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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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EASTER AND ITS CUSTOMS.

EASTER is the Sunday following the first full moon after March 21. The fact that it is a movable date should suggest that it was an astronomical festival, and not one celebrating any human event. If some crucified Jew rose from the dead, he must have done so on a particular day, and the anniversary of that day should be regularly kept. But Christians have never fixed even the year when their man God is said to have crossed swords with Death and won. The ascription of the crucifixion to a Friday, the first day of the Passover, is incorrect, for, according to fixed rules of the Jewish calendar, the first day of Passover never can fall on a Friday, and to suppose that Jesus was crucified during the sacred festival is as absurd as to allege that some English criminal was hanged on a Sunday or Christmas Day!

The name Easter, from Eostre, the Saxon goddess of the East, standing for the dawn and spring, expresses its real meaning. The Saxon Oster means "to rise." The resurrection celebrated at this time is that of vegetation, the bursting of life from the underworld, the triumph of light, warmth, beauty, and promise of plenty over winter and scarcity.

The determination of Easter by the moon is a sign of its antiquity.* Our hot-cross buns on Good Friday are really similar to the cakes which Jeremiah xlv. 19 speaks of as made for the queen of heaven. All the chief customs in connection with Easter show both its antiquity and its foundation in nature-worship rather than in Christianity.

Easter time brings in various games. Many of these, such as marbles, whipping tops, battledore and shuttlecock, are really portions of ancient magic. Ball-playing was an ancient rite, and formerly was practised both outside the church walls and inside the church at Easter.†

The custom of wearing new clothes, like the sports of Easter, is probably part of the Sympathetic Magic to which I have devoted a chapter in my *Footsteps of the Past*, in which, by the way, I have given fuller explanations of some Easter customs than is here possible. Few in the towns now take heed of the old admonition—

At Easter let your clothes be new,
Or else be sure you will it rue.

But in some parts of the country this is still an article of popular belief and practice.

Much has been written on Easter eggs. Early philosophy places the seat of life not in a cell, but in an egg. The virtue of the egg was supposed to go into the eater. In parts of Ireland still the custom prevails of the young men eating eggs on Easter day till they become well-nigh ill. In a more refined form we find the idea in the blessing of the eggs in the Roman missal. In Germany the plough is driven over a loaf, and an egg buried in the field, in order to secure a fruitful harvest; and the ploughman will eat two new-laid eggs on the newly-ploughed field. Thus the virtue passes not only from the egg to the eater, but from the eater to his possessions. Or, again, a loaf and an Easter egg are put into the first sheaf to ensure an abundant crop in the new year. Another custom was once common to England, Scotland, and Germany, where the

boys neither eat the eggs nor bury them, but simply roll them over the fields to enrich the seed corn beneath.*

To this day it is the custom in Jerusalem for the priests to pretend that miraculous fire descends at the Holy Sepulchre at Easter, and their votaries assemble to obtain light from the holy fire. Similar customs are almost world-wide. The ancient Germans used to go to the priest on Holy Saturday, that he may strike new fire from a flint, whereat they lit their own. Bishop Boniface wrote to Rome to ask if they knew the custom there. Pope Zachary replied that they knew it not.† But the Church, ever quick to see how pagan ceremonies might be transformed, took up the new fire, and embodied it in the Office for Holy Saturday. A similar ritual existed among the ancient Mexicans.‡

Brady, in his *Clavis Calendaris*, says of the old custom of "lifting" at Easter: "The Resurrection on the third day was originally designed to be typified by this indecent usage; and we have much to lament that so abominable a violation of Christian purity and simplicity should have triumphed over such a considerable lapse of time." I rather suspect that this was a charm or an imitation of sacrifice. At any rate, it typified not the raising up of Jesus Christ, but the elevation of vegetative life from the underworld.

It is certain that this resurrection was in olden time enacted, typified in a mummerly that probably was intended to bring it about. In my *Footsteps of the Past* I have sought to show that the custom of electing an Easter king, and that of watching the sepulchre, are remnants of this. Many of the analogies are brought out in that most suggestive book, *The Golden Bough*, of Mr. J. G. Frazer. The subject is too vast to be considered within the limits of the present article; but I must allude to the notable fact that such an enacted resurrection takes place to this day in Jerusalem. A figure of a dead person is placed in a sepulchre on Good Friday, and brought out arrayed in gorgeous garments on Sunday. Such customs were once as wide as Christendom. In Belgium, says the Rev. T. E. Bridgett (*Blunders and Forgeries*, p. 168), there is still to be seen a crucifix used formerly in the ceremonial of Holy Week. On Good Friday the arms could be depressed, so that it could be laid, together with the blessed Sacrament, in the sepulchre until the sacred host was placed inside the breast of the figure behind a crystal. At the Resurrection the figure was gorgeously dressed and placed seated above a high altar, with one arm raised in benediction.

