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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE RISING SON.

You are requested to read the above title carefully. Notice the spelling of the last word. It is *son*, not *sun*. The difference to the eye is only in one letter. The substantial difference is very great. Yet in the end the distinction between the Son and the Sun vanishes. Originally they were one and the same thing, and they will be so again when Christianity is properly understood.

Supposing that Jesus of Nazareth ever lived, it is impossible to know, with any approach to accuracy, what he really was. With the exception of four epistles by Saint Paul—in which we find a highly mystical Christ, and not a portrait or even a sketch of an actual man—we have no materials for a biography of Jesus written within a hundred years of his death. Undoubtedly *some* documents existed before the Canonical and Apocryphal Gospels, but they were lost through neglect or suppression, and what we have is simply the concoction of older materials by an unscrupulous Church.

During the interval between the real or supposed death of Jesus and the date of the Gospels, there was plenty of time for the accumulation of any quantity of mythology. The east was full of such material, only waiting, after the destruction of the old national religions under the sway of Rome, to be woven into the texture of a non-national system as wide as the limits of the Empire.

Protestants are able to recognise a vast deal of Paganism in the teaching and ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. On that side they keep an open eye. On the other side their eye is shut. If they opened it they would see plenty of Paganism in the Gospels.

The only fixed date in the career of Jesus is his birthday. This is known by every scholar to be fictitious. The primitive Church was ignorant of the day on which Jesus was born. But what was unknown to the Apostles, one of whom is said to have been his brother, was opportunely discovered by the Church three hundred years afterwards. For some time the nativity of Jesus had been celebrated on all sorts of days, but the Church brought about uniformity by establishing the twenty-fifth of December. This was the Pagan festival of the nativity of the Sun. The Church simply appropriated it, in order to bring over the Pagan population by a change of doctrine without a change of rites and customs.

It may be objected that the primitive Church did not enquire as to the birthday of Jesus until it was too late to ascertain it. But this objection cannot possibly apply to the resurrection, the date of which is involved in equal uncertainty, although one would expect it to be precisely known and regularly commemorated. For many ages the celebration was irregular. Different Sundays were kept, and sometimes other days in various weeks of March and April. Finally, after fierce disputes and excommunications, the present system was imposed upon the whole Catholic world. Easter is, in fact, decided

astronomically, by a process in which sun-worship and moon-worship are both conciliated. The starting point is the vernal equinox, which was the time of a common Pagan festival. The very name of Easter is of heathen origin. All its customs are bequeathed to us from far-off Pagan ancestors. Easter eggs, symbolising the life of the universe, have been traced back to the Romans, Greeks, Persians, and Egyptians.

When the Christians celebrate the resurrection of Christ they are imitating the ancient "heathen," who at the same time of the year commemorated the resurrection of the Sun, and his manifest triumph over the powers of darkness. And when the moderns prepare to celebrate the ascension of Christ, they are really welcoming the ascension of the Sun. The great luminary—father of light and lord of life—is then (apparently) rising higher and higher in heaven, shedding his warmer beams on the earth, and gladdening the hearts of men.

Churches and altars are decked with vegetation, which is another relic of nature-worship. Life is once more bursting forth under the kindling rays of the sun. Hope springs afresh in the heart of man. His fancy sees the pastures covered with flocks and herds, the corn waving in the breeze, and the grapes plumping in the golden sunshine, big with the blood of earth and the fire of heaven.

According to the Apostles' Creed, Jesus descended into hell between his death and resurrection. That is also a relic of sun-worship. During the dark, cold winter the sun descended into the underworld, which is the real meaning of Hades. Misunderstanding this circumstance, or deliberately perverting it, the early Church fabricated the monstrous fable that Jesus "preached unto the spirits in prison," as we read in the first epistle of Peter. One of the apocryphal gospels gives a lively account of how he harried the realm of Old Harry, emptying the place wholesale, and robbing the poor Devil of all his illustrious subjects, from Adam to John the Baptist.

A volume might be filled with illustrations of the mythology of the Resurrection. Our present space is limited, and we must let the above suffice. Any one who reads the Gospel story of the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, with a careful eye and a critical mind, will see that it is not historical. Such witnesses, so loose in statement and so contradictory of each other, would collapse in a few minutes in any court of law. They do not write as spectators, and they were not spectators. What they give us is the legendary and mythical story that had taken possession of the Christian mind long after all the contemporaries of Jesus were dead.

Our belief, in conclusion, is that the Rising Sun will outlast the Rising Son. The latter is gradually, but very surely, perishing. Even professed Christians are giving up the miraculous elements of the Gospels. But who would give up the Sun, which has warmed, lighted, and fertilised the earth for millions of years, and will do so for millions of years after the death of Christianity?

G. W. FOOTE.

THE CRUCIFIXION.

THERE is a well-known tale of an old lady who, hearing the sad story of the cruel treatment and ignominious death of Jesus Christ, said, "Well, it happened a long way off and a good while ago; let us hope it is not true." If the old lady could have read the recently published essay by Mr. Austin Bierbower, *Was Christ Crucified?* or if she even read the gospels critically, she might have been completely consoled. The story is not true. Mr. Bierbower shows the narratives accord neither with the known practice of Jewish nor of Roman law. Nor have they the appearance of truth. Jesus is tried at night and executed the next morning, which was that of the Passover. Yet according to established principles of Jewish law, the Passover never can fall on a Friday, and no execution could take place at that sacred time. The Jewish Sanhedrin was a grave assembly of the élite of the nation, consisting of at least twenty-three judges. They did not meet to try cases in the house of the high priest, nor did they sit by night. They were prohibited from giving sentence after sundown. They were bound to give every opportunity for defence to a criminal on a capital charge, and the allegation that they would buffet and spit on one is preposterous. Nor is it credible that any Roman governor, wishing to release a prisoner, would have given in to the clamor of a mob he despised, and ordered a person believed to be innocent to summary execution. *Credat Judæus.*

Look at the improbable things ascribed to the chief priests and elders. They are said to have mocked at Jesus on the cross, using the words of the twenty-second Psalm. Yet in this psalm the words are ascribed to the ungodly, so that they would be the very last words those acquainted with the psalm would have used. Mr. Scott, in his *English Life of Jesus* says: "If for a moment we try to imagine the chief priests and Sanhedrin as deliberately adopting the ribaldry of profane scoffers, the ludicrous absurdity of the scene is at once forced upon us; and we see clearly that the Pharisees are made to speak not as they would have spoken in real life, but as the Christian legend of a later day required that they should speak." When Jesus called Eloi, the spectators are said to have said he calls for Elias. This mistake Jews who call "Elias" Elijah never could have made, though Greeks might. But every incident is improbable.

The time alleged for the event is uncertain. The gospels cannot be reconciled as to the hour, the day, or even the year, every date from A. D. 28 to 34 being assigned by various authorities. Nor must it be forgotten that Irenæus (bk. ii., ch. 22) makes Jesus to have been fifty years of age.

The place is not only uncertain, it is clearly mythical. It and the Church of the Sepulchre are shown in the very heart of Jerusalem. Kinglake and other travellers having made this show place a laughing-stock, *Murray's Guide* changes the place to the north side of the city, outside the Damascus gate, a site without any authority in tradition, and never heard of till the present century.

But, it may be asked, How could the story arise? This is a question of purely antiquarian interest. I may, I trust, refuse to credit that Jupiter ordered a man named Ixion to be bound on a wheel or fiery cross, even though I cannot explain the meaning of the fable. If anyone tells me a cock-and-bull story of someone rising from the dead, which story is inconsistent with itself as well as with all known facts, I do not feel bound to explain its origin before I reject it. The explanation may be lost beyond hope of discovery. Some suggestions, however, have been made. Rabbi Wise thinks it may have arisen from the widespread and deep sympathy for a crucified king of the

Jews, viz., Antigonus, the last of the Maccabees, whom Marc Antony whipped and crucified B.C. 37.*

My own view, which on such a conjectural matter I do not put forward as of any particular value, would be expressed by writing the word *cruci-fiction*. I hold the entire story to be a fiction, and I think it probable that the sign of the cross (shown last week to have been a religious symbol long pre-Christian) lay at its basis. What is noticeable is that, whereas the Buddhist or Gnostic swastika cross appears in the Catacombs, and the alleged monogram of Christ on coins of the Ptolemies, there is no monumental crucifixion scene till the seventh century. Even then the Christ appears in a tunic, and sometimes above the cross. Yet Marcus Keane, in his *Towers and Temples of Ancient Ireland* (pp. 158-166) gives many instances of pre-Christian crucifixion scenes. Minucius Felix, too, assigned to the beginning of the third century, not only denies that Christians worshipped crosses, but retorts on the Pagans that they not only had the cross but effigies of a man on it. Possibly he alluded to figures of helmet and armor placed on the military standards in sign of victory. Elias Schedius, in his work on the old German gods, tells how the Druids took an oak tree in the form of a cross, or fastened cross-beams to it, putting above the name Thau, on the right the name Hesus, on the middle Tharamis, and on the left Belenus.†

Though I find nothing in the description of the initiatory rites of the Egyptians known as *Crata Repoa* to confirm Mme. Blavatsky's statements as to the symbolical crucifixion of Egyptian initiates,‡ there can be no doubt that lady knew a good deal about secret societies. It was her business. J. H. Da Costa, in his *Sketch of the History of the Dionysian Artificers*, says: "In this third stage of the ceremony the candidate was stretched upon the couch (*pastos*) to represent his death."§ But one of the commonest initiatory rites is the pretence of killing the initiate and bringing him to life again.|| A remarkable rite was that of placing the person in a cruciform pit or pool of blood.¶ That there were prior stories of men gods who died, descended, and rose again, is certain. This appears to have been the case with Osiris, Dionysos, Adonis, Baldur, Attis and others.

These good young men that died have usually been referred to the great god of gods, the life-giving sun, who having passed over the cross of the vernal equinox, between the two thieves of winter and summer, rises triumphant over the realms of decay. But Mr. Frazer has given reason to think they rather represent the spirit of vegetation.** A devotee of a modern form of this ancient deity has embodied the peasant legend in the language of genius. And this is how it runs—

There were three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high;
And they have sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

* See *Jewish Life of Christ*, p. 42.

† *De Vita Germania*, cap. xxiv., p. 511 (1729).

‡ *Secret Doctrine*, vol. ii., pp. 558-561.

§ The *pastos* really was a bridal bed; *pastophori* were the Egyptian priests who carried the image of God in a shrine. Josephus calls the priests' private apartments at the Temple *pastophorion*.

|| J. G. Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii. 342. Mr. Frazer explains it among savages as an exchange of life or souls between a man and his stem.

¶ See *Nimrod* [by the Hon. A. Herbert], vol. ii. p. 654.

** Jesus may then have taken up the worship of the corn spirit, born in Beth-lehem the house of bread, of the virgin of August. Mr. Frazer has fully explained why the divine man or animal embodying the spirit was slain and supposed at once to carry on the divine life and take away the sins of the people (*Golden Bough*, pp. 199-203). Plutarch and Pliny tell how the Romans annually paraded a live dog crucified upon an elder wood cross between the temples of Juventas and Sumanus. Justin Martyr tells us the Passover lamb was roasted on transverse spits in the form of a cross.

