtained for the courts in Moor Street. The copies in use are so dirty and dilapidated that witnesses shudder when required to kiss their greasy covers.

THE *Court and Society Review* is a journal we are blissfully ignorant of. We conjecture from its title that it is one of those high-toned papers that look down upon "the lower orders," and turn an honest penny by chronicling the small talk and loose scandal of "society." One thing, however, is certain; the *C. and S. R.* is disgusted at our "blasphemy," and like a good, pious, charitable Christian, it calls on the Public Prosecutor to do something to "stop this succession of outrages on the faith of the majority of Englishmen." This indignant "society" scribe appears to forget, or perhaps he has never heard, that several desperate attempts have been made to put down this "blasphemous" *Freethinker* without the smallest success.

"THIS infamous paper," says the *C. and S. R.*, "is now being distributed free amongst the lower orders in various parts of London." We are delighted to hear it, especially as the distribution is not at our expense. Why doesn't our pious contemporary get copies of its own issues distributed among the same people to counteract our deadly influences? Because that would cost something, while shouting for the policeman is cheap.

ADMIRAL SIR W. KING-HALL attributes the depression in trade to the fact that Mr. Bradlaugh sits in Parliament. But did it improve during the time he was excluded?

THE *Christian Commonwealth* acknowledges that the Rev. George Dyer, although acquitted of the charge of murder, is universally felt to have been "guilty of imprudence and folly deserving of unmitigated censure." Of course the exposure has given a "shock of surprise and shame" to his brother saints, who "find that he had been concentrating on a single family the time and attention which a Christian minister should distribute amongst the people of his charge." Many more shocks would be given if all the doings of Christian ministers were only exposed to the public gaze. The ministerial attentions which can be concentrated on the courtship of a rich man's wife, would not, we think, be greatly improved by wider distribution. How many rich wives and innocent maidens does the *C. C.* think a Christian minister ought to go courting at once? We think that if saints

must teach chaste wives geography while sitting together on the sofa with the window-curtains pinned together, that the more limited these ministerial attentions are the better. Ordinary husbands and fathers certainly do not want to see such attentions more widely distributed among the fair members of their families.

INFIDELITY is so awful and sombre to the Rev. P. S. O'Brien that it affects his eyesight and makes one of the open spaces of the metropolis, over which the Midland Railway runs, appear as gloomy as Styx. At a meeting of the Kings Cross branch of the Young Men's Christian Association he said: "It was disheartening to think that while they were doing their utmost to spread the Gospel, even within bow-shot, under those dark terrible arches of the railway near, men were standing forth to teach the most nefarious doctrines and to cut the roots from under every tree which the clergyman planted for the happiness of mankind." Another cause for lament is that a gospel shop in the vicinity has been closed for want of custom.

ON Palm Sunday, while the bishop was about to officiate in the cathedral at Madrid, he was shot in the back by a priest. The bullet, however, was not consecrated and did not do its work effectually. The Pope availed himself of the secular means of the telegraph in order that his benediction might arrive in sufficient time to speed the bishop on his way to glory. The priestly assassin says that it was an affair of honor; priestly honor, we presume.

IN the alleged fasting case, Harris is said to have completed his forty-one days fast, and unlike Jesus Christ was not "an hungered." He went to the Ship Inn and had some port wine. Perhaps he has recently been to heaven again and had a good dinner of angels' food, to which he must be getting accustomed.

AT the recent case under the Criminal Law Amendment Act, it transpired that the prisoner met the girl at the mission room where he was employed to play the harmonium.

AT a sitting of the Macclesfield County Court in the case of J. George Jeffrey, a bankrupt tailor and clothier, the Judge severely condemned the conduct of the Rev. Z. T. Downen, a Baptist minister, who lent the bankrupt money and wanted more than cent. per cent. for his loan. The Rev. Z. T. Downen believes in the Scriptures, "from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away"—that is, if he can offer thee over a hundred per cent.

THE Rev. James Kelley, incumbent of St. George's, Liverpool, has sent a letter to the mayor of the city protesting against the godless education given in Liverpool University College. Probably he thinks the history of the Jews overshadows that of all the rest of the world, and considers teaching the dogma of the Trinity a great aid to the higher mathematics.

