

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

PRICE HUGHES ON THE RESURRECTION.

WERE not the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes a conspicuous man among the Wesleyan Methodists, we should owe our readers an apology for bringing him so frequently under their notice. Brains, in any proper sense of the word, he does not possess. The secret of his success is "cheek" and a certain animal energy. His motive power is visceral. If we were free to use the plain speech of the Reformation divines we should describe it by a shorter and more expressive vernacular term.

Mr. Hughes is evidently encouraged by the success of his lie in five chapters, called "The Atheist Shoemaker." He seems to have had misgivings at first, but now he is reassured. Against "infidel" taunts he defends himself by silence, and there is not honesty and manliness enough in the Methodist ranks to make him lay his cards on the table. It does not surprise us, therefore, to see him flying at higher game, and boldly forging fresh evidence of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Last week's *Methodist Times*, which is edited by Mr. Hughes, contains an article on "The Decisive Evidence of Christianity." The drift of this lucubration is that Christians *know* their Savior rose from the dead because they *feel* it. They are thus enabled to dispense with mere carnal and historical proofs. For all that, however, Mr. Hughes assures them of the superabundant sufficiency of such proofs in this particular instance. He proceeds to marshal these, and wind up with a good bold roundhand lie, which will be detected by a few readers, but will nevertheless serve its purpose with the gullible crowd.

"The undisputed epistles of St. Paul," says Mr. Hughes, "and the institution of the Christian Sabbath prove beyond all controversy that from the very beginning all the Christians believed in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ." Now, in the first place, there are no "undisputed" epistles of St. Paul, though there are four which are generally allowed as authentic. Nor is it true that *all* the Christians believed in the Resurrection, for some of them denied that Jesus died at all. But letting these objections pass as hyper-criticisms in the case of a loose-minded and loose-tongued person like Mr. Hughes, we proceed to deal with his three substantive points:—(1) The testimony of St. Paul, (2) the Christian Sabbath, and (3) the belief of the early Christians.

What is the real value of St. Paul's testimony? In face of the evidence the Apostles and their followers put forward he disbelieved the Resurrection, and continued to do so for years, until he was converted by a miracle or a sunstroke on the road to Damascus. Nor did he converse with the Apostles after his conversion and collate all the extant evidence. He distinctly declares that he communed not with flesh and blood. His own personal experience was sufficient, though obviously it could have no logical force with other persons in a condition of

sanity. St. Paul, therefore, affords us no real testimony. If his conversion was wrought by a sunstroke, there is no more to be said; and if it was wrought by a miracle, it could not convey satisfaction to others, unless one miracle is allowed to be evidence of another, which is arguing in a most vicious circle.

With regard to the Christian Sabbath, it was simply the Sun's Day (Sunday), which was taken by the Christians, partly because of its wide celebration, partly because of its mythical and ritual significance, and partly as a protest against Judaism. That they should assign the Resurrection to that day was perfectly natural; but in the time of Justin Martyr, a century after the Crucifixion, there still survived, as one reason for meeting on the first day of the week, the theory that God on that day began the work of creation. What Mr. Hughes has to do is to furnish the links between Justin and the miraculous event said to have happened a century earlier; and that he cannot do except by falling back on the theory of the primitive authorship of the Acts of the Apostles and the disputed epistles of St. Paul, which is a perfectly absurd line of defence against sceptical outsiders.

Thirdly, the belief of the early Christians is not evidence of the truth of their belief, any more than the belief of the Mormons is evidence of the presentation of those gold tablets by God Almighty to Joe Smith.

Mr. Hughes does not stop there, however; the necessities of the case demand a crowning proof; and as it does not exist he manufactures it for the occasion. Of the early Christians he declares that "Hundreds of them asserted that they saw Him after His Resurrection, and they were so confident of this fact that they gladly shed their blood to prove it."

Now these "hundreds" are not to be found in the Gospels. Mr. Hughes doubtless found them in the first of Corinthians (xv., 6), where St. Paul says that Jesus, after the Resurrection, was "seen of about five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep." If St. Paul wrote these words he was as unscrupulous a liar as Hugh Price Hughes, unless the evangelists are all liars as well as the author of the Acts. According to Acts i., 15, the total number of the faithful *after the Ascension* was only a hundred and twenty; and even if every one of these saw Jesus, which is contradictory to the Gospels, St. Paul must have created three hundred and eighty "brethren" out of his own head—which we believe he was quite capable of doing. He took precious care not to say where the remnant of the "five hundred" might be found. His language, in short, is worthy of the exponent of Christianity in such a credulous age. He was writing to Corinthians who lived at a distance from the scene of the Resurrection. Had he written thus to the Hebrews they would have derided or denounced him as a madman or a liar.

St. Paul, however, is not quite such a liar as Mr. Hughes. He does not affirm that the "five hundred" shed their blood to prove their faith; on

the contrary, he says that "some are fallen asleep," which is not the language to describe martyrdom, while "the greater part" remain alive; and as the earliest date assigned to this epistle is A.D. 56, and the Resurrection occurred—if it occurred—twenty-three years earlier, they must have been specially favored in the matter of longevity.

The "hundreds" of witnesses are St. Paul's invention, and the "hundreds" of martyrs are Mr. Hughes's invention. Every scholar is aware that the martyrdom of St. Paul is the only one for which there is a shadow of evidence. St. Peter's martyrdom at Rome is so barefaced a tradition that a crowd of Protestant critics deny that he ever visited the Eternal City; and the martyrdom of the other Apostles is usually admitted by sober judges to be purely legendary. Gibbon, indeed, makes a clean sweep of the entire crew. Allowing for the possible lynching of Stephen, he declares that "a more accurate inquiry will induce us to doubt whether any of those persons who had been witnesses to the miracles of Christ were permitted, beyond the limits of Palestine, to seal with their blood the truth of their testimony."

Now, we do not call upon Mr. Hughes to tell us who were the hundreds of Christians that saw Jesus after his Resurrection and shed their blood to prove the fact. That were a waste of time and energy. Mr. Hughes will seek his old refuge of silence. But we call upon our readers to notice the shameless audacity of this man, and to judge of the worth of a creed which is supported by such agencies. Was it not Herder who said that "Christian veracity" deserved to rank with "Punic faith"? And is not Mr. Hughes a living illustration of this melancholy truth?

G. W. FOOTE.

THE LAST WORDS OF JESUS CHRIST.

THE same Church placard which enumerates the lengthy particulars of three judicial trials of Jesus—all supposed to have taken place on the very morning when he was crucified at nine a.m.—also sets out his seven alleged last words. The sacred number seven is of course made up by combining the discrepant accounts found in the different gospels. The fair presumption certainly is that on this matter each writer would mention all that he knew. If we take only the first and earliest gospels—those ascribed to Matthew and Mark—it would appear that Jesus only uttered one exclamation on the cross, and that the most pathetic and overwhelming one—*Eloi, Eloi, lama Sabachthani*—My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

According to Stier, who has devoted eight volumes to *The Words of the Lord Jesus*, his first utterance on the cross was "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." The idea probably is "they know not they are murdering their Messiah." This utterance is found only in Luke, and is wanting in the oldest manuscript, that of the Vatican. These facts warrant the suspicion that it was the invention of an after age.

The next sentence ascribed to Jesus is his saying to one of the thieves "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." The narrative is full of improbabilities, which are so well brought out by Dr. James Martineau in his latest work on *The Seat of Authority in Religion*, that I cannot do better than transcribe what he says:

"That a couple of convicts under the horrors of their death-struggle should get into an altercation about the Messianic character of their fellow-sufferer, one of them taunting him as an impostor, the other entreating him as a Savior," can be accepted only in defiance of all physical and

* According to Matthew xxvii., 44, and Mark xv., 32, both the thieves reviled him. They had an eye on Ps. xxii., 7. Luke's version is as irreconcilable with them as with probability. The answer ascribed to Jesus was possibly suggested by 1 Sam. xxviii., 19. It is doubtful if the word Paradise was in use at Jerusalem at the time.—J. M. W.

moral probability. The expectation of the penitent petitioner, that, in spite of his death on the cross, Jesus would 'come in his kingdom,' was one of which as yet his most devoted disciples had no faintest foregleam. Jesus, who had habitually disallowed the claim of messiahship on his behalf, now accepts it, and makes a promise in virtue of it. And the promise was illusory; for it was an appointment to meet the suppliant within a few hours in an imaginary place, viz., that division of Hades (called Paradise) which, according to the current Jewish belief, was set apart as the waiting-room for the righteous souls reserved for the resurrection. The conception evidently belongs to the age, not of the scene of Calvary, but of the composition of the third gospel—the age which gave rise to the belief in Christ's *descensus ad inferos*, 'to preach to the spirits in prison' (1 Pet. iii., 19)."