They took a plough and plough'd him down
Put clods upon his head,
And they have sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And showers began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surprised them all.

The hero has to go through worse horrors, including the threshing of his body, the eating of his flesh, and drinking of his blood by his devotees. But after all these atrocities nobody seems a penny the worse, unless indeed the sacrament has been partaken of too freely. As for the hero, being a god, his soul could not see corruption. And then he is used to it—his death and resurrection happening regularly every year, world without end. Amen.

J. M. WHEELER.

SIN AND DEATH.

CHRISTIANITY as a theological system owes its limited influence largely to fear, which has been engendered in the human mind by perverting the nature of man, making life in too many instances a horrible gloom, and surrounding death with fictitious notions that are terrible to the credulous, and misleading to the orthodox believer. According to theology, sin and death are the ruling powers in this world of ours; and both, it is said, were originated through the disobedience of one man and one woman about six thousand years ago. The theory of the "fall" is that, in consequence of Adam complying with a very pardonable request from his wife and partaking of the fruit of "a tree to be desired to make one wise," he committed a sin, and thus corrupted the whole of his posterity and brought mortality to the human kind. Hence we read in the Bible, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. v. 12). "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv. 22).

Here are two of the most glaring fallacies that ever emanated from the theological brain, namely—(1) That our alleged first parents sinned in the Garden of Eden through eating of a particular tree; and (2) that, in consequence of this supposed sin, death was introduced into the world. It is almost incredible that persons possessing even ordinary reasoning powers should assert these absurd and fallacious stories as if they were records of facts. We are aware that some Christian writers have pronounced the account as given in the Bible to be purely figurative; but if this be so, then the doctrine of the Atonement has no reality, for the one supposition is based on the other. Of what, however, is the account figurative? As Principal Tulloch says, St. Paul is very precise upon this point. "Sin is with him not merely transmitted to us, as all our qualities must be transmitted, but it comes to us by definite passage from the sin of Adam as the prototype and representative of our race. . . . It is an idea of spiritual injury and penal consequence inflicted upon the race by the first sin, and directly imputed to the race in consequence of that sin." That this twofold error as to sin and death has no foundation in fact is easily demonstrated.

Even if we believe the account as given in Genesis, it is evident that no sin was committed by Adam and Eve. Sin may be defined as the voluntary performance of an act with the intention of inflicting injury upon someone. It is not shown in the Mosaic account that the hero and heroine of the Garden of Eden had such an intent. On the contrary, the act which it is asserted was the cause of their fall was prompted by a natural feeling which God himself had imparted to

the woman. Besides, as Samuel Taylor Coleridge says: "A sin is an evil which has its ground or origin in the agent, and not in the compulsion of circumstances. An act to be sin must be original, and a state or act that has not its origin in the will may be calamity, deformity, or disease, but sin it cannot be. It is not enough that the act appears so voluntary, or that it has the most hateful passions or debasing appetite for its proximate cause and accompaniment. All these may be found in a madhouse, where neither law nor humanity permit us to condemn the actor of sin. The reason of law declared the maniac not a free agent, and the verdict followed of course, not guilty." Now, according to the Bible there were circumstances over which Eve had no control, and which impelled her to do what she did. Such, for instance, as her possessing certain desires, the existence of a particular kind of fruit calculated to gratify such desires, and the production of a serpent "more subtil than any beast of the field" to aid this gratification. These were agencies which Eve was powerless to resist, and therefore she could not justly be charged with sin for yielding to them. In reference to Adam, he could not have sinned, for, judging from the narrative, when he accepted the fruit from his wife, he had no knowledge that he was doing wrong, inasmuch as it was not until after this incident that "the eyes of them both were opened."

It should be further noted that even if it were granted that the act in question was a sin, then there is no necessary connection between it and death. The two belong to entirely different spheres, and the one does not always influence the other. The most moral men sometimes die young, while bad men often live to a great age. Some immoral acts, of course, shorten life, but only because they are at the same time violations of physical laws. And, be it observed, that Christ did not abolish death, for it is as universal now as ever, and is as old as living things. The earliest plants and animals died long before man existed, and remains of man are also found which, although more recent, date back to a time thousands of years prior to the biblical account of creation. The fact is, death is a universal law of nature, it being a phase of the great change that prevails throughout the entire physical universe. The hardest rocks crumble and decay, water evaporates from the ocean, metals oxydise—that is, their substance blends with the oxygen of the air, forming a new substance. Plants grow, come to perfection, and die, each having a definite time to live, beyond which they cannot go. Animals obey the same law, the body wears out as a machine does, and, like a machine, it must stop when worn out. Man is no exception to this rule, as all experience proves, and it could never have been otherwise, for it is the law of his organisation. As an able writer remarks: "The constitution of man is such that he could never have been immortal. There is a law implanted deep in his nature to which every function of the body is subject that renders dissolution at some time or other as great a certainty as the rising of the sun, or the change of the seasons. Every part of the human frame bears upon it the signs of mortality, and to argue that man could ever have been immortal is to say that he was a man and not a man at the same time. Death is the result of a law universal in its effects and irresistible in its action. To it all must succumb. No known power can set it aside—the experience of all ages testifies to its operation. Not more certain and unvarying is the law of gravity than that of mortality. Disease may be held in check, accident may frequently be avoided, temperance may promote longevity, but old age and death are certain to come sooner or later. Improved physical conditions may lessen the rate of mortality in large towns, but cannot set aside old age and the dissolution of which it is the precursor. The physical frame is built up upon the principle that it

must decay at a particular time, and death is therefore a law of organic beings.'

Another fact deserving of attention is that dead organic matter is necessary to support the living. Man and the higher animals live largely on dead organisms. The powers of reproduction in all animals, including man, show that all were intended to die, for were it not so there would be no limit to the number of the living. Without death the world would be too full in a very short time. Carnivorous animals live on other animals, and man does the same—hence death occurs to support the living. The law of death is as definite as the law of life, and man is as much subject to this law as any other animal. Besides, the material which is used to build up his body has to be returned to nature, it being required for the forming of other human bodies.

Theology has pictured death as an evil and an ordeal of dreadful suffering, while as a matter of fact it is neither. Death is as natural as sleep, and should be no more dreadful. Old age prepares us for this event, and when the time comes in the regular order of nature, we desire the rest that follows "life's fitful fever." The gloom and melancholy that are usually associated with life's closing scene result from theological misrepresentation. Death in itself is usually painless, and even religious feelings hardly ever prevail when the event occurs, however strong they may have been during life. Secularism teaches that instead of associating death with sin, persistent efforts should be made to ally life with virtue and to adorn our careers with noble deeds, useful actions, and loving memories, thus making the world the better for our having played a part therein.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE REIGN OF TERROR.

To most people who take the trouble to study the Reign of Terror in France, 100 years ago, there appears something so unaccountably strange. How could such grand enthusiasm, such splendid heroism, such profound self-denial, such magnificence of public spirit, as characterised the early part of the Revolution, develop the wholesale murder policy, and the extremely savage elements and scenes of the Reign of Terror?

I am not sure that the problem is half so deep as it seems. The key to the Terror is really the excessive joy, the boundless patriotism of the times. It was the very *goodness* of the Revolution that produced its worst evils.

If the French *could* have taken the Revolution coolly and soberly, and calculated and weighed, where they felt a sentiment, and bounded to realise that sentiment in actual life, none of the greater evils of the Revolution could have occurred.

Alas! the people were excited. They dreamt of a Millennium, and found only a Revolution. They were roused as people had never before been roused. The French had been ruled, robbed, enslaved for centuries; now, for the very first time in history, the people counted for something, became a factor in the State. It was the dawn of a new day; and nothing appears exactly as it is in the dawn. Outlines are shadowy and things loom large that are comparatively small. Ghosts and fictions, illusions and distorted visions accompany the dawn.

The French were unfortunate. Suddenly, without preparation or foresight of what came, they found themselves in the midst of conditions they did not understand. They were required to rule; and knew no more how to do it than how to navigate a ship. Instead of the cool, sober views of old hands, they had the visions of raw youths. All were youths in France just then. The Revolution

intoxicated all men; the young men dreamed dreams and the old men saw visions. Visions of Equality, Liberty, Fraternity, rose before them. A universal brotherhood of nations, a Millennium of peace, plenty and happiness filled their imagination; and the people went into hysterics of joy.

It was a Revival—of Social Religion. Everything was religion now. Politics, revenues, laws, were all sacred; and all men were filled with emotions too deep to utter.

Each idea was a creed. Equality was not to be examined and criticised, but adopted as a truth beyond a controversy; and Fraternity was become a goddess to be worshipped. Patriotism was a deep emotion, an all-absorbing idea. Each man and woman was ready to part with anything, life itself, for his newly-acquired political creed. In defence or furtherance of these magnificent ideas the greatest sacrifice seemed paltry. It was an age of martyrdom. And whenever there are martyrs about, butchers will be found to immolate the sacrifices.

The French Revolutionists, I say, were intoxicated with political religion; a blind, enthusiastic creed possessed them, dominated them, filled up all their thoughts and ideas, colored and shaped their whole lives. And herein lay the whole spring and motive of the frightful deeds that followed. A religion, when it becomes absorbing, becomes exclusive; when it rises or sinks to enthusiasm, it becomes murderous from the most generous motives—and the blindest. Fanaticism is enthusiasm full blown and ripe for harvesting. And the Revolutionists became fanatics.

Fanaticism has no room for reason or reflection. It is possessed of one wild idea, and is prepared to die or to kill for that idea; for when a man is prepared to lay down his own life, unless a very remarkable man, he is equally ready to destroy others. Lives count for nothing before the goddess of Liberty! or any other god or goddess.

When Marat proposed to guillotine 270,000 of the opponents of the Revolution, he was in a state of unreasoning fanaticism. His suggestion never struck him as criminal. He could have seen Paris, or France, or the world, depopulated, with no emotion but that of pleasure, because to him the Revolution—that abstract *congeries* of events and movements—was a god or a goddess, a thing to be worshipped, not coolly reasoned upon. Religion had made Marat oblivious to the commonest moral sentiments; and he, like an Inquisitor, was prepared to sacrifice men and women in armies at the shrine of the deity he worshipped.

And when Charlotte Corday plunged the knife into Marat and killed him, it was no vulgar murder she committed—it was a sacrifice, a religious deed. And the poor girl went quite heroically to the guillotine, feeling that she had done her duty in sacrificing Marat.

These two are types of the whole class of Revolutionists and anti-revolutionists in the Reign of Terror. No party dreamt of amalgamation or compromise. Each had an infallible creed, each party was driven furiously on by the catchwords it had adopted and which it worshipped. To reason was to be cold and indifferent. Emotion, enthusiasm, fanaticism were the only tolerable things. And the results were terrible. There was no cure for this state of things but wholesale bloodshed and dictatorship. The fanaticism must be quenched in blood or not quenched at all. It is useless to try to fix the guilt anywhere. All were mad, all were drunk with the new political religion; and as no one in France had had any experience in leading or ruling an emancipated nation; and as the slaves suddenly freed had no idea of self-rule, the nation rushed headlong down rapids and over

the Niagara, and never gathered itself up again or recovered its reason until it found itself shut up in the narrow channel of Napoleon's dictatorship.