DEAN BURGON writes to the *Guardian* suggesting that in reading the prayer for "the safety, honor and welfare of our sovereign and her dominions," every minister should pause for half a minute before the three last words that the congregation may have time to pray against the separation of England and Ireland, "so that the treasonable designs of a little band of traitors be frustrated."

THE *Record* literally rages against any interference with the Blasphemy Laws. Of Professor Courtney Kenny's Bill it declares: "It proposes to deprive Christianity of all legal status, to give full licence to the teaching of profanity, and to encourage the publication of blasphemous libels by doing away with all penalties. We earnestly hope that it is only necessary for the real scope of the Bill to become known to ensure its meeting with a reception that will prove that England is still a Christian country, and that Christianity is still the religion if not the law of the land." Just so. To retain persecuting laws which such judges as Lord Coleridge and Sir James Fitzjames Stephen characterise as ferocious, is the way to prove this a Christian country. Surely this confirms all we have ever written on the crimes of Christianity.

MOTHER GIRLING, the chief of the New Forest Shakers, has been bed-ridden for months. She suffers from a disease which is sure to kill her before long, but her infatuated followers believe she will not die. Her life, and theirs, is to be prolonged to all eternity. Even if she seems to die—that is, if she becomes a corpse which the authorities will insist on burying—they are warned by the energetic old lady that she will only be in a trance, and they must keep her until she revives, or rather (for she won't be dead at all) until she comes round. Such is human stupidity and credulity in the nineteenth century. If Mother Girling could find a sect, every member of which implicitly believes her "revelations," in this age of School Boards, how easy must it have been for the Christs, the Pauls, and the Peters, who did the same kind of thing on a bigger scale eighteen centuries ago.

THE most merciful God has been busy again over in America. Several of his cyclones have played high jinks with houses and trees, besides preparing a number of people for the undertaker. And now the news is telegraphed across the Atlantic that Montreal has

been visited by the most disastrous floods it ever experienced, the loss of life being considerable, and the loss of property something like six million dollars. The Lord promised Noah that he would never drown the earth again, and fixed up the rainbow as a pledge of his veracity, there being no Bible to take an oath on at that time. But the wily old deity made a convenient reservation. He has kept the letter of his promise, while violating its spirit. There has been no universal flood since the ark bumped on Mount Ararat, but the partial ones have been numerous and destructive. Moral.—Keep your weather eye open when you make a contract with Jahveh.

THE new Bishop of Manchester arrived in England on Monday. He came all the way from Melbourne on a call from the Lord. The summons was unmistakable—the salary proved it. Dr. Moorhouse gains a nice post, and what is more, he escapes the stings of Joseph Symes who has been teasing him unmercifully in the *Liberator*.

THE Archbishop of York preached in London last Sunday, and his sermon was remarkably comical when it was not audaciously untruthful. Enjoying a salary of £10,000 a year, or twice as much as the Prime Minister of the British Empire, he exhorted his congregation to "exercise real self-denial." He said it was a modern, and therefore, of course, a miserably false idea that happiness was to be found in this world. True, it will be a bad job for priests and other public parasites when the masses fully realise that idea; but, as a matter of fact, those who bamboozle and plunder them have always known how to make the most of this life before taking their chance in another.

THE Archbishop's talk about the hospitals that are only built by Christian love was the veriest twaddle. Freethinkers contribute to the support of those institutions, and in return they find bigotry rampant in them. The nurses must all be Christians, and generally members of the Church of England; and even University College Hospital has become as bad as all the rest, if not a trifle worse. So much for "Christian love." As for the origin of hospitals, it no more belongs to Christianity than the invention of sleep does, although the pulpit is a good auxiliary to Morpheus. The Pagan temples of Æsculapius were really hospitals, where such medical science as the priests of the god of healing possessed was available to all who sought their aid. And if the patients, on their recovery, gave votive offerings to the beneficent deity, do not the chaplains of our hospitals give every discharged patient a ticket, asking him to go to church on the following Sunday to return thanks to God Almighty, and to give the ticket itself to an officiating sky-pilot?

ANOTHER clerical maunderer is the Catholic bishop of Kingston, Ontario, who rejoices in the name of Cleary, and from his cognomen is either an Irishman or the Devil. Seeing some posters on the walls of the town announcing the arrival of a comic-opera company, and depicting some of its members in their stage costume, the blood of the pious Cleary boiled in his veins, and he immediately fulminated against such horrid impropriety, in utter forgetfulness of the fact that his Bible contains stories which could not be read aloud in the lowest music-hall or the commonest penny gaff. The natural result of this gratuitous advertisement was a crowded house; and, alas for all the godly who went to see something spicy, the play was found to be extremely proper.