One point more should be added. Neither according to Jewish nor to Roman law were thieves subject to crucifixion. It is probable that the phrase of Isaiah, "He was numbered with the transgressors," led to the imaginary Calvary being ornamented with two more crosses.

The third "last word" of Jesus from the cross is said to have been addressed to his mother and the beloved disciple standing beneath the cross, commending them to each other in the words, "Behold thy son! Behold thy mother!" (John xix., 26-27). The purpose of the writer is obvious. Doctor Martineau says: "The incident at the crucifixion he conceived in subservience to a design pervading his gospel, viz., to write up 'the beloved disciple' into a position of primacy preferable to that of Peter, and under cover of his more intimate relation to Jesus to give authority to a more spiritual theology than found acceptance in the Jewish Christian branch of the Church." The presence of either Mary or John at the crucifixion is inconsistent with the other gospels, where John is among those who took their homeward flight when Jesus was arrested, and Mary is not represented as having come up to Jerusalem at all.

The fourth word is the cry of anguish already alluded to as alone attested by the earlier narratives. Pathetic in the extreme as is this utterance, orthodoxy has turned the human tragedy into a divine farce by declaring that the poor sufferer who felt himself forsaken by God was deity himself. Very God of very God, killed by God to satisfy God, and crying to God and asking God why God had forsaken God!

An air of *vraisemblance* is given to this passage by its being a quotation from Psalm xxii., 1, in Hebrew, but an indication of improbability immediately follows. Both Matthew and Mark report that when Jesus called Eli, Eli, or Eloi, Eloi, those who stood near him misunderstood him as calling Elias. Upon this Rabbi I. M. Wise remarks: "Among Hebrews, this mistake is impossible. For Eli is pronounced *Ali*, the first syllable long, and Elias is pronounced *Eleeياهو*, with the stress on the third syllable *yah*, so that the two words have almost no similarity in sound. In Greek, however, Eli is the first part of Elias, both in letters and sound, so that there can be no doubt whatever the writer of that little incident had the Greek and not the Hebrew in his mind."

The fifth cry follows; "I thirst," upon which a vowal of physical need from the crucified God he was offered drink. According to Mark, this was first wine mixed with myrrh and then vinegar. Matthew changes the myrrh into gall, better understanding the passage in Ps. lxix., 21; which the incident had to fulfil. According to the Vatican and Sinaitic MSS. the drink offered was wine, but this has been changed into "vinegar," the better to fulfil prophecy. In John, from which the fifth cry is taken, we have a sponge filled with vinegar only and put upon hyssop, which seems derived from Exod. xii., 22; and in direct contradiction to Matthew and Mark, it is offered after instead of before the execution.

The earliest record that the last words of Jesus were "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken

me?" not according with the orthodox Christian standpoint, Luke, who follows the Pauline Son of God dogma, virtually denies this tradition, and maintains Jesus exclaimed "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." But this was not enough for John, so he too virtually denies the statements of his predecessors, and gives as the final words of Jesus "It is finished"—or all is accomplished.

We think it evident, then, that the last words ascribed to Jesus represent, not the actual record of real words, for in no case have we reason to presume that the narrators were present to hear them if uttered, but the record of what the narrators conceived might, would or should have happened. The stories, inconsistent with themselves and with probability, only make evident the fictitious character of the narrative. The incidents of the Gospels are bubbles which collapse when touched with a pin point of criticism, and the Christianity built upon them is a balloon kept afloat by gas. J. M. WHEELER.

REMINISCENCES OF CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

By G. W. FOOTE.

(Continued.)

On the morning of April 10, 1883, I put on my own clothes and was driven in a four-wheeler from Holloway Gaol to the Law Courts, in company with Warder Smith, who superintended the wing of the prison in which a grateful country lodged and boarded me at its own expense. It was lovely spring weather, and I felt like a man new-born.

Inside the court where the great Blasphemy case was to be tried I found Mr. Bradlaugh with his usual load of law books. The court was crowded with friends of the defendants and legal gentlemen anxious to witness the performance.

Mr. Bradlaugh applied for a separate trial, on the ground that he might need to call his co-defendants as witnesses, which he could not do if they were tried together; and Lord Coleridge, who obviously meant to see fair play, readily granted the application.

Mr. Bradlaugh's position was, in one sense, the most perilous he had ever stood in. Just as his long litigation with respect to his seat in Parliament was drawing to a close, and as he believed to a *successful* close, he had to defend himself against a charge which, if he were proved guilty, would entail upon him the penalty of imprisonment. Of course it would not have been such imprisonment as I was suffering, for Queen's Bench prisoners are generally sent to the civil side of Holloway Gaol. But *any* imprisonment at such a moment gravely imperilled his prospects of success in the mighty struggle with wealth, bigotry, and political prejudice. A sense of this fact weighed heavily upon him, but it did not impair his energy or intellectual alertness; indeed, he was one of those rare men whose faculties are sharpened by danger.

I need not dwell upon the evidence of the prosecution. It was most unsatisfactory, and failed to connect Mr. Bradlaugh with the *Freethinker*. Sir Hardinge Giffard, therefore, almost entirely confined himself to playing upon the prejudices of the jury.

Mr. Bradlaugh was perfection itself in examining and cross-examining, and was soon on the windward side of the judge, but his address to the jury was too boisterous. He *felt* too much. His adversary was not under this disadvantage, and Sir Hardinge Giffard's address to the jury, considered merely as a tactical display, was better than Mr. Bradlaugh's.

On the second day of the trial (it lasted for three days) there occurred a curious episode. Just before the adjournment for luncheon Mr. Bradlaugh intimated that when the Court re-assembled he would call his co-defendants as witnesses. This naturally struck Lord Coleridge as a questionable proceeding, and in low, cold tones, half severe, and half sarcastic, he said "Do you think it necessary?" Mr. Bradlaugh rose and for the first time I saw him tremble. "My Lord," he said, "you put upon me a grave responsibility. "I put no responsibility upon you," said Lord Coleridge,

"it is for you to decide." And the stately judge glided away in his robes of office.

If Mr. Bradlaugh put his co-defendants in the witness-box, one of two things might happen. They might decline to give evidence, as every answer would tend to criminate themselves; or they might exculpate Mr. Bradlaugh and procure their own damnation. It was an awkward dilemma, and Lord Coleridge clearly meant to convey this to Mr. Bradlaugh—"You have a fairly good case; your co-defendants are dragged into this on your account; is it manly to save yourself at their expense?"

I do not blame Lord Coleridge for looking at the matter in this way. He merely displayed the instincts of a perfect gentleman. But I looked at the matter in a different light. Mr. Bradlaugh was my general, and I was his lieutenant, and it was clearly my duty to sacrifice myself. I could release him from danger with half a dozen words, and why should I hesitate to say them or he to exact them? I was already in prison, and another conviction could add little to my misfortune, whereas he was still free, and his continued freedom was just then absolutely indispensable to our common cause. For my part, I had not a moment's hesitation. But Lord Coleridge's words sank into Mr. Bradlaugh's mind, and after luncheon he announced that he would *not* call his co-defendants. His lordship looked pleased, but how he frowned when Sir Hardinge Giffard complained that *he* was deprived of an opportunity! Lord Coleridge did not say, but he *looked*—"Have you no sense of decency?" Sir Hardinge Giffard, however, was thick-skinned. He relied on Mr. Bradlaugh's sense of honor, and made it the basis of an artificial grievance. He even pretended that Mr. Bradlaugh was *afraid* to call his co-defendants. But he overreached himself by stinging his opponent too sorely, and he was positively dismayed when Mr. Bradlaugh, in clear, firm tones, called the first of his co-defendants into the witness-box.

After half an hour's deliberation the jury found Mr. Bradlaugh not guilty. They were satisfied, as they could not help being after my evidence, that he had no connexion with the *Freethinker*. Standing up for the verdict, with pale set face, the grateful little "not" fell upon his ear, and his rigidity relaxed. Tears started to *my* eyes, and I saw the tears in *his* eyes as I squeezed his hand in speechless congratulation.

(To be continued.)

THE BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL FUND.

P. Kavanagh, 2s.; T. Farquharson, 2s. 6d.; G. (per F. Smallman), £5; S. N. (per F. Smallman), £1; J. Marsh, 2s. 6d.—R. FORDER.

THE LAW AND THE BOOK.

