

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XV.—No. 15.

SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 1895.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## WAS HE CRUCIFIED?

EVERY one has heard of the sailor who was looking into a shop-window at a picture of Jesus Christ agonising upon the cross. As he was looking a Jew came up, and the sailor knocked him down. The son of Israel picked himself up, and inquired the reason of such treatment. "Didn't you damned Jews crucify him?" said the sailor. "Oh," said the smarting Hebrew, "that was a long time ago." "Never mind," replied Jack, "I only heard of it yesterday."

The story of the Crucifixion has been the making of Christianity. It is full of moving incident and thrilling pathos. Children, who knew nothing of tragedies and martyrdoms, have followed Jesus in imagination from Gethsemane to Calvary, and his sufferings have become associated with their earliest feelings of pity, and, through pity, of affection. Had the Prophet of Nazareth ascended to heaven like Elijah, without tasting a bitter death; had he even died of some disease, however terrible and excruciating, and risen from the dead after such a decease; he would never have become the object of such profound sympathy. Death from disease is common. It is a violent death that excites attention. And when the violence is inflicted on an innocent man, whose sufferings are depicted with considerable art and invested with awful mystery, it is no wonder that the story should gain a supreme hold upon the human mind—particularly when we remember that it is so carefully pressed upon every fresh generation, in its susceptible childhood, when the feelings are unblunted, and the imagination is at the mercy of accident or authority.

Considering the nature of this story, it is curious how its chief incident—the death of Jesus—is commemorated by millions of professed Christians. According to the Gospels there was a huge eclipse during the Crucifixion; or, as Christian poets have said, the sun veiled its face at the insult offered to its God. But other times bring other manners; and, as the Jew said, the Crucifixion was such a long time ago. Christians call the anniversary of their Saviour's death *Good Friday*. No sign of sadness appears upon their countenances. They seem to say "Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for to-day he died." And certainly they do *drink*. It is a glorious opportunity for the publicans as well as the sinners.

How few of these merry-making Christians ask themselves how it is that *Good Friday* is a shifting anniversary. Jesus Christ must have died (if he ever lived) on a particular day, and the day should be punctually celebrated. Shakespeare's death always occupies the same place in the calendar. Jesus Christ's death has to be fixed every year by astronomical calculations. Such a fact is enough to make us ask whether his death is really an historical fact.

It is no answer to this question to point to the circumstantial character of the Gospel narrative. Art is always more circumstantial than history. Look at the wonderful details of *Robinson Crusoe*. Observe the vivid portraiture of Hamlet and Othello. Does it not make them more real to us than many of the persons with whom we are intimately acquainted? Yet they are creatures of imagination. The highest art conceals the traces of art. In the language of paradox, its productions are more natural than nature itself.

The art of the Gospels is not so great as the art of Shakespeare. It does not satisfy the intellect and imagination that are fortified by experience. To the critical

investigator it reveals grave flaws, wide discrepancies, and serious self-contradictions. One reason for these defects is, that the picture of Christ was not the work of a single master-hand. It was the work of many hands, in several generations. The first sketches, which seem for ever lost, grew into a finished design, not in a private studio, but in a public school. Fresh touches were constantly being given by daring artists, until orthodoxy checked any further development. The picture satisfied the simple and uncritical, but the keen-eyed and reflective see its composite character, and notice the botches of the original designers under the improvements of later and more finished artists.

We have no space to deal with the many self-contradictions of the Crucifixion story. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the task of pointing out some of its serious improbabilities.

Jesus had wrought many miracles. He had even raised the dead. What madness it was, then, on the part of his enemies to seek his life! He had the power of blasting them into nothingness, yet they compassed his death as though he were but an ordinary mortal, to be put out of the way as a nuisance or an inconvenience.

They paid Judas to betray him; that is, they gave Judas thirty half-crowns to identify the best-known man in Jerusalem. We cannot believe that Jews were ever such spendthrifts. Nor can we believe that they were ever so foolish. Suppose the London police had to arrest the late Charles Bradlaugh. Would they pay anyone £3 15s. to identify him?

Judas is the second figure in the Crucifixion story. We are told that he was smitten with remorse and committed suicide. Yet the earliest Christian writer who mentions a Gospel—namely, Papias—informs us that Judas lived on a great example of impiety, that he grew very corpulent, and was eventually crushed to death between a chariot and a wall. Evidently, therefore, the Judas episode had not been finally worked-up even in the days of Papias—that is, more than a hundred years after the date of the Crucifixion.

John, who gives Jesus a more ideal and mystical character than the Synoptics, states that Jesus advanced of his own accord to his arresters, saying, "I am he," and that the very sound of his voice threw them upon their backs. They got up, however, and completed the arrest; which is more than English policemen would do in such circumstances. A man who could floor you with a word would be too dangerous to apprehend.

Bringing Jesus before the High Priest for trial involves ignorance of both Jewish and Roman jurisprudence. The priests' court had no penal jurisdiction except in temple affairs, and only then over priests and Levites. It is also monstrous to suppose that the judges who were trying a prisoner would walk about the room, with the witnesses, the servants, and the crowd, and even spit upon and revile him. The writers of our Gospels were not Jews. They wrote long after the fall of Jerusalem, when there was no one to check their absurdities, and they also wrote for Gentiles.

Pilate, the Roman Governor at Jerusalem, is said to have sent Jesus to Herod, who ruled in Galilee, because Jesus was born there. Is not this ridiculous? Would a Frenchman who committed a murder in England be sent for trial to Paris?

Is it credible that the wife of a Roman governor should send him a message while he sat upon the judgment-seat, requesting him to acquit a prisoner because she knew he was innocent?



Would a Roman governor—especially a proud one like Pilate—sentence a prisoner to execution, although knowing him to be innocent, and then exculpate himself by washing his hands in public? Such a thing was never heard of in the history of Roman jurisprudence. Washing the hands, indeed, was a purely Jewish symbolism. The idea could never have occurred to a Roman judge.

Pilate's whole conduct is opposed to all we know of the duties and responsibilities of a Roman governor. His going to and fro between the prisoner and his accusers was justly described as impossible by the Rev. Dr. Giles, who declared without hesitation that "no Roman governor ever condescended to an act which he would deem so derogatory to his rank and dignity."

The haste of the trial and execution, the miracles at the Crucifixion itself, and many incidents which we have no space to criticise—all show that we are not reading history, but romance; a romance in the interest of a Church which had the effrontery to assert that Pilate sent an account of the Crucifixion to Tiberius, and that Tiberius proposed the deification of Christ to the Roman Senate!

G. W. FOOTE.

### MADAME BLAVATSKY.

(Continued from p. 212.)

BEFORE going to India, Olcott wrote to Swami Dyanand Saraswati, president of the Arya Samaj, that the title of the Theosophical Society should be changed to the Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj, acknowledging the Swami as chief. Early in 1882, however, he realised that he had been imposed upon, and publicly denounced them. In India, Theosophy assumed new features. Spiritism, with its threefold nature of man, was changed for Occultism, with its sevenfold nature. We now hear, for the first time, of the mysterious occult Brotherhood residing in that enlightened but inaccessible country, Thibet. Hindus had for ages believed that holy men called *yogis* could, by a course of meditation or asceticism, obtain magical powers, which placed them out of the category of ordinary mortals, and told wonderful stories of these Paramokshas or Mahatmas. The Theosophical adepts were modelled partly on the Indian *yogis*, partly on the mystical Mejnour, in Lytton's *Zanoni*. They could perceive occurrences and precipitate messages, despite any distance, and only used their powers for good. In short, they possessed all the qualifications requisite to make good Scotland Yard detectives.

The path to the possession of Mahatmaship was confessedly a hard one. Few members of the Theosophical Society could boast that their lives had been completely chaste, even in dreams, or that they had never taken alcoholic liquors, never touched animals, never partaken of animal food, and never worn the product of the sacred cow, all of which things, and far more, was necessary for the blossoming of this "efflorescence of the human race." No wonder gentlemen like Mr. Sinnett preferred the shorter cut of pumping the Hindu adepts, Madame Blavatsky being the channel of communication with the blessed occult brothers. The letters of the Mahatma, Koot Hoomi, were certified by experts as being in the handwriting of Madame Blavatsky. On many points an outsider could judge as well as an expert. Thus H. P. B. wrote: "Olcott says you speak very well English"; K. H. wrote: "One who understands tolerably well English." She wrote "thiefs," so did K. H.; "defense," so did K. H. She wrote: "So more the pity for those"; he: "So more the pity for him," etc. One of Koot Hoomi's letters, giving out original revelations, was almost word for word a plagiarism from a speech delivered by Mr. H. Kiddle, some months previously, at a spiritist camp meeting at Lake Pleasant, in America, and reported in the *Banner of Light*, which exchanged with H. P. B.'s *Theosophist*. Her explanation, that the astral spirit of Koot Hoomi had been at Mount Pleasant, only made matters worse.

To meet the demand for occult teaching, a new edition of *Isis Unveiled* was promised. I have before me the *Philosophic Inquirer*, Madras, February 17, 1884, in which is advertised "*The Secret Doctrine*, a new version of *Isis Unveiled*, with a new arrangement of the matter, large and

important additions and copious notes and commentaries by H. P. Blavatsky, assisted by T. R. Subba Row Garu, B.A., B.L., F.T.S." Mr. Subba Row subsequently discovered H. P. B.'s fraud, and withdrew from the Society. *The Secret Doctrine* proved to contain a totally different doctrine from that in *Isis Unveiled*, and one which was even more a work of imagination.

The new religion was heralded by signs and wonders. The power of adepts to recreate matter was shown by the reproduction of broken saucers and vases in the occult shrine at the headquarters, Adyar. The shrine was simply that familiar device of conjurers, the "trick cabinet." It had three sliding panels in the back. This Madame admitted; they were "for convenience of packing in case of removal." It was fixed against the wall of her bedroom, and just behind it was a recess in the wall lightly boarded over, which had once been a window. On the other side, in Madame Blavatsky's room, was a sideboard with a false back. There was a hole in the boarding big enough to admit a person into the recess, and a hole in the boarding, on the shrine side, big enough to let an arm through to manipulate the sliding panels. All this, when discovered, it was said, was made after H. P. B. had left, in order to defame her. For the revelations of her fraud by an accomplice, Madame Coulomb, at length compelled her to leave India. These revelations were accompanied by proof in the shape of letters. The letters were afterwards denied as forgeries. If so, they were the most clever and purposeless forgeries ever perpetrated. But they, too, were certified by experts to be in H. P. B.'s writing, and they were corroborated by Mr. Hodgson, who was sent out by the Psychical Research Society, of London, to investigate the occult phenomena alleged to have taken place at Adyar. One instance must suffice.

On May 26, 1883, Colonel Olcott writes: "Fine phenomenon. Got pair of tortoise-shell and lacquer vases, with flowers, in a cabinet, a moment before empty." When the sorceress was confronted with the statement that Madame Coulomb had herself purchased these vases, and that the Mahatmas had nothing to do with sending them by occult agency, she replied that Madame Coulomb had tried to obtain vases like them, but failed; and that she (Madame C.) had purchased one pair of vases afterwards, and that they differed in shape, etc., from those received by Colonel Olcott. Mr. Hodgson, however, discovered who was lying by going to the establishment where Madame Coulomb said she had purchased them. He was shown the entries in the books of the firm, and writes: "Madame Coulomb therefore purchased the vases on May 25; Colonel Olcott received them on May 26." Comment is unnecessary.