THE Psalmist said in his haste that all men were liars. Perhaps he only made a rash generalisation from his own company. Anyhow, he had some excuse. But Bishop Cleary has none when he says that Paganism "reduced women to the condition of beastliness." Sky-pilots who talk in that way presume on the ignorance of their hearers. We wish one of the fraternity would break a lance with us on this subject.

AT a meeting at Staplehurst against the extraordinary tithes, a coffin was carried bearing the words: "Extraordinary tithe. Died in the nineteenth century after long suffering and agitation." The Smarden brass band followed behind. In the same waggon a "sandwich" man carried placards headed, "The Church's Wolves in Sheep's Clothing." After this followed texts from Isaiah lvi, 9-12:—"All ye beasts of the field, come to devour, yea, all ye beasts in the forest. His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving in slumber. Yea, they are greedy dogs which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter." The villagers ought to have had a copy of our cartoon this week painted on a large banner.

THE Rector had been circulating hand-bills headed "Extraordinary Lies about Extraordinary Tithes," in which he describes these tithes as "most righteous" and says that "Church tithe is the property of Almighty God." To this he adds a text from Scripture: "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings."—Mal. iii. 8. It is amusing to see both sides hurling texts at each other. The brazen impudence with which the sanctified robbers quote the eighth commandment is particularly rich.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 25, Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool; at 11, "Who wrote the Gospels?" at 3, "An Easter Sermon on the Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ;" at 7, "God's Mother."

Wednesday, April 28, South Place Institute; at 8, Demonstration on the Blasphemy Laws.

Thursday, April 29, Hall of Science, Old Street, London; at 8, Debate with the Rev. Dr. McCann on "Is Secularism True?"

MAY 2, Manchester; 9, Sheffield; 13, West Ham; 16, Milton Hall; 23 and 30, Hall of Science, London.

JUNE 6, Oldham; 13, N. S. S. Conference; 20, Milton Hall; 27, Ball's Pond.

CORRESPONDENTS

- LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.
- THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.
- SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.
- RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—Henry P. Bowdery, G. L., E. J. T., J. Caspar D. M. G.—Thanks for the copy of your letter, which ought to have a good effect. Glad to hear that your acquaintance with Freethought dates from our "infamous prosecution."
- T. W. JOHNSON writes: "I have just read your *Prisoner for Blasphemy* and I feel really glad that the bigots imprisoned you. Your imprisonment will in the end prove more valuable to the cause of Freethought than anything else that has happened during the present century." Thus far we quote from our friend's letter; the rest, even the modesty of a brazen-faced editor obliges us to omit.
- C. GOLLEK.—Unfortunately we are not acquainted with any books fit for a boy of six, in which he will not find some nonsense about Gods and ghosts. Perhaps some of our readers can help our correspondent.
- W. HARGREAVES.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."
- T. GRIFFITHS.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."
- ARGUS.—Many thanks for the batch of cuttings.
- W. HOPPER.—Jokes are always welcome, especially good ones. *Bible Absurdities* will doubtless be useful to thousands of others as well as yourself. It is having an excellent sale.
- J. QUAIL.—Shall appear.
- J. TAYLOR.—Your indignation is natural, but you should remember Gibbon's saying, that the virtues of the clergy are more dangerous than their vices. While the sky-pilots bring religion into contempt by their avarice and ambition they are helping on the cause of Freethought.
- F. E. PERKIS.—We have no room to treat the subject of hydrophobia. Can you send us a medical remedy for pyrophobia? That would be more in our line.
- W. BARROW.—We cannot send anyone to oppose Dr. McCann at Woolwich. The local Freethinkers should bestir themselves in the matter. If they have not a good speaker amongst them they might ask Mr. Forder, the Secretary of the N. S. S., to send them one. Always glad to hear from recent converts, especially when we have been the chief agent in their conversion.
- PETAH.—We have not the slightest notion whether Colonel Ingersoll intends to visit England or not. No doubt a course of lectures by him would give, as you say, a great fillip to Freethought in our country.
- W. G.—We are not good at conundrums.
- F. A. WILLIAMS.—Thanks for the cuttings. Can you give us any information as to Freethought in Cornwall?
- W. CARTER.—We meant no offence, but our opinion being asked we gave it.
- FIDUS.—It is not surprising that your friend who prayed God to wake him early in the morning overslept himself. No one but a sloopy-headed man would ever have offered such a prayer. God wakes those who wake themselves. Glad to hear from you as "a convert during the last few months."
- A. STUCKEY.—Sorry to hear you find so much bigotry in Wales. Thanks for the jokes. Papers sent.
- J. KEAST congratulates Mr. Foote and Mr. Ball on the appearance of *Bible Absurdities*, which he says is the very thing Freethinkers have long wanted. In his opinion every Freethinker who comes in contact with Christians should keep a copy about him. Our correspondent thinks people remain Christians because they do not know the contents of the Bible; he was himself a Christian until he began to read it.
- J. W. GRANSHAW writes that he was formerly assistant-secretary to D. Bitcheno, who was answered in our last week's correspondence. "You may now," he adds, "challenge him to produce his convert, and you can produce one from his own place. I am willing to meet him any time provided I have due notice."
- R. E.—Thanks for the joke.
- G. DONALDSON asks us in our journeys through the country to defend the Northampton people when we hear them abused. We very seldom do hear them abused, as we are not in the habit of visiting the gospel shops in our travels. Besides, we fancy Northampton is quite able to defend itself.
- J. D. LEGGATT.—Shall appear.
- S. RUSSELL.—We really cannot trouble our head about the matter. Tracts relating the conversion of nameless sceptics are always plentiful. Why not write to the publisher for particulars? We don't suppose you will get any, but you might make a trial.