—*Liberator*.

JOS. SYMES.

THE BLESSINGS OF SORROW.

BY THE REV. CATER TOTTERICH.

Text: "Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted."—Matt. v. 4.

My beloved brethren, we come now to another of those wonderful sayings of our Blessed Lord, the first of which furnished a text for my last sermon, taken from the Sermon on the Mount, that portion of scripture which has commended itself to the world to such a degree that even unbelievers speak of it in praise.

It must be confessed that some pages of the history of the Church have been dark and bloody, of such a nature as to cause the ungodly to criticise her with severity; and it must also be confessed that the lives of some of the saints have not been such as, by their example, to build up the visible kingdom of our God on this earth; and it is impossible to say what might have been the effect of these questionable doings, I may say these shortcomings, of the children of God, if, during all the Christian centuries, we had not the Sermon on the Mount to which we might point as the answer to all the quibbles of the unbelievers. We have always been able to direct attention to the marvellous beatitudes of Christ, and to other portions of this matchless sermon, and to say to the gainsayer, "Whatever may be the faults, foibles, or even sins, of individual Christians or of the Church, this sermon, preached by the Lord himself, shows what real Christianity is. In it behold our ideal! If we do not exemplify its precepts, it is because we are weak and sinful; but all the world can see that our faults are not the faults of Christ or of Christianity, whose principles are here set forth in precepts, the truth and beauty of which have never been and cannot be surpassed by any teacher or in any system."

And when we thus point to the wonderful words of our wonderful Lord and Master, even the infidel is silenced, especially if he happens to belong to the property-owning, the ruling class, for he sees at once that no precepts ever were given to this world that are so well calculated as these to promote the peace and prosperity of society, by fostering the spirit of resignation and contentment among the poor, and by transferring their attention from this world of care and trouble to a better world, wherein the fruition of God awaits them. Infidels, I repeat, as well as Christians perceive this; and so it has come about that even among the unbelievers who have any interest in maintaining the established order of society and government, Jesus and his doctrines, as those doctrines are propounded in the sermon from which my text is taken, are almost as much revered as they are among the very Children of Light.

It is true that there are some blasphemous persons who have rebelled against God so persistently that he has utterly blinded their eyes to the truth, in consequence of which they have become out-and-out Atheists. These abandoned persons decry even the Sermon on the Mount, but we can afford to brush aside as of no moment the criticism of such creatures. As long as we have the entire Christian world and all the respectable, patriotic infidels holding up the beauties of the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, we may safely press home its truths and count on their acceptance.

It is not without reason, you may be sure, that the beatitudes, of which my text is one, are so popular. That reason is found in that they are so wonderfully calculated to comfort the human hearts of all classes

of pious persons under the conditions which surround us in this world. That reason it is my purpose to unfold and elaborate on this occasion, with special reference to the particular passage under consideration.

It may be said of this passage, as of the saying, "Blessed are ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of heaven," that at first sight it does not seem to be true. It does not appear to be a blessed thing to mourn. To the superficial thinker the idea of mourning carries with it a notion of almost anything rather than of blessedness, but on deeper consideration we shall see, as we saw in the case of the other text, that our first thought is not correct.

I am willing to admit that I have never found any special blessing in mourning, and I am thankful that my lines have fallen in such pleasant places that in my life little occasion for sadness has arisen. This is fortunate for me and for you, my brethren, for a mournful minister is not desirable.

The time was when persons in my profession assumed long faces and wore a depressing air, but that was in the day and generation when it was supposed that the genius of Christianity was in being miserable, even as our text at first sight would seem to indicate. We, however, have learned better. We now know that in order to build up the Church ministers must be of a cheerful disposition, so that the young people shall not be frightened away from her hallowed portals; and you will pardon me for saying that perhaps one of the secrets of my remarkably successful ministry among you is that I have been endowed with a cheerful, I might almost say a jovial, disposition, which has enabled me to go in and out among our young people and leave on them the impression that the religion of Jesus Christ is a joyful thing. We have, as you know, our gymnasium, bowling alleys, and billiard tables, all under the supervision of the Church, and these have served the admirable purpose of furnishing within the Church, and apart from evil associations, that amusement which youth craves, and of conveying the correct idea that the service of Jesus does not involve the sacrifice of any innocent pleasure.

Our text surely does not mean that it is better for ministers and the young people of the Church to mourn than to be cheerful and happy. In fact, it has no especial application to persons in the social class to which we belong, for we have nothing in particular to mourn about. To be sure, we have our troubles. Sickness invades our homes, and death cannot always be kept at bay, but we have learned that there is a certain lack of culture, a certain vulgarity, in giving way to our emotions over calamities that are common to human experience; and we have that wealth which places at our command in time of trouble resources that are useful in enabling us to forget our griefs by entering cheerfully into the duties and pleasures that belong to the station in life which we occupy. We know that our Heavenly Father does not wish us to spend our time in useless and unbecoming grief, but rather to bear about on our faces and in our manner the sunny aspect that is so useful in winning souls to the glad gospel of Jesus, the Rose of Sharon, the One altogether lovely.

Most of you, my brethren, have been highly favored of God by the possession of riches and of every means of wholesome enjoyment, and it must have been far from the thought of our Divine Master to teach that it would be well for you to spend your days in mourning; else why should he have given you all the means of enjoying innocent pleasure?

This is a bright and beautiful world. I am sure you and I have found it so; and it would be to throw ourselves out of harmony with nature were we to cultivate a mournful spirit under the mistaken impression that the words of our text were meant to

apply to such as us. It is for us to show to a doubting and perverse world what power there is in the religion of Jesus, coupled with the temporal blessings which God has showered upon us, to keep the countenance bright and the heart young.

Twentieth Century. HUGH O. PENTECOST.
(To be concluded).

JEROME HOLDETH FORTH ON "THE BROAD AND NARROW WAYS."

THERE was published in those days, for the edification of young people, a singularly pessimistic periodical, entitled *The Children's Band of Hope Review*. It was a magazine much in favor among grown-up people, and a bound copy of vol. ix. had lately been won by my sister as a prize for punctuality (I fancy she must have exhausted all the virtue she ever possessed, in that direction, upon the winning of the prize. At all events, I have noticed no ostentatious display of the quality in her later life). I had formerly expressed contempt for this book, but now, in my regenerate state, I took a morbid pleasure in poring over its denunciations of sin and sinners. There was one picture in it that appeared peculiarly applicable to myself. It represented a gaudily costumed young man, standing on the topmost of three steep steps, smoking a large cigar. Behind him was a very small church, and below a bright and not altogether uninviting looking hill. The picture was headed "The Three Steps to Ruin," and the three stairs were labelled respectively "Smoking," "Drinking," "Gambling." I had already traversed two-thirds of the road! Was I going all the way, or should I be able to get back? I used to lie awake at night and think about it, till I grew half crazy.

Atas! since then I have completed the descent, so where my future will be spent I do not care to think.

Another picture in the book that troubled me was the frontispiece. This was a highly-colored print, illustrating the broad and narrow ways. The narrow led upward past a Sunday-school and a lion to a city in the clouds. This city was referred to in the accompanying letterpress as a place of "Rest and Peace," but inasmuch as the town was represented in the illustrations as surrounded by a perfect mob of angels, each one blowing a trumpet twice his own size, and obviously blowing it for all he was worth, a certain confusion of ideas would seem to have crept into the allegory.

The other path—the "broad way"—which ended in what at first glance appeared to be a highly successful display of fireworks, started from the door of a tavern, and led past a music hall, on the steps of which stood a gentleman smoking a cigar. (All the wicked people in this book smoked cigars—all except one young man who had killed his mother and died raving mad. He had gone astray on short pipes.)

This made it uncomfortably clear to me which direction I had chosen, and I was greatly alarmed, until, on examining the picture more closely, I noticed, with much satisfaction, that about midway the two paths were connected by a handy little bridge, by the use of which it seemed feasible, starting on the one path and ending up on the other, to combine the practical advantages of both roads.

My belief in the possibility of this convenient compromise must, I fear, have led to an ethical relapse, for there recurs to my mind a somewhat painful scene of a few months' later date in which I am seeking to convince a singularly unresponsive landed proprietor that my presence in his orchard is solely and entirely due to my having unfortunately lost my way.—From "*Variety Patter*," in "*The Idler*," March, 1892.

ANECDOTE OF CRUIKSHANK.

Poor Hone (whose admirable *Every-day Book*, *Table Book*, and *Year Book* are still favorites with all, from the scholar to the mechanic), having failed successively as bookseller, publisher, and author, came finally to grief as an eating-house keeper in Gracechurch-street. His troubled career closed in utter poverty on Nov. 6, 1843, and Cruikshank attended his funeral in company with Charles Dickens. On this sad occasion the warm-hearted artist was so incensed by some disparaging remarks which fell from the Independent minister who conducted the service on the religious character of the defunct, that he whispered to his companion, in a voice broken by sobs, that "if it wasn't a clergyman, and if it wasn't a funeral, he'd punch his head!"—"*The Maclise Portrait Gallery*," William Bates, B.A., p. 188.

ACID DROPS.

The *Manchester Guardian* reports a meeting of the new Christian Evidence Society of that district. The secretary reported that there were 554 members on the books; a class was held once a week to instruct the members in Christian Evidences; and "it was intended to send out men to hold open-air meetings in opposition to the meetings addressed by Atheists." This is good news indeed. The activity of such apostles of the Christian faith will be a great assistance to the Freethought cause.

The chief speakers at the Christian Evidence meeting were Celestine Edwards and Archdeacon Wilson. The Archdeacon may have heard of the wretched personalities in which the black champion indulges, and perhaps it was for that reason he advised Christian lecturers in opposing Secularist lecturers to "treat their opponents with the most perfect sympathy and courtesy." On the other hand, the Archdeacon hedged a little as to the value of discussions. He did not "believe for one moment," he said, "that the whole of the Christian faith could be demonstrated to the human reason." The black champion went still further; he "strongly advised the Society not to have a set debate with any Atheist." Such is the brave advice of a man who formerly went about boasting that "no one would meet him."

Curates of the Church of England have many difficulties to contend with, to which another is now added, in the West End of London at any rate. It takes the form of "no learned men need apply." An ordained and well recommended curate wrote offering himself as a candidate for the curacy of a well-known church, and in reply received a note from the vicar to the following effect: "You are already known to me as a learned man. Thanks for your application, but I would rather have nothing to do with you."

A sky-pilot said there was one advantage in his congregation going to sleep during the service, as he could preach the same sermon nearly every Sunday.

Our pious contemporary, the *Methodist Times*, owned and edited by the Rev. Ananias Hughes, comes out strong upon "the Indian Opium Fiend." As the said Opium Fiend is the creation of the Christian English Government, we really cannot see why our pious contemporary should go into ecstasies of self-conscious virtue, now that the wretched thing stands a chance of being laid. Christians first commits wrongs, by and bye it is forced to right them, and then they boast of the redress as a triumph of Christianity.