While the Copyright Bill was pending before the last Congress, Tiddy Witt Talmage, a notorious person of Brooklyn, sent the following telegram to a senator and to a representative:

"In the name of religion I would ask that the conference committee on Copyright Bill, when appointed, and if within its power, would so amend the Bill as to allow the Bible in whatsoever language and from whatever land, to enter free. There should be no duty on the Bible, and it would be a glorious thing for our American Congress to set an example to the nations of the earth by placing the Bible on the free list."

There is a law authorising and compelling the Custom House authorities to destroy all books of an obscene character which lewd people import to this country. Instead of asking that the Bible be admitted duty free, the Brooklyn parson should call the attention of Collector Erhardt to that law in connection with that book.

What monumental assurance the preachers do possess!—*Truthseeker*.

CIVILISED NATIONS ONCE BARBAROUS.

The evidence that all civilised nations are the descendants of barbarians consists on the one side of clear traces of their former low condition or still existing customs, beliefs, language, etc.; and on the other side, of proofs that savages are independently able to raise themselves a few steps in the scale of civilisation, and have actually thus risen.—*C. Darwin, "Descent of Man,"* part 1, chap. v., p. 221, vol. i., 1838.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO BE HAPPY?

BY HUGH O. PENTECOST.

(From the "Twentieth Century.")

[CONCLUDED.]

I have been explaining to you why people are unhappy, but I started out to answer the question whether it is possible to be happy. The preachers of nearly every sect, every philosophy, every religion will tell you that happiness is not possible in this life. They tell you this mainly to keep you contented with things as they are. They tell you that God made this world a place of misery so that the soul would fix itself on him, and long for the heavenly life. This is all gammon.

If there were a God, he would have better sense than to try to win the love of his children by making them unhappy. The unhappiness of this world is not divinely inspired. It is wholly due to the fact that we are undeveloped creatures; that we have not yet learned the conditions of happiness.

People would be perfectly happy if they were perfectly free. If citizens were free from rulers; if there were no compulsory governments; if wealth producers were free to earn their living without dependence on employers; if children were free from the ignorant domination of their parents; if wives were free from the bullying, and jealous interference of their husbands; if husbands were free from the tyranny of their wives, there would be nothing to stand in the way of the perfect happiness of the human race.

Would you not be happy if, within the range of your capabilities, you were free to do whatever you wished to do? No doubt you think you would not be, for you have been taught from infancy that abominable doctrine of self-denial; you have been taught that you can only be happy by doing what you do not wish to do; a doctrine that has blackened the world with monks and nuns, and crowded the lunatic asylums. But in my opinion you and I and all people would be perfectly happy if we were allowed to do as we please, as we should be, provided we do not please to feloniously attack person or property. In other words, if we should mind our own business and other people would mind theirs, we should be perfectly happy.

Nine-tenths of all the trouble in the world arises from each person not minding his own business. I spoke to you about this once before, but it will bear repeating, for I am sure we have not all of us been minding our own business ever since then.

The clergyman is not satisfied to save his own soul. He must contrive a way to corral people and drive them into heaven. The politician is not satisfied to look after his own affairs. He must needs try to run the country. The parent does not always understand that what is the child's business is not necessarily his. The husband meddles with his wife's affairs, and the wife with her husband's, as neither would with the affairs of others who have no particular claim on their politeness.

All this meddling spreads the earth with nets and pitfalls which entangle our feet and into which we fall, until the journey of life becomes a weariness to the flesh. We cannot hope to live to see all these nets cleared away, all these pitfalls filled up, but we can decline to add any others to the number, we can determine that we will tyrannize over no one, and we can lay out the course of our lives so as to avoid as much as possible the snares which others have laid for us.

He is a wise man who seeks his own happiness above all things else. In this regard all of us are wise, for we are all doing this, though some of us pretend that we are not, and some of us actually think we are not. But he is still wiser who understands that he can be happy only in proportion as he is free. The only slavery that is consistent with happiness is that which one willingly endures, but that is, in reality, freedom.

What makes me sad at this instant is that some of you will misunderstand what I have been saying, some of you will fall short of understanding it, and some of you will reject it as bad, and hug your chains and your misery to your breast, preferring them to freedom and happiness.

But on the other hand, what pleases me is to think that some of you understand it all, perhaps better than I do, and that you welcome it as a better gospel than the old one, which teaches that a bent back and a broken will are

the characteristics of a prize child of God, and that to be miserable is the whole duty of man.

The emblem of human life has always been a set of shackles wet with tears, but the day is coming when there will not be a ball and chain in the world, and when tears will be as scarce as gods.

ACID DROPS.

Dr. Parker's Good Friday morning sermon on the Devils and the Pigs of Gadara drew a crowded house. It is not every day that people expect fun in a gospel-shop, so they flocked to the City Temple in shoals, and hundreds were unable to obtain admission. Theatre boards were stuck up outside—"Full"—long before the "service" began. By way of earning an honest penny, Parker charged sixpence each for seats, and he must have netted "a good round sum." This sort of thing, however, is quite against the spirit of the law, which allows shops like Parker's to be registered as places of public worship, and exempts them from all rates and taxes, which Secular meeting-places, of course, have to pay whether they charge for admission or not.

Parker's sermon must have disappointed a large section of his audience. He said absolutely nothing about the Gladstone-Huxley discussion, but performed the easier task of imagining what typical Jews may have said when they heard of the miracle. Altogether it was a very small mouse that issued from all that mountain of puffery.

The Roman Catholic Church of the Sacred Heart was the scene of a calamity on the night before Good Friday. A special "Altar of Repose" had been decorated and enclosed within a frame work of lace curtains. It was being "watched" through the night by Mr. and Mrs. Primavesi. Whilst they and Canon Akers were alone the Canon accidentally ignited one of the curtains, and instantly the structure was in a blaze. As the result of the excitement, Mr. Primavesi died of heart disease. Altogether it was a pretty chapter of accidents; pious folly at one end and death at the other.

Bishopstoke Church has been badly damaged by fire. While the congregation were praying the new heating apparatus was preparing for blazes, and Jehovah looked on and smiled.

It did not happen in a Secular hall, but in a church, and the victim was not a Freethought lecturer but a parson. The Rev. H. N. Barr, rector of Chilcomb, was seized with apoplexy while preaching and died the same night. This was not a judgment.

A big local habitation was raised at a cost of 150,000 dollars by the Young Men's Christian Association at Montreal. But there was more piety than good building in the structure, and one day it collapsed, Dr. Kelly, the chairman, only saving his life by jumping from a third-storey window. Next time the Christian young men will doubtless put a little less trust in Providence, and a little more in a good contractor.

Through the inadvertence of the Clerk a plot of Church land at Luton was let for a Good Friday performance to Sanger's Circus. The Clerk thought it necessary to explain the slip, but we believe the Lutonites thought it a positive relief. Many a youngster took up his cross that day (on a bun) and followed Sanger.

Prophet Baxter is still plastering the London walls with his flaming bills about the biggest war on record and the approaching end of the world. No doubt the game pays. Verily the fool-crop is perennial.

Prophet Baxter's game of "Nap" is not finished. First he made Louis Napoleon the Destined Monarch of the World. Then he discovered the name Jerome Bonaparte had the number of the Beast. Now he finds the fulfilment of prophecy in Jerome's son Victor. The wars, famines and pestilences which are to precede the coming of J. C. ought to be on by this, but Baxter explains that in abstruse calculations he does not expect to be right to a day. Just wait till May, and if nothing happens then, wait a little longer.

The Syracuse *Sunday Times* devotes a sarcastic article to the Christian proposal that President Harrison shall use his good offices with the European Governments to give back Palestine to the Jews. It points out that the Jews don't want to go there. They emigrate to America in shoals, and Palestine is nearer hand, if they had any inclination to settle in the Promised Land. When the Jews go back to Palestine, we fancy every Irishman's pig will walk to market of its own accord, and wire the selling price to its owner.

The Bishop of Ripon has taken Mr. Stead's hint, and utilised the magic lantern for a Good Friday address on the Lord's Passion. Lime-light views of the most important events in the closing scenes of the life of J. C. were introduced with effect, says the report. Probably they were more interesting than the sermon. But soon the novelty of the magic lantern will wear off, and audiences accustomed to the entertainment will require some more sensational novelty.

A paragraph is going the round of the press to the effect that Charles Bradlaugh died worth £4,586, which he left absolutely to Mrs. Bonner. This is true as far as it goes, but it is one of those half-truths which are worse than downright lies. It leaves Mr. Bradlaugh's liabilities out of account, and they exceed his assets. Mrs. Bonner is not the heiress that many people will be led to imagine.