Wriothesley records in his *Chronicle* that on November 29, 1547, being the first Sunday of Advent, Dr. Barlow, Bishop of St. David's, preached at St. Paul's Cross against idolatry, where "he showed a painted figure of the resurrection of our Lord made with vices [devices, movable joints], which put out his legs of sepulchre, and blessed with his hand and turned his head." Small wonder if the ignorant took such "vices" for miracles, like the weeping and winking virgins still extant on the continent, as is supposed to have been the case with the Rood at Bexley, Kent. Naageorgus refers to the custom in his *Popish Kingdome*:—

Another image doe they get, like one but newly deade,
With legges stretcht out at length, and handes upon his
body spreade:
And him with pomp and sacred song they beare unto his
grave,

* See articles on "Moon Worship," *Freethinker*, December 8 and 15, 1895.

† *Footsteps of the Past*, p. 172.

* *Antiquary*, April, 1882.

† Mannhardt, *Der Baumcultus der Germanen*, 503-518 ff.

‡ H. Bancroft's *Native Races of the Pacific*, iii., 393 ff.

His bodie all being wrapt in lawne, and silks and sarcenet
brave ;
And lest in grave he shoulde remaine without some com-
panie,
The singing bread is layde with him, for more idolatrie.

On Easter eve the fire all is quencht in every place,
And fresh again from out the flint is fetcht with solemn
grace.

The priest doth halow this against great dangers many
one,
A brande whereof doth every man with greedie minde take
home.

The image and the breade from out the grave (a worthie
sight)

They take, and Angels two they place in vesture white.
Another image of a conqueror they forth doe bring,
And on the altar place, and then, they lustily doe sing,
That gates of hell asunder burst and Satan overthrowne,
Christ from his grave is risen up and now alive is known.

Mr. Ernest Gardner, director of the British School of Archæology at Athens, gives the following account of the Easter ceremonies at Thebes, in Boetia: "On Good Friday the sacred picture of the dead Christ was laid on a sort of bier or structure resembling a four-post bed. The picture itself, the four posts, and the overhanging canopy were covered with flowers and green leaves. Every person came up to the bier, kissed the sacred picture, and carried away a flower or leaf from it, with the intention of keeping it until the Easter of the following year." Here the meaning of the festival is as clear as daylight. The dead Christ represents the life of the world departed in winter, but raised again at the crossing of the sun over the vernal equinox.

Easter, born in archaic times, the outcome of simple delight at the return of vegetation and brighter days, has grown with humanity and gathered to itself memorials of many religions. The Queen of Feasts is long antecedent to Christianity, and may long survive it. We keep the old Pagan festivals with new meanings, but they are still links which join us in old-world communion with nature and with our kind.

What custom wills, in all things should we do it ;
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And mountainous error be too highly heap'd
For truth to overpeer.

Yet much is to be said for the maintenance of old festivals that bind us at once to the fathers who have gone before and to the children who will follow after us.

J. M. WHEELER.

A GREAT ATHEIST'S PROSE.

JAMES THOMSON, who wrote for so many years in Free-thought periodicals—such as the *National Reformer*, the *Secularist*, and the *Liberal*—over the initials of "B.V.," was for long a close personal friend of Charles Bradlaugh. Both were uncompromising Atheists in their intellectual maturity, and that was their one point of similarity, as perhaps it was really their one strong link of attachment. In other respects they were widely different. Bradlaugh was very tall, and Thomson might be called short ; Bradlaugh was big and strong, and Thomson was slim and somewhat frail ; Bradlaugh was a man of action, and Thomson was a dreamer ; Bradlaugh looked after lots of people, and Thomson could barely look after himself ; Bradlaugh was a magnificent speaker, but comparatively no writer, and Thomson was a magnificent writer, and no speaker at all except in private conversation ; Bradlaugh won a great reputation as a propagandist, a politician, and finally as a statesman—and Thomson won, or did the work which is winning, a great reputation as a strong, original poet and a prose writer of singular force and distinction.

Owing to his poverty and obscurity, and the unpopularity of the journals to which he contributed, Thomson never made a figure in what is called the literary world. Some general recognition of his powers was accorded during the last year or two of his unhappy life, but it was too late to be more than an ironical gleam on his short pathway to the grave. And had it not been for the devotion of Mr. Bertram Dobell, the poet's death might have destroyed all chance of much further recognition for another fifty years. Mr. Dobell has published Thomson's works at his own

expense, and with a very doubtful prospect of return ; for Thomson's stern intellectual integrity, and utter absence of sentimentality and meretricious adornment, stand in the way of his ever becoming popular. He has already found an audience, however, fit though few ; and this audience is bound to increase—thanks very largely to Mr. Dobell's constant self-sacrifice on the altar of his dead friend's reputation.

