

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

ARCHDEACON FARRAR'S SEVEN SILLY QUESTIONS.

"ARCHDEACON FARRAR'S Seven Questions" is the title of a paragraph in the current number of *The Young Man*, a paper which is proving the certitude of Christian truth, after nearly two thousand years of preaching, by carrying on a symposium on "What is it to be a Christian?" We have interpolated the word "Silly," which is quite accurate, and for which we owe Dr. Farrar no apology, since he does not shrink from applying the description of "stupendous nonsense" to the belief of his opponents.

Our method of criticism shall be honest. We shall give the whole of the paragraph, and then answer the seven silly questions seriatim.

"If you meet with an Atheist, do not let him entangle you into the discussion of side issues. As to many points which he raises, you must make the Rabbi's answer: 'I do not know.' But ask him these seven questions: 1. Ask him, What did matter come from? Can a dead thing create itself? 2. Ask him, Where did motion come from? 3. Ask him, Where life came from save the finger tip of Omnipotence? 4. Ask him, Whence came the exquisite order and design in nature? If one told you that millions of printers' types should fortuitously shape themselves into the divine comedy of Dante, or the plays of Shakespeare, would you not think him a madman? 5. Ask him, Whence came consciousness? 6. Ask him, Who gave you free will? 7. Ask him, Whence came conscience? He who says there is no God, in the face of these questions, talks simply stupendous nonsense."

These questions, be it observed, are put with great deliberation. With regard to many points, not one of which is specified, Dr. Farrar admits that he can only say "I do not know." But on these particular points he is cocksure. His mind is not troubled with a scintillation of doubt. He has no hesitation in saying that those who differ from him are guilty of "stupendous nonsense." It is a matter for regret, however, that he did not answer the questions himself. By so doing he would have saved Christian young men the trouble of hunting up an Atheist, good at answering queries, in order to get the conundrums solved; while, as the case now stands, the Christian young men may go on for ever with a search as weary as that of Diogenes, unless they happen to light on this number of the *Freethinker*.

First (a) Question (we leave out "Silly" to avoid repetition): *What did matter come from?*—First prove that matter ever came, and we will then discuss what (or where) it came from. Matter exists, and for all that anyone knows to the contrary, it always existed. Its beginning to be and its ceasing to be are alike inconceivable. The question is like the old catch query, "When did you leave off beating your father?" the proper answer to which is, "When did I begin to beat my father?"

First (b) Question: *Can a dead thing create itself?*—The question is paradoxical. "Create itself" is a self-contradiction. Creation, however defined, is an act, and an act implies an actor. To create, a thing must first exist; and self-creation is therefore an absurdity. The question is consequently meaningless.

Second Question: *Where did motion come from?*—Another nonsensical question. Motion does not "come" as a special change. Motion is universal and incessant. Molecular movement is constantly going on even in what appear stable masses. The presumption is that this was always so in the past, and will be always so in the future.

Third Question: *Where did life come from save the finger tip of Omnipotence?*—Why not the big toe of Omnipotence? Life is not an entity, but a condition. Its coming from anywhere is therefore nonsensical. A living thing might "come," because its position in space can be changed. Then come fresh difficulties. Can any man conceive the finger of an infinite being, or form a mental picture of life, as a something, flowing from the tip of that finger? The question of the origin of life pertains to the science of biology. When biology answers it, as it has answered other perplexed questions, Dr. Farrar will be enlightened. Meanwhile his ignorance is no excuse for his dogmatism.

Fourth (a) Question: *Whence came the exquisite order and design in nature?*—This is tautology. Design in nature includes order in nature. And the question invites a Scotch reply. *Is there design in nature?* No one disputes that there is *adaptation*, but this is explained by Natural Selection. The fit, that is the adapted, survives. But the unfit is produced in greater abundance than the fit. Theologians look at the *result* and blink the *process*. Darwin, who studied both, said, "Where one would most expect design, namely, in the structure of a sentient being, the more I think the less I can see proof of design." Dr. Farrar must catch his hare before he cooks it. He must prove design before he requires the Atheist to explain it. Perhaps he will begin with idiots, cripples, deaf mutes, fleas, bugs, lice, eczema, cancers, tumors, and tapeworms.

Fourth (b) Question: *Could millions of printers' types fortuitously shape themselves into the works of Dante or Shakespeare?*—No, nor even into the works of Dr. Farrar. But who ever said they could? Why not ask Atheists whether the moon could be made of green cheese. Dr. Farrar is no doubt alluding to what is called Chance. But Atheists do not recognise chance as a cause. Chance is contingency, and contingency is ignorance. The term denotes a condition of our minds, not an operation of external nature.

Fifth Question: *Whence came consciousness?*—This is a very silly or a very fraudulent question. Putting the problem in this way insinuates a theological answer. Consciousness, like life, is not an entity, and did not come from anywhere. The only proper question is, What is the origin of consciousness? This is an extremely difficult and intricate problem. It will be solved, if at all, by the Darwins of physiopsychology, not by the Farrars of the pulpit. The worthy Archdeacon and the Christian young men must wait until their betters have explained the development of consciousness. The supposition that

they understand it is simply ludicrous. Nor is any theory to be built on the bog of their ignorance.

Sixth Question: *Who gave you free will?*—Ay, who? *Has man a free will, in the metaphysical sense of the words?* Martin Luther replied in the negative. He would have laughed, or snorted, at Dr. Farrar's question. Atheists are all with Martin Luther on this point; although, of course, they reject his theory that God and the Devil are always contending for the rulership of the human will. They hold that the will is determined by natural causes, like everything else in the universe. To ask an Atheist, therefore, who gave him free will, is asking him who gave him what he does not possess.

Seventh Question: *Whence came conscience?*—This, again, is stupidly expressed. Conscience did not "come" from anywhere. Further, before the Atheist answers Dr. Farrar's question, even in an amended form, he requires a definition. What is meant by Conscience? If it means the perception of right and wrong, it is an intellectual faculty, which varies in individuals and societies, some having greater discrimination than others. If it means the recognition of distinct, settled categories of right and wrong, it depends on social and religious training. In a high state of civilisation these categories approximate to the laws of social welfare and disease; in a low state of civilisation they are fantastic and fearfully distorted by superstition. There is hardly a single vice that has not been practised as a virtue under a religious sanction. Finally, if conscience means the feeling of obligation, the sense of "I ought," it is a product of social evolution. It is necessarily generated among gregarious beings, and in the course of time Natural Selection weeds out the individuals in whom it is lacking or deficient. Social types of feeling survive, and the anti-social perish. And this is the whole "mystery" of conscience.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE OLDEST BOOK IN THE WORLD.

MANY people are of opinion that the Bible is the most ancient work in existence. So far, however, from that being the case, the earliest portions of that miscellany of sixty-six documents cannot be traced before the ninth century B.C.—that is, after the date assigned to Homer. Much, indeed, of the writings ascribed to Moses is now considered to date only from the time of Ezra, or later than Herodotus. Beside the earliest sacred classics of China, the Rig Veda of the Hindus, the Babylonian inscriptions, or the Gathas of the Zoroastrian Avesta, the writings ascribed to Moses are quite modern. Even if we allow them the date ascribed to them by Christians, they are modern compared with the holy book of the Egyptians, the Book of the Dead. This is the oldest of sacred books. Ancient portions of this Egyptian Bible have been found on tombs dating before 3000 B.C. The earliest preserved papyrus of it, however, only dates from the eighteenth dynasty, or about 1600 B.C. But the work itself is of far greater antiquity, probably preceding the Pyramids. In this work, to which I shall further allude on some future occasion, there is none of that obscenity and bloodshed which disgusts us in the Bible. And Chabas, a writer of the highest authority, tells us—what any reader of the *Records of the Past* may discover for himself—that "None of the Christian virtues is there forgotten—piety, charity, gentleness, chastity, protection of the weak, kind watching over the humble, deference to superiors, respect for property in its least details."

Putting aside the Book of the Dead as of undetermined date, the actually oldest known manuscript in the world is the Papyrus Prisse,* having been discovered by M. Prisse, who published a fac-simile in 1847. The papyrus, which is now in the Biblio-

* There are inscriptions older than this, but no papyri.

thèque Nationale, Paris, came from a tomb belonging to the eleventh dynasty, nearly 3000 B.C. It consists of two portions, the brief Book of Kakimna and the Lessons of Ptah-Hotep. The composition of the works, as appears from internal evidence, must be dated earlier, the first portion belonging to the time of King Senoferu of the third dynasty and the last portion to that of king Assa of the fifth dynasty. No contemporary records being known, it is not easy to assign exact dates for the works, but it is quite safe to say they were written before 3000 B.C. or 1600 years before the alleged times of Moses. In his Hibbert lecture, M. Le Page Renouf, keeper of Egyptian antiquities at the British Museum, who we gladly quote as the President of the Society of Biblical Archaeology, says: "It is undoubtedly, as Chabas called it in the title of the memorable essay in which its contents were first made known, 'The Most Ancient Book of the World'; the manuscript at Paris, which contains it was written centuries before the Hebrew law-giver was born, but the author lived as far back as the reign of king Assa Tatkara of the fifth dynasty." He goes on to say of these maxims "They inculcate the study of Wisdom, the duty of parents and superiors, respect for property, the advantages of charitableness, peaceableness and content, of liberality, humility, chastity and sobriety, of truthfulness and justice; and they show the wickedness and folly of disobedience, strife, arrogance and pride, of slothfulness, intemperance, unchastity and other vices." It is only, adds this devout Catholic, who is always a Christian first and a scholar afterwards, "through a lamentable misunderstanding of the text that some scholars have discovered anti-religious, epicurean, or sceptical expressions."