F. WILSON.—Overcrowded with copy this week. The debate is published and will speak for itself.

EX-RITUALIST.—Shall appear.

C. WARD.—Cuttings received with thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Modern Society—Weekly Times—Highland News—Leith Herald—Shropshire Guardian—Chicago Tribune—Kentish Express—West Sussex Gazette—Beverley Recorder—Northamptonshire Guardian—Sheffield Evening Star—North-Western Gazette—Sheffield Independent.

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

A CATALOGUE of the Progressive Publishing Company's Works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OWING to the St. James's Hall mass meeting which Mr. Bradlaugh has called to support Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy, the third evening's debate between the Rev. Dr. McCann and Mr. Foote has been postponed till April 29. On that and the following Thursday the two debaters will discuss the question whether Secularism is true. Mrs. Besant will preside.

THERE was again a very crowded audience to hear the second night's debate on the 15th inst., and the discussion was followed throughout with the greatest interest. The verbatim report of the first two nights' debate is now ready, under the title of *Is Christianity True?* It is published at the low price of sixpence. As this is the first debate between a representative Freethinker and a representative Christian for several years, and is likely to be the last for a considerable time, it will probably command a large sale. We may add that the report has been revised by both disputants.

WONDERS will never cease. The Christian Evidence Society contemplates doing something. Stung by the frightful impeachment of the *Crimes of Christianity*, it has decided (we hear) to issue a reply, but in what form we are quite unaware. It should be a volume, it may be a pamphlet, but perhaps it will be a tract. The C. E. S. appears to think that the less it says the better, and after all this may be very near the truth.

WE hope the C. E. S. will notice that most of the authorities cited in the *Crimes of Christianity* are orthodox writers, so that, in a certain sense, the creed is judged out of its own mouth. All the heterodox authorities that are cited are standard authors, who are always appealed to concerning the periods they treat. With respect to the accuracy of the *Crimes of Christianity*, we may observe that no orthodox champion has yet claimed the five pounds reward offered to anyone who will find a single substantial misquotation in the whole work.

THE Australian Freethinkers do things in style. We have just seen a bill printed at Sydney announcing a grand picnic with dancing, sports, and a couple of first-class bands, and, as the crowning item, a lecture by Mr. W. W. Collins in the grounds. The party was to be conveyed by steamers, and from the plural term we should imagine there must have been a crowd. If this is how Freethought affairs are conducted at the Antipodes, it seems almost time for the rest of us to follow Mr. Symes and Mr. Collins into El Dorado.