The *Methodist Times* is still pegging away at Sir Charles Dilke. Was it not Swift who defined "nice people" as "people with nasty ideas?"

Many newspapers comment on Mrs. Montagu's care for the souls of her children. A century ago her brutality would have excited little attention, if it had not been attended by the accident of manslaughter. Nowadays the public sentiment is altered. Some of the newspapers, in sneering at Mrs. Montagu's religious notions, glance at religion in general, and seem to regard it something of which a very little goes a long way.

Having concluded his mission in Scotland, Mr. Moody has gone off for a holiday. And where does the reader think? Why, to Paris. Oh, fie!

Johnny McNeill is going to join Moody and Sankey at the Chicago World's Fair. The trio will evangelise the visitors from all parts of the world. Probably they think it will lead to the conversion of the whole human race, and the inauguration of the millennium. We don't. What we believe is that the trio will do good business—for themselves.

Calling a man a Christian in a Christian country, and getting prosecuted for it, is rather a novel development of the law of libel as applied to newspapers. According to the *New York Sun*, a Syracuse shoemaker has entered a claim for 2500 dols. against a journal which falsely described him as a Christian. In the writ served upon the defendant it is declared that the plaintiff has not lost patronage, but that the alleged libel "has caused the said John Brooks to be

brought into scandal, infamy and disgrace with and among his neighbors."

Pastor Soltau, of Tasmania, who claims that it was he who fetched along the Lunceston earthquake by prayer as a punishment for the local sinners, will presently have reason to wish he had never been born. A Melbourne syndicate owning property on the island has served him with a writ for £250 000 damages for shock, malicious concussion, and wilful destruction to their property. We can hear with the capacious ear of prophecy the pastor under examination in the witness-box. "Did you not state that you fetched along that earthquake by prayer?" "I did." "You are aware, no doubt, that one old woman died of fright? Do you admit murdering that old woman?" "I—ahem—that is a matter which rests entirely with the Lord. I am only a Numb's Instrument." "You are also aware that much damage was done to property. Do you admit causing that damage?" "I—ahem—I protest against this worldly view of the matter. I am only a vessel in the hands of Providence." "Are you willing to pay up the damage?" "No." "Then you don't admit that you caused the injuries and killed the old woman?" "No." "Then you didn't bring about the earthquake?" "No, I didn't." "Then when you said you caused it by prayer the statement wasn't true?" "No." "What do you call a man who makes a statement that isn't true?" Dead silence and a long and horrible pause.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

Under the head of "The Russian Oppression" the *Christian* writes about "a true Christian hero" in a Russian prison, detained in solitary confinement for five months without trial. Our pious contemporary forgets to say that other Christians put the poor fellow in prison. It also forgets that nearly all the "true Christian heroes" in Russia are actively occupied in persecuting the Jews.

Every Easter the cranks become specially noisy about the end of the world. They expect Jesus to come in time for the Passover Supper on earth, while the 144 000 male virgins ascend to have their supper in heaven, and the earth, only some 6,049,836,000 000 tons of matter, bursts off in chaos. Meantime the poor old world keeps on in the same jog-trot path.

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by, Your Lord was crucified for you on Good Friday?" Such is the placard stuck on various churches. But the unheeding multitude pass by. They know it is *Good Friday*, and they mean to have their holiday in the good old Pagan way, even though God made a bad Friday of it some eighteen hundred odd years ago.

The myths founded on the Bible may be illustrated from the above text, which is taken from the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Jeremiah complained of the misery of captive Jerusalem, and Christians apply it to their God and Savior. How the process went on is seen in the Catholic Church, with its doctrine of the seven stations of the suffering Christ. Scupoli, for instance, in his popular *Spiritual Combat* (chap 48), on Meditation on Christ's Passion, says: "Consider how his Sacred Limbs, could not reach the holes made to receive the nails, were stretched by cruel dogs so violently that the dislocated Bones might be told one by one." Of course there is nothing about these horrors in the gospels, but the reference is given to Ps. xxii. 16, 17, and another pretended prophecy is made into history.

A passion play, "Le Christ," is now drawing good audiences at the Théâtre Moderne, Paris. This is not a wicked burlesque, but is designed to attract the gay Parisians back to Catholicism.

We had just been looking at a big book by one M-Culloch on the Goodness of God, when we read in the *Times* that spotted typhus, black small-pox, and other revolting diseases were rife in Russia as a consequence of the famine, and that the medical aid for the sick and dying thousands was almost nil.

The Rothesay School Board the other day had a big pow-wow about a recent religious examination in the public school, and, in the course of the discussion, it cropped out that the lady member of the Board was not quite satisfied with the results, and there was also disclosed some difference of opinion in the Board regarding the Pentateuch. Miss Macdonell said one of the scholars, in answer to a question,

said "Adam had not named the beasts." The Chairman: "I don't think Adam did name the beasts." (Laughter). Miss Macdonell: "I rather think he did." The Chairman: "I am of opinion that the beasts were named a good while before Adam." (Laughter).

Are there any sky-pilots who are really sincere in their religious professions? Yes, as there were women who believed themselves to be witches.

As we mentioned that a charge of impropriety had been brought against the Rev. Dr. Lee, vicar of All Saints, Lambeth, it is right to give the same publicity to the fact that the grand jury have ignored the indictment.

The *Woodville and Swallincote Wesleyan Methodist Circuit Church Record* asks people to "look for a moment at the programs of Lord Salisbury and Mr. Gladstone, and then at the program of Jesus Christ," who is called "the greatest Social Reformer the world has ever known." But there are certain items of the Jesus Christ program usually kept out of sight—for instance those at Matt. x. 34. xix. 12, Mark xvi. 16, Luke xiv. 26, etc. These planks of the Christian platform are carefully covered up.

"Peter Lombard," writing from Jerusalem to the *Church Times*, says that no progress is being made towards the conversion of the Moslems there. We should think not indeed. They have the spectacle constantly before them of Christians disputing about their sacred places, and ready to fly at each other's throat for the right of exhibiting the same for backsheesh.

The Blood Accusation has broken out again against the Jews in Egypt. At Port Said a Spanish Jew named Carmore has been murdered. He was accused of kidnapping a Christian girl for ritual purposes. The girl was recovered alive and well, but the Jew has died of his injuries. The curious thing about this accusation is its persistency. This alone should show that it has an ancient and deep-seated foundation. The Jews would do themselves a service if they not only denied the accusation, but showed on what ancient foundation it rests.

Lieut. Totten says Christ will come in April 1, 1899. Seven years is a long while ahead for a stale old hoax of this kind. Lieut. Totten may not live to say, "O you April fools!"

Prophet Baxter has been further heckled by Mr. Ward concerning the latter's recent suggestions to him that he should execute a deed of gift conveying all his possessions on May 1, 1901, to some charitable institution, should he be alive on that date. This suggestion was provoked by the worthy prophet's statement that the world was to be destroyed on April 11 in the fatal year mentioned.

On Monday last, at the Farringdon-street Memorial Hall, Mr. Ward and Mr. Guest put in an appearance at Mr. Baxter's lecture, and Mr. Guest first asked permission to put a question. To this Mr. Baxter acceded, promising Mr. Guest he should speak after a certain gentleman on the platform had spoken. That gentleman having finished, Mr. Guest began; but the artful prophet, having had a whispered message from one of his touts (probably to the effect that that troublesome Mr. Ward was Mr. Guest's companion), retreated from his promise, and denied Mr. Guest a hearing, amid hostile protestations from the audience.

Mr. Ward then essayed to speak, and ultimately succeeded in shouting down the platform opposition, repeating his suggestion with the addition that he had a gentleman with him prepared to become one of the trustees of the proposed deed of gift. The audience almost unanimously expressed their delight. Mr. Baxter replied that it was unreasonable to ask him to tie up his property in the hands of trustees, and trickily called on a lady to speak, whose voice Mr. Ward's gallantry did not permit him to drown.

At the morning meeting of the same day Mr. Wheeler put a similar question to Mr. Baxter amidst much laughter and some applause. The prophet gave a sickly smile, but did not condescend to reply.

The Bishop of Mashonaland says the great difficulty in the way of giving the natives of that country respect for religion is the brutal conduct of white men. They may well be excused for doubting the divinity of a religion which leads to such products.

The father of the present King of Dahomey received the Catholic missionaries most hospitably, and they taught his subjects the duty of submission. He also destroyed some of the indecent fetishes in his capital. When they sought to go away he said, "I have received you well, and even demolished the fetishes you think immoral. But in return I now insist that you shall show me your God to set up in their places." This put them in a quandary, but they got out of it by sending for statues of the Twelve Apostles, which were duly set up as the Christians' gods, and stand there, as Matthew says, "unto this day."

Vanity Fair tells a story of a retired general in the west of Ireland, who is also a passionate sportsman. Being at church one Sunday morning, and falling asleep under the sermon, he was awakened by a friend who whispered in his ear, "Mark cock!" Up sprang the general, and levelled his umbrella like a gun at the lectern, which bore the shape of an eagle. The congregation laughed audibly, and the general joined in the chorus.

An Irishman in Edinboro' was convicted in the police-court one Monday morning, and having been fined, said that he would pay the money on condition that he got a receipt. The magistrate instructed the clerk to give the man a receipt, and after he had got it, he was walking out, when the Bailie stopped him, and asked him why he was so anxious to get this document. "Shure, and Oi'm surprised at ye," says Pat. "When Oi knock at the gate of hevvin, St. Patrick will say, 'Who's there?' 'Shure, and it's me,' says Oi.' 'Have ye paid all yer debts?' says he. And then it will be easier for me to pull this resait out of my pocket than have to go through all the corners o' hell lookin' fur you!"

The report of the Royal Humane Society, now in existence 118 years, reminds the *Daily News* that in its early days "many worthy persons denounced the whole business of endeavoring to resuscitate those who are apparently dead from drowning or asphyxia as 'a profane interference with God's decrees.'" When Sir James Young Simpson first employed chloroform in cases of parturition it was also denounced as an impious attempt to thwart God's curse upon Eve.

There ought to be a great rush for Lourdes. Mr. Edward Wolseley gives in the *Tablet* a long account of the cure of a paralysed young lady by the Blessed Virgin. Unlike most of such stories, this one is very precise; only when you look into it carefully you see the precision is more apparent than real. "A Protestant doctor" is said to have signed a declaration that the cure was beyond medical power. But there are plenty of Protestant doctors. What is wanted is the medico's name and address. Will Mr. Edward Wolseley give it? We hope so. It would be so nice to meet with a real miracle at last.

Monsignor de Hulst asserted in the French Chamber that conscience was above law. The assertion made some commotion in the Chamber, the members knowing well that by conscience, the clerical representative means the church.

The *Dublin Figaro* remarks: "Ireland is an extremely virtuous country—by compulsion. By the way, have you ever considered the cost? Have you ever considered the amount of holy men and women in this little island who do no reproductive work, but are paid and housed to keep the Irish young woman proper?"