A Reading friend sends us a picture from the Rev. Dr. Wright's "Complete British Family Bible." It is a "New Map of the Garden of Eden," which was off the east side of the Persian Gulf, having been swallowed up by the sea since Adam was kicked out. This is the worthy doctor's version, but he honestly points out half a dozen other places where the Garden of Eden has been fixed by other authorities. The truth is, all you can get from these gentlemen is that Eden was somewhere.

The Liverpool Catholics are thankful for very small mercies. At a meeting of their Literary Society, an "excellent" paper was read by the Rt. Rev. Abbot Snow on "The Attitude of Catholics towards the Scientific Theories of the Day." The right reverend gentleman was not bold enough to oppose evolution, but he urged that it was not yet fully established, because it has not yet explained everything. Of course it has not, but it has explained a million times more than any religious theory.

One of the writers in *Lux Mundi* is sarcastic on the Christians who are always getting into "the gaps" of Science. The gaps, as he remarks, have a tendency to close, when it is extremely awkward for those who have taken refuge in them.

The parish magazine of St. Andrew's, Worthing, says: "Dissent has strong claims to be the devil himself," and asserts that Baptist ministers have been known to steal the spoons where they visit. How these Christians love one another.

Many of the images of Hindu gods are made in Birmingham, and in Germany some Jews are engaged in the manufacture of crucifixes. Two kinds are supplied for the Italian market. The cheap variety is known as *Cristo tristo*. It is intended for the poor, and represents a most agonising figure on a cross, with bent head and abject misery. The superior sort is known as *Cristo superbo*. Here the figure has the head erect, and, with dignified aspect, looks as though crucifixion was a mere nothing. This is intended for the superior classes.

The Liverpool Corporation lives and learns. Some years ago it spent £3,000 on a stained glass window in St. George's Hall, whereon St. George and the Dragon were depicted, the Dragon having a devil of a tail. But the Corporation has since discovered that the dragon is a mythical animal, and now it is going to spend two or three hundred pounds in removing the poor creature.

While the Liverpool Corporation is in this mood it will find plenty to do. The churches of that city are full of mythical objects, mythical books, and mythical teachings. Yes, there is a big field for the Liverpool Corporation.

Father—or, to give him his proper title, Monsignor—

Munro has been lecturing at Glasgow in opposition to Max Müller's recent lectures in that city. He took up the strong position of the late Cardinal Newman, that there is no logical medium between Catholicism and Atheism. The Protestant principle of Max Müller, he said, could not answer the Atheist, the Pantheist, or the Rationalist. "Human reason lay at the root of Protestantism and Atheism; the principle in each case was the same, the difference was only one of degree." Men could not arrive at God through reason. If they wished to do so "they must submit to divine teaching, and they would see all the glory of the supernatural."

This is genuine religious teaching and contrasts with the namby-pambyism of modern Protestantism. Men must become, as Christ says, like little children. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. Shut your eyes and open your mouth and see what God will send you. Faith is the great requisite of falsity as reason is the requisite of truth.

Spurgeon records a good Yorkshire criticism of a sermon. "Ah say, mister, you preeched a goodish sermon to-night; but if it had been cut short at beath ends, and set a-fire in the middle, it wad a dean us mare good."

The *Liverpool Review* publishes a smart cartoon on pious Sam Smith, the "purity" M.P., who is at present bending all the energies of his mighty soul against gambling. It satirically observes that Samuel made his pile in cotton speculations, but "that was not gambling—that was business."

"In appearance the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes is medium-sized, slightly built, and full of nervous energy. His thick hair, short beard, and full moustache look black in the distance; his complexion is dark. Probably by a strain of originality and an amount of earnestness he has, in a commonplace age and an era of spiritual languor, contrived to attract attention which he could never have earned as an orator or a thinker. His voice, though not harsh, can scarcely be called musical, whilst his words, though fluent, are devoid of eloquence. His discourse, delivered in a conversational tone, abounding in commonplace metaphor and free from subtle arguments, is suited to those he addresses, and certainly never soars above their heads."—*J. F. Molloy*, in "*New York Herald*."

Mr. Molloy says he heard Mr. Hughes declare that sincerity was not necessary to salvation, and was never mentioned in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Perhaps this accounts for the "Atheist Shoemaker."

The secularisation of Christianity goes on rapidly. There were ten leaderettes, with special headings, on the front page of last week's *Christian World*, and not one of them was on a religious topic.

Lady Florence Dixie says she did not promise to "love, honor, and obey" her husband. She said "er-er-er," which is a lingo the Almighty can hardly understand. Lady Florence doesn't care a straw for St. Paul; nay, if she met him she would give him a bit of her mind. Poor Paul is too old-fashioned for this advanced age. Thousands of women would tar and feather him if he repeated that cock-a-doodle-doo of his that the man was not made for the woman but the woman for the man.

Under the heading "The Law and the Book" we have reprinted from the *Truthseeker* Talmage's remarks on the Copyright Bill. It happens that the Jabbernacle oracle has given utterance to another dictum which should be applied to his one fetish book. Referring to the spread of immoral literature, he exhorted his hearers, "Abstain from all those books, which, while they have some good things about them, have also an admixture of evil." This phrase fits the Bible as if made for the purpose.

In the *Expositor* for March Professor Sayce expresses the opinion that it is practically proved that there was a fundamental original written document from which the three Evangelists drew in common, and that this gospel is most nearly represented by the one named Mark. In the same magazine Prof. J. T. Marshall contends that this gospel was in Aramaic, the spoken language of Palestine. Then comes the question, why was this earlier gospel destroyed, so that we

only have remaining Greek substitutes, and possibly Greek perversions, of the original Word of God.

"God Almighty is not a darned fool," says that good man Stead. Yet he believes that he himself was made in God's very image.

The Archbishop of York has been telling amusing anecdotes of the rivalries and jealousies which in former days existed between the two Archbishops. Once when the two Archbishops met in the same room his Grace of Canterbury took the first place, and his Grace of York, rather than take second place, sat on the knees of his episcopal brother. In the reign of Edward III. there was a decree of major excommunication pronounced by the Archbishop of Canterbury against any person in his diocese who furnished a meal of meat to his brother of York and his chaplain when they travelled southwards.

Mr. Foote's late visit to Spennymoor has stirred up the local Christians, who are yearning to see the "infidels" hewed in pieces before the Lord. They will soon have an opportunity of trying their swords on Mr. C. J. Hunt. We see that the Rev. S. M. Thompson, the vicar of Tudhoe, the colliery village where Mr. Foote spent the night, has been discoursing to a "large audience" of sixty persons on "Is Christianity True?" But there does not seem to have been any discussion, and the vicar's task was doubtless an easy one. Indeed, he was so encouraged that he is going to continue his lectures fortnightly.

The Rev. W. W. Howard has been preaching at Spennymoor on "The Great Miracle Explained and Defended"—the said miracle being Joshua's prize-trick with the sun and moon. Mr. Howard is obliged to "explain" the miracle before "defending" it. He forgets that a miracle explained ceases to be a miracle.

Letters are still appearing in the *Newcastle Daily Leader* on the vexed question whether Charles Bradlaugh is in heaven. His being there or not is a matter of fact, and discussion, therefore, is rather idle. We propose that the Christians should ask the Lord for information, and tell him it is most important they should have it. No doubt, if they went on their knees and swore never to rise or eat or drink until they got an answer, the Lord would take pity on them and grant their request.

The *Sunday World* gives a prize for the best joke. One of the candidates sent in, and got first place in the list for, a *Star* paragraph announcing Mr. Foote's recent lecture at Battersea on "Heaven and Hell." The joke appears to lie in the words "Admission free" after the names of the upper and lower circles.

The following answer of the Western agricultural rustic to the interminable question "Why don't working men go to church?" is given in Thomas Hardy's *Return of the Native*. "I ha'n't been these three years," said Humphrey; "for I'm so dead sleepy of a Sunday; and 'tis so terrible far to get there; and when you do get there 'tis such a mortal poor chance that you'll be chose for up above, when so many baint, that I bide at home and don't go at all."

Another instance how religion takes alarm at any scheme of social reform is afforded in India. The government, with a view of mitigating the evils arising from child marriages, have wisely resolved to raise the age of consent to marriage from that of ten to twelve. A great open-air demonstration has been held against the measure, the notice calling the same running:—"Brethren! Great Danger! Ruin is at hand. Government is going to interfere with the religion of the Hindus and Mohammedans through mistake. Religion is being lost. Mr. sers', sisters', and wives' respect are at stake. Hindu families are on the verge of ruin."