THE half-yearly report of the Australasian Secular Association has just reached us. It is a highly satisfactory document. The total receipts for the six months amount to £1,448 8s. 3d. We are pleased to see that Mr. Symes's salary as lecturer is a big item on the expenditure side. The report states that Mr. Collins made himself very popular during his short stay in Melbourne as Mr. Symes's *locum tenens*; that the number and influence of the association are steadily increasing; and that there is no fear of any retrogression while the *Liberator* and its editor keep the field. It is gratifying to add that "the trustees have arranged for the purchase of an allotment of land on which to erect a hall and the first instalment of the purchase money has been paid."

THE following extract from a letter written by a gentleman at Cawnpore to a friend in England will show how this journal is appreciated in India:—"The Christmas Number of the *Freethinker* caused a great sensation and all were so eager to have a read that I was cruelly molested; but to pacify their rapacious hunger I read over Noah's Log and I had quite a crowd around me."

THIS year Good Friday should be a festival to all Freethinkers for it falls on the birthday of William Shakespeare, the author of our Saxon Bible. April 23 was in old times a holiday, being dedicated to St. George, the patron saint of England. St. George was a low parasite who got a lucrative contract to supply the army with bacon. He literally purchased his way to the bishopric of Alexandria. Being lynched, as he deserved, this precious knave was considered a martyr to Christianity, and in good time became St. George of England, the patron of chivalry.

NOW is the time for all Freethinkers to bestir themselves in the cause of free expression of opinion. Every one should make

himself a centre for the collection of signatures to the petition for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Freethinkers may also do good by bringing the subject before any clubs with which they may be connected and by writing to their representatives in Parliament, urging their support of Professor Courtney Kenny's Bill.

WE beg for the last time to remind our readers of the demonstration in support of Professor Kenny's Bill for the Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, which will be held at South Place Institute next Wednesday evening. It is highly desirable that the hall should be crowded. The meeting will be addressed by many well-known speakers, and we hope the newspapers will give a fair report.

THE United States is the only country in the world which spends more upon education than upon war. Probably that is the reason why Ingersoll gets such audiences. He beats all the popular preachers hollow. More people pay to hear him than listen to Talmage for nothing.

A LONG and vigorous letter in the *Leith Herald* on the subject of Sabbath Desecration over the signature of "Vasco," reminds us that Scotland does not stand where it did upon this question, as any one who will take a Sunday stroll in Princes' Gardens, Edinburgh, may see. "Vasco" hits heavily at Presbyterianism, with its creed of gloom. The publication of such outspoken heresy is a hopeful sign for "meenister"-ridden Scotland.

THE PASSOVER.

"Christ our passover is sacrificed for us."—PAUL, 1 Cor. v., 7.

THE Passover is the most important and impressive festival of the Jews, instituted, it is said, by God himself, and a type of the sacrifice of his only son. Its observance was most rigorously enjoined under penalty of death, and although the circumstances of the Jews have prevented their carrying out the sacrificial details, they still, in the custom of each head of the family assuming *pro tem.* the rôle of high priest, preserve the most primitive type of priesthood known.

The Bible account of the institution of the Passover is utterly incredible. After afflicting the Egyptians with nine plagues, God still hardens Pharaoh's heart (Exodus x. 27) and tells Moses that "about midnight" he will go into the midst of Egypt and slay all the firstborn. But in order that he shall make no mistake in carrying out his atrocious design, he orders that each family of the children of Israel shall take a lamb and kill it in the evening, and smear the door-posts of the house with blood, "and when I see the blood I will pass over you." Moses received this command on the very day at the close of which the paschal lambs were to be killed, certainly very short notice for communicating with the head of each family about to start on a hurried flight. As the people were two million in number and the lambs had to be all males, without blemish, of one year old, this supposes, on the most moderate computation, a flock of sheep as numerous as the people. Who can credit this monstrous libel on the character of God and on the intelligence of those to whom such a story is proffered?