A French translation has been made by M. Philippe Virey, who devoted six years to the elucidation of eighteen pages, and the reader will desire to know something of the contents of the work. That of Kakimna is only a short fragment on civility. It enjoins against gluttony, and contains at least one sentence "Do not harden the hearts of thy children," fully equal to any in the Bible. Compare this with the saying of Solomon—"He that spareth his rod hateth his son" (Prov. xiii., 24) and "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying," and then say whether the truest wisdom and humanity is not to be found in the more ancient precept of the heathen.

The precepts of Ptah-Hotep give us a fuller view of Egyptian life and civilisation. The work shows the mind of one accustomed to a well-ordered society, wherein he respects the authority of those above him, and in return is respected by those beneath. He refers to well-defined classes of society, from the prince to the policeman, and the peasant with well-marked limits to his property. He was not only civilised: he saw the root of the matter, as witness the following:

"If thou art wise, take care of thy house. Love thy wife purely. Feed her, clothe her; these are the cares to give to her body. Caress her, fulfil her desire. Be not brutal; kindness will lead her better than force. Love is her breath. This establishes her in thy house. If thou repellst her, it is an abyss. Open thine arms to her for her arms call her; show her thy love."

Some refinement, too, is shown in this:

"Do not repeat an excess of language. Do not hear it. It is something which has escaped a heated soul. If it is repeated, look, without hearing it, towards the ground; say nothing about it.

"If thou hast to do with a disputer while he is in his heat, do not treat him with contempt because thou art not of the same opinion. Do not be provoked with him when he is wrong; away with that! He is fighting against his very self; do not ask him to flatter thy views."

One passage in Ptah-Hotep is very similar to one of the Proverbs ascribed to Solomon. Ptah-Hotep

says: "If thou art among persons who are sitting down to eat at the house of one greater than thyself, take what he gives thee, bowing low. Look at what is before thee, bowing profoundly." The wisest of all mankind, according to the Jews, said, "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee; And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite" (Prov. xxiii., 1, 2). Again we prefer the ancient profane to the modern sacred writer. Temperance people may rejoice to know that in this old work is the maxim "Do not warm thyself in the house where intoxicating liquors are drunk," and may contrast it with the precepts given in Deut. xiv., 26, and Prov. xxxi., 7.

Ptah-Hotep mentions Osiris and a divinity who may be a form of Osiris, yet speaks of God in the singular number, saying in one passage "Love for the work they do brings men near to God." He looks forward to the future of humanity and says: "If thou hast the position of leader prosecuting plans according to thy will, do the best things which after days will remember; so that the word which multiplies flatteries, excites pride and produces vanity, shall not succeed with thee." Among the positive injunctions of Ptah-Hotep are: "Love thy people; Treat dependents well. Return a gentle answer. The gentle man overcometh obstacles. Forget the wrong. Be just. Inspire men with confidence in you. Be kind to all. Be companionable. Be cheerful." Any one who thinks must be certain that a considerable development of morality existed among the people who put up the pyramids. But Christians, who claim a moral monopoly, usually do not think and are unaware that a sufficient refutation of their claims can be found in the oldest known book in the world.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE RISE AND PROGRESS OF FREETHOUGHT IN SPAIN.

SPAIN has been, and still is to a certain extent, a sort of *terra incognita* to the rest of the civilised world. Very scanty indeed is the number of travellers who have penetrated her interior regions with a view of studying them; scantier still the number of those who possess a knowledge of the nature of the Spanish mind. Of Spanish literature, which is extensive and not unworthy of the language, with the exception of the immortal hero of Lepanto—*i.e.*, Cervantes—and some writers of the seventeenth century, hardly anything is known to foreigners, notwithstanding that *littérateurs* like Shack, Ticknor, Baret, Phil. Chasles and numerous other critics have devoted many years of labor to the study of that literature. Of the number of clever and intellectual men that the Peninsula produced, many of whom were highly gifted and possessed of genius, with the exception of the names of a few painters, not a single one has ever crossed the Pyrenees or drifted to the hospitable shores of Albion.

A priest-ridden country like Spain, lost in a fog of fanaticism and childish credulity, could never have offered a peaceful abode to philosophers. It is not astonishing, then, if in her soil no philosophic school arose or took root. The scholastic philosophy alone succeeded in gathering a few disciples, and since its origin in the eighth century up till today its influence has only slightly slackened. It would be useless to seek in Spain for that power of abstraction, that boldness of system inherent in Teutonic thought, or for those brilliant essays, full of temerity, which issue at times from the pens of English and French writers. Spain always was too impregnated with the Catholic faith to pass easily to rationalism; and nothing has she abhorred so much (until recently) as doctrines bordering on scepticism or tinged by materialism. Her philosophy has been an *ensemble* of mysticism and spiritualism. A brief perusal of the works of Raymundus Lullus, Vives, Feijoo, Caramuel, and, in the nineteenth century, Balmés and Donoso Cortes, will confirm the above assertion.

Little has been written concerning the intellectual development of Spain. Buckle, in his admirable *History of Civilisation*, consecrates a fair chapter to this subject, but as his book was written quite thirty years ago, and it is in the last quarter of a century that Spain has experienced a complete

metamorphosis (which we shall eventually show), the statements in that well-known work cannot be applied to the present state of Spain, and would convey but an unfair—even false—impression of the mental condition of that country.

Spain is no longer that "huge and torpid mass at the further extremity of the continent." She is no longer that fanatic and ignorant country, which baffled for centuries the efforts of heretics to deliver it from the grasp of clericalism. Spain has awakened at last. Confused and ashamed at finding herself the most backward country in Europe, she has laid aside her ancient pride and infatuation, and is working with undaunted enthusiasm towards the realisation of a grand and radical reform. She progresses slowly, we grant; but, to borrow a comparison from Prof. Tyndall, "it is with the steady and irresistible movement of an avalanche." In her task Spain will do well to look forward towards free and brave Old England. Spain will find that by following England's footsteps she will reach the path which leads to honor, glory and prosperity. Let us hope that there always will be an eternal bond of brotherhood and friendship between English and Spanish Freethinkers, so that by mutually assisting each other, they may be able to fight for and advance the cause they both deeply cherish!

Let us briefly examine the causes which prevented Freethought from spreading in the Peninsula. "Spain," wrote an eminent English historian, "seems to have been designated by nature to be the seat and refuge of superstition." Among the most important physical causes of superstition are earthquakes, epidemics and famines. It is curious to remark that the said calamities have not elsewhere been so prominent as in Spain. "When we moreover add," continues Buckle, "that in the Peninsula, including Portugal, earthquakes have been extremely disastrous, and have excited all those superstitious feelings which they naturally provoke, we may form some idea of the insecurity of life, and of the ease with which an artful and ambitious priesthood could turn such insecurity into an engine for the advancement of their own power."

In no country has the Church dominated so widely and for such a length of time as in Spain. Since the middle of the seventh century the clergy have been holding kings in bondage by the confessional, and the people by their *naif* and blind credulity. The clergy were always exempt from charges towards the State, and all their work was merely reduced to absorb public wealth by their benefices, by tithes, taxes on perquisites, and by the encroachments they made on the property of the weak, and by the confiscation of the goods of Jews and heretics. All these sources made the revenues of the clergy swell to the enormous sum of one million yearly. Every attempt to liberate the human mind was smothered in blood. Before a book was allowed to be printed it had to receive the approbation of the Grand Inquisitor. Priests alone were allowed to teach, but in their bigotry and egotism they thought it would be better to leave the people in absolute ignorance. The following examples will show how severely the Inquisition behaved even towards those who formed part of that tribunal:—

Juan de Vergara, the celebrated Hebrew scholar, was imprisoned for having pointed out some mistakes in the translation of the Vulgate. Several learned theologians who were present at the Council of Trent were persecuted because in their discourses they showed a spirit of independence and were suspected of holding heretical opinions. The Benedictine father Virues, preacher to Charles V., was arrested and incarcerated during four years on mere suspicion of favoring Lutheran doctrines. Even the bigoted Charles V. himself was suspected of heresy, and after his death assaults are said to have been committed upon his body. Augustin Cazalla, chaplain of Salamanca, on account of his liberal sermons, was strangled and burnt with all their relatives. Ponce de Leon, a monk by profession, underwent an imprisonment of five years for translating the Song of Solomon. A long list of Protestants, Freemasons and Jews could be added to the above names, who were either burnt or banished on the mere charge of having become obnoxious to the Inquisition.*

F. MALIBRAN.

(To be concluded.)