Mr. Dobell published last year a collected edition, in two volumes, of Thomson's poems. Many of these productions had never been published before, but were printed direct from the poet's manuscript. Some day or other, and before long if possible, I hope to say something more about these precious volumes, which ought to be on the library shelves, and often in the hands, of every Freethinker who appreciates lofty poetry. Meanwhile, I desire to bespeak a Freethought public, and of course Freethought purchasers, for a beautiful volume of Thomson's prose, which Mr. Dobell has just issued. *Biographical and Critical Studies* is its title. It is complete in itself, though it is intended to be the first volume of a collected edition of Thomson's prose. "But it must be understood," the editor says, "that it will depend upon the reception of the present volume whether the publication of the remainder is proceeded with." May that reception be cordial enough to encourage Mr. Dobell in his disinterested enterprise ; may it lead to the completion of this noble project ; and when Thomson's prose, as well as his verse, is fully placed before the English-reading public of the whole world, the poet's lovers from of old will all cry "Well done !" feeling that in Mr. Dobell's case love *has* been stronger than death, and friendship has defied the grave.

And now for a little fault-finding ; it is *very* little, and may as well be dispatched immediately. Mr. Dobell mentions all but one of the publications in which these collected articles first appeared. Is there any reason for not stating that the long notice of Garth Wilkinson's *Improvisations* first appeared in the *Liberal* ? And has not Mr. Dobell made an awkward mistake in not following his own editorial policy in the collected edition of the poems, where he gives the dates of composition ? This is not a matter of trifling importance, for Thomson's passage to Atheism was slow and painful, and long after rejecting supernatural Christianity he clung to a half metaphysical and half poetical Pantheism. When the date of composition is appended to every article, the reader is able to understand the contradictory opinions of the author, as simply marking the different stages in his mental and spiritual development ; but, without the help of this chronology, the author's self-contradictions are bewildering. I have seen Thomson's opinion quoted against "Materialists," that "Blake and Swedenborg and other true mystics (Jesus among them) undoubtedly had senses other than ours." Thomson did, indeed, write thus in 1863, but in the article on "A Strange Book" (Garth Wilkinson's) sixteen years later he poured fierce scorn on Swedenborg's "rigid and frigid system," and pointedly disowned all belief in this "other senses" theory of mysticism. This is what he wrote then :—

"Divine inspiration, influx of the Spirit, and such phrases, are convenient for conveying a person's consciousness of being in ecstasy, lifted beyond his ordinary self, as they are consecrated by long usage ; but I disavow any theological or mythological dogmas which others may conceive involved in them. To myself, ecstasy, trance, inspiration, vision, revelation, are no less simply human and natural, though so much less common, than sleep and waking ; are just as susceptible of scientific explanation, though our science is not yet subtle and comprehensive enough to pervade them, as spring-tides or summer flowering and fruitage, or the *aurora borealis*. If a man be eight feet high, or only four feet, he is of very uncommon stature ; but in the one case he is not above, and in the other he is not below, the limits of humanity. You must prove the insufficiency of nature for any effect, before you can fairly claim our attention to assertions of the supernatural."

This extract is sufficiently decisive, and it occurs in a remarkable article, the conclusion of which is a piece of well-sustained eloquence, beginning with a final censure of Swedenborg's "dreary, monstrous madness which kept piecing and patching away, year after year, for a whole generation, all the shreds and tatters of Hebrew old clo's, in the desperate delusion of thus making a sufficient and everlasting garment for the illimitable Universe of Life."

The articles which rightly precede this one deal with Blake and Shelley; they are very finely written, but they must be read (we repeat) with a constant view to their date of composition. The article on Blake abounds in poetical criticism. Burns, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, and Browning, are all admirably appraised. Mrs. Browning is rightly accused of making "her style rugged with pedantry," and in *Aurora Leigh* she "sets out determined to walk the world with the great Shakespearean stride, whence desperate entanglement of feminine draperies and blinding swirls of dust." Thomson concludes his article on Shelley by styling him "poet of poets and purest of men," a description which he repeated in his dedication of *Vane's Story* to Shelley's memory.

The articles on John Wilson and James Hogg are well done, but such indifferent themes did not permit Thomson to kindle. How different are the succeeding papers on Robert Browning! Here we have Thomson at his best, and then he is hard to beat. Here is Thomson's view of Browning as man and poet:—

"I look up to Browning as one of the very few men known to me by their works who, with most cordial energy and invincible resolution, have lived thoroughly throughout the whole of their being, to the uttermost verge of all their capacities, in his case truly colossal; lived and wrought thoroughly in sense and soul and intellect; lived at home in all realms of nature and human nature, art and literature: whereas nearly all of us are really alive in but a small portion of our so much smaller beings, and drag wearily to the grave our for the most part dead selves, dead from the suicidal poison of misuse and atrophy of disuse. Confident and rejoicing in the storm and stress of the struggle, he has conquered life instead of being conquered by it; a victory so rare as to be almost unique, especially among poets in these latter days."