The *Adelaide Advertiser* makes it clear that Booth and his "submerged tenth" are not wanted in Australia, and ridicules his pretensions to know anything of that country's needs after staying four days, during which nearly the whole of his waking time was occupied in seeking for cash at meetings.

English Jews have been scandalised by finding that many of their Polish brethren and sisters in London have been living in cohabitation without going through the ceremony of marriage. As the Polish Jews are religious, this excited

some inquiry, leading to the discovery that the sole reason was the heavy fees charged by the Rabbis. Something like £4 was the price these men of God thought fit to put upon their services. In consequence of the inquiry they have consented to a reduction of fees. In Paris, by the way, there is a Freethinking *Société du Mariage Civil*, which provides poor people with the slight fees necessary for marriage, and something to help them to an establishment besides, provided they are married before the mayor and without any religious ceremony.

A servant girl, who always attended divine service, but who also could not read, had, from constant attendance, got the service by rote, and could repeat it extremely well. But a few Sundays previous to her marriage she was accompanied in the same pew by her beau, to whom she did not like it to be known that she could not read; she, therefore, took up the prayer-book, and held it before her. Her lover wished to have a sight of it also; but, unfortunately for her, she held it upside down. The man, astonished, says, "Good heaven! why, you have the book wrong side upwards." "I know it, sir," said she, confusedly, "I always read so, for I am left-handed."

On Sampson's imprisonment, the irreverent writer in the *Daily News* remarked, "they must take care to cut his hair at once when he enters Holloway, or there is no knowing what may happen to the pillars of the house." This is something like rank blasphemy.

A parson wound up a stormy altercation with his son by telling him to go to hell and turning him out of his home. Thrown upon his own resources, the young man went to sea, and, after an absence of several years, returned to his native place, and at once made tracks for his old home, which he reached after a long walk through a blinding snowstorm, half perished with cold. Arrived at the parsonage, he was admitted by the servant, and entered the library, where he found his father in consultation with a number of other clericals about some missionary project, and all closely drawn round the fire. "So you have come back at last," said the parson, upon recognising his son; "and pray where have you been to?" "To hell; where you told me to go," was his reply. "And how did you find it?" "Much the same as here. So many parsons in the place that I could not get near the fire."

"A serious state of affairs" is said to exist at the Kentish village of Beddinden. Out of the 1,360 inhabitants, upwards of 1,000 do not attend a place of worship on Sunday. This is very sad, of course; especially for the sky-pilots. But has it any very alarming effect on the villagers' morals? May it not be, after all, that they simply prefer talking to each other, instead of going to places where one man gets up in a box and carries on a purely one-sided conversation, sometimes with the audience and sometimes with God Almighty?

"Jesus Christ cannot be ignored," says the Rev. R. F. Horton. Quite true. His ministers are always fussing about. You can't ignore him. They won't let you. Forty or fifty thousand blow his trumpet every Sunday, and are well paid to get up the wind during the week. Jesus Christ is no more to be ignored than General Booth.

Those confirmed idiots in Starcross Asylum are causing trouble. The poor Bishop of Exeter is roundly abused for honestly confessing that imbeciles are the most religious of mortals. A question has even been asked in the House of Commons. Would it not pay somebody to take those confirmed idiots round on exhibition? There would be money in it. Myriads of doubtful Christians would pay to see the real article.

Religions once accepted petrify into unchanging form. Knowledge increases; religion remains stationary. Fresh problems rise, for which they provide no solution, or a solution transparently false; and then follow the familiar phenomena of disintegration and falling sanctions and relaxed rule of action, and, along with these, the efforts of well-meaning men to resist the irresistible, reconciliations of religion and science, natural theologies reconstructed on philosophic basis, with at intervals unavailing efforts to conceal the cracks in the theory by elaborate restorations of ritual.—*J. A. Froude, Short Studies, "Divus Cæsar."*

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, April 17, Sangers' Circus, Pinstone-street, Sheffield: at 11, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"; at 3, "Bible Blunders"; at 7, "Is Christianity the Friend of the People?"

April 24, Hall of Science.

May 1, Glasgow; 8, Belfast; 15, Edinburgh; 22 and 29, Hall of Science.

June 5, N. S. S. Conference; 19, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—April 17, Birmingham; 24, Rochdale. May 1 and 8 (morning and evening), Hall of Science; 15 and 22, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

W. H.—Your letter was evidently not lost on Archdeacon Wilson. He appears to be a decent sort of Christian, but we don't expect much assistance from him in repealing the law which intercepts the money of dead Freethinkers left to Freethought societies.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. THORNTON.—Mr. Lick, the founder of the great "Lick Observatory" was a "Liberal," which is a common American term for a Freethinker. He subscribed liberally to the Secular propaganda in the United States.

J. P. SILKSTONE.—The spear-thrust could not drain the body of Jesus of blood. The blood and water had a mystical significance. See Mr. Foote's pamphlet on the Crucifixion. Glad to have your good opinion of the lecture.

W. H. M.—The pamphlet *Was Christ Crucified?* is now on sale. Pleased to hear you also esteem it highly and are taking a quantity for distribution.

C. S. BRIDGICK.—Clark Braden, the writer of the pamphlet you refer to, is a low, reckless person, in absolute disrepute among religious people in America. Ingersoll would only be laughed at for condescending to notice the creature.

E. PARKER.—Your letter bore a penny stamp, and the Post Office charged us eightpence. The chaplain's letter seems well-meant, but he doesn't understand the "complaint" he seeks to remedy. The "consolations" of Christianity are only the jam in which it is hoped to pass off the pill. No doubt this homely simile will strike the man of God as "scurrilous."

J. PORTER—(1) You are quite mistaken. Mr. Foote has not visited Cardiff for years; he has visited Leicester once during the past twelve months, and Liverpool twice. How then is Liverpool neglected? The Branch shall have another visit as soon as possible. (2) The black champion tickles the ears of the Christian groundlings. Your specimens of his argumentation, if accurate, are beneath contempt.

D. PACE.—See paragraph.

J. DIXON.—We do not understand your letter. What is the "second disappointment" at Merthyr? Mr. Foote gave such notice as his illness permitted, when he could not come; in fact, bills were printed and posted at his expense, announcing that he was too ill to keep the engagement; and as in eighteen years he has only three or four times been obliged to break a Sunday engagement in the provinces, there seems very little to complain about. Mr. Foote intends to visit Merthyr as soon as possible.

J. UPSHON (Madras).—Book received with thanks. Good wishes to all Indian Freethinkers.

J. G. BATHAM.—You do not give the date of your monthly meeting; we are therefore unable to give it a paragraph. In any case we hope the Newcastle Branch, which is doing such gallant work, will be supported by all the Freethinkers in the district.

SORANUS.—Thanks for cuttings. The handbill has come under our notice before.

KILBURN friends are requested to note that the lectures in Salisbury-road will in future be at 6.30 instead of 3.30.

W. B. THOMPSON, Nelson-road, New Brompton, wants the address of Lucretius Keen.

H. BROWN.—The responsibility rests with the *Liberator*, from which we took the paragraph. The paper's name was given at the end. The gentleman who wrote about the faith-healing case sent us his name and address. Who he is is no business of yours. You can apply to the secretary for the doctor's name yourself.

J. G. BARNES.—The subject is not neglected. We have several times written on the importance of bringing women over to the side of Freethought. Your suggestion shall be considered.

J. BILLING.—See "Sugar Plums." We hope the Wigan Branch will go ahead.

R. O. SMITH, hon. treasurer of the London Secular Federation, acknowledges:—Camberwell Branch, £1 from benefit soiree.

S. M. MARTIN.—Many thanks. Contents-sheet shall be forwarded.

E. DOWDING, 11 Daisy Villas, Manor-road, Leyton, will distribute any Freethought literature that may be sent him for the purpose.

J. TOMKINS.—Of course the house and grounds are *real* estate. The lady made a slip.

J. DUPONT.—Space compels us to much shorten your obituary notice of your friend.

J. NEATE.—Mr. Elflein appears to have been shabbily treated by his Christian Evidence friends.

C. SCHOFIELD.—We had already an account of the meeting. See "Acid Drops." Prophet Baxter is as honest as they make them—in that business.

W. FRENCH.—When the front portion of the Hall of Science premises is rebuilt the recreation rooms will be on the top floors; the lower floors will be devoted to the purposes of a Secular Institute, and there will be a separate entrance to the lecture hall.

REUBEN MELLOR.—Good Friday cannot come earlier than March 20 or later than April 23. Easter Sunday depends on the moon. It is the Sunday after the first full moon after the 14th of March—that is in the middle of the sign of Nisan or Aries, the Lamb. Being a Sun festival it would never do to fall on any day, which it would do if regulated by date instead of by astronomical signs.

J. TOWNSEND.—"Drink ye, and be drunken and spue and fall, and rise no more" occurs Jer. xxv. 27. See also Prov. xxxi. 6, 7, and Deut. xiv. 28.

G. NÆWIGER.—We hope little Elma Billamy Gill, named at the Hull Branch's meeting on Sunday, will live to see half the churches in the town put to Secular uses.

O. WILSON.—The newspaper from which you send a cutting was always fond of sneering at Charles Bradlaugh.

SMITHDOWN.—Celestine Edwards gave a point blank refusal at Sheffield. That was at a public meeting. The letter sent him by the Manchester Branch was not even answered. See his advice in one of our "Acid Drops" this week.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Truthseeker—Lichtfreund—Freidenker—Liberator—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Progressive Thinker—Cosmopolitan—Flaming Sword—Better Way—Echo—Ironclad Age—Lucifer—Crossbearer—Clarion—Dublin Figaro—Newcastle Leader—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Grays and Tilbury Gazette—Manchester Guardian—North Devon Journal—Kensington News—Lancaster Observer—Twentieth Century—Bulletin Mensuel—Ligue Anti-Cléricale—Adelaide Advertiser.

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.

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.

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.

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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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Freethinkers in the Sheffield district should take particular notice of Mr. Foote's lectures to-day (April 17) at Sanger's Circus, Pinstone-street. Sheffield has been waking up lately (none too soon!) in regard to Secularism, and an enterprising member of the N. S. S. has managed to do what was thought impossible, namely, secure a large, central building for a Sunday course of Freethought lectures. In concert with the local Secular Society's committee he has billed the town thoroughly, and it is hoped that the Circus, though it holds three thousand people, will be fairly well filled. The Freethinkers of the district, at any rate, should do their best to make the meetings a Secular Demonstration. Those who come from a distance will find tea provided for sixpence at the Hall of Science, Rockingham-street, at 5 o'clock.

The London Secular Federation's course of Free Lectures at Walthamstow has been a great success. On Thursday, April 7, Mr. Foote wound up the course, lecturing to a crowded audience on "Why I Cannot be a Christian." So many Christians wanted to oppose that the chairman was obliged to make a selection. It was a late hour when the meeting broke up.

The Leyton Branch has made several new members by this course of lectures. This Branch is comparatively young, but

it has done much excellent work. We hear that the members are all going to take shares in the National Secular Hall Society.