"On human evidence the miracles of St. Theresa and St. Francis of Assisi are as well established as those of the New Testament.—J. A. Froude, "Short Studies."

* The reader who wishes for further information on this subject will do well to consult F. D. Mocatta, *The Jews and the Inquisition*, 1877; and E. La Rigaudiere, *Persécutions en Espagne*, 1860.

ACID DROPS.

Even the *Christian Life*, a Unitarian paper, is sceptical as to Mrs. Humphrey Ward's scheme. It "extremely regrets" the negation of miracle in the basis of the movement. "Had the first teachers of Christianity," it says, "planted themselves on the basis Mrs. Ward proposes, Christianity would not have been heard of out of Palestine." This is true enough. Fiction and miracle were the chief agencies in the spread of Christianity, and they will always be the chief agencies in its maintenance.

This is how Mr. George Barlow tries to satirise Mr. Herbert Spencer.

"God, when he shut heaven's door, took care to lock it,
Glanced round, then set to work upon the sun;
But Spencer drew his latch-key from his pocket,
And entered heaven, and saw the whole thing done.

Hence all our thoughts are changed—a light intenser
Now beams upon the paths creation took.
Had Moses had the help of Herbert Spencer
He would have written a far abler book."

The last line has a sort of cart-wheel melody, but it contains a good deal of truth. Moses may have been skilled in all the learning of the Egyptians. Very likely he was the only Jew of that age who had a day's schooling. But he didn't know much about astronomy, and the nebular theory never dawned on his imagination. He saw some divine (and funny) sights up Mount Sinai, but he never saw the law of gravitation. But the best of the joke is, he didn't write a book at all, so Herbert Spencer couldn't have helped him to write "a far abler" one. Mr. Barlow should not meddle with his betters. Let him stick to his last. He is good enough at passable echoes of Swinburne, but he hasn't brains enough for effective satire.

Parson Hoskyns, rector of Stepney, will not have to defend himself again. Mrs. Besant has decided to abandon her action against him, and entered into an agreement not to bring any fresh action in respect of the same matter. The reverend gentleman is still impenitent, but perhaps he will be a little more scrupulous in future.

Dean Lefroy's tirade against Scepticism, to which we devoted a paragraph last week, is reported at greater length in the *Christian World*. We cull the following choice passages from his "able and eloquent address": "After twenty-five years of close study, I must impress on you my conclusion that the causes of scepticism are more moral than intellectual. People begin to sin, they give up religion, take to drink, impurity and foul language, and then they try to bribe themselves into the belief that there is no Being to whom they are responsible. There is real, honest doubt when men are in conscientious agony, and their whole lives are saddened by their inability to see with the same definiteness that others can see, and for these I have great pity; but your poor, shallow, silly rattlebrain, that strokes his eyebrows and feels insanely for the down on his cheek, for him to talk to me about scepticism is to make me pray not to lose my temper."

If this is the result of Dean Lefroy's "twenty-five years of close study" he must be singularly foolish or he must have worn the spectacles of prejudice. This is the first time we ever heard that sceptics were to be known by their stroking their eyebrows and caressing their nascent beards. So far the Dean's discovery has the merit of novelty. But the part which describes the sceptic as a person who first takes to drink, impurity and foul language, is extremely ancient. It is a Pigottism that any candid investigator would see through in less than "twenty-five years." A few evenings' research would show that it is not the Freethinkers, but a very different class of persons, who congregate in the haunts of drink and lechery. Dean Lefroy has mistaken his friends for his foes.

Is it old age or the dowager duchess? Anyhow Professor Tyndall is not the man he was. His recent appearances at Belfast are in singular contrast to the visit of 1874, when he delivered that famous Address, which was such a splendid *resumé* of the history and philosophy of Evolution. His lectures are now patronised by the clergy

who were then his severest critics. But *they* have not changed. The change is in himself.

Mr. Hugh Price Hughes's organ, the *Methodist Times*, says "We would much rather see a good Conservative who is a Methodist in Parliament than a bad Liberal." The syntax of this sentence is as bad as its sense. What is meant at bottom is this, that the chief question about any man is, Is he a Methodist? Perhaps it should be added, "Does he subscribe to the West-end Mission?"

Dr. Tylor asserts very justly, in his magnificent work on *Primitive Culture*, that at first religion and morality have no connection with each other. This is now admitted in reality by Professor Max Müller, although he paradoxically affirms that religion does influence man's moral nature even if it only tells him to do immoral things! In his tenth Gifford lecture the following passage is worth quoting: "We are told, for instance, that the pre-historic Hebrews killed their first-born in sacrifice to their god. Abraham came very near doing the same thing. Jephtha killed his daughter, and David killed the seven sons of Saul, and kept them hanging in the air all the summer long, to remind his God that Ishbosheth was avenged. If you catch a Yezidee in the act of stealing, he will tell you that murder is to him a religious rite. If you reprove the Todas of the Nilgheri Hills for living in polyandry, they will tell you that this is the very ground-work of their religion. If you reprove the Mormons for living in polygamy, they will remind you that this is the Biblical chart of their faith."

Real Christianity always runs into a contempt for the flesh and a hatred of the world. It expresses the views of Jesus and Paul as to the evil of earthly life and the inconvenience, if not the sinfulness, of all sexual relations. We are not surprised, therefore, at Mr. Dillon's account of Tolstoi's new novel, which is still in manuscript, its publication being prohibited in Russia. "It aims at enforcing the lesson," says the *Christian World*, "which Tolstoi professes to derive from the Gospel, that it is not good to marry, and, following as a corollary upon this, that the race should be allowed to become extinct." Properly speaking, this is the upshot of every *spiritual* theory, for if the soul is an independent entity the body is only a clog.

The Vicar of Burton-on-Trent desires to be a martyr to the sacred cause of sectarian education. He objects to pay the School Board rate because the School Boards do not teach the dogmas of his church, and says he will only stump up on compulsion, thereby proclaiming his opposition to what the mass of his fellow-countrymen deem a prime element of social welfare. The man of God has been summoned to the police court, and ordered to pay.

In Tasmania, where Mr. Symes was recently mobbed, the spirit of bigotry is aroused, and Mr. Walker, a prominent Freethinker in Launceston, has been charged with blasphemy and committed for trial. A fund has been raised for his defence, and the result will surely be an accession of strength to the Freethought cause.

Archbishop Denison says: "'The New Criticism,' of which Mr. Gore, in the book called *Lux Mundi*, is the apologist, proceeds upon the assumption that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did not know in his time upon earth what is the historic value of the Scriptures (John v., 39-47), but that 'The New Criticism' does know, and is therefore able to accept or to reject."

The Archdeacon is quite right. To discredit Daniel is to discredit Jesus, who referred to him. To deny that Moses wrote the Pentateuch is to repudiate Jesus, who said that Moses wrote of him, though, of course, Moses did nothing of the kind, even if he was the author of the documents ascribed to him.

Quite a number of sky-pilots are prepared to pitch overboard the Old Testament if they can only save the New. It is necessary to show them the two volumes are bound together. Others, especially the Romanisers, would pitch over the Bible entirely if they could only save the Church and their positions therein. It is necessary to show them that the Old and New Testaments are the pillars of the

Church, which once destroyed, down comes the entire edifice.

There were "ructions" at the Sunfield Men's Bible Class. A paper was read on "Christ's Religion as the Best National Security," and when question time came Mr. Henry Smith arose and asked, "Seeing that the Sermon on the Mount is the principal teaching of Christ, how is it that Christians don't carry it out?" This innocent question fell like a bombshell, and it was found advisable to decline to have the question answered on the ground that Mr. Smith was not a member; but, after he had left in disgust, one humbug after another protested that he would have had a satisfactory answer if he had only remained.

According to *Modern Society*, the children of a National school at the seaside were being paraded preparatory to a march to church for a Lenten week-day service, and one little fellow whose father does not approve of sectarian teaching, contrived to make his escape and run home, as he had received instructions to do. When he appeared at school next morning he was not merely punished for playing truant, but so severely thrashed by the master, that when he got home his little clothes were covered with blood, and he presented such a woeful appearance that the police, to whom his father took him, asked if the "child had been mauled by a sow?"

A summons was taken out against the master, but the said pedagogue went to the father privately and persuaded him to take compensation in money! It seems to us very strange that any parent should consent to have such a case kept out of court; but it is alleged that the father, who is only a poor fisherman, was afraid that the rector's influence with the local magistrates of the neighborhood would prevent his cause from getting a fair hearing in any case.