The longest article in this volume is on Ben Jonson. Originally contributed to *Cope's Tobacco Plant*, it deals largely with Ben's references to "the divine weed." This part of the article, even to a deep smoker, will perhaps be tedious; but all the rest is capital work and capital reading. There is a shorter, but most delightful, article on Saint-Amant, an early French poet, wit, smoker, and hard drinker; interspersed with deft renderings of select bits of versification. The opening article is on the great Rabelais, king of French humorists, who was always one of Thomson's favorites. Nothing equal to this has been written on Rabelais in English. Walter Besant is good, but he is so much thinner than Thomson. Rabelais is by no means a clean writer, according to present-day standards; but, as Coleridge said, his "caricature of filth and zanyism" shows "how fully he both knew and felt the danger in which he stood." Robert Burns reminded Tam O'Shanter that "in hell they'll roast thee like a herring," but they roasted you this side of hell in the days of Rabelais. He had seen his own friends burnt for thinking too freely, and he did not mean to share their fate if he could help it; so he covered his heresy with buffoonery, which did not hide it from the wise, though shielding him from bigots and persecutors. Speaking of the filth and dirt of this great writer, Thomson says he "had to use so much for mere disguise, like one crouching in a foul ditch in order to escape his enemies." Here is Thomson's summing-up on Rabelais:—

"I am inclined to look up to Rabelais as the greatest genius in French literature. Perhaps the very finest work in that literature has been done by Pascal, but Pascal's finest work is a series of fragments; and while as profound, he is narrow as an artesian well, in comparison with the oceanic amplitude and energy, as well as depth, of Rabelais. Of the humor I say nothing—it is proverbial; a frank, jolly laughter, unrestrained, diluvian, immense, inextinguishable as the laughter of the gods. His enormous erudition and knowledge are mere toys for his playtime; but throughout his whole work, or play, he gives you the sense of easiest power and mastery—at home in everything, rising with its theme as readily as it falls, never strained or fatigued, able to do what it likes, equal and more than equal to far more arduous things if it cared to undertake them; in short, with an indefinite reserve of capacity in all directions: and this I take to be the impression which only a supreme and Titanic genius can produce."

Such admirable writing ought not to lie buried in the columns of a defunct periodical, and I for one am thankful to Mr. Dobell for rescuing it from such oblivion.

G. W. FOOTE.

GOD AND HUMAN HAPPINESS.

THE endeavor to promote the general happiness of the community is a duty which we should all recognise, and one that we should, as far as possible, practically carry out. Whatever is calculated to aid in realising this desirable object of existence should have our hearty support. The popular theological notion is, that the happiness of mankind cannot be attained without a belief in God. It is further assumed by orthodox adherents that a disbelief in a supernatural providence is necessarily attended with personal misery and national disorder. Believing that such a notion and assumption are contrary to fact and to general experience, we propose to consider if there is any necessary connection between the belief in God and the enjoyment of human happiness; and also whether disbelief in such a being is the source of individual misery and societarian misfortunes. We are not here concerned with the question, Does God exist? but simply with the inquiry, Is faith in him indispensable to the tranquility of the mind and to the progress and well-being of society? It is not denied that God-believers are sometimes happy in their belief; but our contention is that there are persons who can be, and who are, supremely happy without such belief; and, further, that the world's advancement in all that adds to its brightness, dignity, and welfare depends upon natural, not supernatural, agencies.

This fact has been admitted, not only by some of our greatest philosophic and scientific thinkers, but also by some of the most eminent theologians. Jeremy Taylor, Drs. Blair, Hooker, and Chalmers, have all given it as their opinion that it is possible for a man to be moral independently of any religious belief; and the Bishop of Hereford, in his Bampton Lectures, says: "The principles of morality are founded in our nature, independently of any religious belief, and are, in fact, obligatory even upon the Atheist." Theodore Parker observes: "Atheists are men who aim to be faithful to their nature, and to their whole nature. . . . They are commonly on the side of man, as opposed to the enemies of man; on the side of the people as against a tyrant; they are, or mean to be, on the side of truth, of justice, and of love." Bacon says: "Atheism did never perturb States. . . . and we see the times inclined to Atheism (as the time of Augustus Cæsar) were civil times; but superstition hath been the confusion of many States" (*Essay on Superstition*). The Right Hon. William Pitt truthfully acknowledges that "Atheism furnishes no man with arguments to be vicious"; and Professor Tyndall remarks: "If I wished to find men who are scrupulous in their adherence to engagements, whose words are their bond, and to whom moral shiftiness of any kind is subjectively unknown: if I wanted a loving father, a faithful husband, an honorable neighbor, and a just citizen, I should seek him and find him among the band of Atheists" (*Lecture on Science and Man*, pp. 27, 28). In the *Weekly Sun*, March 25, 1894, Hector Graham writes: "I have associated with a great number of Agnostics in my time, and am constrained to admit that I have always found them happy, honorable men. . . . I put the question seriously: How many Atheists destroy themselves? Hardly any. How many thorough unbelievers are found in gaol? How many promote bogus societies and victimise the fatherless and widows? Alas! the press too often shows us that the promoters of such societies and companies have been looked upon with respect and adoration, and have been Christians of an eighteen-carat stamp." These testimonies accord with our experience that human happiness abounds where there is no belief in God. It would be against the very nature of things for misery to be the result of thoughtful scepticism, inasmuch as such a mental condition, being the outcome of honest investigation, has around it the cheering halo of sincerity and fidelity.