Four lives have recently been lost by the adherence of the Peculiar People to the doctrine of James the Apostle, prescribing that when any are sick the elders of the Church are to be sent for and pray over and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. We noted last week the case of the woman who died, with her child, in childbirth, through adopting this process, instead of procuring proper medical attendance. The *Essex County Chronicle* reports "two more

deaths," both of children, through the same reason. The censures of juries and the admonition of coroners have little avail against "fanaticism," absorbed in the divinity of its fetish book. The peculiarity of the Peculiar People is that they, at the expense of their own and their children's lives, really seek to act up to the teaching which other Christians only pretend to believe divine.

Joe, the colored waiting-man, came early one morning to make a fire for Elisha Carr, a sort of evangelist, who was stopping with Joe's master. It was cold, and the ground covered with snow. "Have you got religion yet, Joe?" asked Mr. Carr. "No, sir." "Well, don't you want to get it?" "No, sir, I don't know as I does." "Well, you'd better want to get it. You'd better want to get to heaven, where it will be warm, and you won't have to make fires on cold mornings." The idea struck Joe with force and he studied over it for a while, then, looking up with a puzzled expression, he asked, "Tell me, Mr. Carr, is dey any white folks up dar?" "Yes." "Well," sighed Joe, "you nee'n't tell me, ef dey's any white folks up dar, dat niggers won't have ter make fires for them."

The Jews in Old Testament times had no idea of hell. There was no mention of a punishment after death in the teachings of Moses, nor is this doctrine taught by the prophets. The word sheol, which is translated by hell in the King James version of the Bible, meant simply the abode of the dead, and corresponded to the Greek hades, used in the New Testament and other writings. Gloomy and repulsive ideas were associated with sheol, similar to those we connect with death and the grave, but it was the destination of good and bad alike, and not a place of punishment. The troubles which the wicked and the enemies of the Jews were threatend with by the prophets pertained to this world. They were pain, disease, loss of possessions and kindred, hostility of neighbors, death, and indignities to the dead body.

Protestant propoganda is carried on under difficulties in Spain. At Valdeiglesia, a few miles out of Madrid, the priests excited the fanaticism of the inhabitants to such an extent that a mob of both sexes attacked and insulted a Spanish Protestant clergyman who had gone there to find a building suitable for Protestant services. Sweet religion!

Spain in "Holy Week" goes back from the era of secular civilisation to the old days when ecclesiasticism ruled. During three days of this week Madrid itself becomes a city of silence. From early morning to sunset no carriage or tramway or any other vehicle is tolerated, while thousands of the faithful slowly go from church to church, complying with the rule that seven must be visited. Even royalty does this pilgrimage on foot on Holy Thursday.

A Chinese legend of the origin of the tea-plant seems to indicate that the gospel injunction to bodily mutilation is by no means original. The story goes that the tea-plant sprang from the eyelids of a Buddhist saint who had vowed never to sleep. As usual nature was too strong for the saint. He fell asleep and his eyelids having thus offended he cut them off, and thence sprang the tea-plant with its wakeful juice.

"Cut down the forest of lust" said Buddha in the Dhammapada. But it does not appear that his injunctions were intended to be taken literally, for it is related that when meeting an ascetic seated upon knives, he said: "What is the use of that? make your heart right within you and leave your body alone"—a wiser injunction than those found in Matt. v., 29, 30; xviii., 8-9; xix., 12; and Mark, ix., 43-48.

She presented a pitiable spectacle as she stood up in the witness-box. One eye was closed and blackened, her face was badly bruised, and she had evidently received a most brutal thrashing from the hulking scoundrel who stood in the dock, and whose wife it was her misfortune to be. Yet, woman-like, she sought to screen the culprit. Her evidence was given reluctantly enough, and at its close she begged the magistrate "to give him another chance, and leave it to God to punish him." "Na, na, ma wumman," replied the bailie, "I cannae dae that—the case is faur too important; I'll need to send him to the shirra." And he did it, too.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 5, Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Cambridge-street, Birmingham; at 11, "The Grand Old Book"; at 3, "Death and the Devil"; at 7, "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."
Friday, April 10, Co-operative Hall, Powis-street, Woolwich, at 8, "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."

April 12, Camberwell; 19, Belfast; 26, Liverpool; 30, Hammersmith.
 May 3, Hall of Science; May 4, Northampton; 10, Camberwell; 17, N. S. S. Conference; 24, Manchester.
 June 7, Camberwell; 14 and 21, Hall of Science.

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.

T. CLARK.—Contents-sheet shall be forwarded. Many thanks.
 J. TULLIN.—Glad to hear such good news from Newcastle.

A. WHEELER.—See paragraph.
 A. HEMINGWAY.—We take it that the Manchester Branch is improving, at least financially, and we are pleased to receive the news.

J. SLYFIELD.—Both letters received.
 J. SAUNDERS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

J. SILKSTONE.—Messrs. Foote and Wheeler are now actively engaged in preparing vol. ii. of *Crimes of Christianity* for the press.—The price (10s.) for Murdoch's edition of Mosheim is fair if the volumes are in good condition. The best edition of Gibbon is Dean Milman's, re-edited by Dr. Smith, in eight volumes, published at £3 3s. A second-hand copy will fetch about £2.—Mr. Foote is glad to hear you were so pleased with his March course of lectures at the Hall of Science.

R. J. MURRAY.—Mr. Moss has handed us your letter. Good books on good subjects cannot often be bought for an old song. The best plan would be to get them through your Mechanics' Institute at Nottingham. We have frequently given the titles of books that Freethinkers might read with advantage. What *special* lines have you in view?

W. J. MARSH.—We will try to find room.
 F. SWATTS.—Thanks for the cuttings.

W. RUDD.—Cuttings are welcome. We hope the Luton Branch will be pushed on with immediately.

J. H. STEPHENS.—The fund is closed, but we have handed the 10s. to Mr. Forder. Mr. Foote will be happy to see you when you come to London.

A. N. S.—We have not seen the new census paper yet. It ought not to contain any reference to religion. If such a reference has been smuggled in, our party might put down "*Freethinker*." This would include all of us—Atheists, Agnostics, and Secularists.

E. PACK.—It is impossible to advise you unless you state the special line of reading you wish to follow, there being such a multiplicity of good books on almost every branch of study.

MR. DICK EDWARDS sends us £5 for five shares in the Hall Company, 10s. annual subs. to N. S. S., and 10s. for the Bradlaugh Liability Fund. Mrs. Edwards sends 5s. each for the second and third funds.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschenthum—Echo—Neues Frereligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—La Vérité Philosophique—Progressive Thinker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Two Worlds—Star—Auckland Times and Herald—Newcastle Daily Leader—Boston Herald—Freeman's Journal—Melbourne Age—Open Court—Huddersfield Examiner—Castleford Gazette—Times of India—Bombay Gazette—Western Mail—Church Reformer—Yorkshire Evening Post—Colne and Nelson Times—Daily Chronicle—Indian Mirror.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention. CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

SUGAR PLUMS.

The concluding lecture of Mr. Foote's special course at the London Hall of Science drew a larger audience than was expected on Easter Sunday. The subject was "Christianity and Social Progress." There seemed an unusual number of ladies present.

These special lectures covered a broad territory in dispute between Christians and Freethinkers, and if orthodox people are in the least inclined to discussion, this was an opportunity not to be missed. But nothing seems able to draw them out of their shells. Their one trust now is in the great conspiracy of silence.

This year's Conference of the National Secular Society will be held at Birmingham, according to the majority vote of the Branches. Birmingham is a central place, and there should be a large representation from London and the provinces. An effort will be made to secure the Town Hall for the evening public meeting.

The report to be presented to the Conference would have been highly gratifying if Mr. Bradlaugh's death had not overshadowed everything. Fresh branches have been established and old ones revived, and a considerable increase has been made in the number of new members. The President has already signed 600 certificates since the last Conference, and in a few days a fresh batch of nearly 100 will require his signature. We should be happy to see the number rise to a thousand by the date of the Conference. Perhaps a few hundred of our readers who have not yet joined will take the hint.

This year's edition of the N. S. S. Almanack was fifty per cent. larger than last year's, and only 250 copies now remain unsold. As it contained the last contribution of Mr. Bradlaugh to this publication, the copies that are left will doubtless find purchasers.

Mr. Joseph Symes is afraid lest his eulogy on Charles Bradlaugh should be construed into a reflection on Mr. Foote. So far as Mr. Foote is concerned Mr. Symes need be under no apprehension. Friend Joseph's words came straight from his heart, and all Mr. Foote felt after reading the *Liberator* article was a wish that his arm were as extensive as a line of longitude that he might reach over his hand to Melbourne and get a good grip of friend Joseph's.