Considering the marvellous weather there was an extremely good audience on Sunday evening at the London Hall of Science, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Did Jesus Rise from the Dead?" In the absence of Mr. R. O. Smith the chair was taken by Mr. Kelf. Sandwiched between some excellent singing was a reading by the lecturer of Robert Browning's beautiful "Love Among the Ruins." The lecture itself was listened to with rapt attention and frequently punctuated with laughter and applause.

Many strangers were present at Mr. Charles Watts's lecture in Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, on Sunday last. His subject, "Materialism and Spiritualism," met with a warm reception from the audience, and an interesting debate followed the lecture. A members' meeting of the local Branch of the N. S. S. was held in the morning, when Mr. Ridgway was unanimously elected President of the Branch in place of Mr. Middleton, who has resigned.

The second social party of the Birmingham friends, under the direction of Mrs. Charles Watts, was held at Baskerville Hall on Wednesday, April 6. Refreshments were provided, and dancing was kept up until 11.30. Mr. D. T. Bullows made an excellent M.C., and the members of the local Branch of the N. S. S. rendered valuable assistance. The next social is announced for Tuesday, April 26.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake begs to acknowledge the following subscriptions to the Baskerville Hall (Birmingham) Fund:— J. Maude, 5s.; J. Crossley, £1. Mr. Holyoake points out that further donations would be very acceptable.

Peace prevailed in Victoria Park on Sunday. Mr. Cohen lectured, the meeting was very orderly, and the superintendent was not rash enough to interfere. A capital collection was taken up, one gentleman giving a half sovereign in appreciation of the Bethnal Green Branch's hard fighting.

The Finsbury Branch hold its "good old annual" at the London Hall of Science, and chooses Good Friday as what the little girl called the "goodest" day for the celebration. Tea at 5.30; concert at 7. Tickets one shilling; concert only, sixpence.

Miss E. M. Vance is arranging to carry on the Midland Arches open-air station for the L. S. F., and would be glad to hear from lecturers with vacant Sunday mornings.

Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner has at length begun the publication of her father's Biography. The instalments appearing in her paper are to be eventually published in book form, after revision and enlargement. The first instalment is necessarily of somewhat inferior interest. Mrs. Bonner traces her father's genealogy, and inclines to the opinion that he was of Danish extraction. But the evidence is extremely slender, and after all the point is of trifling importance.

Mr. Sam Standring's course of Monday night lectures in the Manchester Secular Hall have been so successful that the Committee has decided to continue them and to post the town with placards. We also hear that Mr. Standring is energetically pushing forward the South Lancashire Federation scheme.

Wigan was visited by Mr. Standring on Sunday. He gave four lectures, one at the Market Cross and three indoors. He also named an infant and got three new members for the Branch. Mr. Standring says the Wigan friends are now in earnest for work.

The *Manchester Examiner* inserts a straightforward letter from Mr. Sam Standring defending "godless education."

Mr. John Bowing, whose exclusion from the jury by Mr. Justice Mathew we dealt with last week, sends a full report of the matter to the *Grays Gazette*. Its appearance there will help to enlighten the public mind on the Oath's Bill.

M. Topinard, the French anthropologist, classes man as a

sub-order of the order Primates. The monkeys and lemurs constitute the lower sub-orders. With Prof. E. D. Cope, he considers that man has descended from the lemurs without passing by way of the monkeys and anthropoid apes; the lemurs themselves coming through the marsupials.

Mr. C. A. Ward has a note in *Notes and Queries* on Shelley the Atheist, in reference to the disputed Greek inscription in an inn album near Mont Blanc of words, meaning "I am a lover of humanity, a Democrat, and an Atheist." The Greek accents as usually given are wrong, but Mr. Ward, and most other persons who are well acquainted with his works, hold that the inscription was Shelley's, all except the bad Greek, which appears in copies.

The *Spectator* devotes an article to Pierre Loti, the new French Academician, whom it calls a poetic materialist, "an Atheist rather by taste than by thought."

Many of our readers can make us an Easter present. We don't want their money or their goods. We only want them to press their newsagents to take copies of the *Freethinker* for chance sale, and if possible to display a contents-sheet. If the newsagents are guaranteed against loss on unsold copies, many of them will give the paper a fair chance, and the guarantee is nearly always formal, for the paper finds customers wherever it is offered for sale.

Secularists who can advertise in the *Freethinker* and don't are standing in their own light as well as ours. We advise them to give it a trial. They may go farther and fare worse. Our terms are moderate, especially for several insertions. It should be remembered that this journal circulates through the whole of the United Kingdom.

Applications are coming in steadily for shares in the Hall of Science purchase scheme, and the first call has been made on a considerable number. We hope the Free-thought party will remember that the Directors want to take possession at Midsummer. Those who mean to help the scheme should lose no time in writing to Mr. Forder.

BIGOTRY AT NEWCASTLE.

HENRY LOADER, a Christian seller of Malthusian literature, having been prosecuted by the Newcastle-on-Tyne police, was tried before the Recorder (Judge Digby Seymour), and on the jury's disagreeing the case was postponed for trial at the next sessions. On Friday last (April 8) the new trial took place, the result being that the jury found Henry Loader guilty of selling "indecent" literature; in other words, the twelve good men and true stigmatised Dr. Allbutt's *Wife's Handbook* as a criminal publication; which means, in effect, that poor people must not be told how to limit their families, with a view to preventing domestic misery, and diminishing the competition of the workers in the labor market, where the surplus hands reduce wages and in every way play the game of the capitalists.

Judge Seymour delivered himself of a whole budget of social opinions, which he is free to entertain as a citizen but has no right to carry upon the bench. In his view it is only "an encouragement to vice and immorality" to teach prudence in the matter of offspring, and to stop what Mr. Cotter Morison called "the deluge of children." A large number of people, however, as honest and well-informed as Judge Seymour, think otherwise. What he regards as "an encouragement to vice and immorality" they regard as conducive to happiness and dignity; and as they are accustomed to think for themselves, they are not disposed to accept as a final judgment the personal view of a man who happens to get his living by trying thieves and assaulters. It does not appear to them that his profession qualifies him in any special way to decide the value of social remedies, or to set bounds to the freedom of their discussion.

Judge Seymour's action was less arbitrary than his social philosophy. He did not sentence Henry Loader to imprisonment. He only bound him over, himself in £100 and one surety of £50, to come up for judgment when called upon.

Thus the case stood on Friday evening, but on Saturday it changed for the worse. Judge Seymour having called upon Henry Loader to say whether he was prepared to give recognizances and stop the sale of the incriminated books,

the accused flatly refused to do so; and amidst a scene of great excitement, in which the old man begged to be taken out of his misery into the prison to die, he was ordered to go to gaol for one month.

During this painful scene Judge Seymour talked once more about "filthy books," and was promptly checked by the accused, who told him he had said quite enough about that yesterday. Denunciations were also poured on the heads of those "counsellors" who had advised the accused to "resist the decision of the court." Such cheap heroics, however, will not allay the trouble. The Newcastle police, if they mean business, have not seen the end of the fight they provoked.

On Monday evening another indignation meeting was held at Newcastle, among the speakers being Dr. Drysdale, the President of the Malthusian League. Mr. Foote sent a long telegram to the meeting, recommending strategy as well as courage, and promising to advise the Committee after conferring with Dr. Drysdale on his return to London. There the matter must remain until our next issue. Meanwhile the Secular party, which is nothing if not a champion of free discussion, may rest assured that this great principle will be properly vindicated.

It is one of the satisfactory features of this case that the local press has given publicity to the crusade against the prosecution. The *Leader* has been particularly helpful, and its admirable article on the verdict and sentence is worthy of the best traditions of Liberal journalism.

Perhaps the most satisfactory feature of this case is the attitude of the local Secularists. Henry Loader was a perfect stranger to them, and he was a Christian; yet they sprang to his assistance, for the sake of the principle at stake; and it must be confessed that they have received very little support from Henry Loader's fellow Christians.

MR. WATTS IN BIRMINGHAM.

My long connection with the party, and the personal respect always paid to me by individual members of it, seem to justify my addressing a few words to the readers of the *Freethinker* in the Midland district. In order to utilise Mr. Watts's services and make them permanently useful to the Freethought cause, I suggest that in every place surrounding the Midland metropolis committees should be formed to correspond with one another and with Mr. Watts. They could note and report what is being said in the pulpits and Christian associations and such as required replying to. Their meetings could be held privately and inexpensively till their number and means justified a public association. This was done in years past, and could be done again by the young Freethinkers of the present generation. Where a convenient room is available I advise the formation of young men's debating societies, to which they might invite the members of Christian associations. Many of them would enter the lists with their equals who would not face a trained popular disputant. I have seen this in many instances, and the result has always been beneficial to the Freethought cause.

An admirable opportunity is now presented at Baskerville Hall, which is frequently at liberty, morning and afternoon, and at which admission might be free. The cost to a strong association would mean only a nominal sum per member. Invitations might be sent to the local Christian Evidence Society and the Y.M.C.A. Besides the advantage of debate, it would doubtless increase the attendance at the evening lecture. I am addressing myself more especially to the young men, to whom such meetings would be a lasting pleasure, and would also lead to the formation of friendships that would last a lifetime. I need hardly say that my advice and services are cordially placed at the command of any number of the readers of this journal to whom my proposals appear practicable and useful.

CHARLES C. CATTELL.

Mr. Quilliam, the founder of the Moslem Society at Liverpool, says: "Islam is progressing slowly but satisfactorily both here, in Manchester, and in Dublin. In the latter two cities we shall open shortly small associations affiliated with the parent one here. We are not getting the crowd; we don't want them yet; but we are getting thinking people who have got courage enough to call their souls their own."

THE LOVER AND HIS BRIDE.

(Somewhat after Oliver Schreiner's Dream, "The Hunter.")

COME! see a picture that will gladden the heart of man.

There stands a Lover who has won a Bride, and the name of his Bride is Truth. The fight for his Bride has been a hard fight, and the struggle has been long, and bitter, and distressing; his heart has often failed him, and his arms grown weak, and his eye dim with watching, and he has thought that he would never find her; but now she is his, and he will not let her go for ever. She is his Bride, his Chosen, his Belovéd; he loves her with his whole soul, and he will love none other. His heart is bound in her, and where she is not, there is no mirth for him. He clings to her, he holds her to his breast; he looks at her with loving eyes, and his whole soul goes out to her, and he is satisfied. He has turned from his first love, whom he can now love no more for ever. He has found her for whom he has been seeking up and down the earth these many years—her whose love alone can satisfy his soul, and he will never leave her, he will never let her go.

He cherishes no fondness now for those whom once he loved, and their names are Fear, and Hope, and Superstition, Faith, and Lies; for none of these he cares. Once he loved them, but they did not satisfy his soul. He found that they were weak, and small, and mean, and miserable, so he left them all, and set out in search of her—the maiden Truth, whom he has now found—this new Bride of his, whom he will never forsake. She is grand, and noble, and generous. She is strong and stable; her will is as the will of thousands; and she bends her Lover to her will, and he is ever hers.