Mr. Hodgson, who investigated the whole business in India with great care, came to the conclusion that "her real object had been the furtherance of Russian interests." He first noticed "her sudden and curious excitement at the news of the recent Russian movement upon the Afghan frontier," and he says: "Madame Blavatsky's momentary emotional betrayal of her sympathies in the onset of her excitement was not rendered less significant by the too strongly-impressed 'afterstroke' of a quite uncalculated vituperation of the Russians, who, she said, would be the death-blow of the Society if they got into India." Mrs. Besant curiously defended H. P. B. from the charge of being a Russian agent by stating in the *Chronicle* of September 25, 1891, that "many Indian Theosophists, by Madame Blavatsky's advice, enrolled for service, if needed, to repel a Russian invasion during Afghan troubles." This was letting the cat out of the bag with a vengeance. The Russian lady used her secret society in Bombay and Madras to repel an invasion on the Afghan frontier. These were truly extraordinary precautions against Russian invasion. It was doubtless with a similar object Madame Blavatsky wrote continually to Russia. A fac-simile of a fragment which came into the hands of Mr. Hodgson is given in the third volume of the *Proceedings of the Society for Psychical Research*. It reads as follows:—

"Military men, more than any other, must remember that the approaching act of the Eastern drama is to be the last and the decisive one; that it will require all our efforts, every sacrifice on our part, and requires more careful preparation in every direction than did the last war. They must remember that to sit idle now, when everyone has to be busily preparing, is the highest of crimes, a treason to Rus, their country, and their Czar. He who hath ears to hear let him. . . ."



In the *fac-simile* it may be noticed that the word "Rus" is crossed out, and the word "Czar" written so that it might be taken for "God."

Mr. Hodgson quotes another letter, which begins: "Is our friend a Sikh? If so, the fact that he should be, as you say, very much pleased to learn the object of our Society is not at all strange. For his ancestors have for centuries been—until their efforts were paralysed by British domination, that curse of every land it fastens itself upon—battling for the divine truths against external theologes. . . . The letter concludes: "Could you not hook out for your Bombay Branch either Gwalior (Scindia) or the Holkar of Indore—those most faithful and loyal friends of the British (?)"

It was the discovery of her impostures, and not her political work, which forced Madame to fly from India. She had been watched in a most bungling fashion. Mr. Sinnett says he pitied the unhappy police-officer who was employed to watch her. He observes:—

"She pursued this officer with sarcasms all the while that he, in the performance of his irksome duty, pursued her in her vague and erratic wanderings. She would offer him bags or letters to examine, and address him condolences on the miserable fate that condemned him to play the part of a *mouchard*. I suspect, from what I heard at Simla at the time, that the Bombay Government must have been treated by the superior authorities to remarks that were anything but complimentary on the manner in which they conducted this business."

No wonder this officer was ordered to be withdrawn; but we may be quite sure the Government fully appreciated her inducing Theosophists to enrol for service, if needed, to repel Russian invasion.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

## WHAT IS MEANT BY LAWS OF NATURE?

GREAT confusion and misapprehension exist in the theological mind in reference to the real meaning of the term, "laws of nature." The laws are regarded by most orthodox believers as commands given, and as arrangements made, by the "creator of the universe." They are of two kinds: those which prescribe men's religious and social duties, which are called moral; and the movements in the material world, which are termed physical. The incorrect use of the term "law" is so general among poets, statesmen, and philosophers that it is not surprising to find the general masses of the community entertaining the same erroneous ideas as to its true signification. We desire, therefore, to state what, in our opinion, is the correct meaning of the term "law" when it is applied to theological disputants are continually propounding fallacies upon the subject.

"Law" is a Saxon word, but its interpretation is founded upon the Latin, to govern, which we call rule. In cases where it is applied to the general government of society it means something written, and it refers to conduct. Thus used, the term implies a command, or commands, from some superior power, whether it be the King or the State. Law, so defined, may be ignored, altered, or abrogated; or it may be interpreted in many different ways, according to the requirements of society. It may also vary at different times, and in different countries, according to the wishes and customs of the people where it is in force. But the same cannot be said of the laws of nature—a phrase which has quite another meaning. Fleming writes: "When a fact, frequently observed, recurs invariably under the same circumstances, we compare it to an act which has been prescribed, to an order which has been established, and say it occurs according to law." That is, the observed order, or continuity in nature, is what should be termed the law of nature. This does not mean that the law is a command given by some personal being, but simply that it represents the sequence we find in the universe. Law, applied to things, of phenomena; it indicates the manner in which they act and are acted upon, and, therefore, it must not be regarded as an entity apart from, or added to, nature. Law does not make the needle point to the north, nor does it cause the leaves and fruit to fall from the trees; it is

nothing more than a name for the conditions under which the forces of nature are manifested, and are recognised by the human mind. We perceive the regularity or invariability which characterises certain movements in nature, and to this uniformity of action we apply the term "law."

Some of the most advanced writers of the early part of the present century, who recognised the idea of law, interpreted it to mean that there were certain consequences which always followed causes that had been so pre-ordained by the creator. To them the order of nature was the will of God; hence they considered that any infractions, infringements, or breaking of the laws of nature were sins against the laws of God. But such an interpretation of the operations of nature involves some curious conclusions. It really amounts to ascribing a preconceived intention to every natural event that happens. Suppose a man is killed by lightning, and that a village is destroyed by an earthquake, there is no dispute but that both took place in accordance with the laws of nature. But, be it observed, it was nature, not the laws, that did the mischief. To say that these events were pre-ordained means that the man *was* to be killed, and the village *was* to be destroyed in any case. If this were true, what a reflection it would be upon the supposed law-maker! Such an assumption is as inhuman as it is unscientific. The death of the man and the destruction of the village can be accounted for by natural causes; and it is a wise axiom not to assume more causes than are sufficient to account for phenomena.

We allege that whatever happens occurs in accordance with what we call the laws or mode of nature, and is not produced by any external power. Against this position it is urged that, if it were so, no law of nature could be "broken," inasmuch as that would imply that nature could act against herself. Now the error of this objection is in supposing that, because the totality of all things is nature, therefore there can be no conflict in the various parts. Nature, as a whole, cannot of course be altered; but one portion may and does come into conflict with another. A man may use his physical powers, which are, of course, natural, to do that which produces injury on his bodily organisation, which is also quite natural, and we say he has "broken a law of nature." We do not, however, mean that he has done anything which nature did not give him the power to do, but that he has used his power to a disadvantage to himself, and, it may be, to others. The expression, therefore, is relative, not absolute. Of course, strictly speaking, the laws of nature cannot be broken.

It is further objected, as there are certain acts which we are in the habit of speaking of as being unnatural, that nothing can be unnatural if nature includes everything. Let us see what should be understood upon this point. We say of a man who treats his own kith and kin cruelly that he acts unnaturally, and we designate certain crimes as unnatural offences. But we do not mean by such phraseology that these acts are super-natural, but that they are infra-natural—that is, they are not higher, but lower, than nature. Further, a moment's reflection should show that, by the use of these terms, we do not intend to convey the idea that anything has been done outside of nature as a whole, for the very powers employed are natural, and the acts are no less so. What is meant is that a person who so acts has pursued a course of conduct which is not in harmony with our exalted conception of the sphere in nature to which he belongs. Measured by ordinary standards, one part of nature is higher than another. Man's sphere is the highest of all that we are acquainted with; he has intellect of a far superior degree to that of any other animal, and he has evolved a moral law by which he is supposed to regulate his conduct.

Now, if, instead of conforming to the laws of his own being, man descends to a lower platform, and acts in a way that is utterly out of harmony with his exalted functions, we say that he is unnatural, meaning thereby that he is descending to a lower sphere in nature than that which we have a right to expect him to occupy. The act that we call unnatural in him would probably be natural enough in a lower animal, and therefore cannot be outside nature, but is only out of accord with the requirements of that part of nature in which he plays his part. There is evidently a legitimate function for every passion and desire of which man finds himself possessed, and the proper use of these, according to the purpose of nature, we call natural; while to divert them from their proper object or end we say is



unnatural. A man has an appetite for food, which is natural; but he can starve himself to death, which, in a sense, is natural too; and yet, in another sense, we should say it was unnatural, because it was a violation of an instinct common to us all. Suppose a starving man to be destitute of food, and his own child, who has plenty, refuses that aid to his parent that would save life, we should regard such a son as an unnatural monster; not meaning thereby that he had done anything that nature did not furnish the means of doing, but that he had not acted according to the higher laws of nature which appertain to all beings moving in his sphere. All, therefore, that can be done is accomplished by what we term the laws of nature.

It must not be overlooked, as J. S. Mill points out in his essay on *Nature*, that "the observed uniformities in the occurrence of phenomena, the uniformities of antecedence and sequence, are what in science are meant by the laws of nature." He also mentions that we should know what particular law to use in a particular case, so that we may "use one law to counteract another." This means that, by studying the various forces of nature, we can avail ourselves of one force to control the effect of another. For instance, if a building is saved from destruction by a lightning conductor, it simply means that another natural force protected the building from that of the lightning. Both are in strict keeping with the laws of nature.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

### THE JERUSALEM GHOST.

AT this time of the year, when the Pagan world celebrated the uprising of vegetation from the underworld, the Christian world is edified with a very ancient ghost story of the rising of a man from the dead—a curious event to celebrate with a movable festival. For such a stupendous event no one pretends there is any other evidence than testimony transmitted down to us through a period of some eighteen hundred years. What is it worth on such a subject? Should we believe a man who told us such a ghost story to-day. Should we not think it far more probable that he was lying, or lying under a delusion, than that such an event really occurred? But what is the testimony? If we look into it a little, I think we may discover how it grew.

Mark, the shortest gospel, is now admitted to represent the oldest version. Yet it is certain from the testimony of all the best manuscripts that the early version of Mark had no story of the resurrection at all. Chapter xvi. ended with verse 8, and the remaining twelve verses have been added by another and a later hand. All the original Mark tells us is that Joseph of Arimathea begged the body of Jesus and laid it in a sepulchre; that early on Sunday morning Mary Magdalene, Mary of James, and Salome went with spices and found the body gone; and that a young man told them he is risen. Thus the earliest account does not venture even to say that anybody saw Jesus alive after death. Three women found his body was not in the tomb—that was all. What had become of it? Common sense would say, Ask Joseph of Arimathea. But this is never done, and the excited reports of the women may have given rise to the cock-and-bull ghost story with which the other gossellers favor us.

Matthew, in giving a fuller story, betrays its legendary character. He makes the Jewish priests know that Jesus said he would rise again, though, according to John xx. 9, his disciples were ignorant of this. They bribe Roman soldiers to say they slept at their posts, the punishment of which was death, and to deny for cash the most stupendous miracle they had themselves witnessed!

Matthew tells us that the eleven disciples went to Galilee and met Jesus in a mountain; "but some doubted." Luke gives no time for this journey, but makes him ascend to heaven from Bethany, says that they stayed in Jerusalem, and were continually in the temple. Acts, however, makes him stay on earth forty days. John makes it necessary for him to work another miracle for them—a miraculous draught of fishes, such as they had had before. In 1 Corinthians xv. we are told the first appearance was to Peter. John and the addition to Mark say it was to Mary Magdalene.

Matthew says it was to the two Marys. The Gospel according to the Hebrews says it was to James. According to Paul, the second appearance was to the twelve. Luke says the eleven. Judas, having repented, either returned the money and hanged himself, according to Matthew; or bought a field with the money, wherein he fell and burst asunder, according to Acts. John says the ten, Thomas being absent. Apparently, Paul had never heard of the doubting Thomas, or the defection of the much-killed Judas. But he goes on to tell us of a third appearance to five hundred brethren at once. How the story grows! According to Acts, there were only "about an hundred and twenty" disciples altogether.

From all this contradictory evidence, which would not bear ten minutes' cross-examination in a police court, the only thing plain is that a number of persons said that a number of other persons had seen the Jerusalem ghost. The only person who says "I saw him" was not near Jerusalem, and not a believer at the time. This was Paul, who, for a while, was an unbeliever and a persecutor. And how did Paul see him? Apparently he had a sunstroke on the Damascus road, and heard a voice from heaven, which he took to be that of Jesus. He says: "Last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time"; and we should say that those who credit such a ghost story on such evidence must be born out of due time also.