Mr. Symes goes on to say what he clearly hopes the British Secularists will read, so we reproduce his paragraphs:

"Mr. Foote has had for many years my warm admiration; I am glad to see him President of the National Secular Society; I feel confidence in his ability and judgment; and if any word I can say may render his trying post easier, I shall be most ready to speak that word. It is no trifle even for a Foote to follow Bradlaugh.

"I am not suggesting or implying that he wants the least consideration, for his ability is great; but I do hope he will, now that Mr. Bradlaugh is gone, receive the loyal support of Mr. Bradlaugh's friends, old and new. As one who yields to none in admiration of our late President, I hereby offer my unreserved support to his successor, as I would do were I in England. I am satisfied he is the best man for the post; and I do really anticipate for him a brilliant and successful Presidency.

"I am above all anxious that we as a party (though not a sect) should suffer no loss of friends, influence or efficiency through the stunning blow that has been dealt us by fate. I am sure I express in substance what our great friend would say, could he still speak to us, when I say we must so utilise his great life as to neutralise the disastrous effects of his untimely death. And I am confident my British friends feel the same.

"I am told by recent arrivals here that Mr. Foote is very popular; and am nowise surprised to hear that he is so. He is surrounded by good men and women able to help him both with pen and tongue (I almost envy him, for I am lonely here), besides the rank and file of our party, who are ever ready to back up and encourage a good leader.

"Mr. Foote may utilise this in any way he thinks best. I am sure he will not think me impertinent thus to let British Secularists know what I think of him and his post. If Mr.

Footo were not so indispensable in Britain, I should wish him here."

We have received from Bombay the *Times of India* and a number of other papers with notices of the death of Mr. Bradlaugh. One and all deplore his loss as that of a sincere friend of India."

The *Indian Mirror* says: "That a man who was such a thorough iconoclast as to break down all idols, human and divine, whose inherent combativeness led him to do battle with every phase of spiritual or religious dogma, should still seek to serve, and render actual service to humanity, not only to those among whom his lot was cast, but also to those with whom he had no racial ties, and between whom and himself rolled many thousand miles of the salt sea, was a fact which puzzled most men, but which ensured for him the esteem, admiration, and warm personal affection of many thousand Englishmen, and the lasting love and gratitude of the millions of India."

Mrs. Louisa Samson is one of the latest accessions to the Freethought platform. We have not had the pleasure of hearing her speak in public, but she is evidently a lady of culture and ability. She has just published her lecture on *Why Women Should be Secularists*, and we heartily recommend it as a useful pamphlet to circulate among the sex which is most enslaved to religion and priestcraft. The price is twopence, and copies can be obtained of Mr. Forder.

A good report of Mrs. Samson's recent lectures at Reading appears in the local *Observer*.

We are pleased to hear that Secularism is making headway in the district covered by the North Middlesex Federation. Soon the open-air work will be in full swing. We hope Mr. Standing and his colleagues will guard against having too many stations, as there is a limit to the number of acceptable lecturers.

The *Colne and Nelson Times* remarks that the Secular lectures of Mr. Stanley Jones, of Liverpool, in the Albert Hall, Nelson, were well attended, and listened to with a marked degree of interest. It calls upon the Churches to be up and ready to give a reason for the faith that is in them, which is the very thing we desire, though we do not share its confidence that Christianity will then prevail.

Mr. Foote and Mr. Forder visited Luton on Thursday, March 26, the former lecturing in the Plait Hall and the latter presiding. Unfortunately a most unfavorable evening had inadvertently been fixed for the lecture, and the attendance was but meagre. Most of those present, however, appeared to sympathise with Freethought, and arrangements were made for a subsequent meeting of a more private character for the purpose of starting a Branch of the N. S. S. During the summer some open-air lectures will be given. Mr. Forder has promised to go down to Luton and deliver the first when the Branch is established. Luton is one of a dozen places within easy reach of London that ought to be, and will be, worked in the immediate future.

The Battersea Branch held its quarterly meeting last Sunday afternoon. Most of the old officers were re-elected. The balance-sheet showed a good sum on the right side, notwithstanding the old debt had been cleared off. After the meeting over sixty members and friends sat down to tea. At 7.30 the soirée commenced, and was kept up till a late hour. A most enjoyable evening was spent.

The Finsbury Branch had a successful tea and concert at the Hall of Science on Good Friday. Many of the artists were paid, yet a profit is left for the Branch. This is very good for a first attempt.

The Newcastle Branch had a most successful social gathering on Good Friday, which realised a profit that will go towards clearing off the debt. The Branch is leaving its old unsuitable premises in Hall's-court, and after the 1st of May its ordinary meetings will be held in a large room at the Working Men's Club in Nelson-street. We hope all Freethinkers in the district will now rally round the Branch Committee. The prospect is decidedly good, and if all work

together, the cause will flourish more vigorously than ever in "canny Newcastle."

The Manchester Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday. The financial report showed a balance of £53 in hand. Mr. Hemingway was elected president; the vice-presidents being Messrs. G. Payne, C. Pegg, J. Billcliffe, and Mesdames Pegg, Jackson, and Ramsden. Mr. J. R. Willock is corresponding secretary; Mr. S. King, treasurer; Mr. F. Gough, financial secretary; Mr. E. H. Jones, librarian.

Mr. Foote is going to deliver his Oration on Charles Bradlaugh at Northampton on Monday, May 4. As the Town Hall is rebuilding, the Temperance Hall has been engaged for the occasion.

The Hibbert lectures will be delivered in the Portman Rooms from April 15 to 23. They will be by the Count Goblet d'Alviella, author of *The Contemporary Evolution of Religion and Theology*, who has taken for his subject "The Evolution of the God Idea." The discourses will be delivered in French. Tickets can be obtained from Messrs. Williams and Norgate, Henrietta-street, Covent Garden.

Dr. A. H. Japp will lecture on "Shelley's Relations to Christian Dogma" at University College, Gower Street, on Wednesday, April 8, at 8 p.m. Attendance invited.

At the next meeting of the Co-operative Congress a testimonial will be presented to Mr. E. Vansittart Neale, who has been for many years secretary of the Co-operative Union.

Miss Ira Craddock, secretary of the American Secular Union, writes in favor of adopting the pansy as a badge of Freethought.

Natural Religion, first issued in 1882, has reached a third edition. Prof. Seeley's anti-supernaturalism is of a very mild character, though it is not at all relished by the orthodox. The pious Earl of Shaftesbury absurdly said of his *Eccc Homo* it was the worst book ever vomited from the jaws of hell, upon which the Professor said that its being vomited out was a sign it was not appreciated there.

Professor Momerie narrates in the new number of the *Contemporary Review* the history of his controversy and correspondence with the authorities of King's College, which ended in his Professorship of Logic and Metaphysics being detached from the Department of Theology and attached to the Literature and Science Department of the College only. Objections, it will be remembered, had been raised to the sentiments and tone of the Professor's work on "Inspiration." In closing his paper, Mr. Momerie quotes a comment which he clearly thinks deserves a place in the records of theological discussion. "When I returned," he says, "to the college after my fate had been decided, the porter was kind enough to say he was glad to see me back, and he added with a smile, 'We can't all think alike.' Was not the smile of the porter," the Professor adds, "more philosophical, more Christian, more in harmony with the evolution of the race than the frown of the Reverend Principal?"—*Daily News*.

The prize of one thousand dollars offered by the American Secular Union for the best manual for teaching morality without religion has been equally divided between Nicholas Paine Gilman, M.A., editor of the *Literary World*, Boston, and Edward Payson Jackson, M.A., Professor of Physical Science in the Latin school of the same city. The "hub of the universe" thus takes the cake. The books of Messrs. Gilman and Payson will be published in the autumn.

Captain Robert F. Adams, one of the ablest Canadian Freethought advocates, is drawing large audiences at the Armoury Hall, Montreal, which has been successfully maintained despite much Christian opposition.

The question, should the World's Fair at Chicago be opened on Sunday is still occupying the attention of our American friends, and many petitions are being signed with the view of Sunday opening. The decision will remain with the Chicago people. It is stated that though the Philadelphia Exhibition was nominally closed on Sundays, it was really open to any who chose to pay for being passed in by an exhibitor. "Poor people and strangers" were shut out, while

rich Philadelphians made up parties to see the show without the annoyance of vulgar crowds. This is the way Sunday laws work in America as well as in England.