What, then, is the correct version of the origin of the Passover? Dr. Hardwicke, in his *Popular Faith Unveiled*, says it meant "nothing more or less than the pass-over of the sun across the equator, into the constellation Aries, when the astronomical lamb was consequently obliterated or sacrificed by the superior effulgence of the sun." While allowing that this may have determined the time of the festival, I cannot think it covers the ground of its significance. That seems to me to be indicated in the thirteenth chapter of Exodus in connection with the institution of the Passover. There we read the order, "thou shalt set apart [the margin more properly reads "cause to pass over"] unto the Lord, all that openeth the matrix" (verse 12). "And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem."* Professor Huxley, in the current number of the *Nineteenth Century*, asks upon this passage: "Is it possible to avoid the conclusion that immolation of their first-born sons would have been incumbent on the worshippers of Jahveh, had they not been thus specially excused?" In Exodus xxii., 29, the command stands simply

"the firstborn of thy sons shalt thou give unto me." In Exodus xii., 27; xxiii., 18; xxxiv., 25; and Numbers ix., 13, the Passover is spoken of as particularly the Lord's own sacrifice.

The law proceeds to enjoin that the father shall tell his son as the reason for the festival, how the Lord "slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beasts: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem." Evidently here is the notion of a substitutionary offering, although the reason given is not the true reason. In Exodus xxxiv., 18-20, the festival is brought into the same connection with immediate reference to the redemption of the firstborn. In the story of Abraham and Isaac we have the same idea. God commands the patriarch to offer up his only son as a burnt sacrifice (Genesis xxii., 2), an order which he receives without astonishment, and proceeds to execute as if it were the most ordinary business imaginable, without the slightest sign of reluctance. A messenger from Jahveh, however, intervenes and a ram is substituted.* I do not doubt that this story, like similar ones found in Hindu and Greek mythology, indicates an era when animal sacrifices were substituted for human ones.† The legend is of course far older than the record of it which reaches us. In a notable passage in Ezekiel xx., 25, 26, the Lord declares that he had given his people "statutes that were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live." And he continues, "I polluted them in their own gifts in that they cause to pass through the fire all that openeth the womb, that I might make them desolate, to the end that they might know that I am the Lord." The fact that the very same words are used in Ezekiel which are found in Exodus xiii., 12, at once suggests that originally the passover was a human sacrifice, and that of the most abominable kind—the offering of the firstborn—and that the story of the Lord slaying the firstborn of Egypt was an invention to account for the relics of the custom. We know that such sacrifices did remain as part of the Jewish religion. Ezekiel himself says that when they had slain their children to their idols, they came the same day into the sanctuary to profane it (xxiii., 39). Micah argues against the barbarous practice: "Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (vi., 6). Two kings of Judah, Ahaz and Manasseh, are recorded to have offered up their children as burnt offerings (2 Chron. xxviii., 3; xxxiii., 6), as upon one occasion did the king of Moab (2 Kings iii., 27). 2 Chron. xxx., in relating how Hezekiah commanded all Israel to keep the Passover, says that "they had not done it of a long time in such sort as it was written," and relates how the Levites were ashamed and many yet did eat the Passover otherwise than it was written. And in the account of how Josiah broke down the altars which had been set up by Ahaz and Manasseh one reads "surely there was not held such a Passover from the days of the judges." In other words, it had never been kept in the same fashion within human memory. The keeping of the Passover had been different before this reformation, just as until the age of Hezekiah the Jews worshipped a brazen serpent which they afterwards accounted for by ascribing it to Moses the law-giver who had prohibited all idolatry.

If then we interpret the offering of the paschal lamb as being substituted for a human sacrifice, we shall understand how it is at once a thank-offering and yet eaten with "the bread of affliction," the motzahs, or unleavened cakes, and bitter herbs, which are the remaining features of the festival, and this may help to explain the accusation which in all ages has been brought against the Jews, viz., that once in seven years at least they required their Passover to be celebrated with human blood. It is true the accusation has been often brought without evidence, but the Jews themselves profess astonishment at the unanimity with which their opponents have fixed upon this charge. Further, we shall see that in adopting the paschal lamb as the type of Christ, the substitutionary sacrifice for our sins, the Christians were simply reverting to the early savage notion that deities are only to be appeased with blood, and

* Observe that *Elohim*, the old gods, claim the sacrifice and *Jahveh*, the new Lord, prevents it.

† See article "Jewish Sacrifices," *Freethinker*, January 3, 1886. It may help us to understand how the sacrifice of an animal may atone for human life, if we notice how in South Africa a Zulu will redeem a lost child from the finder by a bullock.