J. M. W.

### A FURTHER WORD ON MR. KIDD.

IN the February number of the *Nineteenth Century* Mr. Kidd has an article in which he defends himself, so to say, for not dealing with the critics of his *Social Evolution*, because, he thinks, his main positions have not been challenged, and the time has not yet come when any reply would be profitable. But he goes over and re-states some of his central arguments. And here let me say frankly that Mr. Kidd is in many ways a most admirable writer, at least in my humble opinion. He is modest, he writes with the force of a man who believes what he is writing, and he is extremely interesting. He boldly says, in the conclusion of his article, that the opinion of the multitude—mostly the religious multitude—which received his work with extravagant applause, is not particularly valuable. He writes, and the passage is a noble and a just one:—

"But I do not hide from myself that, from this class equally with the other, no searching criticism is to be expected. I have had no purpose to serve in the book except the statement of the truth as it presented itself to me. I have sought neither to oppose nor defend any party or opinion, and no preconceived conviction or opinion of my own has been allowed to stand in the way of the application of the principles of human development therein presented. Science is an exacting mistress, and it is in the belief that it is in this spirit alone that she accepts service that I have endeavored to do her work."

This passage, admirable as it is in tone, breathing as it does the true scientific spirit which seeks for the truth regardless of preconceived notions, yet exemplifies at the same time Mr. Kidd's radical inconsistency. For here is a writer speaking in the name of science, and reverently declaring that to science alone he owes allegiance, who uses the language of science, and applies the methods of science, yet whose whole work is to laboriously show that science is not to be trusted, and that to keep the social sanctions which intact it is necessary to appeal to moral sanctions which are not only outside or above, but are opposed to, scientific knowledge. Mr. Kidd seems to belong to that "scientifically drugged" school, of which Mr. Mallock is a leading type, who scientifically prove that science is valueless, and profoundly reason themselves into the position that science is useless as a guide in the highest things of life.

Take, for instance, Mr. Kidd's main proposition, which he repeats in the *Nineteenth Century*. This is the kernel of Mr. Kidd's faith:—

"All religion is essentially ultra-rational. No form of belief is capable of functioning as a religion in the evolution of society which does not provide sanctions for conduct outside of, and superior to, reason."

Now let us examine this proposition for a moment. In the first place, of course, as to what constitutes a religion, what forms of belief are "capable of functioning" as such



it is not relevant now to decide, though one might suggest that, historically, foolishness and falsehood have proved no bar to a belief "functioning" as a religion. At the same time, it seems to me that in the above proposition, as through his book, Mr. Kidd is rather begging the question. His logic amounts to this:—

"No belief is a religion which does not provide ultra-rational sanctions; these beliefs [Christianity, Mormonism, etc.] provide such sanctions; these beliefs are religions—*ergo*, only religions are capable of providing such sanctions as enable societies to exist."

In short, he attaches an arbitrary meaning to the term "religion"—an arbitrariness which was emphasised by his excluding Positivism from the designation, and then produces an arbitrary result.

But now let us come down from these vague "scientific" generalities to definite examples. Instead of dealing hazily with "ultra-rational sanctions," we will take one religious sanction. Take the belief in hell. That is decidedly a religious motive of conduct—at least it is intended to be such. And here I must say that I do not quite understand what Mr. Kidd means by sanctions "outside of, and superior to, reason." Religionists are often fond of talking in this strain about theological propositions being "beyond reason." Take hell. Now, the hell doctrine is not "ultra-rational," or "superior to reason," or "beyond reason." These are the old word-juggles. The proposition that two and two make five is not ultra-rational or ultra anything else; neither is the hell belief; neither is the belief in a fallen man, or a crucified man-god, or any other of the motley array of ridiculous propositions that go to make up the Christian religion. These doctrines are simply false. And really the time has come to cease playing with these high-sounding phrases over beliefs that no sane man now holds.

But I contend that, to the man who really does believe in hell, that belief is so far a *rational factor* in determining his conduct. In any case, it is difficult to see how a man can be influenced in his actions by beliefs—true or false—which he cannot comprehend. And this raises the question at the root of Mr. Kidd's special pleading. The distinction between "rational" and "ultra-rational" belief is a false one. If, for instance, hell be true, a man is justified in so regulating his conduct as to avoid hell; in fact, such a man would be acting in the most rational manner possible. The real distinction is between true and false beliefs, not between rational and supra-rational ones. Hence it is I would like Mr. Kidd to give a plain answer to a plain question. Will he say definitely that he thinks the hell-belief, for instance, has provided a useful sanction for conduct, and so facilitated the progress of the race? Will he distinctly tell us whether he thinks the belief in a savior crucified for the sins of others—in other words, the doctrine of vicarious atonement—will he tell us that *that* has been a beneficial "ultra-rational" sanction? For, after all, it is not quite satisfying to deal in vague general propositions about beliefs "capable of functioning as religions," and "ultra-rational sanctions," and all the rest. One likes a little definite details. But, naturally, Mr. Kidd does not push his theories so far, or pursue a supra-rational belief till he finds its logical end in the inhuman horrors of a Furniss or a Pinamonti. He merely concerns himself with daintily-worded abstractions—which is well for his theory. There is nothing more dangerous than to apply a general proposition to a particular case. And when you are so constituted as to be incapable of perceiving the necessity of the particular application, then so much the better for your peace of mind; but so much the worse for the value of your thinking.

The whole fact appears to be that Mr. Kidd does perceive a certain difficulty—the difficulty which was dealt with by Professor Huxley in his Romanes Lecture some time ago. The struggle for existence would lead individuals to fight for themselves regardless of others, and ruthlessly crush out those less able; the whole burden of ethical teaching is that such crushing-out is wrong. How, then, are "ethics" and "evolution" to be reconciled? Mr. Kidd's reconciliation implies that the purely individual instinct is solely rational, and the ethical instinct, so to say, is simply a necessary piece of unreason which humanity carries with it to save itself from extinction. The explanation, which involves, as a corollary, the absurd proposition that, if the race were perfectly reasonable, it would die

out, is surely condemned on its face. One might reply broadly that, since reason is human knowledge and experience, and since it embraces the whole field of human polity, whatever conduct helps and builds up the race, whatever conduces to human welfare, must have a sanction in human reason. The social instinct, then, the desire to succour others and help others, reacts on and modifies the purely individual instinct, and both are essentially part of human nature. That man in society subordinates his individual desires and ambitions to the welfare and happiness of others is a natural phenomenon; and it is a phenomenon which will remain after all the ultra-rational beliefs are swept away. If Mr. Kidd calls this social instinct in human nature the religious part, and if he imagines that it can only be kept alive and nurtured by false beliefs, he is in a curious intellectual *cul-de-sac*. The parental instinct is surely a social instinct as opposed to an individual one, yet assumedly in an Atheist or Positivist community, according to Mr. Kidd, the parental instinct would disappear. Does Mr. Kidd really think so? If he does, he has been imposed on by some of the worst nonsense of the lower-class aggressive religionist—nonsense which even less cultured and scientific writers on the Christian side than Mr. Kidd have been above accepting.

One must, finally, protest against the Kidd method—if the phrase be permissible—of taking beliefs and treating them as if they were objective entities, apart altogether from the question of their truth or falsehood. Suppose society could be saved if everyone believed that two straight lines could enclose a space, does Mr. Kidd think social salvation would be possible? And what, then, would we think of a sociologist who went about treating this proposition and its effect on those who did believe it, and its probable effects on those who might be induced to believe it, and never once touched on the vital fact of its falsehood? If society can only be saved or kept together by sanctions which, though they may be trebly ultra-supra-rational, are yet in plain English false, then society is in a bad way indeed. In sociology Mr. Kidd, in fact, is the greatest pessimist of our time.

FREDERICK RYAN.

## THE "CHRISTIAN WORLD" NEWSPAPER AND FATHER IGNATIUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Allow me to thank you very sincerely for the short paragraph in your columns of March 24 upon the above. I hope that the *Christian*—it should be Rationalistic—*World* will answer your very sensible and practical question, "What on earth is an 'enlightened' view of the Atonement?" I, in common with all honest Christians, Catholic or Protestant, regard the *Christian World's* "enlightened" view of the Atonement as utterly and entirely *dishonest*.

You also speak of my denunciation of Archdeacon Farrar, as "that awful man," and then ask "what would I say of the editor of the *Freethinker*?" As you have asked, allow me to reply. I think that you are probably a gentleman and an honest man. But, Sir, if I heard tomorrow that you had allowed yourself to be made an Archdeacon in our Church, and were receiving the salary of one, I should change my opinion of you and think you a blackguard and a rogue. If Archdeacon Farrar would accept the sub-editorship (at your invitation, of course) of the *Freethinker*, I should similarly regard him—as I do you—as a gentleman and an honest man.

You have publicly asked me a question. I have answered it.—Yours faithfully, IGNATIUS, O.S.B., Monk.

There is the greatest difference between presuming an opinion to be true because, with every opportunity for contesting it, it has not been refuted, and assuming its truth for the purpose of not permitting its refutation. Complete liberty of contradicting and disproving our opinion is the very condition which justifies us in assuring its truth for purposes of action; on no other terms can a being with human faculties have any rational assurance of right.—*J. S. Mill, "On Liberty," p. 36.*



## BLASPHEMY IN SWEDEN.

CAPTAIN OTTO THOMSON sends us a copy of the Stockholm *Dagens Nyheter* (*Daily News*), which reports that Gustaf Thoren, the editor of the *Söderköping Posten* has been found guilty of blasphemy and sentenced to two months' imprisonment and a fine of twenty-five crowns, for this impossible "crime." Our readers may remember that it was for an article on "Schools and Religion" that this prosecution was commenced. This contemptible attempt to suppress free speech is as ridiculous as the attempt to mop out the Atlantic, and the prosecution will advertise Freethought views in places where they were unknown before.

Captain Thomson informs us that a new Freethought paper, *Nya Sanningar*, or *New Thoughts*, has been started in Stockholm. Captain Thomson has recently translated from our columns Colonel Ingersoll's lecture, "Which Way?" which he will shortly publish to see if they are as ready to prosecute for blasphemy in the capital as in a small provincial town like Söderköping.

## NOAH'S SONG.

Tune: "I'm afloat, I'm afloat."

I'm afloat, I'm afloat on my three-storey'd bark,  
Designed by Jehovah, my boat-house, the *Ark*;  
She's built like a stable, and roofed like a shed,  
With nought to distinguish her stern from her head;  
She boasts no superfluous windows nor doors,  
Of each she has one, and her triad of floors  
Foreshadows, in some sort of mystical sense,  
Some change in her *Arkitect* centuries hence.

The Lord, who designed this pestiferous tub—  
My "second-sight" shows me—would suffer a snub  
From people who know what a ship ought to be,  
Like "Lloyd's"—which with optics prophetic I see—  
Just think of it! cribbed in a three-storey'd *Ark*  
With thousands of animals, all in the dark!  
Of light not a ray, and of air scarce a breath,  
A coffin of life on an ocean of death!

I'm afloat with earth's fauna, my children and wife,  
Although we don't care for a seafaring life.  
The fact is, Jehovah found out his mistake  
In tempting young Eve with a logical snake;  
And now, in his rage, he is drowning our race,  
The living reminders of all his disgrace;  
In short, all his creatures, save those on my barge,  
Are drowning, in millions, this moment at large.

I'm afloat on an ocean where land used to be;  
My body's afloat, and my mind's "all at sea,"  
Dumbfounded in trying to fathom God's scheme;  
For, surely, the notion quite foolish doth seem,  
To save one or two of a core-tainted brood,  
In hopes of a progeny wholesome and good!  
I'm glad I am saved, but, between me and you,  
He ought to drown *all*, and create life anew.