Fernando Lozano, a prominent Spanish Freethinker and writer in *Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento*, under the signature of "Demofilo," has been elected as deputy to the Spanish Cortes. Senor Lozano is author of *Battles of Freethought* and other advanced works. His daughter attended the International Conference of Freethinkers at Paris in 1889, in company with her husband, Prof. Odon de Buen.

The telephone from London to Paris would not only astonish the apostles, but may scandalise the parsons. By its means the Sunday operas and concerts in wicked Paris may be listened to by people in holy London.

The *New York Sun*, noticing a paper by Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, read at a Session of the Women's National Council in Washington, says Mrs. Stanton is also unquestionably right in saying that the position of woman was materially altered for the worse after Christianity had acquired ascendancy in the Roman world. Thenceforward there was neither in theory nor practice any approach to an equality of the sexes. One woman, indeed, was deified, but on the other hand, her sisters were branded with impurity and relegated to servitude and misery. Very different had been the lot of women in the imperial city from, for instance, the time of Augustus to the time of Constantine. The *patria potestas* with its pitiless rigor had passed away, and the Roman lawgivers, impregnated with the stoical philosophy, raised woman to such a pitch of dignity and independence as she has never yet entirely regained. Indeed, the Roman women of that period could do everything but vote and discharge certain religious functions.

CHRISTIANITY A FAILURE.

BY OUIDA.

(From the "North American Review.")

To live and spread as it has done, Christianity must have some vital force within itself superior to those possessed by other creeds. It must be suited to the human race in some manner which the religion of Mohammed and that of Israel have alike missed. Indeed, the whole history of the acquisition of its dominion is very singular, and has probably been due to the socialistic element contained in it; for the gospels are a breviary intimately dear to the heart of every communist.

Mohammedanism is aristocratic; so is Judaism; so were the Greek and Latin religions; but Christianity is the religion of democracy, of universal equality, of the poor man consoled for privation on earth by his belief that such privation is surely the narrow gate by which heaven alone can be reached. Even in the moment when Christianity most nearly approached an aristocratic worship, it still contained germs of democracy: it still held out hope to the poor man, hope both spiritual and material, in the feudal ages, when it was the war-cry of knights and the ruling power of great kings and arrogant priests, it still whispered in the ear of the swineherd and the scullion: "Take my tonsure and my habit, and who knows that thou mayst not live to earn the triple crown?"

And if we meditate on and realise the essentially socialistic tendencies of the Christian creed, we may wonder that the "grands de la terre" ever so welcomed it, or ever failed to see in it the death-germs of their own order; but we shall completely understand why it fascinated all the laboring classes of mankind and planted in them those seeds of Communism which are now bearing forth full fruit. But what is almost equally certain is that Christianity will be wholly powerless to restrain the results of what it has inspired.

For of all absolutely powerless things on earth, Christianity is the most powerless, even though sovereigns are still consecrated, multitudes still baptized, parliaments and tribunals still opened, and countless churches and cathedrals still builded in its name. It has become a shibboleth, a husk, a robe with no heart beating within it, a winged angel carved in dead wood. It has said that it is almost impossible for the rich man to be just or inherit the kingdom of heaven; the anarchists insist that it is utterly impossible, and will, if they can, cast the rich man into hell on earth.

Christianity has opened the floodgates of Socialism, but it will not have any power in itself to close them again. For

nothing can be in more complete contradiction than the prevalence of the profession of Christianity with the impotency of that profession to color and control human life. The Buddha of Galilee has not one-thousandth part of the direct influence on his professional disciples that is possessed by the Buddha of India. Christianity is professed over the whole earth wherever the Aryan race exists and rules, but all the kingdoms and republics which make it their state creed are, practically, wholly unaffected by its doctrines, except in so far as their socialistic members derive precedent and strength from them. Take, for instance, that which governs states and prescribes the duties of men—the majesty of the law, as it is termed—the science and the practice of legislation. Side by side with the religion enjoined by the state there exists a code of legislation which violates every precept of Christianity, and resembles only the *lex talionis* of the old Hebrew law, which the Christian creed was supposed to have destroyed and superseded.

Mr. Ruskin never writes on Venice without dwelling on the vital influence of the Christian creed on the men of the middle ages, and contrasting the religious spirit of those whose cry was St. Mark and whose admiration was St. Jerome with those of modern times, when these names mean nothing on the ears of men. But in truth the influence was architectural and artistic rather than moral; the memory neither of St. Mark nor St. Jerome ever prevented the blinding of the eyes of doges who had displeased the people, the treachery and brutality of their inexorable decree, or the torture of the Foscari, or the betrayal of Carracciolo, or the sale of slaves, or any one of the awful cruelties and tyrannies of the Council of Ten.

The capitalist who makes millions by the manufacture of rifled cannon sees no inconsistency in murmuring in his seat at Catholic mass or Protestant service, "Return good for evil," "If one cheek be smitten, turn the other," and all the rest of the injunctions to peace and forbearance. Were any to suggest to him the inconsistency of his conduct, such a one would speak to deaf ears; that his whole life was a violation of the precepts he professed would be an unintelligible reproach to him; his soul would take refuge, snug and safe, in his formulas. Yet who can deny that, if the commands of Christianity had in the least penetrated beneath the surface of human life, to make weapons of destruction would be viewed as a crime so frightful that none would attempt it? Some writer has said that "singing psalms never yet prevented a grocer from sanding his sugar." This rough joke expresses in a grotesque form what may be said in all seriousness of the impotency of Christianity to affect modern national life.

Christianity is a formula: it is nothing more. The nations in which daily services in its honor are said in thousands and tens of thousands of cathedrals and churches, sell opium to the Chinese, cheat and slay red Indians, slaughter with every brutality the peaceful natives of Tonquin and Assam, carry fire and sword into Central Asia, kill Africans like ants on expeditions, and keep a whole populace in the grip of military service from the Spree to the Elbe, from the Seine to the Neva. Whether the nation be England, America, France, Russia, or Germany, the fact is the same. With the gospels on its reading desks and their shibboleth on its lips, every nation practically follows the lusts and passions of its human greeds for possession of territory and increase of treasure. Not one amongst them is better in this matter than another. Krupp guns, shrapnel shells, nitro-glycerine, and submarine torpedoes are the practical issues of evangelicism all over the civilised world. And the nations are so sublimely unconscious of their own hypocrisy that they have blessings on their warfare pronounced by their ecclesiastics, and implore the Lord of Hosts for his sympathy before sending out armored cruisers.

A while ago there was published an account of the manufacture of the deadliest sort of dynamite on the shores of Arran. Full in the front of the great sea, with all the majesty of a rock-bound and solitary shore around them, these hideous works raise their blasphemous face to Nature, and pollute and profane her most solemn glories. And there, on this coast of Arran, numbers of young girls work at the devilish thing in wooden huts, with every moment the ever-present risk of women and huts being blown into a million of atoms if so much as a shred of metal or even a ray of too warm sunshine strike on the foul, sickly, infernal compound which their fingers handle. A brief while since two girls were thus blown into the air, and were so instantaneously and utterly annihilated that not a particle of their bodies or of

their clothing could be recognised; and all the while the seagulls were circling, and the waves leaping, and the clouds sailing, and deep calling to deep, "Lo, behold the devil and all his works!" And there is no devil there at all except man—man who makes money out of this fell thing which blasts the beauties of nature, and scars the faces of the hills, and has made possible to civilisation a fashion of wholesale assassination so horrible, so craven, and so treacherous that the boldness of open murder seems almost virtue beside it.

Even of death Christianity has made a terror which was unknown to the gay calmness of the pagan and the stoical repose of the Indian. Never has death been the cause of such craven timidity as in the Christian world, to which, if Christians believed any part of what they profess, it would be the harbinger of glad tidings, the welcome messenger of a more perfect life. To visionaries like Catharine of Siena it may have been so at times, but to the masses of men and women professing the Christian faith, death has been and is the King of Terrors, from whose approach they cower in an agony which Petronius Arbiter would have ridiculed and Seneca have scorned. The Greek and the Latin gave dignity to death, and awaited it with philosophy and peace; but the Christian beholds in it innumerable fears like a child's terror of ghosts in darkness, and by the manner of the funeral rites with which he celebrates it contrives to make grotesque even that mute majesty which rests with the dead slave as much as with the dead emperor. The Christian religion has been cruel in much to the human race. It has quenched much of the sweet joy and gladness of life; it has caused the natural passions and affections of it to be held as sins. By its teaching that the body should be despised it has brought on all the unnameable filth which was made a virtue in the monastic orders, and which in the Italian, the Spanish, the Russian peoples, and the poor of all nations is a cherished and indestructible habit. In its permission to man to lay subject to him all other living creatures of the earth it conjoined the cruelty of the barbarian and of the pagan, and endowed it with what appeared a divine authority—an authority which science, despising Christianity, has yet not been ashamed to borrow and to use.