Prophet Baxter is superseded. Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops says "The end of the world is now." He has sent us a copy of his vaticination, which has the double advantage of being very ungrammatical and three times as mad as Baxter's. We have read it from left to right, and from right to left, and upside down, and we can't understand it any way. However, it is intelligible on one point. Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops solicits the public to buy his portraits at a shilling each "to help him to bring the reality of the world"—whatever that means. And to show it is all square he sends us one of his counterfeit presentments, taken by Beattie, of Praed Street. It represents a gentleman with a largish mouth, and very small eyes, which seem to behold a lot of things that ordinary people never see. Underneath is a printed slip, enough to horrify the poor photographer, bearing the words—"Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops, First and Seventh Angel, Alpha and Omega, Christ the Second, M.S.S." But surely the "M" is a misprint for A.

Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops writes us a fearful scrawl. Encouraged, perhaps, by some recent references to the N. S. S. motto "We seek for Truth," and regarding it as an open invitation to all the cranks of the universe, he exclaims, "You seek for truth, and the truth is come." He says he has joined the N. S. S.—goodness knows under what name—and declares it is from the platform of the London Hall of Science that he is destined to "open the Fourth Kingdom."

This Christ the Second is apparently a great deal madder than Christ the First. But if the N. S. S. is to take in everybody on the lock-out for truth, we don't see how he is to be excluded. Who knows whether he is not what he pretends? According to Mr. Sinnett it is possible for the ego to be reincarnated after a lapse of fifteen hundred years in Devachan. Now Christ the First has been dead—supposing he ever lived—a margin of three centuries over the minimum; and it may be that "Gabriel Michael St. Patrick Hops"—whose carnal patronymic is Hopkings—is really the Prophet of Nazareth once more on the track. For our part, however, we have no means of solving the problem. It requires those *spiritual* faculties which Madame Blavatsky very truly says we do not possess. We shall therefore have to submit the case to a committee of Theosophists.

The Roman Catholic Bishop of Birmingham in his Mid-Lent Pastoral calls for more aspirants to the priesthood. He says the number of students falls short of those needed to supply the vacancies.

The Dean of Windsor says that side by side with the increase of scepticism the world is witnessing an increase of faith. Yes, but the scepticism is developing among the intelligent and the faith among the illiterate.

Mr. Moncure D. Conway has been to Rome and seen the Pope, who he says reminded him of certain Hindu deities he has seen in their temples. Mr. Conway thinks the Church has gained nothing and lost much by its irreconcilable attitude towards the State, and says: "To-day, freedom is even less liable to be harmed by Catholicism than by Protestantism; and apart from political freedom, where is the advantage? Why should I prefer Jehovah to Mary, or the bottomless pit to purgatory?"

Cardinal Parrocchi, the Vicar-General to the Pope, said to Mr. Stead of England, "There is no country that is so near to my heart." He has shown the sincerity of his words by issuing an order "canonically erecting the Confraternity, which has for its end to promote the conversion of England, and apostates and those in danger of apostacy." The order will be under the patronage of "Our Lady of Ransom and the Blessed English Martyrs," and the Church of the English Convent of the Poor Servants of the Mother of God Incarnate in the Via San Sebastiano, Rome, will be a centre for prayers for the conversion of England.

The Papists know well enough that prayers won't do without work, and they are showing more activity than ever. In Poplar, Father Lawless—good name—has instituted processions with a big crucifix, and other Catholic priests are holding services in the bye-lanes and streets of Southwark.

The New York *Press* heads another account of a victim to the faith cure, "Prayer Did Not Save." A child, whose parents are members of the Faith Cure Society, died without medical attendance. The father, who said he put his trust in God only, is to be put on trial for following the injunction of the apostle James.

Richard Davies, one of the Crewe murderers, has written a long letter to a friend. It is full of pious expressions. He is sure the Lord will forgive him, and take him through, and bring him out on the other side to Heaven. He admits that he went "wrong," but he evinces no sense whatever of the enormity of his crime, nor does he give a thought to the father whom he hurried out of life, and who is probably (on Christian principles) burning in Hell. Granted that the father was a wicked, cruel man; still, it would be thought that one who was looking for pardon himself would extend a little sympathy to his sinful father. But no, the father's fate does not occur to the murderer's mind; and it appears that both brothers were without a sense of the gravity of their crime until the death sentence was passed upon them. Yet the mouth of Richard Davies is full of pious expressions, and he spends his time in reading religious books. Could anything show more clearly the selfish character of religion?

Frank Brealey, the murderer of a child at Burton, was apparently afflicted with religious mania. Mrs. Peabody, who struggled with him at the time of the murder, says "he talked with me about heaven, and said he wished he could realise that the Savior was his. He wanted to pray, and sent for the Rev. Mr. Edwards, of All Saints."

"Mr. H. Barratt (Kilburn Liberal) writes us a very indignant letter on the intolerance of a 'noisy few' at his club, who have banished the *Freethinker* from the reading room. He protests against any body of men dictating as to what the members should read. He considers if the Government allows the paper to be sold it cannot be a very dreadful production. Many in the club desire to read it, and are barred by a tyrannical few! We think our friend has cause for complaint, for working men's clubs are not supposed to be young men's Christian societies or Wesleyan chapels. If the members' religious feelings are so keen on the literature of Atheists they are not obliged

to read the *Freethinker*, even if it lies on the library table. They should be more liberal in their ideas, and if they wish to counteract the evil effects of the *Freethinker* let them supply the *Christian Million* or the *War Cry* as an antidote."—*Club and Institute Journal*.

This is what a working man said, according to the Rev. G. W. McCree:—"Look here, governor, when yon 'ere chapel was full of swells and their wives, we were never asked to come in and take a seat; but when the swells left and went outside London, and the pews were empty, the folks began to send out bills to get us in. Look here, we're wanted now to fill up empty seats—that's it. Yes, that's your dodge, it is. Well, we ain't a-coming, that's all."—*London Echo*.

The newspapers report that a monkey at Bellie, Fochabers, escaped and went to the parish church, where he mounted to the gallery and joined in religious worship. But the restless nature of the animal would not permit him to observe the usual rules, and during the singing of the psalm he walked along the seat rails and grinned at the congregation. He was subsequently captured, and that single Sunday at church will probably have to last him for a lifetime.

Mr. Handel-Cossham, M.P., as an advanced Radical by profession, was very much out of place at the recent annual meeting of the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association in Exeter Hall. After a nauseous, canting speech by Sir R. N. Fowler on the awful amount of Sunday labor involved in the opening of museums and art galleries, Mr. Handel-Cossham gave a fine specimen of fluent nonsense. He appears to belong to that Radical school which is sound on popular ideas that have a lumping majority behind them, but utterly bigoted on every open question, and obstructive to every measure of rational freedom until it becomes a big party cry.

Mr. Handel-Cossham is a Home Ruler. We believe he has been so ever since the Liberal party shifted on the Irish question. Well, then, we invite him to answer this question. If it is right for the majority, who don't wish to go to museums and art galleries on Sunday, to close them on the minority, who do wish to go, how is it wrong for the English majority to coerce the Irish minority?

More religious love in Germany! Pastor Stoecker is on the rampage again, breathing out Christian fire and slaughter against the Jews. He has formed a Christian league of merchants who positively refuse to have any business dealings with the Jews. In Saxony, Hesse-Cassel and Westphalia the Jews are denied the right of acting as jurors.

The death is reported of Noah Drew, another leader of the Jezreelites. He was formerly a prosperous farmer at Michigan, in the United States, with a well-stocked holding of 100 acres, his own freehold. But Jezreel having convinced him that he was one of the 144,000 elect who were to sail up to heaven at the approaching second coming of Christ, he converted his farm into hard cash, every penny of which was, by Jezreel's order, handed over to the "treasury." Now Jezreel and his wife are dead, and Noah Drew is dead, but Christ hasn't come; and as the "money's all gone and spent," Noah Drew's widow is left penniless, and charitable persons are trying to find her a passage back to her native country.

Jezreel's little game was exactly like that of Peter and the other Apostles. Both little enterprises traded on the second coming of Christ, and both flourished on the property of converts. The Jezreel affair is a dismal "sell," and we should doubtless have a similar tale of the Peter affair if the poor dupes had left their account of it.

An American crank having prophesied the destruction of San Francisco and New York on April 14, a number of infatuated followers are selling off their goods at an alarming sacrifice, and holding daily prayer-meetings to avert the disaster. If the cities are spared it will doubtless be owing to these good men's prayers.