I'm afloat on the flood that's now destined to be  
An ocean of corpses—a sepulchre sea;  
A black heaving desert of water abhorred—  
The grave of a world, the accursed of the Lord!  
My bark is a *life-boat* to tigers and swine,  
But also, through infinite mercy divine,  
A *death-boat* to thousands of children that gasp  
Whilst striving its black, mocking timbers to grasp.

I hear, high above my menagerie's din,  
The shrieks of the doomed drowning children of sin,  
And strive to extinguish my grief for their fate  
In terror lest I the creator should hate!  
'Tis sinful, as Ham was remarking to Shem,  
To pity the folk whom the Lord doth condemn;  
So, harden your hearts, all ye creatures on board;  
We're bound to be right if we copy the Lord!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

## ACID DROPS.

THE *Methodist Times* is "delighted" that a Wesleyan Methodist has induced "that enlightened body," the Nottingham Town Council, to pass a resolution in favor of abolishing the delivery of letters on Sunday. "If London, with all its millions," says our pious contemporary, "can live without a Sunday delivery, it is quite certain that any other city could." London, of course, could "live" without a good many things. It could even live without the *Methodist Times*. But it is simply ridiculous that London should be treated as it is by the Post Office. There is no delivery of letters on Sunday, nor is a single mail dispatched till after twelve o'clock at night. If you drop a letter in a London pillar-box after six o'clock on Saturday evening, it will not reach Manchester till midday on Monday. All this waste of public time, and interference with public convenience, is pretendedly in the interest of Sunday rest. It is really in the interest of a bastard economy. The Post Office will not employ enough hands to give them all one day's rest in seven, without giving them all the same day. It takes the easiest and cheapest course for itself; the hardest and dearest course for the public.

The *Methodist Times* is bitterly opposed to Established Churches, and quotes Mr. Bryce to the effect that Constantine "secularised the Church." Mr. Hughes's organ regards this as a calamity. So do we. But it was not a calamity to Christianity. It took Christianity three hundred years to convert one in twenty of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire. Nine-tenths of the rest were converted in the next century through the patronage of the emperors, who used every means—bribery, intimidation, and actual persecution—to make their subjects Christians. Constantine was a great rascal, but he was no fool; he knew that the Christian religion was a most convenient instrument of tyranny.

Mr. Hughes is, after all, a half-hearted Nonconformist. He objects to the State paying for religion in churches, but he wishes the State to pay for religion in schools. At the recent Free Churches Congress at Birmingham he spoke in opposition to the Rev. J. Hulme, a member of the Birmingham School Board. He declared that, "if any attempt were made to revive the system of Secular Education advocated by George Dawson and the late Dr. Dale, the whole of the Wesleyan Methodists of England would be forced into the opposite camp." That is, they would vote with the Church party rather than with the friends of Secular Education.

The Rev. J. Hulme replied "with considerable warmth." He said that Mr. Hughes was free to differ from him, but "no Nonconformist could be true to his principles who countenanced the payment for religious teaching out of the imperial revenue or out of the rates." This was received with "strong dissent." The fact is, the majority of the Nonconformist men of God want the help of the State as far as it serves their interest; their objection to it begins when it serves the interest of their opponents.

That Free Churches Congress discussed "The Church and Social Questions." Mr. George Cadbury, the cocoa man, presided at this sitting. He argued that the Churches must supply leaders to the great social revolution that was going forward; otherwise the consequences would be disastrous, as in France, where "such a revolution was led by non-Christian men." What this cunning Quaker really means is that the Churches, and especially (as he said) the Free Churches, should nobble the revolutionary movement. Men like George Cadbury don't want too great a change in the existing order of things. Nor do the Churches want such a change. It is so hard to get coppers from working men, and so convenient to fall back upon the capitalist Cadburys, who can write out big cheques for religious purposes.

Most of the men of God who took part in this discussion were very strongly in favor of a rigorous enforcement of the law against vice and immorality. That is all very well, gentlemen; but where the deuce do you come in? Why should you be paid so handsomely, merely to call in the police?

Under the heading of "Whispers," the *Birmingham Owl* finds: "That Mr. Hugh Price Hughes expresses himself as violently opposed to the Birmingham system of education. That the Reverend Hugh Price Hughes is always violently opposed to somebody or something. That if he would learn to think more and talk less he might yet live down his reputation for exaggeration, sensationalism, and cant."

One of our readers attended Mr. Keir Hardie's address on Burns, which was criticised in our last issue. When the



address was over, this gentleman rose and asked the orator why he introduced religion and Jesus Christ in connection with the Independent Labor Party. Mr. Hardie gave an evasive reply. Discussion, he said, was a waste of time; the choir, therefore, would sing a hymn. Fancy a man like this leading the hosts of Labor out of the Wilderness into the Promised Land!

Lucy Garnett, writing in the *Athenæum* on "Other People's Superstitions," calls attention to the following passage from *The People of Turkey*: "Mohammedans execrate the Christian faith, and Christians the Mohammedan faith; but both, in cases of incurable disease, have recourse reciprocally to each other's holy wells, to the sacred tombs of the saints, and to the prayers of the clergy of both creeds. I have often seen sick Turkish children taken to the Armenian church at Broussa, and heard prayers read over them by Armenian priests. I have also seen Christian children taken to Hodjas to be blown or spat upon, or have the visitation of intermittent fever 'tied up' by means of a piece of cotton thread twisted round the wrist." Miss Garnett adds that Jews as well as Christians frequently have recourse to the good offices of Dervish sheikhs and Turkish witches.

It is reported that the Pope, in his brief on Christian reunion, will not refer to the validity of Anglican orders, but simply urge the Church of England to return to the fold. The Catholics are doing their best to see that the publication of the brief is followed by reports of converts, and it is said that some prominent members of the English Church Union will go to Rome, where they hope to be followed by some Welsh parsons if disestablished.

It is probably with a view to taking advantage of Disestablishment that the Papal Brief has been placed in the hands of Cardinal Vaughan, authorising the collection of eleven Welsh counties into an Apostolic Vicariate, to which a new Catholic bishop will shortly be appointed.

Saint Athanasius Riley, of the London School Board, is a High Churchman, and a patron of the old Sarum Missal, which of course is thoroughly popish. There are other High Churchmen who share the same predilection. At St. Mark's, Marylebone, last Sunday (being Palm Sunday), palms were blessed and censed and carried in procession round the church, the choir singing antiphons, responses, and versicles. Something was wanted, however, to perfect the function. Some one—say the parson—should have mounted a donkey and headed the procession.

H. K. Carroll says in the *Forum Library*: "The wealthiest denomination in the United States, if we estimate national wealth according to the average value of the church edifices and sites, is the Jewish. The next is the Unitarian, the third is the Reformed (Dutch), and the fourth the Protestant Episcopal. The average value of the churches of Reformed Jews is \$38,839; of the Unitarian, \$24,725; of the Reformed (Dutch), \$19,227; and of the Protestant Episcopal, \$16,182."

In America the sky-pilots usually get half fare on the railroads, as well as low rates for education and other services, and free tickets to concerts and entertainments. The subject has recently been publicly discussed at Chicago, when divinity students themselves saying that "the day is past when the priesthood can claim special favors," and "society owes only one duty to the man who is always holding out his hand—to kick him."

But the Rev. Young said: "I have no scruples about taking a free ride, since I always remember the free journey Christ took on an ass when he entered Jerusalem." The ass was requisitioned without the leave of the owner. The Rev. Young, if he will take a "free ride" under similar circumstances which surrounded "Our Lord," will find himself in the penitentiary. Let him go in and win.

The Rev. Thomas Dixon has been forced to resign his connection with the Twenty-third-street Baptist Church, New York, many of his congregation objecting to his sensational preaching, which has been much discussed in the *Herald*. Mr. Dixon says: "I seek to be in the spectacular line." He succeeded first by a long series of sermons denouncing Ingersoll, and then by being arrested and fined for shooting robins on a "hunting expedition." His most recent sensation was a pulpit attack on Dr. Parkhurst.

There has been a row at St. John's African Methodist Episcopal Church, Brooklyn, the fashionable colored church of that place. The Rev. F. F. Giles, the presiding elder, is accused of not believing in the Holy Ghost. He was impeached by Mrs. Hiram Worrell, a prominent travelling evangelist who believes in visions and manifestations of the

Holy Ghost as in the days of Pentecost. The congregation is divided on the subject.

The American public, especially the Catholic section, are easily bamboozled. An Italian correspondent of the *New York Sun*, after hinting that the English press knows nothing about the matter, suggests that the late visit of Lord Halifax to Rome may bring about the end of the Anglican schism, and the reunion of the Church of England with her long-hated mother. If ever the Pope was foolish enough to expect such a reunion, Cardinal Vaughan and the English bishops have probably undeceived him.

Of course, as Christianity breaks up, there will be much talk of, and many attempts at, reunion; but such attempts may only precipitate the end. While the Catholic Church confines the drinking of the blood of the Savior to the priest, it will have little chance with the lay Anglican, who thinks he ought to have a regular supply of that fluid himself.

A writer in the *New York Sun* points out that, while they are appealing for more money for churches, there are within easy distance six churches whose entire congregations could easily be accommodated in one.

Mr. Joshua Nunn, of Maldon, has been sued by two parsons for tithe rent charge. The Rev. J. Coling demands £10 12s. 8d., and the Rev. Reginald Tavernor Love £11 13s. Mr. Nunn says there is nothing on the land wherewith to pay, and the tithe charge is ruinous; but the men of God have piled expenses against him to the tune of £24 18s. 8d., and the end is not yet.

The St. Petersburg correspondent of the *Chronicle* gives an instance of gross superstition in Russia. A Jew farmer sold his wife (who was *enciente*) to some robbers for a large sum of money, the intention of the purchasers being to kill the woman and draw out her veins, from the superstitious belief that the veins of pregnant women render thieves invisible. Luckily for the intended victim, her little daughter, aged only four years, overheard the bargaining, and told her of it. She sought the protection of the landowner, and the husband and robbers were arrested.

The Emperor William's piety is of the royal diplomatic order. He thoroughly understands that a God is a useful article to a king. But he will also patronise a Pagan deity on occasion, as last week, when launching a new ironclad at Kiel, he is reported as saying: "Thou art now to be ranged among the armed vessels of the German navy. The names of the ships which belong to the same class are taken from the old Germanic legends. Therefore shalt thou also recall the grey ages of our ancestors, and the mighty god who was worshipped and feared by all our Germanic seafaring forefathers, whose mighty empire extended from the icy North Pole to the distant South Pole, on whose ocean waves were fought the northern fights, and death and destruction brought into the land. This great god's name shalt thou bear. Mayst thou prove thyself worthy of it. I christen thee with the name of 'Aegir.'"

The prisoners in the witch-burning case have been committed for trial. It appears that the husband, Cleary, was a regular member of the Roman Church, and mass was celebrated in the room where the crime was committed, though the priest pleaded ignorance of what was taking place.

One of the things which confirmed the belief that the poor woman was a witch was that when the sacred wafer was administered she spat it out. What became of the consecrated element which contains the body, blood, and bones of divinity? Were these sacred elements trodden upon on the floor, or did the priest, as in duty bound, take it up and eat it himself?

Belief in the Bible-warranted superstition of witchcraft lingers in some parts of England as well as in Ireland. The *Western Chronicle* of October 4, 1889, mentioned a case at Hornington, in the New Forest. The daughter of a local Primitive Methodist preacher was believed to have been bewitched by an old gipsy, and it was thought that to cut the witch's finger would break the charm.

As late as September 4, 1863, a poor old paralysed Frenchman died in consequence of having been ducked as a wizard at Castle Hedingham, Essex; and on September 17, 1875, an old woman was killed as a witch by a half-insane man at Long Compton, Warwickshire.