At times this Lover's Bride is dark and threatening, but he loves her even then; and at times she is so gloomy and unlovable, but to him she is the one thing lovely upon earth. To others she is gloomy and unlovable, but she is his Bride; in her he has found that which his soul desired, so he careth not, for without her he must surely die; and so he rejoiceth greatly that he hath won his Bride.

And then at times she is even harsh and cruel. O, so cruel! And she tells him that there is no Hereafter, and that perhaps there is no God. She tells him that when he hath passed from earth his soul will sleep for ever, that there will be no awakening and no resurrection; but when Death comes that there's an end—and yet he loves her. He weeps, and cries out in the great bitterness of his grief; but he looks upon her, and her eyes constrain him, and he loves her still. Then in his grief he kneels to kiss her feet; she lays her hand upon his head, and he feels that it is firm; but there is a tremor, for she knows the awfulness of what he has to bear. Are not now his dear ones, who have passed away in death, clean gone from him for ever? He will never, never again behold them, and he shudders at the thought. Nevertheless he loves her in his grief, and he will love none other.

At times she speaks to him words of tenderness and peace—words that make his heart bound and his soul rejoice. She tells him that there is no Heaven, and that there is no Hell; that these are but the poor imaginings of foolish men, the outcome of the fear and superstition of the ages. She tells him that there is no joy in store for any after death, nor is there everlasting woe so great that no imagination can depict its awfulness; she tells him that all such maudlin rhapsodies are lies. Again he looks upon his Bride, and he loves her; loves her with an utter intensity of love; his allegiance can never waver; she is his, and he is hers, until they shall both go down together and be swallowed up of death.

He looketh abroad and he loveth all his fellows everywhere, and he knoweth that they will never be in that everlasting torment where they would call in vain for help, and he is glad. He loves his Bride, for it is she hath taught him this.

Then he turns to behold those he had loved in former days. They are beckoning to him, but he will not go; he despises them, and with sadness he beholds the countless multitudes that flock around them and whom they are deceiving. There they stand beckoning and calling to him. They are murmuring sweet phrases which rejoice the heart but do not satisfy the soul. They have found a man, and they make of him a God, and they fall down and worship him. Those who do not worship him they seize and cast into the fires that will last for ever. They laugh at the struggles of those they seize, and they say, "You are yourselves to blame." He shudders, and clings closer to his Bride; for did not he help them once to seize the struggling victims for the quenchless flames?

But these former loves of his are all so comely that they might well win the heart of a man oppressed with grief; and they are Fear, and Hope, and Superstition, Faith, and Lies, and their mother is Religion. They are not all of equal age, for some are young and some are older, and all are fair to look upon. But the Lover cannot bestow a thought upon the fairest or the youngest (which is Hope), for to him they are all vanity and weakness, and he turns to her—his Bride—for she is ever young and ever true.

Yes they are comely, these old loves of his; and Hope is the fairest, and the most bewitching, and men fall down and worship her. Those who walk through life with her are ever joyful; her eyes sparkle, and her laugh is merry. To those who wed her she becomes a Talisman, and each one conjures up his own especial dreams. But she herself is nothing better than a dream, in which there is no substance, no reality! Her beauty is the only charm she hath, and so the ardent seeker after good turns to some other to satisfy the hunger of his soul. Her sisters are not quite so comely, but most are passing fair to look upon. They are fair without, while some of them within are darkness and all terror, even the Terror of Weeping, and the Gnashing of Teeth! They are comely, and bright, and lovable. They speak of peace, and rest and joy for ever, but their words are mere sound, and folly of all imaginings, while they themselves are weak, and small, and mean. And as he watches them he knows it all. Yes! he has shown it since he left them, dissatisfied with their words and promises, their miracles and their prayers. They were deceiving him; and though he loved them dearly, yet he found they could not always love each other. There is no strength within them; nor can the soul of man be satisfied with promises and words.

But now again he turns to his Beloved. She at least will not deceive him, and he can rest with confidence on her. She will never leave him, and he will never let her go. She is his, for he hath won her; and though the fight was hard, yet it but endears her to him. In her is all strength, and all nobleness. To her a man may cling. For her a man may fight, and he need not fear. He looks upon his bride, and his soul goes out to her again. He knows that here is strength; his feet at last are set upon the rock; and his heart may cast out fear.

She seems to him like unto a mountain, great, and sombre, and dark; but proud and grand, stretching far into the clear sky, on which the winds and rains of ages have been beating without avail. On this mountain one may climb from height to height, and breathe the free pure air, rejoicing in existence and the buoyant sense of freedom. And then the top is reached. Behold the prospect! O, how one desires to bring mankind up there to look upon that sight!

And those—his former loves—to what shall he liken them? Ah! yes they are like to heavy clouds far off on the horizon. The sun has shed his rays and lent them splendor, and now they are lit up with an effulgent and a glorious light. Surely these are the golden mountains in the Land of Paradise! So high are they, and yet of such symmetry, and so lovely are the colors on their peaks. One hastens on, all eager to ascend; when lo! as he approaches the light vanishes, the clouds rise, and these mountains of Paradise are dissolved in vapor. Presently the night comes, and now the clouds are overhead. They break; the rain descends, and the poor deluded wanderer is now most miserable.

"Yes," thinks the Lover, "from this have I escaped," and his brow grows darker. Then he looks upon his Bride, and his heart leaps within him. "Truth is my Bride," he says. "I have sought her earnestly, and now I have found her. I love her with a great love, and I will love none other. Together we shall go down the pathway of life, and together, calmly, and without fear, we shall plunge, at last, into the darkness of the Vast Unknown!"

J. ARTHUR GIBSON.

Are there any marks of distributive justice in the world? If you answer in the affirmative, I conclude, that, since justice here exerts itself, it is satisfied. If you reply in the negative, I conclude, that you have then no reason to ascribe justice in our sense of it to the gods. If you hold a medium between affirmation and negation, by saying, that the justice of the gods, at present, exerts itself in part, but not in its full extent; I answer, that you have no reason to give it any particular extent, but only as far as you see it, at present, exert itself.—*David Hume, "Of a Providence and Future State."*

ODE TO HIS SUPREME MAJESTY, THE DEVIL.

MIGHTY being, lord tremendous
Over regions incandescent,
Where the climate, so they tell us,
Is exceedingly unpleasant—
Quite unbearably unpleasant.

List my lay of adulation,
Thou of gods the foe unbeaten;
Innovator of cremation,
Smiting all, thyself unsmitten;
Defying Deity unsmitten.

Theists threatened me with terrors
If no god or gods I revered;
Atheists were malefactors,
So they said, and should be silenced.
Prayerless voices should be silenced.

My allegiance undivided
And my praise in ceaseless shower
I would give, I then decided,
To supremacy in power,
To the proved highest power.

Long I thought among the classics,
Old religions, crazes latest,
Asked of sages, priests, fanatics,
Which celestial power was greatest,
Which had history proved the greatest.

God had planned that Eve and consort
Ne'er from bliss should know estrangement
But thy majesty, sans effort,
Upset all the nice arrangement.
Busted up the sweet arrangement.

Now commenced thy skilful innings;
Thy antagonist was routed,
All the race but eight thy winnings,
And Jehovah rudely flouted;
By thy countless subjects flouted.

Then the water-cure God tested.
Drowned the folk by wiles tricked;
Yet by thee he still was bested,
For the world was quite as wicked.
As before was quite as wicked.

God's big trump—the Jewish martyr—
Then was played to win the sinner,
Played—and lost—for thou, great victor,
Still remainest highest winner—
Of men's souls the champion winner.

Through Jehovah's "narrow" byeway
'Tis very "few" or none that wanders,
While the broad and ample highway
With the tramp of myriads thunders
Down it near the whole world thunders.

Therefore, mighty dominator,
Thee I yield adoring honor;
In return I ask one favor—
Keep for me thy coolest corner;
Number and reserve that corner.

A. GUEST.

OBITUARY.

Died at Glasgow, James Francis Harford. Born of a religious family, he had to leave home early on account of his Freethinking ideas. Till the last day of his life he gave positive orders that no priest or clergyman should come to his bedside or officiate at his funeral. Through a long and painful illness he preserved a calm demeanor and a cheerfulness which contrasts with the frequent anxieties of believers. He was buried on 9th inst.—J. DUPONT.

It is our painful duty to record the death, at Syston, of Susan, the beloved wife of Mr. W. McCulloch, in the 38th year of her age. Mr. Thos. Slater delivered a short address and read a Burial Service at the grave. This being the first Secular funeral that had ever taken place in Syston, it apparently excited considerable interest, and the address and service were listened to with rapt attention by a considerable number of people. Mr. McCulloch is an old Freethinker, whom we first met in Edinburgh over 20 years ago, and we deeply sympathise with him in his loss.—T. SLATER.

BOOK CHAT.

The *Monist* for April opens with "The Doctrine of Necessity Examined," by C. S. Pierce. Mr. Pierce believes "every throw of sixes with a pair of dice is a manifest instance of chance." He does not deny that there is regularity in nature, but contends there is an element of spontaneity also, and that those who argue for universal regularity have to resort to *a priori* reasons to support their thesis. We should say the belief in the universality of law is, of course, only an inference, but it is an inference confirmed by the experience of ages.

The next article is by Dr. Edmund Montgomery on "Psychical Monism." Dr. Montgomery's Monism has no room for any deity. He says: "A monistic interpretation of nature cannot possibly be reached by assuming consciousness or intelligence to be ultimate reality, and as such the One and All. It can be reached only by recognising that consciousness is a function of subjects that stand in definite relations to the rest of nature, and have power along with the other constituents of nature so to affect the sensibility of other sentient beings as to cause to arise therein the symbolical representation of themselves."

Another article which is sure to attract attention is "On Criminal Suggestion," by the eminent Belgian physiologist, Prof. J. Delbœuf, who argues that hypnotised persons cannot be compelled to crimes contrary to their own inclination and habits. A controversy between Louis Belrose and the editor on Littré's Positivism also tends to make this number of the *Monist* an interesting one.

Mr. G. Margoliouth considered the Oriental MS. No. 4,445 in the British Museum the oldest manuscript of the Hebrew Bible. Yet this cannot be considered as older than the ninth century of the Christian era. The Papyrus Prisse, containing the sacred Egyptian maxims of Ptah-hotep, is over two thousand years older. It is in the National Library at Paris.

The interest taken in social questions could hardly be better vouched for than by the fact that the Social Science series of Messrs. Swan Sonnenschein has in two years reached its fiftieth volume, and ten more volumes are also announced for early publication. The works of the series are, generally speaking, by no means profound, but they must help to diffuse some knowledge on social economics and increase interest in social problems.

The closely allied subject of ethics is attracting increased attention. The *International Journal of Ethics* has able articles, mostly from the Humanitarian and non-theological standpoint of the Ethical Culturists. Among books of the month we notice Muirhead's *Elements of Ethics* (one of the University Extension Manuals), and *Social Ethics*, by T. Ziegler.

The *Library Review* for April opens with the second instalment of Mr. J. Stanley Little's criticism of "Some Aspects and Tendencies of Current Fiction," dealing with the recent works of George Meredith and Thomas Hardy. Other articles are on Karl Pearson's *Grammar of Science*, "Wordsworth and his Haunts," "Ballads, Songs and Lyrics," by the editor, Kineton Parkes, etc.