It is frequently alleged that a belief in God and his providence is the grand dividing line between the human species and the "brute creation." But even if we grant this, it does not, therefore, follow that human happiness is the result of such a belief. The New Testament tells us that "the fowls of the air" are fed by the "heavenly Father," that the "lilies of the field" are arrayed in a glory surpassing that of Solomon's, and that the grass of the field is clothed (Matthew vi.). Yet these providential attentions are not attributed to any belief; why, then, should it be expected that man, who belongs to the great world of

sentient beings, should be otherwise dealt with by nature's impartial hand? Supposing God does care for his creatures; is it fair to him to allege that he is less mindful of man than of the lower animals and of the vegetal world? If he bestow his blessings upon the one without belief, why should he not do so upon the other? To say that the one has the power to believe, and that the other has not, is not a sufficient answer, because there are thousands of human beings who are unable to believe in a deity. They may not deny his existence, but they cannot recognise any evidence to justify them in believing in him. Are they, therefore, on that account to be regarded as being "of all men most miserable"? St. Paul might have thought so, but he lived a long time ago, and his theology prompted him to form a very low and grovelling estimate of human nature and its capabilities.

Those professed Christians, who consider that it is in the "order of God's Providence" that belief in him is necessary to human happiness, appear to overlook the fact that the teachings of Theism vary in different ages, and among different sects; also that this acknowledgment of God's existence is purely a matter of faith, and that is not possible to some minds. The absurdity of the Christian position here referred to will appear obvious to the unprejudiced mind if we note the different inferences that have been drawn from the supposed acts of God by Roman Catholics and Protestants in Ireland. The unhappiness and terrible sufferings of the people in that country have been ascribed by Protestants to the endowment of Romanism; while the Catholics consider that their national suffering was caused by Protestant rule and the heresy of its faith. The fact is, it cannot be shown that either was right. Archbishop Whately, who was a professor of logic, failed to see that the "judgments" in either case could be proved to have come from God. Still, very inconsistently we think, Whately admitted that in the old Bible times God did punish people for holding wrong views; his objection was to men presuming to pass judgment in Ireland upon what was supposed to be God's acts. But if, as Whately puts it, it was an act of presumption upon the part of men in Ireland to judge that the nation's unhappiness was caused by Roman or Protestant belief, was it not equally a presumption upon the part of the Bible writers to do a similar thing? There is no more incongruity in God sending a famine to Ireland than in his destroying nearly the whole of the world's inhabitants by a flood. So far, however, as Ireland is concerned, the matter should be settled by the fact that similar miseries and privations to those which devastated that country have been experienced where Catholicism and Protestantism were not in conflict.

If it were true that God averts misery and secures happiness to those who believe in him, the plagues, pestilences, famines, and wars that have decimated professed Christian nations ought not to have occurred. The failure of crops in England, the storms that visit its coasts and destroy thousands of lives, while the majority of the inhabitants profess to believe in God, should be sufficient to refute the fallacy that such belief secures human happiness. We assert that personal suffering and national disasters continue in spite of prayers offered up to the "God of heaven." It was recently urged, in support of the theory that deity does interfere in human affairs, that there was an evident relation between the late Russian persecution of the Jews and the visitation of the cholera to that country. It seems, however, to have been forgotten that both the Russians and the Jews believed in God, and that both alike fell victims to the epidemic. If an infectious disease is allowed to spread unchecked by natural means, as it was in the good old godly times, no amount of belief in God will arrest its deadly work. The war between Germany and France was made the subject of an appeal to God by both parties, but only one of them thanked God for victory. The inutility of the belief in God was shown by the fact that he did not make them both victorious. We suppose the most he could have done would have been to have made it a drawn battle; but even this he did not do. Both France and Germany are God-believing countries, and, in spite of this, they were plunged into the most fearful misery; and a terrible sacrifice of human life took place, and no God interfered to prevent the calamity.