Some time ago the *Christian World* questioned the value of Sunday-schools, and pointed out what an overwhelming majority of our gaol birds have graduated in those institutions. Curiously enough, the same fact is admitted in America. It is not those wicked Freethinkers who fill the prisons, but old Sunday-school scholars. We see that the *Christian Advocate*, a Methodist paper in New York, edited by Dr. Buckley, is asking for subscriptions to defray the cost of sending that journal to the inmates of Sing Sing prison; and in doing so it makes the following candid admission: "Of all those fifteen hundred and fifteen men, fifty-five per cent. are nominally Roman Catholics, and forty-five per cent. nominally Protestants. Of the whole number, ninety per cent. went to Sunday-school when boys."

Fifty-five per cent. Catholics, and forty-five per cent. Protestants! As the man in the street says, that is "the whole blooming lot"—one hundred per cent. Not a fractional percentage is left for the vicious, sinful, degraded, hardened, corrupt Freethinkers. Surely the illogicality of these creatures is incredible. According to the most faultless Christian logic they ought to go to gaol, but they don't. The Christians go there instead.

According to the rector of Rettersdon, the largest class of tramps in Essex is recruited from the ranks of broken-down clergymen and schoolmasters with an unmistakable religious snivel. They use Greek and mathematical signs. The Greek Theta, the first letter of Theos ("God") is, it appears, put on the gates of religious people's houses, where the aforesaid religious snivel is of course introduced.

Dr. B. W. Richardson has been seeking to convert the Jews' College Literary Society to teetotalism. He ascribed the vitality of the Jews to their knowing that wine was a mocker. But the Jews as a race, though temperate, are not teetotalers. As with the Christians, wine forms an item of religious service, and that the wines of Palestine were intoxicating there is evidence in the awful examples of Noah and Lot, and indeed in the very passage upon which Dr. Richardson built his discourse. Yet Deuteronomy permits money to be used for "whatsoever thy soul lusteth after; for oxen or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth."

Dr. Vaughan, the Catholic Bishop of Salford, has been inveighing against cremation. He points out that the Italian cremation societies are animated by hostility to the Christian religion, and he calls upon the faithful to stand up for the orthodox practice of rotting in the grave. Like a thorough-paced bigot, he congratulates the Manchester Corporation on its refusal to allow of a crematorium in its public cemeteries. That is, the Bishop says "We don't mean to be cremated, and we won't let anybody else be cremated." But as the heretics who wish to be burnt will all burn everlastingly in hell, it is difficult to see why their wish should be interfered with.

One of Dr. Vaughan's remarks was simply silly. After denouncing cremation as though it were a grave danger to Catholicism, he wound up by saying it was but a small fad in England, where only forty-six persons had been cremated in 1889. He forgets the early history of his own Church. After all the miracles of Jesus Christ, including the Resurrection and Ascension, there were only a hundred and twenty Christians all told. Cremation has no supernatural assistance, but it has made greater progress than that.

The Salvation Army has a "Fire Insurance Branch" in the "Property Department." At first the Army only insured against fire in the next world; now it insures against fire in both worlds; but, with a fine financial instinct, it makes the premiums for both payable in the present life.

CERTAINTY OF THE GOSPELS.—We cannot even rely upon the statement as to the age of Jesus at the commencement of his public career, that he was just thirty years old; this is a deduction from the date of registry of Cyrenius, a date adopted for the birth as affording a sort of excuse, far-fetched and improbable enough, for transferring Mary for the nonce from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the city of David, and so getting a fulfilment of a repeated prophecy.—*W. Warkiss Lloyd*, "Christianity in the Cartoons," p. 70.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, March 23, Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, London, at 7, "Mr. Gladstone's Rock of Ages."

April 6, Milton Hall; 9, Shelley Society 13, Portsmouth; 20, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science, London.

May 4, Newcastle; 11, South Shields; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, N. S. S. Conference.

June 1, Hall of Science London; 8, Gladstone Radical Club and Hall of Science, London.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d. Australia, China and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months, 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d. Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

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.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

P. C.—We cannot waste further space over H. L. Hastings's libels on Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll. The man who prints in England what he dares not print in America, namely that Ingersoll got on by "managing swindling whiskey rings," is simply a cowardly liar.

G. BARLOW, 148 Falcon Road, Clapham Junction, has agreed to supply the *Freethinker* retail. He will exhibit a contents-sheet, and try to push the sale of the paper. Readers in the neighborhood will please note the address.

SCRUTATOR.—The document you send us from *Spare Moments*, purporting to be the actual sentence passed upon Jesus Christ, has gone the round of the newspapers. It is a shameless fraud, which every scholar, even within the Church, would treat with scorn. The papers that have inserted the fraudulent rigmarole have only evinced the usual gross ignorance, even on the part of the "educated" people, of the history and evidence of Christianity.

SENEX.—It certainly was a funny mistake. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation. We shall be glad to see you if you will write and make an appointment. Or, if you will send your own address, we will make an appointment with you. Your questions are answered as follows:—(1) Yes. It could be arranged at the interview. (2) Yes, contents-sheets shall be sent. (3) It was a slip on the writer's part. Of course the Ober Ammergau mystery play is not acted yearly.

C. TURNER.—The London Secular Federation will do something of the kind before long. A Christian Evidence Class was to have been started at Christmas, but Mr. Foote and Mr. Wheeler were both too busy to conduct it.

W. CARTER.—You must really pardon us for not going into such a personal matter. Let it suffice that we bear the correspondence in mind.

J. SIMS (Glasgow) endorses the opinion that this journal improves every week. He is greatly pleased with the article on "Benighted Ireland," which expresses what he has experienced as a frequent visitor to the land of St. Patrick during the past forty years.

H. RICHARDSON (Jarrow) sends us £1 1s. for the London Secular Federation's free lecture movement. He advises Freethought lecturers to speak more frequently on the Evolution Theory.

H. C. JACQUES.—Pleased to hear that, as a reader of all kinds of literature, you find our pennyworth the best of the week, and that you push it wherever you can. Sorry to hear, however, that Burton-on-Trent is such a gospel-ridden place. Is the fact due to the fumes of the beer?

J. E. (Newcastle) thinks the whole *Freethinker* is too much for the nerves of the bigots, and recommends the cutting out and pasting up of good Acid Drops and Sugar Plums.

QUIXOTE.—Cuttings are always welcome.

C. D.—Father Burke may have been a Dominican, but the passage Mr. Wheeler quoted was one in which he spoke of Jesuits as if himself of the order.

"FREETHINKER" CIRCULATION FUND.—R. Mayer, 1s.; W. Grant, 1s. 6d.

THORNTON SMITH.—Many thanks for the extract.

R. O. SMITH, hon. treasurer, London Secular Federation, acknowledges the receipt of a £3 subscription from the Hall of Science Club and Institute.

C. K. LAPORTE.—We have one or two of your pieces in type waiting for space.

W. T. (Preston).—It seems a purely domestic squabble. We "tackled" Mr. Spurgeon in one of our *Letters to the Clergy*, which will shortly be resumed.

ON THE WAR-PATH.—We fear you will never be happy till you go to church.

WALTER MANN, 21 Bermondsey Square, Grange Road, S.E., has opened a second-hand book shop at this address, and means to keep a stock of Freethought literature. He displays a *Freethinker* contents-sheet, and has already had some lively experience of local bigotry. No doubt our friends in the neighborhood will remember Mr. Mann's shop.

RECURR writes from a Tyneside town—"About three months ago a fresh newsagent commenced business in this town. In order to help him I told him to supply me with the *Freethinker*. For the first few weeks he only got the one I ordered, but I induced him to get a few more on speculation. He did so and is now selling half a dozen every week. The other evening he said to me, pointing to the *Christian Herald*, 'This paper has gone down fifty per cent. since I began to sell the *Freethinker*.'"

"STUPID AWE."—Judges i, 19, reads: "And the Lord was with Judah; and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron." Thanks for cuttings.

W. H. J. P.—Nahum i, 7, may be compared with Isaiah xlv., 7, where the Lord says he creates evil. John v., 24, with 1 Tim. vi., 16, "Who only hath immortality." More palpable contradictions may be found in *The Bible Handbook*. Cannot answer the second question.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschentum—Echo—Owl—People's Press—Club and Institute Journal—Cosmopolitan—New York Press—Twentieth Century—Open Court—Burton Evening Gazette—Golden Perhaps—Liberty—Western Chronicle—Modern Society—Star—Redditch Indicator—Pudsey District Advertiser—Sussex Daily News—Hull Express—Northern Ensign—Leicester Daily Mercury—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Wesleyan Methodist Magazine—Daily Chronicle.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish our attention directed.

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.

Considering the unfavorable weather there was a good audience at the Hall of Science on Sunday evening. The lecture was followed by discussion, in which the Rev. Mr. Brennan took a courteous part. This evening (March 30) Mr. Foote lectures there again. His subject, however, will not be as previously announced. He will discourse on a live topic—"Mr. Gladstone's Defence of the Bible," dealing of course with the Liberal leader's article on the Impregnable Rock of Scripture in the April number of *Good Words*. It would be well if Freethinkers would make the lecture known among their orthodox friends.