* Why is the ass only mentioned besides man? One cannot but suspect that his introduction is an interpolation by the reformed Jews, who had outgrown the custom of human sacrifice, betrayed by the phrase "thou shalt break his neck."

to this degraded belief they have added the absurdity that Christ himself was God, thus making God sacrifice himself in order to appease himself!

J. M. WHEELER.

JESUS PAID IT ALL.

"Nothing, either great or small,
Remains for me to do;
Nothing—Jesus paid it all,
All the debt I owe."—[Revival Hymn.]

REJOICE, ye debtors, and be glad!
Ye saints, rise up and sing!
From every land and every clime
Your hymn of praises bring;
From every debt of sin or crime,
Committed since "the fall,"
You are discharged, no man you owe,
For Jesus paid it all.

No matter what the sin has been,
How great the debt may be;
Only believe, and then be set
From obligations free.
Deprive the widow of her mite,
Nor heed the orphan's call;
You've no concern in things like these,
For Jesus paid it all.

So wallow in the sinks of vice,
Rob virtue of her gold;
With slander sting your brother's name,
And spare not young or old;
Play with the Devil hide and seek,
Hell need not now appal,
For Satan's might is broken quite,
Since Jesus paid it all.

If Christian wearies of his wife,
And craves another's charms;
If strychnine powder takes her life,
His soul feels no alarms;
On bended knees, in felon's cell,
He on the Lord will call,
And that will balance his account,
For Jesus paid it all.

From every gallows in the land
The blood-stained wretches go
To sit at once on God's right hand,
(Their victims down below;)
And there they sit and claw their harps,
And each will loudly bawl,—
"We owe nobody anything,
For Jesus paid it all."

And so throughout the catalogue
Of rogues and scoundrels all—
Preachers, laymen, sinners, saints,
All "ransomed from the fall;"
For every debt contracted here,
However great or small,
Expect to 'scape the just demand,
With "Jesus paid it all." W. F. PECK.

FERGUSON DEFENCE FUND.

The following additional subscriptions have been received:—
C. Goller, 1s.; T. W. Johnson, 2s.; G. Anderson, £2 2s.; G. Payne (second subscription), £2 2s. [The Fund must be closed at the end of April. All who wish to subscribe towards the deficit should therefore do so at once.]

"FRAGMENTS THAT REMAIN."

We read that in Belgium the pamphlet *Ni Dieu ni Maitre* ("Neither God nor Master"), has been strictly prohibited on account of its Atheistic and Socialistic teachings.

The N. Y. *Journal* is authority for the statement that Chinamen make it a religious duty to pay their debts once a year. It is this sort of insulting reflection upon the customs of civilisation which makes it a hopeless task to convert the almond-eyed heathens.

A MINNESOTA man by the name of Green, in a fit of religious fervor, is starving himself as a means of gaining the "power." One thing is certain: he is well-named.

It costs £100 to convert a South Sea cannibal to Christianity, and then he is only worth ten shillings a week in a penny show.

A CLERGYMAN has blown out his brains at a small hotel at Clifton, near Bristol, where he had stayed the night. We wonder if infidelity can be assigned as the reason.

"C. BRADLAUGH,
The Anti-Christian!

MOB ORATOR AND HERALD OF IMPURE PHILOSOPHY!
In the House self-sworn to brag out of it!
He trembles before Truth's solemn test.

WHO IS GOD, AND WHAT IS HIS WORK?
See my Challenge in London Papers, May 2 to Aug. 2.
W. BEAUMONT,

34 Half Moon Street, London, W.,
Who in 1881-2-3 lectured in public in the North.
Such is an advertisement cut out of the *Eastbourne Standard*.
W. Beaumont surely dates from Full Moony Street, judging by the way he spends his money in advertising "the Anti-Christian."

SIR JOHN LUBBOCK has discovered a curious epitaph. It is to be found in a Norfolk churchyard, and reads:

"Here lies a poor woman who always were tired,
For she lived in a world where too much were required.
'Weep not for me, friends,' she said, 'for I am going
Where there'll neither be working nor reading nor sewing.
Then weep not for me friends, if death us do sever,
For I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever."

It speaks rather unfavorably for European morality that all the tribes of the West African coast agree in representing Satan under the form of a white man. This fact was turned to formidable account in the epigram written on Sir George Grey when he was Governor-General of Cape Colony:—

"About the Devil's color there's a fight,
The white men say he's black, the black men white;
But this dispute is at an end to-day,
For now we're all agreed the Devil's Grey."