Of course, we know the methods adopted by orthodox believers to escape the logical issues involved by their theory; but such methods are only subterfuges and

evasions. They tell us that victory in war, good trade, and plentiful harvests are blessings bestowed by God upon a righteous people; while misfortunes in war and the failure of crops are penalties inflicted upon a nation for its sins. This is the old orthodox theory, that national calamities are essential to human happiness, because it is through such sufferings that men are brought to a knowledge of their dependence upon God. The believer's position is that all these misfortunes are "blessings in disguise"; that they are really for the good of the human family. If so, God does indeed move "in a mysterious way his wonders to perform." This orthodox notion of "apparent evil being positive good" is a theological delusion. The belief in a God that lighted the fires of Smithfield, that inspired the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and that filled the Inquisition with victims, cannot be an influence in promoting the happiness of well-balanced minds. The man must indeed be infatuated with his belief who can expect "protection and favor" from one

Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish or a sparrow fall.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

THOMAS PAINE AND EARL CHARLEMONT.

(Concluded from page 197.)

THAT Paine was credited with an enormous influence, and feared accordingly, can be judged by an extract from Malone to Charlemont, which is dated London, Dec. 3. Although vastly interesting in the details it furnishes as to the inner working of the political world, it is too long to give in full; but one passage relating to Paine is of moment to us:—

"After I had written the above I was obliged to go into the city upon business. The stocks have not verified my prediction; they have only sunk to 74. This morning the King's proclamation was pulled down at an early hour in every part of the town in which it had been posted, as Mr. Reeve's address, printed on a broad sheet of paper stuck up in various places, had been served every day last week. The villains who wish to throw all things into confusion perform these feats in the night or before daybreak. In the city to-day it has been resolved to have parochial meetings in every parish, to ascertain the inhabitants, that we may know our friends from our enemies, and who are the authors of these audacious proceedings. For several weeks past not less than four thousand per week of Paine's despicable and nonsensical pamphlet have been issued forth, for almost nothing, and dispersed all over the kingdom. At Manchester and Sheffield the innovators bribe the poor with drink to hear it read."

And then, further on, we have a quite droll connection of names and acts:—

"Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Lord Temple were both dismissed from the service on Saturday for the part they have acted.....Did you observe several odd sums subscribed for the assertion of French liberty, as it is called? 52s. frequently; this is the price of two muskets. Can anyone imagine that five or six hundred pounds—for that is all they have got—will be transmitted to a nation now overrunning the world, and who, besides, have one of the most fruitful mints that ever were employed? But those same muskets may either be employed at home, or, supposing nothing of that sort in contemplation, those respectable persons, Mr. Thomas Paine and Mr. Horne Tooke, the latter of whom is the principal agent in this business, may employ the money in dispersing seditious pamphlets through England."

Under date December 22, 1792, we have another of Malone's Tory presentments, in course of which he says:—

"That vain fellow, Erskine, had been going about this month past, saying he would make a speech in defence of Paine's nonsensical and impudent libel on the English constitution, that would astonish the world, and make him to be remembered when Pitt, and Fox, and Burke, etc., were all forgotten. After speaking for four hours, and fainting in the usual form, the jury, without suffering the Attorney-General to reply, or going out of the box, found Paine guilty."

And still some of us to-day think that Erskine was more correct in his prophecy than Malone in his judgment.

It is pretty certain that, canvassing the first thousand people crossing London Bridge to-morrow morning, one would get a fuller and more detailed account of Thomas Paine and Thomas Erskine, his counsel, than of Burke, Lord Kenyon, or of the whole of the corrupt ministry who caused the prosecution put together. Still, from Malone we get the next reference to Paine and his influence. November 15, 1793, in a long letter to Charlemont, Malone dealing almost wholly with his labors on Shakespeare at Stratford-on-Avon, etc. He tells how his work on the quarto has been hampered by the person engaged on the engravings for it:—

"This person, a Mr. George Robinson, is unluckily, too, a determined republican, on which account alone I am sorry that I have employed him. In consequence of his political phrenzy, he at this moment is apprehensive of judgment being pronounced against him by the King's Bench for selling Paine's pamphlet, and may probably be punished for his zeal in the 'good old cause,' as they called it in the last century, by six months' imprisonment. I shall not have the smallest pity for him. To do any act whatever that may tend to forward the principles maintained by the diabolical ruffians of France is so highly criminal that I hope the chief justice will inflict the most exemplary punishment on all the favorers of that vile system whenever he can lay hold on them. I hope most sincerely that the editors of two seditious papers, which are published daily (the *Morning Chronicle* and the *English Chronicle*), who have the audacity publicly to support our enemies by every means in their power, will soon feel the vengeance of the law; an opportunity of laying hold of them has not yet occurred, but I make no doubt it will. If, however, Mr. Robinson does not enter on my work with spirit immediately after Christmas, I am determined to put it into other hands."

Whether Malone was gratified or not I am unable to say.

In Sherwin's *Life of Paine*, p. 138, among the list of those prosecuted for publishing Paine's works there is an entry, August 10: "Messrs. Robinsons, *Rights of Man*; fine"; but whether this refers to the same Robinson I am not sure. Anyhow, Mr. J. M. Robertson may note critic Malone's venom when issuing a new edition of *Toryism and Barbarism*.