The *St. Louis Globe Democrat* says: "While the House of Congress was in session Sunday night, which by legislative fiction was called part of Saturday, Mr. Broderick, of Kansas, strolled over to the seat of Mr. Bailey, of Texas, who has a great reputation as a parliamentarian. 'Bailey,'



queried the Kansan, 'do you suppose the LIIIrd Congress by calling this Saturday will be able to fool the Lord?' 'I don't know,' replied Mr. Bailey, doubtfully; 'perhaps it will. It has fooled everybody else.'

Listening to a discussion among his officers as to the value of a name, Bonaparte once said: "It has much. Do you suppose that I could ever have become Emperor of France if my name had been Skaggs? No, no. The French will stand a great deal, but Emperor Skaggs would have aroused their deepest animosity." If Jesus had been known by his proper name of Joshua, all the guilt would have come off the gingerbread.

General Booth insulted the reporters at Sunderland, first turning them from their place, which he said was not for reporters, but a penitent form. He called them poor, dead, shrivelled-souled creatures, scribes who put questions, but nothing in the collection-boxes. When they rose and left, he said they were running from God. What have the reporters done to the "General"? Have they incurred his resentment by taking down and publishing his speeches exactly as delivered?

Lord Rosebery has at last given a Broad Churchman a turn by appointing Canon Fremantle as Dean of Ripon. We suppose he got his billet for his Liberal politics, not for his liberal theology.

Canon Barnett, who was formerly vicar of St. Jude's, Whitechapel, says that the Church schools in the East End are, "as a rule, inferior schools." He advises the Church to give up the existing schools and build a few model ones.

Before the St. Asaph Board of Guardians, the master of the workhouse admitted that a lady had received permission to visit the workhouse and collect signatures to a petition against the Disestablishment of the Welsh Church. Mr. Mostyn Williams inquired if any of the imbeciles signed. The master replied: "Yes; one or more; but, strictly speaking, one is not an imbecile." These admissions gave rise to an animated discussion.

At Barrow the parish council, in opposition both to the Home Office and the Bishop of Peterborough, have dedicated their cemetery without any consecration. They see that the only meaning of consecration now is extra fees for the clergy, and are right in standing out against the imposition.

At Chevall, Wilts, the first Nonconformist burial, under the Act of 1880, took place last week. An old man named Isaac Ealey was laid to rest by a minister of the Plymouth Brethren, of which he was a member. Some excitement and feeling shown on the occasion by the crowd of mourners were intensified by the action of the rector, who refused to allow the deceased to be buried with his wife, but ordered the grave to be dug in the remotest corner of the churchyard, behind the church. A most unseemly altercation also was raised at the grave by the sexton.

The name Easter is doubtless derived from Eoster, a Saxon goddess of light, whose festival was kept by our Pagan forefathers about this time of the year. In the East, Easter is called Bright Day; in Bohemia, the night and morning ushering it in are called "The Great Night." In the Middle Ages the poor at this season fed in churches, where there were passion plays on Good Friday, and sports, dances, and farcical exhibitions within the holy building. There is plenty of evidence that religion was essentially Pagan down to a period little prior to the Reformation.

The early Christian Church is said to have been rent by a violent dispute as to when Easter should be celebrated. The Eastern Christians kept it like the Jews kept Passover, from which, with them, it was a development, on the fourteenth day of the first Jewish month, which, of course, involved a constant variation in the day of the week. The Western Christians, with a truer appreciation of the meaning, declared it must always be kept on Sunday, and this view is said to have been adopted by the Council of Nice. But the question gave rise to much controversy, in which the rival churches and bishops damned each other, "quite persuaded all the apostles would have done as they did."

It is possible that the Motza cakes eaten by Jews at Passover may, like the Good Friday bun, be a survival of a sun-sacrament. They are always of a round shape, and the *Jewish Chronicle* says that when a baker tried to introduce square ones he did not sell a single pound.

On Seder night, at Pesach, the Jews say: "Next year in Jerusalem." But they do not wish to go there, for all that. Moses knows a trick worth two of that.

The *Jewish Chronicle* (April 5) says it is amusing to note how anxious the Temperance Societies are to prove the unprovable. "The late Dr. Edersheim was offered one hundred pounds by such a society to prove that the wine mentioned in the New Testament miracle at Cana was unfermented, and, therefore, non-intoxicating. But he refused."

It adds: "Dr. Erich Harnack has just given the same folly a knock-down blow in his pamphlet, *Die Bibel und die alkoholischen Getränke*" (Berlin: B. Hirschwald; 1895). Total abstinence may be a desirable thing, but it is the sheerest ignorance to argue that the wine of the Bible was non-alcoholic.

Samuel Fox has a follower in Edward Pickard, another Quaker, who was turned out of Truro Cathedral for keeping on his hat. He maintained that the building was national property, and that he was within his legal rights; but he was marched out by the wardens. There is a long report in *Lake's Falmouth Packet*. Pickard said: "The fact is you mustn't wear your own hat—that is, you mustn't possess your own head—on the priests' premises."

The *Philadelphia Times* (U.S.A.) reports the prosecution of Joseph and Elizabeth Copestake, of Fifty-Second and Wakefield-streets, by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. They had subjected their two boys, John and Joseph, aged respectively eight and eleven, to frightful tortures. Their hands were tied to the cellar water-pipe on cold days, and they were stripped naked and denied food. One time their feet were placed in a bucket of ice-cold water; another time they were compelled to place their hands on a red-hot stove. All this was done for the children's good. "All that we did," said Copestake, "was done in a Christian spirit." "Where did you get your idea of Christianity?" asked the magistrate. "From the Bible," was the reply.

An American committee of women is charged with the task of getting out a revision of the Bible which will show the mistranslations in other editions, so far as woman is concerned. It seems to be the notion of the committee that the "we" in Genesis includes the "motherhood of god," instead of the polytheism of the writer, as is undoubtedly the case. This is another instance of attempting to read into the Scriptures what the reader-in wants there.

A clergyman died in his pulpit at Dayton, Ohio, while delivering his sermon. This, of course, was in due process of nature; but had a Spiritualist or Agnostic lecturer died under similar circumstances, the religious press would have proclaimed it an act of God, to punish the offender for disbelief of his holy teaching.—*Progressive Thinker*.

Ingersoll once told a story of a Yankee who visited Mount Ararat and brought away a stone with him, which he exhibited at a Sunday-school in the United States as a proof of Noah's Flood. The Rev. James Gibson, Methodist New Connection minister, of Hucknall Torkard, is not quite so bad as that Yankee, but he is bad enough. Having recently visited Rome, he has much to say about the Catacombs, and he pretends to have found in them proofs that there were Christians in Rome at the time of the Ascension! Every scholar knows that this is utter nonsense. Mr. Gibson draws upon his imagination too largely. He says that "for 250 years it was death to confess Christianity." Of course the statement is ridiculously false.

At the recent County Council elections in London the following conversation took place between the wife of a Secularist and a canvasser on behalf of a sky-pilot: "Good morning, madam. Is Mr. R. in, please?" "No, he is not. I am Mrs. R." "When will it be convenient for me to see him?" "Any time after seven this evening." "Is your husband a Moderate or a Progressive?" "I don't know which he is." "What paper does he read?" "The *Freethinker*." "Um! Ah! Good day, madam."

### Too Much for Poor Human Nature.

The Moravians, it is stated, send wives out to their missionaries, who are not allowed to choose for themselves, for the very proper reason that men who do this frequently fall in love with their wives, and love interferes with the true missionary spirit. A third wife was once sent to a twice-afflicted widower. He boarded the ship when she arrived. The bride came upon deck to meet her bridegroom. She advanced with downcast eyes and blushing cheeks. It was an anxious moment. The officers of the ship stood by. The sympathising passengers expected a meeting of real pathos and of edification. The bride raised her head and stood before her chosen. Alas, all he said, as he smote his brow, was, "Ach, Himmel, red hair again!"



Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, April 14, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London :— 7.30, "The Romance of the Resurrection."  
 Wednesday and Thursday, April 17 and 18, debate at the Public Hall, New Brompton, with Rev. A. J. Waldron, of the Christian Evidence Society, on "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"  
 April 21, Glasgow; 28, Sunderland.  
 May 8 and 9, debate at Derby with Mr. Lee (C.E.S.).

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—April 14, Liverpool; 21, m. Walworth Radical Club, e. Hall of Science; 28, Hall of Science. May 5, Glasgow; 12, Dundee; 19, Camberwell; 26, Manchester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.  
 FAIR PLAY (Manchester).—We referred to the matter in last week's "Acid Drops." Powell as a member of the N.S.S. is ineffably ludicrous. Could you not see through such folly?  
 CHARLES HARDING, 2 Sydenham-terrace, Fratton, Portsmouth, is now secretary of the local N.S.S. Branch, in place of Mr. Hore, who has resigned. C. W. Loveridge, 200 Fawcett-road, Southsea, is corresponding secretary. The Branch will hold no regular meetings during the summer.  
 J. M. (Liverpool).—The quarrel between the two libellers is amusing, but we do not intend to notice either of them any further, unless we get an opportunity of making them suffer in purse or person for their sweet exhibitions of Christian charity. It is bad policy to give them the advertisement without the punishment.  
 T. DUNBAR.—Thanks. See paragraph.  
 MARK NIXON.—Glad to have your cheerful letter. We remember your telling us personally about that Christmas Number.  
 A. COMLEY.—We are publishing the Hall of Science Libel Case in a separate form. It will be ready for circulation soon after this number of the *Freethinker* is published. What we said at Bristol is quite true. Every religious idea and moral maxim in the Gospels was common property before the Christian era. Jesus taught nothing, except belief in himself, with which the world was not already familiar.  
 J. G. BARTRAM.—Your letter is manly. You did quite right in leaving that braggart severely alone. A fellow who can advertise himself as "the most able champion of Christian Evidences over heard" should undergo medical treatment. It is amusing to hear that "the infidels dread him." We know the Debate is still sold, but it has been expurgated since the trial.  
 ANTI-CANT.—Obliged. See paragraph.  
 T. WISE.—(1) Many thanks for your kind and interesting letter. It is pleasant to find so much life and love for Freethought in one so old as yourself. (2) Certainly the damages in the Hall of Science libel case were ridiculous, but it was something to get a verdict, when a Freethinker was suing Christians. (3) A Branch of the N.S.S. would doubtless do well at Paddington. We are giving the whole subject of organisation, especially in London, our serious attention. It is pretty clear that ordinary democratic methods fail in all militant enterprises.  
 E. SMEDLEY.—Thanks for cutting. See paragraph. (1) Certainly the Bible is responsible for the superstition of witchcraft in Christian countries. It teaches demoniacal possession, even in the New Testament. Saul went to the Witch of Endor to raise the ghost of Samuel, and Exodus says, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." That single text has shed innocent blood enough to dye all the Bibles that were ever printed. (2) Protestants did burn witches as well as Catholics. (3) We cannot say whether Allan Ramsey was a sincere Christian. Few poets have been, unless they had the blues. (4) We agree with you that Mr. Watts's new pamphlet on Christ as a Social Reformer deserves a wide circulation.  
 F. CAREY.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks. We should like to see the whole Tyneside district the scene of an active propaganda.  
 W. FOSTER.—We did not recommend the lady because we were ignorant of her character and qualifications. Those who did recommend her now admit that they were grievously mistaken. Generous impulses are admirable, but they should only be gratified at one's own expense, not at the expense of others. It is dangerous, and even worse, to press untried and unknown persons upon the Secular platform, especially when it is complained that the lecturers already there are far too little employed.  
 SUNDERLAND READER.—We understood that the Branch enrolled some new members, but we were not apprised of the number.  
 J. T. RONSON.—Commands to destroy the Canaanites are found in Deut. vii, 2, xx, 17. It was David who, when he took Rabbah, brought forth the people that were therein, and put them under saws, and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron, and made them pass through the brick kiln. And thus did he unto all the cities of the children of Ammon" (2 Samuel xii. 31).  
 W. J. GAINES.—(1) The Garibaldi passage was from his *Rule of the Monk*. The Maudslay passage was from the Unitarian Society's publication on *Monkery and Immorality*. (2) We are obliged to you for the N. R. quotation. Bradlaugh's challenge of Price Hughes's story is dealt with in our exposure of it. (3) Delighted to hear that we helped to bring you to Freethought.