Let us endeavor to realise the unutterable torments endured by men and maidens in their efforts to subdue the natural desires of their senses and their affections to the unnatural celibacy of the cloister, and we shall see that the tortures inflicted by Christianity have been more cruel than the cruelties of death. Christianity ever has been the enemy of human love; it for ever cursed and expelled and crucified the one passion that sweetens and smiles on human life, which makes the desert blossom as the rose, and which glorifies the common things and common ways of earth. It made of this, the angel of life, a shape of sin and darkness, and made the woman whose lips were warm with the first kisses of her lover believe herself accursed and ashamed. Even in the unions which it reluctantly permitted, it degraded and dwarfed the passion which it could not entirely exclude, and permitted it coarsely to exist for the mere necessity of procreation. The words of the Christian nuptial service expressly say so. Love, the winged god of the immortals, became, in the Christian creed, a thrice-damned and earth-bound devil, to be exorcised and loathed. This has been the greatest injury that Christianity has ever done to the human race. Love, the one supreme, unceasing source of human felicity, the one sole joy which lifts the whole mortal existence into the empyrean, was by it degraded into the mere mechanical action of reproduction. It cut the wings of Eros. Man, believing that he must no longer love his mistress; woman, believing that she must no longer love her lover, loved themselves, and from the cloisters and from the churches there arose a bitter, joyless, narrow, apprehensive passion which believed itself to be religion, but was in truth only a form of concentrated egotism, the agonised desire to be "saved"; to ascend into the highest heaven, let who else would wait without its doors or pine in hell. The influence of this is still with the world, and will long be with it; and its echo is still loud in the sibilant voices which hiss at the poet who sings and the poet who glorifies love.

Christians repeat like a parrot's recitative the phrase that no sparrow falls uncounted by its creator, and they go to their crops and scatter poison, or loading fowling-pieces with small shot, to destroy hundreds of sparrows in a morning. If they believed that their God saw the little birds of the air fall, would they dare to do it? Of course they would not; but they do not believe; it only suits them to use their

formula, and they are never prevented by it from strewing poison or setting traps.

What will be the future of Christianity? There is no prophet of vision keen enough to behold. The intellect of mankind is every year forsaking it more utterly, and the ever-increasing luxury which is possible with riches, and the ever-increasing materialism of all kinds of life into which mechanical labor enters, are forces which every year drive the multitudes farther and farther from its primitive tenets. In a small and poor community Christianity may be a creed possible in its practical realisation and consistent in its simplicity of existence; but in the mind of modern life, with its overwhelming wealth and overwhelming poverty, with its horrible satiety and its horrible hunger, with its fiendish greed and its ghastly crimes, its endless lusts and its cruel bitterness of hatred, Christianity can only be one of two things—either a nullity, as it is now in all national life, or a dynamic force allied with and ruling through Socialism.

Which will it be? There is no prophet to say. But whichever it be, there will be that in its future which, could he have foreseen it when he hung upon the cross, would have been more bitter to its founder than the vinegar and hyssop raised to his parching lips, and more cruel to his tender soul than the thorns wherewith his enemies crowned him.

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REVIEW.

A Song for My Son. By GEORGE HENRY MARTIN. Watts and Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street. Price 2s. 6d.—These are vigorous verses by a reformer inculcating his own fervent principles of Radicalism and Freethought. The following estimate of Christianity will give some idea of his quality:—

A foolish Faith, a barbarous Creed, at best are these ye feign to hold;
How long 'twill be before ye heed this truth as simple as 'tis old—
Nor God nor Son of God can save the sinner from the doom of sin,
Nor any from the circling wave of consequence to all within
The influence of the evil thing. This faith firm held, made manifest
In every act, shall bring salvation to the sinfullest.

The lines are spirited throughout, and the book is prettily got up and excellently printed.

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Why is the Queen like Nebuchadnezzar.—Because she has gone to Grasse.

Eve was the first and we reckon the only woman who did not gather up her dress in both hands and yell at the sight of a snake.

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"Cussin' and swearin', my dear breddern, am a wery bad habit, but de use ob de word 'damn,' wen yo' pet co'n am stepped on, ain't needer cussin' nor swearin', it's a jess human nature, an' de Lord won't count it against yo' wen yer turu comes to apply fer admittance at de golden gate."

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SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30. Mr. H. Snell, "The Lamb of God and the British Workman." Monday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "An Impeachment of Christian Morality." Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7, Mr. B. Hyatt, "Myth of the Resurrection" (preceded by a Dramatic Study from "Romeo and Juliet.")

Lambeth—Mr. Roger's, 144 Kennington Road: 12, meeting. Leyton—Mr. Beadle's, 10 Daisey Villas, Manor Road: 7, Mr. Beadle, "What Did Jesus Teach?"

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W.: 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Creation Stories." Monday, at 8.30, social meeting. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Mr. Robert Forder, "Signs of the Zodiac, III." Thursday, at 8, open debate.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road): 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Miracles and How to Work Them"; 8.30, quarterly meeting. Friday, April 10, at 8, in the Co-operative Hall, Powis Street, Mr. G. W. Foote, "An Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.15, Mr. H. Snell, "What has Christianity Done for the World?"

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Religion and Secularism Contrasted."

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch: 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Religion and Secularism Contrasted."

Kilburn—Salisbury Road (close to Queen's Park Station): 6.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Moral Objections to Christianity."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "The Bible: what it is and what it is not."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Charles Bradlaugh's Work for Humanity."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street: Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "The Grand Old Book"; 3, "Death and the Devil"; 7, "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."

Blyth Central Hall: Mr. C. J. Hunt, 11, "Christianity and Secularism"; 2.30, "Evolution and Design"; 7, "The Christian's Creed."

Bradford—Large Room, Albert Buildings (bottom of Horton Road): Mr. Sam Standring, 11, "Man's Search for God"; 3, "Charles Bradlaugh, the True Patriot"; 7, "Secularism: Destructive and Constructive."

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street: 12 noon, debating class, Mr. Williamson, "Sociology"; 6.30, Mr. Shaw, "The Mythical Origin of Christianity."

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: 11, Tontine Society; 11.30, committee meeting; 3, discussion class, Mr. J. Hall, "What Think Ye of Christ?"; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Historical Criticism Applied to Christian Evidences."

Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch N. S. S.—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street: fortnightly financial meeting. Friday, at the Irish Literary Institute, Clayton Street (opposite Nelson Street), at 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Spiritualism v. Materialism." Admission 3d.—Debating Society: 7.30, Mr. T. Purvis, "Population Quest on."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street: 3, annual meeting; 7, Readings from Mr. Bradlaugh by the Secretary, and recitation by Mr. Wilson.

Plymouth—100 Union Street: 7, Mr. Ross, "Man in Space and Time."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 3, debating class, Mr. Jannaway, "Why Women should be Secularists"; 7, Mr. G. Hore, "The Future of the Human Race."

Sheffield—Hall of Science Rockingham Street: 7, Mr. Thomas Garbutt, "Was Jesus Christ a Socialist?"

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street: 7, business meeting.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street: 6, Mr. B. Dawson, "The Disposal of the Dead." Tuesday, at 7.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Christianity v. Secularism."

Stalybridge—Mr. J. Taylor's, 12 Bayley Street: 7, committee meeting.

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street: 7, Mr. R. Weightman will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 5, morning, Westminster; evening, Woolwich; 12, morning, Battersea; 26, evening, Hall of Science. May 3, morning, Clerkenwell; 10, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 17, morning, Westminster; 24, morning, Kingsland; afternoon, Victoria Park; 31, morning, Battersea. June 7, morning, Clerkenwell; afternoon, Victoria Park; 14, morning, Woolwich.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordinley Road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—April 5, Blyth; 6, Wellingon; 7, Spennymoor; 8, West Auckland; 9, Ox Hill; 10, Newcastle; 11, Chester-le-Street; 12, Spennymoor; 19, morning, Mile End; 26, morning, Hyde Park; afternoon, Finsbury Park; evening, Woolwich. May 3, morning, Kingsland Green; afternoon, Regent's Park; 10, morning, Pimlico; evening, Kilburn; 17, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Battersea; 24, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith; 31, morning, Camberwell; evening, Lambeth.

H. SMITH, 3 Breck Place Breck Road, Everton Road, Liverpool.—April 12, Liverpool.

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