In the same vein again Malone writes, November 7, 1794, of Thomas Hardy and Horne Tooke:—

"But the arch traitor of all is Horne Tooke, a renegade priest, a venal hireling, an Atheist, and a coward. Of every one of these characters there are decisive proofs. Yet I am afraid he is so cunning that he will escape the fate he so well deserves."

And then there is another gird at Erskine.

Most Freethought readers and students of comparative religion recall Richard Payne Knight only for his worship of Priapus and kindred works, and it will be news to some that he was also a poet of some merit.

Charlemont expresses to Malone much pleasure that in "Knight's Landscape"—a poem on gardening—"we have a modern poem perfectly free from fashionable verbiage." In another place he says he "likes it exceedingly" (p. 263).

Charlemont was certainly Catholic in his tastes and reading, and in a long letter to his eldest son, admonishing him as to some excesses of conduct, we learn some personal details as to his own early life and studies, in which, among other things, he says: "With David Hume for my early friend, I have preserved my religion unperverted. With Jack St. Leger for my early companion, I have kept my principles of morality unchanged."

In letter 284, November 21, 1796, we have the dawns of our wonderful electric system of communication in a letter to Lord Charlemont from Richard Lovell Edgeworth, giving an account of some dealings with the Duke of York and other officials in connection with the art of carrying secret and swift intelligence by tellograph, in which matter, in the usual fashion, the inventor was sat upon by the red-tapists.

The last reference to Paine is the closing sentence of a letter to Haliday, Dublin, February 1, 1797: "So Paine has now attacked Washington! No wonder; he has lately dared to attack heaven." This is a reference to the pamphlet, *A Letter to George Washington, President of the United States of America, on Affairs Public and Private*, by Thomas Paine, author of the works entitled *Common Sense*, *Rights of Man*, *Age of Reason*, etc. (Dublin, 1797; 8vo).

With this we have to quit the still tempting pages of this volume of old letters, believing that, though long, the

extracts will be enjoyed and appreciated by all lovers and students of Paine and his work.

We are convinced that it is right to make these extracts as widely known as possible, for the reports of the Historical Manuscripts Commission do not fall in the way of every reader of the *Freethinker*, than whom none are more interested in Paine.

That these interesting letters form a body of new material we know, for, having at the Paine Exhibition shown the volume to Mr. Moncreu D. Conway, to Mr. J. M. Wheeler, and several other authorities on Paine, they all expressed their pleasure at such a find.

To successfully glean after two such scholars one may be a little bit proud, and it may be hoped that the idea of such a reward will incite others to give some attention to the most valuable volumes of this particular department of State publications, in which one is sure to find much of entertainment and profit.

THOMAS SHORE.

ABOUT PRAYER.

LAST Sunday night I went to church to hear a couple of female solo singers. The minister, a noted Methodist Toronto divine, opened by praying long and fervently for all possible good things that I could think of. He closed by nearly a repetition of it. Several hundred people, apparently, joined him in his prayer. I judged that, from the posture, sighs, and moans accompanying his varied requests. After the usual closing, he begged the entire congregation to remain for a fifteen minutes' prayer-meeting. I protested by quietly walking out. Then I sat down and cogitated about prayer in general. That prayer was offered in one small church out of the many thousands on this continent. If we only knew how far off heaven was or is, and the rapidity with which an ordinary prayer travelled, and taking account of the time difference between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts, we might make a reasonable calculation of the number of words per second reaching the ear of the Great Infinite. We would probably come to the conclusion that, no matter how compassed by environment, the Almighty would at least need an infinite ear to hear all the words, and an infinite patience to listen for a whole Sunday.

And I asked myself, "How can apparently intelligent, honest adults lend their countenance to such seemingly meaningless performances?" I could only answer: "It must be due to the influence of heredity and the impressions of early youth, coupled with the intense natural laziness of the ordinary human mind."

"Where two or three are gathered together in my house, I will hear them and answer their request" is supposed to be the solemn pledge of the Great I Am. It is often quoted. If such is the case, why waste the vast energy expended on prayer? Why not have the two or three do the praying for the whole world? It would conserve the energies of the world, and surely relieve the Almighty of a fearful amount of worry.

"How can Christians consistently pray to an unchangeable God?" is another conundrum. If God intends to do what they ask for, he will do it without prayer; if he does so intend, then with an unchangeable being prayer must be fruitless. Then why pray?

If ever in human experience there was an undoubted case of prayer being answered (as a result of the prayer), then logically it would be all right, however inconsistent. But no human mortal up to the present has ever been able to lay his finger on a fact in the history of the universe that became a fact as the result of prayer.