THE Rev. M. Baxter, editor of the *Christian Herald*, and author of *Louis Napoleon, the Destined Monarch of the World*, has, since the advent of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, discovered that the separation of Ireland from England was predicted by the old Hebrew prophets. They gave even more details of this matter than they did of the Messiah, but one thing they omitted to explain clearly, and that was their intention to make Baxter or Bakster their prophet. His credentials, however, need not be disputed, since he is found to bear in his own name the mark and number of the beast. (See Rev. xiii., 18.) His proof that Jerome Napoleon is the beast applies equally to himself. Thus:

M.	B	A	K	S	T	E	R	
40	2	1	20	200	300	3	100	= 666.

THE *Saturday Evening Gazette*, of Boston, says: "Mr. Joseph Cook has Gratiano's talent for saying an infinite deal of nothing. In common with that other windy, quarrelsome, and nonsensical person, the Rev. Mr. Talmage, he possesses an unfortunate gift for verbosity which he mistakes for both eloquence and argument, and this erroneous estimate leads him into no end of trouble. He has, during the years which he has poured forth unfathomable torrents of words, accomplished nothing more important than talking himself into notoriety. He has worn the public out by his volubility, and the wonder is that he has not worn himself out as well. The only explanation that offers is the indestructibility of wind. The potency of humbug when assisted by invulnerable egotism was never more felicitously exemplified than in the careers of these Tupper's of religious polemics, Messrs. Talmage and Cook. Ridicule, no matter how justly provoked, or how unerring its aim, hurls its shafts at them in vain. Their hides are impervious, and the professors of verbosity continue to pour out words in an endless, wishy-washy flood. Like neighbor Verges, they will be talking."

THE Rev. Hely H. Smith contends that Jesus of Nazareth was the lawful heir to the throne of David, and cites the contradictory genealogies, the saying of the wise men from the East, "where is he that is born King of the Jews," and the otherwise discrepant superscriptions on the cross to prove it. He says Jesus acknowledged it in replying "Thou savest" to Pilate when he asked him the question "Art thou the King of the Jews?" This contention only justifies Pontius Pilate in putting to death a king who was not wanted by his people and whose legitimate title to the throne could only make him an object of political disorder.

A CHARACTERISTIC comment was made by a Dublin gallery habitué on a curious dramatic hitch, which occurred some years ago at the Queen's Theatre. A very portly Mephistopheles, in some "Faust" extravaganza, had to "go home." The dramatic devil was, like Hamlet, "fat and scant of breath," and as he sank through a small circular trap—a sort of "converted vampire," to be technical—he stuck. The demons below tugged at his crimson legs in vain; the mortals above tried to stuff him down; everything was useless—and then, over the delighted Dublin din that rose from the whole house, came a still, small voice: "Well, boys, that's a comfort, anyway—hell's full!" The curtain came down with a run.

PROFANE JOKES.

SUNDAY-SCHOOL TEACHER (to Ah Sin, the laundryman): "What are the wages of sin?" Ah Sin: "Sleventy-five cent a dozen. No checkee no washee."

At a recent church entertainment in Surrey the following item was seen on the programme: "Miss Fisher—'Put me in my little bed,' accompanied by the curate."

A NEW church has been started in Greenland. During the time when the days are three months long, the parson doesn't go to the church until three weeks after breakfast, and dismisses the congregation two months before sundown.

JIM WEBSTER being once more before the court, his Honor asked: "Haven't you been in jail for stealing chickens once before?" "No sah; no indeed I hain't. Praise de Lawd for his inferno goodness and mussy, nobody hain't cotched me yit. Hit seems as ef I was pertected by de higher powers."

A GENTLEMAN travelling in the wilds of Fayette county, Virginia, last winter had to pass the night in the lowly home of a "broom-sager," who, before the family retired, offered the following prayer: "Now we lay we 'uns down to sleep. We'uns are not jealous of our betters, and ef the snow fall fo' feeter deep to-night, in the maw'nin' perhaps the stranger will trade we'uns his watch and chain even up fo' the old yellow mule."

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AND
MR. G. W. FOOTE,
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Clair J. Green, Esq., LL.D., in the chair.
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