Mr. Foote's lecture at Chatham was greatly enjoyed by the Freethinkers. Several Christians asked questions, and three offered opposition. The proceedings terminated at ten o'clock, after which the lecturer walked two miles to Strood Station, caught the 10.30 slow train to London Bridge, arrived there at 12, and reached home by the aid of a cab some time before one in the morning. Such is the lazy life of a Freethought lecturer.

The Chatham Society has obtained the freehold of a plot of ground, and is raising £150 to erect an iron structure upon it for a regular meeting-place. As the Society consists almost exclusively of working men and women, the enterprise is a remarkable one, and we wish it a speedy success.

Our next number will contain an article on "Mr. Gladstone and the Bible" from the editor's pen. It would have appeared this week, but we were not favored with an advance copy, and the April number of *Good Words* was not published till Wednesday, the day on which we go to press.

Some friend hath done this. The *Freethinker* is advertised in the *Western Chronicle* as "the raciest weekly pennyworth" and on sale at Mrs. Sevier's, 3 Silver Street, Yeovil. And he said unto them, "Go ye and do likewise."

Our circulation is steadily improving, and before long the editor will be able to stand the staff—the "sub." and the

office-boy—a supper on the first week's profit. Meanwhile we beg to impress upon some of our friends who can afford it that they might take two copies instead of one, circulating the second copy amongst their friends and acquaintances, or laying it in the way of the British public.

The great meeting at St. James's Hall, convened by the National Sunday League, proves that the Free Sunday movement has made immense progress. What a change since the old days when the League boasted but a few hard workers, most of them Secularists, who fought for its principle against overwhelming odds!

One of the League's Vice-Presidents has offered to pay £3,000 for the expenses of a year's trial of the Sunday opening of museums and art galleries in London. Good! There's money in the movement now. In the old days it was hard to make both ends meet.

The journeyman hatters of London have been polled on the Sunday question. In response to a circular issued by the National Sunday League they have decided in favor of opening museums and art galleries on the "Lord's Day." The numbers were—for Sunday opening, 532; against, 52.

The Yorkshire Secularists are making a forward movement. A lecture by Mr. J. Greevz Fisher, of Leeds, on "Will Atheists go to Hell?" given at the Pudsey Mechanics' Institute, is well reported in the *Pudsey Advertiser*. The meeting was crowded, and there was much opposition, apparently of a farcical character, one worthy asking the lecturer what he made of the death-bed scenes of Christians in which they had seen heaven opened, and of Atheists in which hell appeared as if waiting to receive them. Another gentleman wished to know if the lecturer ever knew a beast dream a dream that came true. Altogether, Pudsey seems to have had an intellectual stir, and to need it.

Captain Robert C. Adams, of Montreal, President of the Canadian Secular Union, has taken action to secure, if possible, the passage of a new Oath and Affirmation Bill in the Dominion Parliament. The text of the Bill allows everyone to swear or affirm at pleasure without any declaration. If it is carried in this form it will be superior to the English Act. But there's many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip, and the Bill, even if it passes at all, may be altered a good deal in discussion. However, we hope for the best, and we congratulate the Canadian Secular Union on having an energetic President.

The Canadian Secular Union has done another good stroke. Some time ago copies of Paine's *Age of Reason* were impounded at the Custom House as "immoral," and it was decided that the legality of such action should be tested. Mr. J. A. Risser, the Union secretary, ordered a copy of the "immoral" book, and the authorities were duly informed that the parcel would be cleared; but on this occasion, after some fencing correspondence, the books were delivered, and so, as Mr. Risser expresses it, the Government has eaten the leek.

The National Living Society is quite free from the religious sectarianism of the old Vegetarian Society, and should attract the support of vegetarian Freethinkers. Its president is Dr. T. R. Allinson, and the Society's address is 4 Spanish Place, Manchester Square, London, W.

Mr. J. M. Robertson's debate with the Rev. J. Tinsling on "Was the Pentateuch written by Moses?" takes place at the London Hall of Science on Thursday April 10, not April 3, as we wrongly announced in our previous issue.

Puck, of New York, has the pluck to tackle religious humbugs. A recent cartoon depicts wide-mouthed Talmago returning to America with relics from the Holy Land, such as the cradle of Moses, Joseph's coat of many colors, Delilah's shears, nails from the ark, and the jawbone used by Samson. By the way, if Samson had only got hold of the jawbone of Talmago, what havoc he would have played.

The quarrel between Church and State in Italy has become accentuated. The Pope is much incensed at King Humbert having subscribed 1,000 lire for the monument to Mazzini in Rome, and also at the removal of the obligation of

students in the royal military colleges and schools to attend church on Sundays.

The Sunday Music League has scored a victory at Newcastle. The candidate it supported in South Saint Andrew's Ward was returned by fifty votes above the Church and Tory candidate. Mr. Scott the chapel candidate, who had the support of the Liberal Association was at bottom of the poll. In the North Saint Andrew's Ward, which is a great Tory stronghold, the League candidate was only beaten by forty-four votes.

Mr. Swinburne Hanham delivered an interesting lecture on Cremation to a large audience at Brixton, the chair being occupied by Dr. Farquharson, M.P. His plea for incineration instead of burial was very favorably received. Mr. Swinburne Hanham's father and mother were both cremated.

There is some sense knocking about in Wisconsin. The State Supreme Court has decided that the reading of the Bible in the public schools is unconstitutional, as certain passages are made the foundation for conflicting creeds, and this is really sectarian instruction. Such a decision is too much for the Glasgow *Evening News*, which devotes a groggy leader to the subject, and goes to the fatuous length of saying that "rejection of the doctrinal teachings of the Bible deprives its ethical precepts of their inherent value." When the writer reflects on this sentence in a sober frame of mind he will probably wonder how anything can be deprived of its inherent value.

The *Truthseeker's* cartoon "Some of the Ordinances of God," depicts the Emperor of Russia, surrounded by scenes in Siberian prisons, a woman being knouted, and a prisoner shot by a soldier; Liberty lies strangled beneath, and above are the texts "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake" (1 Peter ii., 13). "For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." (Rom. xiii., 1.)

The Swedish Freethinkers have the right spirit. Many branches of the Utilistiska Samfundet, have sent addresses to Mr. Lennstrand in prison, declaring that they will openly testify that they fully agree with him and "will to a man demand the legal and spiritual authorities, the true guardians of superstition and falsehood, shall either punish us with you or else desist from persecuting you." This brave, determined spirit gives assurances of success despite the bigotry of the Swedish royal family.

SWEDISH PRISONER'S FUND.—Per Mr. Bradlaugh, 10s.; E. Goodwin, 2s. 6d.; J. Temple, 2s.; Hyde Park Branch, 4s. 7½d.; J. Marsh, 1s.; W. Inches, 1s.; H. Alexander, 1s.; H. Pope, 1s.; J. Spurgin, 6d.; J. C., 1s.; D. Richardson, 6d.; N. Remard, 6d.; H. Gibson, 6d.; The Fitter, 6d.; M. Dawson, 1s.; J. Firth, 6d.; J. Lees, 6d.; W. Boocock, 3d.; W. Sugden, 3d.; J. Howarth, 3d.; T. Dobson, 3d.; W. Ward, 6d.—R. Forder, Secretary.

We are glad to notice that, undeterred by his recent loss by fire, Mr. J. D. Shaw has purchased a new site for the Freethought Hall and *Independent Pulpit* publishing house at Waco, Texas. The *Pulpit* is now in its eighth volume, and is as outspoken and well-conducted as ever.

We are pleased to notice that the *Cosmopolitan*, a new Hindu Freethought paper, published at Bhowanipore, Calcutta, devotes some of its attention to preachers of mongrel Hinduism who attempt to make a cross between their old superstitions and the Christian ones.

Mr. Sam. Standing was lecturing at Brighton on Sunday, and on the Saturday evening he addressed a meeting of railway men in the Town Hall. He spoke warmly in favor of shorter hours of labor, and gave the meeting a taste of Freethought sentiment before sitting down amidst enthusiastic applause. Mr. Gill, another sound Secularist and member of the N.S.S., was also a well received speaker. It is mainly through Mr. Gill that the Brighton Town Hall was obtained for such a meeting.

The Battersea Branch's social gathering on Sunday evening was a brilliant success. The hall was well filled, and the services of the ladies and gentlemen who sang and recited

were highly appreciated. Miss Palmer, Miss Dew, Mrs. Hinton, Mrs. Hubbles, and Messrs. Martin, Fisher, and Dipper deserve special mention.

The recent free lectures at the London Hall of Science have excited the attention of *The Rock*, which writes as follows:—"Lately at the Hall of Science there have been discussions to which the Christian Evidence Society has sent representatives, and in which the new President of the Secularists, Mr. Foote, has taken part, and these delegates bring back word that large assemblies in which they were the only Christians accorded them respectful hearing."