Mr. W. H. Quilliam, the leader of the Moslem movement in Liverpool, has reprinted a lecture on "Fanatics and Fanaticism," delivered by him in the Vernon Temperance Hall. The Liverpool Temperance League, under whose auspices it was delivered, thought it worthy of publication, and published it accordingly. When, however, the committee found that the reference to Mohammed was telling in favor of the Moslem Society, they reprinted it, but eliminated from it all reference to Islam. The author has accordingly re-issued it in its original form, and it may be obtained at 15 Manchester-street.

Mr. Quilliam is also issuing a work in three volumes entitled *The Religion of the Sword*. It is "an inquiry into the tenets and history of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with a view of considering which religion has been the most tolerant." As mottoes to the book (the first volume of which is issued), the following texts are given: Exod. xxxii. 27, Matt. x. 34, 35, John viii. 7, and "Let there be no violence in religion," from Sura 2 of the Koran.

The appointment of Mr. Froude as Regius Professor of History at Oxford, in the place of Prof. Freeman, recalls the fact that Mr. Froude's first book, the *Nemesis of Faith*, was burnt as a rationalist production at Exeter College when issued in '48. Mr. Froude thereupon resigned his fellowship. Oxford is evidently advancing, though most of its professors are still rigidly orthodox.

KILLING THE GOD.

It may be suspected that the custom of employing a divine man or an animal as a public scapegoat is much more widely diffused than appears from the examples cited. For, as has already been pointed out, the custom of killing a god dates from so early a period of human history that in later ages, even when the custom continues to be practised, it is liable to be misinterpreted. The divine character of the animal or man is forgotten, and he comes to be regarded merely as an ordinary victim. This is especially likely to be the case when it is a divine man who is killed. For when a nation becomes civilised, if it does not drop human sacrifices altogether, it at least selects as victims only such criminals as would be put to death at any rate. Thus, as in the Sacaean festival at Babylon, the killing of a god may come to be confounded with the execution of a criminal.—J. G. Frazer, "*The Golden Bough*," vol. ii., p. 205.

PROFANE JOKES.

Rev. M. Sprouter: "How did you like my sermon yesterday? What did you think of my exordium and my peroration, eh?" De Grumpe: "I thought they were too wide apart."

"Mother, don't the angels wear any clothes?" asked a little Texas girl of her mother. "No, my daughter." There was a pause, and the little girl asked—"Where do the angels put their pocket-handkerchiefs?"

Teacher: "That is a very worthy precept you are writing there, Johnny—'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Can you give me an explanation of it?" Johnny: "Yes, sir. When I got that lickin' yesterday, I'll bet you felt a heap more blessed in givin' it than I did in receivin' it."

A clergyman in Scotland desired his hearers never to call one another liars, but when anyone said the thing that was not true they ought to whistle. One Sunday he preached a sermon on the parable of the loaves and fishes, and being at a loss how to explain it he said the loaves were not like those nowadays—they were as big as some of the hills in Scotland. He had scarcely pronounced the words when he heard a loud whistle. "What is that," says he, "ca's me a liar?" "It is I, Willy McDonald the baker." "Well, Willy, what objection have ye to what I ha' told you?" "None sir, only I want to know what sort of ovens they had to bake those loaves in?"

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE MALTHUSIAN DEFENCE FUND.—500 copies of *Malthusian*, per Mr. Reynolds, for sale on behalf of Defence Fund; A Friend, 1s.; T. E., 1s.; J. W. White, 3d.; W. Tennent, 3d.; R. E., 3d.; W. Jones, 6d.; A Friend, 6d.; Mr. Nell, 6d.; Camberwell Branch N. S. S., 10s. 6d.; Enthusiast, 5s. 1d.; Friends at Milton Hall, 18s.; H. Jones, 1s.; H. S. S., 2s. 6d.; T. Crisfield, 5s.; F. Weston, 6d.; G. Brown, 2s.; Mr. McMillan, 1s.; W. Henderson, 1s.; T. Stephenson, £1; Hanley Branch N. S. S., 10s.; T. Adams, 3s. 6d.; Mr. Burdett, 6d.; Mrs. Shotten, 1s.; T. Radford, 6d.; Mr. Thorley, 6d.; J. Goldstram, 6d.; J. Brown, 6d.; J. Adams, 6d.; W. Wood, 6d.; R. Cawley, 6d.; S. Huline, 1s.; W. Maddock, 6d.; Mr. Kickup, 1s.; A Friend, 6d.; Mr. Sutcliff, 1s.; C. Eastop, 6d.; E. Young, 6d.; J. Brown, 6d.; J. Thornton, 2s. 6d.; J. F. Henley, 1s.; F. J. Todd, 6d.; M. A., 2d.; C. J., 2d.; Mr. Symons, 6d.; Mr. Cohen, 6d.; A. Simson, 6d.; Mr. Maggs, 6d.; Miss Simson, 6d.; Mrs. Sansom, 6d.; Mr. Franklin, 6d.; J. Neate, 6d.; Miss Neate, 6d.; Mr. Newdogg, 1s.; W. R. Jarmaine, 6d.; F. Thurlow, 3d.; C. Quinton, 6d.; Mrs. Quinton, 6d.; J. W. Wittering, 1s.; J. Noble, 1s.; S. Epton, 6d.; A. Button, 1s.; S. Alward, 1s.; T. O. Bonser, M.A., 10s. 6d.; Mr. Stapleton, 1s. For A. R. Atkinson, 1s., Nottingham, read A. R. Atkey, 1s., in last week's list.—JOSEPH BROWN, Hon. Sec. Neo-Malthusian Defence Committee, 86 Durham-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

Synesius, the Pagan Christian philosopher, whose friendship with Hypatia, is referred to in the *N. S. S. Almanac* article "A Christian Saint and a Freethought Martyr," when offered the bishopric of Ptolemais, wrote thus: "I am willing to accept the sacerdotal office on condition that I be permitted to remain a philosopher in my own house, and to retail fables only in public." He got the bishopric.

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.

Balls Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green-road: 7, T. Thurlow, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" (free).
Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, W. J. Ramsey, "Easter a Pagan Festival" (free). Monday and Tuesday, at 8, social gatherings (1d.) Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class (few members wanted)
Bethnal Green - Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 6, tea (d); 7, musical selections; 7.30, C. Cohen, a lecture.
Camberwell-61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30, debating class, Elocution; 4.30, quarterly meeting; 6, tea and entertainment (members 6d., public 9d.)
Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Touzeau Parris, "Unsocial Superstitions" (free); 6.45, music; 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Some Glaring Defects of Christianity" (3d., 6d., and 1s.) Thursday, at 8, Touzeau Parris, "Facts About the Bible Worth Remembering" (3d, 6d, and 1s.)
Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, J. B. Coppock, "The Origin of Stars and Worlds" (illustrated by the lantern).
Hammersmith - Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday, at 8, Touzeau Parris, "Fact- about the Bible."
Walthamstow-Workman's Hall, High-street: Thursday, at 8, debate between C. Cohen and Mr. Hetherington, on "Which has Benefited the World Most-Christianity or Secularism?"
West Ham-Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 11, quarterly meeting; 6, tea and entertainment (9d.)
Woolwich-"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead-road (entrance, Maxey-road): 7.20, A. B. Moss, "The Trial of Christianity."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, W. J. Ramsey, "The Resurrection Fable."
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, H. Courtney, "Saints and Sinners."
Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, F. Dowdall, "Moral Value of the Bible."
Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."
Kilburn-Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station): 6.30, Mr. St. John, "What has Christianity Done?"
Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Ethics and Theology."
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "God's Favorites."
Tottenham (corner of West Green-road): 3.30, a lecture.
Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, J. Rowney, "The Resurrection"; 3.15, H. Courtney, "Biblical Bulwarks."
Wood Green-Jolly Butchers-hill: 11.30, A. Lewis, "Education."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham-Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, Charles Watts, "Did Christ Rise from the Dead?"
Edinburgh-Labor Hall, 50 South Bridge: 2.30, C. J. Hunt, "Life and Death": 6.30, C. J. Hunt, "Materialism, Secularism, Spiritualism, and Theosophy."
Glasgow-Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: noon, W. Lindsay, "The Eight Hours Bill"; 6.30, J. P. Gilmour, "Secularism: Its Struggles and Triumphs."
Hull-Cobden Hall, 6 Story-street, Albion-street: 6.30, N. B. Billany, "The Bishop of Durham's Pamphlet."
Liverpool - Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Circumfixion and Resurrection."
Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: 6.30 Tom Bland, "Our Boys" (free).
Newcastle-on-Tyne-Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, monthly meeting of members; 7, debate between Mr. W. H. Robinson, President of the Newcastle Spiritual Evidence Society, and Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Is there any Evidence for a Continuity of Life after Death?"
Portsmouth - Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, a meeting; Tuesday, members' general meeting.
Sheffield-Sangers' Circus, Finstone-street: G. W. Foote, at 11 "Did Christ rise from the Dead?" 3, "Bible Blunders"; 7, "Is Christianity the Friend of the People?" (3d, 6d., and 1s.) Tea in the Hall of Science at 5 (6d.)
South Shields - Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: Miss Ada Campbell, 3, "Secularism and Christianity"; 7, "The Real Atonement, or Man's True savior."
Sunderland-Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, W. R. Stan-sell, "Why I do not believe in a God."

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Edinburgh-The Meadows, at 12, "Origin of Christianity."

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LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.-17, Hall of Science; 24, Milton Hall.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.-April 24, m., Victoria Park; e., Camberwell. May 1, m., Victoria Park; e., Battersea; 8, m., Wood Green; e., Swaby's Coffee Palace; 15, m., Battersea; a., Finsbury Park; 22, m. and e., Camberwell; 29, m., Salmon and Ball; a., Regent's Park. June 5, e., Camberwell; 12, m., Wood Green; a., Finsbury Park; 19, m., Battersea; a., Kilburn; 26, m., Camberwell.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.-April 17 to May 1, Annual Tour. May to Sept., all mornings booked.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.-April 17, morning, Westminster; evening, Woolwich; 24, morning, Hornsey. May 1, morning, Camberwell; 8, Clerkenwell; 15, morning, Westminster; 22, morning, Mile End. June 5, morning, Camberwell; 12, Clerkenwell; 19, morning, Hornsey. July 3, morning, Camberwell; 10, Clerkenwell; 17, morning, Westminster.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.-April 17, morning, Mile End Waste; evening, Libra Hall; 24, afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Plaistow. May 1, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Finsbury Park; evening, Edmonton; 8, morning and afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Edmonton; 15, morning, Mile End Waste; afternoon, Regent's Park; evening, Edmonton; 22, morning, Lambeth; afternoon Victoria Park; evening, Leytonstone; 29, morning, Clerkenwell Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Edmonton.

SAM STANDRING, 2 Morton-street, C-on-M., Manchester.-April 21, Pendlebury; 24 and 25, Manchester. May 1, 2 and 9, Manchester; 15, Failsworth; 16, Manchester.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.-May 15, June 19, and July 17, mornings, Lambeth.

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