As we go to press we learn from Nottingham (not from Rochdale) that the Rochdale Branch "strongly protests" against what it is pleased to call "the unconstitutional action of the Executive in overriding the votes of the Branches in the matter of the place of the Annual Conference." It was distinctly stated that there was but one vote for Nottingham above Bristol, and this became a tie when the London Branches made up their votes on the Executive. It must also be remembered that the vice-presidents have a voice in this matter, according to the old rule of practice. The real ground, however, for deciding on Bristol was that the Nottingham Branch had not complied with the conditions by guaranteeing a suitable place for the evening meeting. The Executive was unanimous, and the President kept perfectly neutral. The Rochdale Branch should really make enquiries before passing votes of censure.

A. G. LEVETT.—Thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Stockholm Dagens Nyheter—Harbinger of Light—Echo—Blyth Bi-Weekly News—Clarion—Two Worlds—World's Advance Thought—Post—Universal Republic—Lake's Falmouth Packet—Crescent—Bradford Telegraph—Zoophilist—Huddersfield Examiner—Liberator—Financial Bulletin—Dawn of Day—Twentieth Century—Truthseeker—Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento—Newcastle Leader—Isle of Man Times—Cape Times—Review of Reviews—Forum Library—New York Sun—Non-Sectarian—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Chanter's Magazine.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

THE HALL OF SCIENCE.

MR. R. O. SMITH offers to take £525 in cash, and £75 in paid-up shares, to satisfy his entire claim as vendor and mortgagee on the lease of the Hall of Science. The original purchase-money was to be £3,000 for the lease, fixtures, and furniture. Of this sum £1,400 has already been paid. It will be seen, therefore, that the new arrangement involves the considerable reduction of £1,000.

Mr. Smith stipulates that the matter shall be settled during the present month of April. The Board of Directors of the National Secular Hall Society, Limited, at a meeting in Mr. George Anderson's office, agreed to satisfy Mr. Smith's claim on this basis, if possible; and authorised me to appeal to the Freethought party for its prompt and generous support.

Prospectively there can be no doubt as to the value of the lease. The neighborhood is a rapidly improving one, and in another ten or fifteen years the lease should be a first-rate marketable property.

Upon this site it is intended to erect new premises, which shall be suitable headquarters for the Secular party and a worthy memorial to Charles Bradlaugh.

To acquire the unencumbered lease is the first necessity, and I earnestly appeal to the Secular party for the means. Existing shareholders may increase the number of their shares. Non-shareholders may take shares immediately. They are £1 each, payable at once, or in instalments of 2s. 6d. on application, 2s. 6d. on allotment, and 2s. 6d. per call afterwards. Friends of the movement who do not wish to become shareholders can forward donations, which will be invested as shares in the name of any person they please, or in the name of the National Secular Society.

Intending shareholders may save time, which is very important in the circumstances, by filling in the application form which will be found in the *Freethinker* advertisement columns.



This is a great opportunity, and every Freethinker should ask himself, "What can I do in this crisis?" and then do it. The law of the country is against us; it treats us with indignity and injustice; it deprives us of the proprietary rights which are enjoyed by all religious bodies; but this is a reason why we should tax ourselves all the more freely, and even severely, for the great cause for which some of us have suffered, and for which some of us would die.

No one can say that I have spared myself in this enterprise. A few intimate friends know what time and trouble it has cost me. And it may cost me even more in the future; for I am resolved that no more quarrels or disputes shall arise from divided responsibility. Still, fresh precept must be enforced by fresh example. I propose, therefore, by way of encouraging others, to give the whole proceeds that accrue to me from last Sunday's and this Sunday's lectures. I am only a poor man, with many claims and heavy obligations. There are many members of the Secular party who are more fortunately situated. I appeal to them to do their best in this emergency. And I also appeal to all others, even to the poorest, who can only take a share or give a shilling.

We have vindicated the reputation of the London Hall of Science, and indirectly the memory of Charles Bradlaugh, against infamous libellers. Let us now acquire and renovate the one, and do a still greater justice to the other. Let us build a Freethought temple on the spot which was consecrated by the eloquence of one of the noblest heroes who ever battled for truth and liberty.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was another capital audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Death of God and the Life of Humanity." His discourse was highly appreciated and rapturously applauded. Mr. Foote occupies the same platform again this evening (April 14), and will take a particularly seasonable subject—"The Romance of the Resurrection; or, Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" It should be noted that the Sunday evening lectures now commence at *half-past seven*.

Mr. Foote's debate with the Rev. A. J. Waldron on "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" takes place in the Public Hall, New Brompton, Kent, next Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Major Scott Moncrieff, R.E., and Mr. Charles Watts are to be chairmen. The joint-committee have made a curious arrangement. Both chairmen are to act each evening; the Major is to keep Mr. Foote in order, and Mr. Watts is to keep the reverend gentlemen in order. We shudder to think what would happen if the chairmen differed. Perhaps the debaters would have to keep *them* in order.

There is sure to be a crowd to hear the debate. The Christians expect to see the infidel "wiped out." They generally do—and they are generally mistaken. If anything happens to Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts will be there to bring home the fragments.

Freethinkers or Secularists residing in or near New Brompton are requested to purchase their tickets for the debate in the Public Hall, on the 17th and 18th inst., *re* Rev. Waldron *v.* G. W. Foote, upon "Did Christ Rise?" on or before the 14th inst., after which date they will be sold to the public.

Mr. Charles Watts had three excellent audiences last Sunday at Sheffield. Friends from surrounding districts mustered in good force. Mr. Watts, we are informed, was in his best form, and he received hearty applause from his audiences, who were evidently pleased with what the chairman termed "an original and intellectual treat." All the *Freethinkers* on hand were sold by the close of the afternoon meeting.

Mr. Watts lectures to-day, Sunday, April 14, three times at Liverpool.

Mr. Putnam, the President of the American Secular Union, will arrive in England probably on May 1. As

we announced last week, he will be met at Southampton by Messrs. Foote and Watts. His first lecture will be at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, May 3, when Mr. Foote will preside. Mr. Putnam's subsequent lectures in this country are being organised by Mr. Watts, to whom all applications should be made immediately.

Mr. Putnam will attend the Annual Conference of the N.S.S. at Bristol, and read a special letter to the English Freethinkers from Colonel Ingersoll. Out of respect to our American visitor, it is to be hoped that the chronic grumblers will take a holiday on that occasion.

The report of the Hall of Science libel case is being issued in pamphlet form by Mr. Foote. Besides the verbatim report, which appeared in the *Freethinker* after the trial, the pamphlet includes an historical and critical Introduction, and an account of the so-called "Leeds orgies," which have for so many years been the principal stock-in-trade of a certain class of Christian Evidencers. The delay in issuing the pamphlet has chiefly arisen from Mr. Foote's desire to be overwhelmingly accurate, so as to leave no possible room for further misrepresentation. We appeal to Freethinkers to spread this pamphlet broadcast. Whether they do so or not, we have incurred the expense of producing it as "a piece of justification"—to borrow a French phrase. It appears to us that a permanent account of the libel action is almost as necessary as the libel action was itself. To publish it is an act of policy, and to circulate it is an act of duty. The pamphlet runs to sixty-four close-printed pages, and the price is only threepence. The first edition will not, at this price, pay for the cost of production; but we shall be happy to reprint for a larger demand. It is our intention to send a copy to all the religious journals in the kingdom, and to the leading daily and weekly newspapers. The pamphlet will be on sale soon after the issue of this week's *Freethinker*.

The Newcastle papers report the funeral of Mr. Joseph Brown, late secretary of the North-Eastern Secular Federation, whose death was announced in our last issue. The *Daily Leader* notices that "there was no clergyman present, nor was there the usual tolling of the bell." Mr. C. Cohen spoke at the graveside "with solemn impressiveness." The *Evening Chronicle* calls his address "a neat and beautifully-worded oration."

We are pleased to note that Professor Huxley, who has passed through a severe attack of influenza, is much better. He is a fighter who could ill be spared.

At Rome the funeral of Signor Rosea, the founder of an anti-clerical club and a prominent Freemason, was made the occasion of an anti-clerical demonstration. No priest had been allowed to visit the dying Freethinker, who passed away quite serenely. But the hearse bore the emblem of the cross. This was at once objected to and covered over with the banner of the Giordano Bruno Association, "to the great satisfaction of the anti-clericals," says the paper. The body was cremated.

A new Freethought journal has appeared in the republic of Argentina. Its name is *Giordano Bruno*.

They had a religious census at Bulawayo, South Africa, the total population of the township being 1,537. Of these the Church of England numbered 974; Lutherans, 98; Roman Catholics, 95; Jews, 92; Presbyterians, 90; Dutch Reformed, 86; Wesleyans, 61; Baptists, 10; no religion, 7; Freethinkers, 4; Free Church, 3; Congregationalists, 2; Greek Church, 6; Agnostics, 2; Atheists, 2; Deists, 2; Pantheist, 1; Pagan, 1. Evidently there are a few heretics not afraid of declaring themselves so at Bulawayo.

Freethinkers owe a special debt of gratitude to Mr. Speaker Peel. When that masterful man got into the chair he speedily put an end to the baiting of Bradlaugh, which the Tories and bigots had indulged in for four years, and which neither Mr. Speaker Brand nor Mr. Gladstone had been able to stop. All that was really wanted was firmness, and that Mr. Speaker Peel brought to his new post. There was a stir among the young bloods of the "stupid party" as Bradlaugh approached the table to be sworn in, but the new Speaker would not tolerate any unconstitutional interference, and Bradlaugh took his seat and held it unchallenged. What a blessing it is to have a strong man in a responsible position!

The authorities at Dusseldorf, Heinrich Heine's birthplace, would not find a place for his statue, and it is now suggested that the monument should be sent to New York and placed in the Central Park there.

Mr. Walter R. Cassells, the author of *Supernatural Religion*, writes in this month's *Nineteenth Century* on the "Diatessaron of Tatian." He contends that, allowing everything that is claimed for the Diatessaron, it does not give us any



earlier date than A.D. 140 for the Gospel of John, and leaves us without any proof of the apostolical authorship of that Gospel.

The South Shields Branch, which was very successful with its social gatherings at Christmas and New Year, announces a Soiree for Easter Monday. It is only necessary to mention that this will be under the able management of Messrs. White and Bow to ensure that all the arrangements will be satisfactory. To commence at 7.30. Double ticket, 2s. 6d. Refreshments; moderate prices.

The Chatham friends intend having a tea on Good Friday, at 4.30, price 6d. Social in the evening, price 1s. Tickets for Tea and Social, 1s. 3d. Just the place to go and spend a pleasant time; dancing till 2 a.m.

The Huddersfield Branch sends us its printed balance-sheet for the year ending March 31. There appears to have been very little lecturing done in that period, chiefly owing, we believe, to the difficulty in obtaining halls. Huddersfield contains some sturdy Freethinkers, and we should like to see them working under more favorable conditions.

We print in another column a characteristic letter from Father Ignatius. It is impossible not to feel a certain sympathy with him in his protest against "infidelity" in the Church. At the same time, we cannot help feeling that the necessity for his honest indignation only marks the irresistible progress of the spirit of Freethought.