The *Methodist Magazine* for March is down upon the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes who talks in his cock-and-bull story, *The Atheist Shoemaker*, of such people as "Christian Atheists." Our contemporary says that, "The phrase *Christian Atheist*, whatever else it may be, is the starkest nonsense, the flattest contradiction in terms. And if any one thinks Atheists are to be caught by this 'fulsome flattery,' let him just read the review of the very book in which Mr. Hughes makes this outrageous compliment, in the leading Atheist journal, the *Freethinker*. For Atheists, however hard-hearted, are sometimes hard-headed."

We are passing through the press the second part of Ingersoll's *Why am I an Agnostic?* It will make a sixteen-page pamphlet, and will be ready next week, price twopence. This appears to conclude the essay, but, should a third part appear, we shall reprint it in another pamphlet.

We are also reprinting Ingersoll's remarkably fine address before the State Bar Association of New York. It is entitled *Crimes against Criminals*, and is one of those fine social studies with which Ingersoll now and then shows the world the true way to the millenium. This also will be ready next week. The address is very lengthy, and will make a thirty-two page pamphlet, the price being threepence.

"BEAUTY LIVES WITH KINDNESS."

By HUGH O. PENTECOST.

From the "*Twentieth Century*."

(Concluded from p. 135.)

MEN say the social revolution can never be brought about without force of arms. If that is so it is because so many working men are cowards. They are afraid of being called Socialists or Anarchists. They are afraid to speak up to their employers firmly and kindly and say: "In this and in that you do us injury." They are afraid to vote as they think, afraid to attend public meetings, afraid to let it be known that they think they are wronged. They keep silent like cowards and then some day they hope to fly to arms like cowards; for I tell you he is not the brave man who fights for his rights; he is the brave man who lets his wrongs be known and fearlessly trusts to public opinion to see that they are righted. There is many a man brave enough to join a mob who is not brave enough to run the risk of losing his situation by talking for his rights.

I have digressed a little. I was saying that kindness smooths our way in life in a thousand encounters with persons whom we see to-day and are gone to-morrow. And if this is so, how much more happiness-producing is it in those social relations that are permanent.

It is said that marriage is a failure because of the legal restraints that attend it. It is said that because each couple must ask leave of the priest and the politician before they can marry or unmarry, an artificial condition is set up that necessarily produces unhappiness. I suppose this is true as a general statement, although it is something that the average man or woman cannot understand. Persons who think that society could not exist unless we allowed two or three hundred thousand politicians and policemen to rob us for their own support, will naturally think that marriage can never be a pure and holy

institution unless the State charges the bridegroom for a license and the priest kisses the bride.

It is quite possible for me to understand that if men were free to make a living as they pleased without asking permission of the people who own the land, the money and the machinery, and if women were equally free so that they were no longer dependent upon men for support, they might be able to make homes for themselves without the intermeddling of persons in black robes or blue uniforms. I believe profoundly in the ability of human beings to take care of themselves if the priests and politicians would only give them a chance.

But it is not my purpose now to discuss the question of whether marriage is a failure or not, or if it is, why it is. All that I wish to do is to point out to you that a good many marriages are failures that need not be, because the husband and wife are not kind to each other. There are thousands upon thousands of married people who would not separate from each other under any conditions or would come together again in a month if they did, who, nevertheless, do not know how to live very happily together because they do not know the magic power of kindness.

The relation of husband and wife is the most intimate possible relation that one person can sustain to another, and for that reason all reserve is apt to be thrown down between the two. Men are apt to cease to be polite to their wives and women are apt to grow careless of what they say to their husbands. Men are inclined to be overbearing and women are inclined to nag. Men are inclined to criticise and women are inclined to suspect. Both are human; both are subject to temptation; both are liable to drift into that unhappy familiarity that breeds contempt; both are apt to say and do unkind things.

I am not called upon to discuss the philosophy or practice of conjugal love. I observe that when public speakers begin to talk about conjugal love they are very apt to commit a sacrilege upon sentiments that should never be put into words, or else they grow maudlin—I might even say mushy—or else they are indelicate. I am not attempting to tell you that you should or how you should love each other. I only wish to impress it upon you that the beauty of married life lives in kindness. If a man is kind to his wife in his thoughts, in his words, in what he does, and if the wife is kind to him, I warrant you love will sit long at their fireside.

And with children—ah, who can be unkind to a child; and to his or her own child above all others? There are some persons—lost to shame—who beat their children. There are women—whom we call the gentler sex—who shut up their children in dark closets, or send them supperless to bed, or who hark them with loud and strident scolding. Clubs and prisons are bad enough when we are dealing with "hardened criminals," but to bring these horrors into the home circles—what palliation can there be for that? Such parents say they have bad children. Not so. Such children have bad parents. There are no bad children.

You say all this is moonshine? You say I am a person with poetic theories, that I am given to vapourings and vagaries. I tell you that I know what can be done with children by kindness; I know a home in which there is no government by physical force or angry words and in which unkindness is almost as rare as snow in June. A home in which the flame of love is fanned by gentleness and self-control, which is a safeguard against evils without its walls and a solace for every annoyance and pain. A home which no sensible man would exchange for a heaven in which it could not be.

And I know not what can be hoped for from people who do not know how to build such homes. Homes in which there is no ruler and no slave; no one to

fear, no one to obey. Homes in which there are no menials, no masters, no mistresses. Homes in which beauty lives with kindness.

It is idle to say that such homes cannot be made even in this dark age when everything fights against the fireside and tends to spoil the beauty of that real and holy trinity—father, mother and child. Such homes can be made even among the very rich and the very poor—our two most unfortunate classes. The secret of their making is kindness.

No one can doubt the horrid snarl into which our industrial life has got. Look at the disparities of life. Here is an indolent woman, who sleeps nearly all day, and decks herself in diamonds and dissipates nearly all night. There is a woman who takes care of the idle woman's child. She wears a cap and apron to show that she is a menial. And there are other women who wash and scrub and cook. One is the mistress. The others are servants—a noble name unless the service becomes servitude. They all live under the same roof, but they are not one family either in fact or feeling. The mistress is rude, insolent or patronising to the servants. (Not infrequently the most ill-bred person in the household is the mistress.) The servants are sometimes sly, deceitful and dishonest in many other ways.

This is a barbaric state of things. It means that society enables some persons to live without working and compels others to put up with humiliating conditions in order to live at all. It is shameful that it should be so. But it is so and it will be so until society is so arranged that no one can live without earning his or her living, until there shall be no exclusive monopoly of the means of making a living. But meantime how can the shameful state of things be mitigated a little; made bearable? By kindness; only by kindness.

Here is a man who rolls to his office in his carriage, spends a few hours there and then rolls away to his home or his club. And here are a thousand people, men, women and children, working for him, producing three dollars in wealth for every one they get. It is a barbaric state of things which enables one man to pocket two-thirds of the earnings of a thousand men, women and children. But nothing can be done to change that until poor people are allowed to work vacant land wherever they find it and to pass any kind of money that people will take from them. But what can be done meantime by way of apology for the shame of the social arrangement that binds one man to a machine and sets another free from toil? Kindness. This commercial king need not stand so far away from his subjects; he need not steal from them any more than the system compels him to. And they need not hate him nor destroy what he calls his property.

Beauty lives with kindness. I have seen a white master and a black slave who loved and respected each other and between whom there was kindness. It did not make the relation of master and slave less wicked, but it made them both happier under a condition with which neither should have been content. I do not say that we should forget for a moment that social conditions are awfully out of joint. I do not say that we should cease to expose the infamy and when necessary call men and things by their right names with no particular mercy nor kindness toward them as the representatives of what is evil. What I say is that as we touch elbows with people in this world it is better for our own sakes to be good-natured and kind, and when we are thrown with the same persons every day it is positively ill-bred and destructive of the amenities of life and of our own peace of mind not to be kind.

Why poison your happiness with hatreds; with thoughts of retaliation; with bitterness of feeling? Revenge is the weapon of the foolish. Anger is the language of the vulgar. To make another suffer is

the trick of a mean nature. To smile when others frown; to laugh when others swear; to extend the hand to one who has injured you; to be as polite to your wife as you were to your sweetheart; to be, at least, as kind to your children as you are to your pet dog—these are marks of beauty, for "beauty lives with kindness."

AN IRISHMAN'S SOUL.

If the average Irishman devoted as much attention to the welfare of his body as he does to what he calls his "soul," it would be better for himself, and a great deal better for his country. Instead, however, of doing anything of the kind, he looks upon the stubborn fact of this world as of no consequence compared with the imaginary world beyond the grave. When I speak of the Irishman in this connection I mean the Catholic Irishman; as the Protestant Irishman, to do him justice, leaves the welfare of his soul almost entirely to his God; does a maximum of business while satisfied with a minimum of worship and prayer; and, fervently hating Pope and Papists, goes down to his grave convinced that he is "safe in the arms of Jesus." The Protestant Irishman, like other Protestants, allows nothing to interfere between God and himself but Christ and the Bible; he does not care a fig about his clergyman, and does not believe that the latter can do much good for his soul, and it is to his credit that he disdains to have his soul fenced round by all sorts of protections and precautions. With the Catholic Irishman it is very different. *He* makes such provisions and takes such elaborate precautions as not only enable him to outwit the Devil, but God himself into the bargain. As a consequence, though Ireland does not turn out much that is remarkable in the manufacturing line, it exports to "kingdom-come" some of the best-cured and most superfine brands of souls that can be produced anywhere.