The American press has unanimously condemned the New Jersey sky-pilots who sought to prevent Colonel Ingersoll from speaking at Hoboken. The *New York Commercial Advertiser* says: "It is humiliating and pitiful, the efforts of inefficient preachers to enforce by law the respect for the Bible which their feeble tongues are not able to inspire. They have had centuries in which to promulgate the faith they profess, and yet we find them returning once more to the methods of the Puritans, who, seeking religious freedom, persecuted the good Quakers and waged bloody war on poor old women accused of witchcraft."

The *Duluth News-Tribune* remarks: "It is absurd to say that Mr. Ingersoll may not entertain any views that please him, or that he may not expound his views, so that he keeps within the bounds, not of prejudice, but of decency and common morality. If Mr. Ingersoll takes Sunday as a day for argument and discussion, it is the Christian Church which has set him the example, and Mr. Ingersoll, it must be remembered, does not pretend to regard the day as sacred."

The *Christian Register* (Unitarian) says: "Col. Ingersoll's lectures, though they may offend good taste, are not any more blasphemous than a theology which made God a cruel Devil and the majority of mankind the victims of his unrighteous hatred. For ministers who preach such doctrines to accuse Colonel Ingersoll of blasphemy is a parody on reverence."

The *New York Morning Journal* devotes nearly a column to a description of the roof garden of 400 Fifth-avenue, New York, where the grandchildren of Colonel Ingersoll have just as much fun up there as the other little folks do, and ain't so likely to get run over, or to catch diphtheria, scarlet fever, mumps, bad manners, or bad English, as they would be on the street. Colonel Ingersoll goes up there to play with them. He has a good time with his grandchildren. In the drawing-room of the house is an enlarged photograph of the champion of Freethought, with his two little ones hanging about his neck."

*De Dageraud* opens its April number with a paper by F. Domela Nieuwenhuis, the leading Dutch Socialist, entitled "The Way to Canossa." Mr. Wheeler's account of "The Religion of the Bab" is also translated by J. van der Ende, for the benefit of the readers of *De Dageraud*.

Professor O. M. Marsh, the distinguished naturalist of Yale College, contributes a paper to the *American Journal of Science* on the discovery of a missing link in Java. He cautiously affirms that Dr. Dubois "has proved to science the existence of a new prehistoric form, not human indeed, but in size, brain power, and erect posture much nearer than any animal hitherto discovered, living or extinct." He, however, expresses without reservation the opinion that now, "when zeal for exploration is so great," the discovery of additional remains of "still other intermediate forms" "may be expected at no distant day." He indicates the tropical region of both Asia and Africa as the most inviting fields for such ambitious explorations.

"I may mention," writes a correspondent, "that it was one of your illustrations that first set me thinking about

religion. General Booth was depicted on his knees, and another fellow was pouring poison down his gullet. Some verses from the last chapter of Mark were underneath. Your fine work, *Infidel Death Beds*, was advertised on the back of the paper. I looked through the list of names given, among them being Stuart Mill and Lord Amberley. I at once obtained their works from our Free Library, and read them with avidity. After obtaining and reading Bradlaugh's works and your own, I developed into an uncompromising Freethinker."

At a recent meeting of the Blyth Trades Council, Mr. Carey, the local secretary of the Sailors' and Firemen's Union, raised a protest against the reading of the Bible in the Board schools. Mr. Douglass, the chairman, put on his hat and retired, but Mr. Nuttall got into the chair, and the debate continued. There was some pretty plain speaking, though no resolution was voted upon. A resolution, however, will come by-and-by. What is needed at present is agitation, and Mr. Carey deserves thanks for starting it at the Blyth Trades Council, whose members ought to see that the workers will never gain their full rights while they are trained up as slaves to superstition.

The Annual Conference of the National Secular Society will be held at Bristol on Whit-Sunday. We hope there will be a large attendance of delegates and individual members. Bristol is easy enough of access, and there is some delightful scenery in its neighborhood for those who can stay to see it. All notices of motion for the Conference agenda must be forwarded to Miss Vance, at 28 Stonecutter-street, not later than May 4. The financial year closes on April 27.

#### MR. S. P. PUTNAM.

NEXT week we shall insert a list of the lecturing engagements that Mr. Watts has made for Mr. Putnam. In the meantime we give below the subjects upon which our American friend will speak during his visit. Societies who have engaged Mr. Putnam will please select the subjects they prefer from the following:—

1. The Bible and Modern Thought.
2. Christ and the Nineteenth Century.
3. Secularism and Christianity.
4. Freethought and Morality.
5. Evolution and Creation.
6. Christianity and Woman.

Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll says: "Mr. Putnam believes Freethought has a future; that the time is coming when the superstitions of this world will be forgotten or remembered—some of them with smiles, many of them with tears. His abilities are of the highest order. He compels the admiration of everyone who really loves the just and true."

#### THE HIGHER CRITICISM AND "THE AGE OF REASON."

THE *New York Truth* has the following description of a striking scene in a recent Baptist Congress in Detroit:—

"President Harper and President Andrews, of Brown University, with others, had been advocating the methods of modern Higher Criticism, and saying that the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah were written by some other man, when Professor Howard Osgood, of Rochester, arose to reply. He spoke briefly, completely answered the Higher Critics, and then said: 'I have here an article, written almost exactly one hundred years ago. I will read it, and then tell you the name of the author.' He read a criticism on the Bible, and especially on Isaiah, advocating a double authorship of the latter, in almost exactly the language of Harper and his friends. He made a few comments upon the clearness of the ideas of the author, and showed his teachings to be identical with modern Higher Criticism. He then exclaimed after a long pause, 'The author of this paper was Thomas Paine.' The effect was wonderful. There was a look of surprise on the faces of the critics, and then, as the applause rang out, they looked as though they would like to escape. . . . It was carefully kept out of the papers for some reason."

This evidence that the conclusions of the Higher Critics had been put before the world a hundred years ago was looked upon as a great triumph of orthodoxy. It really is a proof of the unblushing effrontery of the Christians who reviled, tabooed, and persecuted the works of men whose conclusions were in advance of their time, but are now adopted by the most competent in the Church.



## RELIGION AND CRIME.

ELLEN DIETRICK, writing in the *Twentieth Century*, cites Dr. Buckley, editor of the *Methodist Advocate*, as saying that 90 per cent. of the criminals imprisoned at Sing-Sing had been Sunday-school scholars in their youth. Dr. Buckley, she says, was unable to find the real significance of his discovery. He seemed to see in it only another proof that "the heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," and to take it for granted that there could have been no defect in the early education of those criminals, for are not Sunday-schools absolutely devoted to good teaching?

But what does it mean when we find that any one set of criminals in our midst have had "orthodox" religious teaching in their youth; that the vast majority of the criminals in our prisons to-day are orthodox believers in dogmas of ecclesiasticism, and that only a very small proportion of Freethinkers are to be found among the prison population? What is the real significance embodied in the fact that 90 per cent. of those Sing-Sing criminals were unquestioning believers, and that Freethinkers contributed only 10 per cent. of evil-doers?

Arthur Macdonald, a profound and dispassionate student of and writer on "Criminology," admits that, "while some of the chiefs of the bands (of criminals) ridicule religion, the majority of criminals believe in it," and he quotes the testimony of European authorities on Criminology to the same effect. According to Lombroso, "61 per cent. of the violators and 56 per cent. of the assassins frequent the church." Out of two hundred assassins Ferri (another authority on Criminology) found only one who professed to be an Atheist, seven of the others showed an exaggerated religious devotion, five were strong in the faith, and the rest, while scoffing at the priests, affirmed that they believed in God. One said, "It does not depend upon me to be a good man; it is God who gives this sentiment."

Macdonald says that "a criminal, having killed twelve soldiers and a priest, believed himself invulnerable because he kept on his breast a consecrated offering. . . . A criminal, after strangling three women, was said to be the most assiduous and sincere at church and the confessional. . . . A woman criminal, who had strangled a little girl, on hearing her death sentence, turned and said, 'Death is nothing, the essential is to save the soul; as I have saved mine, I mock at the rest,' and so on, in innumerable cases."

Thus scientific students of Criminology agree that religious dogmas do not prevent vice and crime. They point out the characteristics of criminals as "much credulity," superficial cleverness, superstition, violent passions, bigotry, hypocrisy, and benevolence combined with vanity. "The great criminals," says Macdonald, "never foresee the possibility of their being discovered, and when they are they are astonished that they could have made such a 'great mistake!'" Swindlers are characteristically "lavish with their money." But while religion does not seem to have a restraining effect on those inclined to crime, scientific cultivation of the intelligence does decrease the tendency to wrong-doing. "Crime is very rare among mathematicians and natural scientists. Men of science in general find their investigations a pleasure in themselves; their work requires them to hold rigidly to the criticisms of the true. This training enables them to overcome their passions easier, and to see clearer how a criminal action is not only unjust, but illogical and of no profit, because the reaction comes back with full force upon the author of the crime."

## A NICE PARSON.

THE Rev. Henry Trewicke Biscoe, M.A., rector of Great Greenford, Middlesex, and formerly chaplain of King's College, Cambridge, appeared at Brentford yesterday for his public examination in bankruptcy. The debtor's statement of affairs showed liabilities, £2,470; assets, £8 6s. Mr. Biscoe said that, with the exception of a few tradesmen's debts and two sums owing to parish charities, his liabilities consisted wholly on amounts owing to money-lenders. He was instituted to the living of Great Greenford in 1890. Its annual net value was about £380, and there was a rectory house. He had had dealings with various money-lenders for twenty years, and lately the interest on the various loans had swallowed up pretty nearly the whole income of his living.

Questioned as to his connection with certain parish charities, the debtor said he was the acting trustee of Betham's Charity, which was left for the maintenance of a school at Greenford, and from which there was an annual income of about £210. He was the only person authorised to draw cheques on the school account, which was kept at the Fleet-street branch of Lloyds Bank. From 1892 to 1894 he drew £120 from the account, and he had not paid it in again.

OFFICIAL RECEIVER: You mean that you received the money and have appropriated it to your own purposes?

DEBTOR: Am I bound to answer that question?

OFFICIAL RECEIVER: Certainly; but I will put it in this way—Was any part of that money used for the purposes for which the charity was founded?

DEBTOR: No.

The Official Receiver next examined Mr. Biscoe as to an amount of £462, which he had stated that he owed to another parochial charity—Bennett's. Mr. Biscoe said that when he came to the parish there was an amount of £462 invested in consols. The interest amounted to about £12 a year, and the founder of the charity provided that a grant of £1 annually should be made to each of twelve poor parishioners of Greenford. The money was invested in his name and that of a Mr. Dix Perkin, who was now dead. After Mr. Perkin's death he sold out the stock.

What did you do with the money?—It was paid into my bank at Cambridge.

Used for your own purposes?—Yes.

Whose duty was it to investigate the accounts of the charity?—The vestry, I believe.

How do you justify these transactions?—I cannot attempt to justify them.

I should think not!

The examination was then adjourned, and the debtor was ordered to prepare a statement showing how he had disposed of the amounts received from Betham's and Bennett's Charities, and hand over to the Official Receiver all his books and papers.—*Morning Leader*, April 3, 1895.

## IMPLORA PACE.

WHEN I lie cauld beneath the mool,  
My death will gie but sma' concern;  
The railway trains will still be full,  
And steamboats crammed frae stem to stern.

When I lie cauld beneath the mool  
Others will stand in dead men's shoes,  
Wee rosy bairns will gang to school,  
And newspapers be fu' o' news.

But years tak' aff the gladsome zest,  
And a' grows wearisome and dull;  
There's naething after a' like rest  
For weary banes and aching skull;

Rest from the joys and pains o' sense,  
Rest from the east wind and the snaw,  
Rest from a wrangle about pence;  
Rest from divinity and law.

—Henry Glassford Bell.