The trade of soul-curing in Catholic Ireland is carried on with marvellous industry, and it pays better dividends than any other trade on the face of the earth. It supports a body of about 4,000 men, and keeps them well-housed, fat and purse-proud. It is a trade, too, that is never affected by strikes, and but little influenced by bad seasons. How much the 4,000 soul-curers make out of the business cannot possibly be known, but the "wages of sin" must be something enormous. Nobody grudges the big dividends, however, for is not the salvation of "immortal souls" secured in return for the shillings and half-crowns advanced?

How an Irishman's soul is saved should be an interesting study for the seeker after the curious, as well as for the student of human nature. Built on a basis of the most besotted credulity, the business of soul-curing is carried on with the most audacious imposture. Sleek clergymen preach that soul-curing can be practised with as much system, and with as good prospects of certain results, as pig-curing. Their dupes implicitly believe them, and having surrendered their minds to the preachers, they complete the business by surrendering their hard-earned coins as well.

From the cradle to the grave, and even beyond the grave, the Irishman's soul is not neglected for a moment. The two great essential things that must be done for it are—the owner of the soul must never miss mass of a Sunday or holy day, and he must go to confession at least once a year. Otherwise, eternal damnation is the result. Of course there are a multitude of other things necessary; but these are the great fundamental essentials. The Catholic who wilfully misses mass is, as the Americans say, "a gone coon." And if he does not go once a year and confess all his sins to a priest, the case of his soul is hopeless indeed. The penalty for this awful omission is "exclusion from the house of God whilst living and deprivation of Christian burial at death."

Confession and communion are great and infallible medicine for a troubled soul. A man must tell all his sins to a priest, and express himself as being very sorry for them, or sorry that he cannot work up a decent sorrow for them, which is as good a sorrow as any other. The first then "absolves" him as well from the sins he has thought of as from those he happened to forget. Next day the penitent receives the "Blessed Eucharist," a very tiny wafer, which he must believe to be the *real body and blood of Christ*. After this extraordinary piece of pious cannibalism is duly executed, the cannibal goes away without a stain on his soul! He is then as innocent as the new-born babe—and remains so? Not a bit of it. Why, if his sins are washed out once why not a

hundred times?—and thinking thus he goes his way,—often a very crooked, dirty way—and having duly enjoyed his favorite sins he returns to the priest and is made stainless again! This goes on during a man's whole time, and when death stares him in the face, he is not very much in dread of it, if the priest is by to give him nourishment for the long journey he is told is before him. Of course, besides the ceremonies of confession and communion there are a thousand and one other protections raised up to save the soul. Prayers, fasting, and alms-deeds, are said to be excellent things. Praying on beds, praying before images and pictures, praying to saints without number, are also prescribed.

But it is when a man dies that all the fuss is made about his already well-cared for soul. That is, plenty of fuss is made if the man was wealthy and has left rich relatives behind him. For the poor man's soul nothing at all is done. No priest goes and reads a burial service over his dead body. No surpliced impostor troubles to offer up masses for his soul, or to implore the Virgin Mary and the Saints to intercede with God for him. But if the priest is paid to read the burial service or to say masses, then the thing will be done willingly, and to all outward appearance piously. And it is taught that the results of these prayers and masses will be something astonishing. There are three departments in the other world, heaven, purgatory and hell. The good Catholic cannot possibly get into hell, for he has been forgiven the crimes that warrant his being sent there. On the other hand, it is not likely that anybody is good enough to get straight to heaven. God is supposed to be very good, but he is not quite so good as to transplant an Irishman from the Bog of Allan straight to heaven. Now, supposing there were only hell and heaven on the other side—in that case prayers would be useless, as out of hell nobody could be fool enough to desire anything better than heaven. So that in such an event there would be no use in praying, and consequently there would be no revenue. A revenue being useful the third department, purgatory, was added on. This is a favorite haunt of dead Irishmen—crowds of them are said to be roasting there comfortably. It is quite as hot as hell, say our celestial geographers, with the one difference, that it is possible and comparatively easy to get out of purgatory. The priests say that they have the power to release the imprisoned ones in purgatory, provided they are paid for it. The more they are paid the sooner the prisoners will be released, and without payment there is no release until God thinks it time to bestir himself without being asked. Of course the coin is forthcoming, and the Virgin Mary and St. Patrick and St. Bridget are bombarded with requests until these interesting individuals are moved to go on a deputation to God to ask him to release Paddy Muldoon out of Purgatory, if he is there. If Paddy, however, happens to have gone to hell or to heaven, what then? Simply this. Somebody else will be released instead, so that whoever pays the money can be satisfied that some good result will accrue to somebody.

Suppose, now, that 4,000 Irish priests are praying day after day for as many dead Irishmen as they can get paid for; and suppose also that the B. V. M. and her good-natured spouse, followed by a procession of saints, are always ready to intercede on behalf of those prayed for, what a terrible time of it the "old chap" must have, and what a disappointment it must be to him to have to release an Irishman from "frizzling" whom he had sent to have a good long roast in purgatory! For my own part, I fear that the poor wretch is so bothered about it that he is quite sorry he ever gave a "soul" to an Irishman at all.

J. O'DONOVAN.

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

LONDON.

- Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7
- Mr. T. Pearson, "Commercial Anarchy."
- Battersea—The Shed of Truth, Prince of Wales's Road, 7, 30,
- Mr. Magenis, "Spiritualism." Social evening every Tuesday.
- Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, 30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 7, 30, "The Meaning of Materialism."
- Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Mr. Gladstone on the Impregnable Rock of Scripture."
- Hyde Park, near Marble Arch; 11.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Who Was Jesus, and What Did He Teach?"
- Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, 30, musical evening, orchestral band, etc.
- West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 10.30, committee meeting; 11.30, Mr. Frank Fawcett, "David"; 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "The Resurrection"; 8.30, music.

- Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. T. Garner, "Modern Irreligion: for Good or Evil?"
- Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Masey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Phantoms and Ghosts of Theology."

COUNTRY.

- Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Mr. G. Standing, 11, "The Follies and Frauds of Superstition"; 3, "Absurdities of the Church Prayer-Book"; 7, "Heaven and Hell."
- Derby—20 Newland Street, 6.30, meeting of members, special business.
- Glasgow Secular Society and Branch of N. S. S., 122 Ingram Street.—6.30, Mr. William Cassels, "The Land Question."
- Hanley—Secular Hall, 51 John Street, 7, quarterly meeting; subscriptions now due.
- Liverpool Branch N.S.S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—at 3, discussion class; 7, Mr. E. S. Jones, "A Defence of Atheism." The financial year ends March 31: subscriptions due.
- Manchester—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road. Sunday and Monday, sale of work, open at 3 on Sunday, admission (including tea) 1s., tea at 5; admission after tea 6d.; open on Monday at 6; dancing, admission, 6. Long night, Good Friday.
- Newcastle-on-Tyne—Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, at 11, Mrs Annie Besant, "What is Theosophy?"; 3, "Biblical Floods and Others"; 7, "Salvation by Man or Christ"; tea provided at Society's Rooms, 4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, after the afternoon lecture; tickets, 9d. each.
- New Swindon—"Golden Lion," Bridge Street, 7, Mr. Card, "Col. Ingersoll's 'Breaking the Fetters.'"
- Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, at 7, Local, but renowned Professor will give short anecdotal and humorous lecture on "Magic," with marvellous illustrations of the dexterous art.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

- ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon Road, London, S.E.—March 23, Milton Hall; 30, Woolwich. April 6 (morning), Kingsland Green (evening), Ball's Pond; 13, (morning) Pimlico, (evening) Camberwell. May 18 (morning), Clerkenwell Green, (evening), Ball's Pond; 25, (afternoon) Regent's Park. June 1 (morning), Pimlico; 15, Ball's Pond; 29, Mile End. July 13, Mile End.
- TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—March 23, Woolwich; 30, Westminster. May 4 (morning), Mile End Waste; 11, Clerkenwell Green; 18 (afternoon), Regent's Park; 25 (morning), Hyde Park. June 1 (morning), Mile End Waste; 8 (morning), Clerkenwell Green.
- JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon Street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—April 13, Nottingham.
- T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—April 13 (evening), Plaistow; 27, Hyde Park.
- H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place, Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—April 6, Liverpool; 13, Manchester. May 4, Birmingham.

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