## Obituary.

It is my painful duty to record the death of one of the oldest members of the Newcastle Branch. Mr. W. Bell died from bronchitis, at his residence, on Saturday, March 30, aged fifty-three years, and was buried at St. Andrew's Cemetery on Tuesday, April 2. Mr. C. Cohen read the burial service by Austin Holyoake in an impressive manner to a large number of friends. Deceased had been connected with the Secular movement for over twenty years, and right up to his last illness, took a prominent part in the Sunday Music Society. Needless to add, he died as he lived, an earnest Freethinker. He leaves a widow and family of four to mourn his loss.

MR. JOSEPH BROWN, late Secretary of the North-Eastern Secular Federation, whose death was announced last week, was interred at Elswick Cemetery. On this occasion Mr. C. Cohen gave a beautifully-worded and impressive extempore address, which won the admiration of all present. The South Shields Branch was represented by Messrs. Peacock, Chapman, White, and Thompson; Sunderland, by Messrs. Duncan and Robert Tate; Newcastle, by Messrs. Cresswell, Summerfield, Start, Mem, Richardson, Bennett, Bartram, and others. Mr. Brown also leaves a widow and son to lament their loss. A brief sketch of Mr. Brown's career appeared in the *Freethinker* of May 7, 1893.—J. G. BARTRAM.

PROFESSOR PETER H. VANDER WEYDE, a distinguished man of science, died at his home in New York on March 18. He was born in Nymegen, Holland, eighty-two years ago. The chair of Industrial Science was expressly created for him at Girard College in 1864. He was one of the editors of Appleton's American Cyclopaedia; editor of the *Manufacturer and Builder*; took out over two hundred patents on inventions of his own, mostly electrical; was noted as a musician and composer, and was a painter of no mean merit. He wrote much for the scientific press, completing only a week before his death an article on modern electricity. Professor Vander Weyde was a radical Freethinker, and for some years a prominent member of the Manhattan Liberal Club.



## CORRESPONDENCE.

AN APPEAL TO THE DEVOTEES OF THE  
THREE F's.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I think myself that all persons should be vegetarians, and when it is objected that such and such a one has tried vegetarianism and failed, and therefore it does not suit him, I answer, the trial has not been of the right sort—not the proper food, or not long enough taken. I am afraid that want of success lies in the ever-recurring craving for the "too too solid flesh," dread of ridicule, or of the defection of friends. Nevertheless, I say that, as there are far more momentous interests at issue than the above (hard nuts as they appear to be), these should not be allowed to stand in the way of our ultimate self-conversion.

There is, we know, very little new that can be written in support of the system, which to me simply spells *right* or *normal*, in the same way as the eating of an animal brought into being solely to be murdered (whether "humanely," "scientifically," or what not, matters nothing) for our tables, would mean all which is *wrong*. That a man "gets his bob's worth," and with it conveys to his body material which keeps the machinery in the best repair; that neither his muscles nor his mind are one whit the worse off; and that he might count on a long life of happiness by being a vegetarian, is no news to most.

As a Secularist—that is, in the sense of not being a religionist, having no sympathy with Church or Bible cant—I earnestly ask all Secularists to give vegetarianism a patient, thorough trial, and not be beaten back by the banter of the unco' clever ones, nor be allured by odors of the only too-welcome roast beef or mutton, and then they will discover what is doubtless news to the many—that life has undergone a metamorphosis of so satisfactory a character, the wonder will be that of not having become a vegetarian long ago. It will be discovered that things difficult or impossible of accomplishment upon a flesh diet are got through with the greatest ease when living upon a wisely-chosen vegetarian diet. In like manner, losses, disappointments, and sorrows, which upon the artificial mode of living cause the most poignant suffering, lose their sting by virtue of vegetarianism.

In urging people on to the adoption of our diet, I must be understood to include women. I think it necessary to mention this, the inference almost invariably being that vegetarians are of the male gender. Pleasant for the human species ultimately if such were the fact. If it is proper for the "sterner sex" to banquet without slaughter, how much more appropriate is it to the "gentler sex." Women, by the way, make a rare fuss over their offspring, and are in a frenzy of fear lest any hurt should befall them. It would be but natural and fair if they could let their thoughts dwell occasionally upon the like solicitude of other animals for their young. High time is it that this matter was pondered seriously by both sexes. Save for the possession of a more articulate voice, and the capacity for doing more harm in general, by what right are we to be considered before those species which are doomed for the roasting-jack or the skillet? Why are these goodly-shaped, inoffensive ones to be so slighted?

As all Secularists aim at the attainment of *manliness*, what could tend more to that consummation than the endeavor—per vegetarianism—to save from murder and its attendant cruelties the less formidably-equipped species? Surely it is something highly laudable and consolatory to be one of those who not only cannot endure the thought of, but actually help to do away with, the daily barbarities inseparable from making ready animals for the table. Those who touch no "animal food" eat but their legitimate provender, and cannot consequently be robbing anyone else of his or hers.

Again, having regard to the vital subject of population, vegetarians, for two cogent reasons at least, will never overstock the world with children. Finding his all-sufficient, no vegetarian covets the goods of another, nor does anyone suffer by the non-payment of his just debts, because a vegetarian never lives beyond his means. Looking at the matter in this light, it is clear that, in proportion as all become non-flesheaters, less emigration from one's own native country on the risk of earning a livelihood elsewhere is an inevitable consequence.

To sum up, the full benefits can only be acquired by total renunciation of flesh-meat (harsh condition as that may seem), for there is no comparison between the results obtained from "little meat eating" and those obtained from no meat eating. The latter is a *sine qua non*. Speaking for my wife as well as myself, it is perhaps worthy of remark that we look upon our non-flesheating as a matter of course, and prove our right to such by the fact that we never require the aid of doctor or physic, and that we literally live and let live.

P. H. ECHLIN.

## VEGETARIAN RECIPES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—From time to time I read with interest your kindly notice of the question of vegetarianism in the columns of your paper, and have ventured to hope you would allow me to express my willingness to send *free*, to any of your readers, recipes for the preparation of cheap, simple, and nourishing vegetarian dishes, along with a few recipes which will, I am sure, be found most useful by housewives and all interested in this question.

ALBERT BROADBENT.

9 Peter-street, Manchester.

## THE FAITH THAT IS LOST.

NAY, nay, I do not seek again  
The faith of childhood lost to me—  
The legend of the holy tree;  
The legend of a savior slain.

Nay, nay! I do not wish to live  
Through bitter restlessness and pain  
To struggle with the Truth again,  
And seek the joy Faith could not give.

For now my fight with Faith is done,  
And thought is free as earth is wide  
To seek the Truth Faith fain would hide  
Until my fight with Life is done.

THE GABERLUNZIE.

## From the North.

The South Shields Branch, after a long absence, last Sunday returned to its old retreat, Captain Duncan's Navigation School. There was a very good attendance. The president, Mr. J. M. Peacock, occupied the chair. The evening was chiefly spent in reviewing Mr. Cohen's mission and its results. Mr. White, the treasurer, reported that there was a small deficit on the six months, but it was generally agreed that, everything—especially bad weather—considered, the course had been very successful. The lectures had included, besides anti-theological, ethical, biographical, and historical discourses, both interesting and instructive to old Freethinkers as well as our younger friends. The gratifying result was largely due to the marked ability of our lecturer, who has made many new and sincere friends during his stay in the district. It was decided to ask him to visit South Shields when he comes North in June. It was also decided to communicate with Mr. Watts in reference to Mr. Putnam. A vote of condolence with the widow of Mr. Joseph Brown, of Newcastle, who was well known to the South Shields friends, was passed unanimously.—R. CHAPMAN.

## PROFANE JOKES.

It is a theological error to suppose that Adam lost anything by exchanging the Garden of Eden for the whole wide world. He "gained ground" by the operation.

"Is your rector High Church?" "Oh, yes." "I suppose he calls sin, then, a moral obliquity?" "Higher than that. He calls it a psychological eccentricity."

Scene—Country House. Host—"Why, you're surely not going to bed yet, Captain? We're going to have prayers, presently." Captain—"Aw, yes, thanks very much. I never take anything after dinner."

A little girl in a western town, after studying for some time a picture of the Magdalen reclining on her face and weeping, suddenly turned to her mother, and exclaimed: "Mamma, I know why Mrs. Magdalen is crying. It is because Mr. Magdalen does not buy her clothes enough."

An old-fashioned cathedral verger, "lord of the aisles," saw a pious visitor on his knees. The verger hastened up to him and said, in a tone of indignant excitement: "The services in this cathedral are at ten in the morning and at four in the afternoon, and we don't have no fancy prayers."

A preacher at an open-air meeting was holding forth on temperance. "When Dives was in h— what did he call for? Did he call for stout? No. Did he ask for bitter? No. Did he ask for brandy or champagne? No. He asked for water. What does that prove, dear friends?" and he paused, when a toper in the crowd called out, "It proves where all you blooming teetotalers go to!"



## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

## LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Romance of the Resurrection; or Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, L. Hewitt, "Pompeii: Past and Present"—lantern illustrations. (Free.) Easter Monday and Tuesday, at 8, social gatherings for N.S.S. members and friends.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."

EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road, E.): 8, Dr. Stanton Coit, "Does Evolution Justify the Ways of God to Man?"

## OPEN AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Christianity or Civilisation?"

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "The Brain or the Bible."

DEPTFORD BROADWAY: 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Atonement."

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7, a lecture. Thursday, at 8.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Resurrection."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, J. Fagan, "The Apostles' Creed"; 3.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."

MILE END WASTE: 11.15, A. B. Moss, "Ancient Saints and Modern Sinners."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul and Science."

VICTORIA PARK: 11.15, St. John will lecture; 3, A. B. Moss will lecture.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton, "Some Old Tales Re-told"; 7, "Under which Flag?"

## COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, social gathering.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, S. J. Boorman will lecture; 7, dramatic entertainment.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class; 6.30, J. Cowie, "Our Currency: Its Imperfections, and a Remedy."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 2.30, Hunter Watts, "A Mad World"; 7, "A Glad World."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Charles Watts, "Trust in God a Delusion"; 3, "Theism Tried and Found Wanting"; 7, "Christianity: Its Birth, Reign, and Death."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): See Friday's *Evening News* for announcement.

NOTTINGHAM (Woodland Hall, Woodland-place, N. Parliament-street): 7, James Hooper will lecture.

NEWCASTLE ON-TYNE (Northumberland Hall, High Friar-street): 3, C. Cohen, "The Dream of Immortality"; 7, "Christianity and Morality."

ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 6.30, Sam Standing, "Mrs. Besant on Re-incarnation."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, musical and other recitals.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Baring-street Board Schools): Easter Monday, at 7.30, soiree.

STOCKTON-ON-TEE: (32 Dovecote-street): 6, G. Wallace, "Was Jesus Christ a Social Reformer?"

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, opposite *Echo* office): 7, The Secretary, "The Folly of Prayer."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

DERBY (Market-place): 6.45, Mr. Briggs will lecture.

NEWCASTLE ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, C. Cohen will lecture.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 11, Sam Standing, "Some Events of the Week"; 3, "The Resurrection."

## Lecturers' Engagements.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Sunnyside, 72 Union-grove, Clapham, London, S.W.—April 21, West Ham; 28, Manchester. May 5, Sheffield.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London. E.—April 14, 21, 28, Newcastle-on-Tyne. May 2, Wood Green; 5, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Edmonton; 9, Wood Green; 12, Sheffield; 19, Manchester; 23, Wood Green; 26, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Wood Green; 30, Wood Green.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London.—April 14, m. Pimlico Pier, a. Hyde Park, e. Camberwell; 21, m. Victoria Park, a. Tottenham, e. Deptford; 25, Hammersmith; 28, m. Battersea, a. Victoria Park. May 5, m. Finsbury Park, e. Battersea; 12, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 19, m. Finsbury, e. Deptford; 22, Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London.—April 14, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 21, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 28, m. Camberwell. May 5, a. Finsbury Park; 12, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park; 19, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith; 26, Clerkenwell.

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