Such proof is impossible from the nature of the case. The positive and negative sides are equally incapable of proof. If the Infinite Inscrutable Something behind all phenomena be the action and reaction of blind force and insensate matter, what effect will prayer have? If there be a supreme, unchangeable intelligence, from which animal intelligence is but an emanation, how can prayer affect the former? Can the finite influence the conditionless infinite?

If this world is governed by a personal God who is infinite (the Christian contention, but an infinite absurdity), who is all-knowing, all-wise, all-powerful, and all-good, why

should pigmy man tell him anything or ask him anything? If he exists, he knows what is best, and, having all those other attributes, will certainly do it. Then why pray? Countless billions of prayers, earnest, honest prayers, have been uttered on this earth alone since man became a conscious being and lost himself amid the perplexities of nature, not one of which has borne any apparent fruit. Countless billions more prayers of the same character will yet be offered, with logically the same result. Then why pray? If the united earnest prayer of all the Christians on the continent could not induce God to show Colonel Ingersoll the error of his ways, then what is the use of asking for any other reasonable thing? If there be a God, he evidently knew best what to do in Ingersoll's case, as he does in all others.

Prayer is a condition of mental abstraction in which men and women get lost in the unknowable and unthinkable. They herein find mental relief from the tedium and monotony of life, much as the Hindoo philosopher finds the same mental condition from contemplation.

Billions of good, kind, honest, sincere people have prayed to thousands of different deities (hazy, mental images only), and received pleasure therefrom. That is the only good that has ever come to man from prayer. Mental content and pleasure. Content and pleasure from doing a supposed duty. Supposed duty done, of any kind, always produces the same result. The moment a person concludes that prayer is useless and absurd, the pleasure and content are gone. Repugnance is the mental state. I have no objection to people praying, who believe in it, who consider it a sacred duty, who thereby derive pleasure from it. No liberal mind can object. But I would like to convince such people that prayer is useless, illogical, absurd, and degrading; that in rationalism the mental pleasure and content can be accentuated a hundredfold. The old fear is replaced by a vast content. All the philosophies then open to the mind for pleasure and recreation. Then the intellect runs riot in pleasure and surprise.

Mental pleasure is the only good that comes from prayer. But there is a grave evil which comes from it and the habits of thought it induces. People who pray sincerely are always rather expecting an answer. They rely on some unseen providence instead of themselves, thereby deteriorating as citizens. Untold providence, sorrow, pain, and distress have arisen in the world from the mental habit of waiting, like Nicholas Micawber, for "something to turn up." But it never turns up except by some human effort or interference. One good act is worth a million prayers. Reliant self-endeavor has done more for the world than all the prayers uttered.

J. A. ROLLINS.

—*Secular Thought.*

PROPHET BAXTER.

THE Rev. Mr. Baxter, of prophetic fame, has got into a somewhat awkward fix at Southampton. A few days ago he was delivering a couple of lectures showing that there is to be "a general bust up" in Europe and Asia almost immediately. At the first lecture a Mr. Worrall appeared and reminded the prophet that ten years ago he had visited the town and told a similar tale of woe, and, on a challenge being given, he had promised to pay £100 to the Royal South Hants Infirmary if the predictions did not prove correct. "Now," said Mr. Worrall, "I want £100 for the infirmary on account of unfulfilled prophecies." The Prophet Baxter called for evidence that he had made the promise, and Mr. Worrall said he would produce it the following evening. True to his word, Mr. Worrall appeared with a copy of a Southampton paper recording the fact, but the prophet was absent, and his substitute said that he had gone to Bournemouth on business. Mr. Worrall unkindly declared that the prophet had run away.

Thirty years ago Mr. Baxter published a book entitled *Napoleon III., the Predestined Monarch of the World*. Unfortunately, he died. Then Mr. Baxter set up the poor Prince Imperial as "the Beast" of the Revelation. But he died also, and so Mr. Baxter set up Prince Jerome. But Jerome died. So Mr. Baxter fixed on Boulanger, who was "a dead cert." Did not Boulanger fight a duel and get wounded? Did not the Book of the Revelation speak of "the Beast who had the wound by the sword and did live"? Nothing could be clearer—only, last of all, Boulanger died also. Mr. Baxter has not quite made up his mind whether "the Beast" is Kaiser William, or Oom Paul, or the Kalifa; but he still comes up smiling. He really ought, however, to plank down that hundred pounds.—*London Star (Mar. 25)*

ACID DROPS.

THE House of Lords has carried the second reading of a ridiculous Bill, which surely will never be allowed to pass through the House of Commons. It empowers the judges to prohibit the publication in newspapers of any evidence they choose to think inimical to public morals, and if their prohibition is violated they may imprison the offender for contempt of court. This is really setting up a new Star Chamber. Judges can keep a man in prison as long as they like for contempt of court. They are also judges of the offence itself. There is no trial by jury, and no appeal whatever against their decision.

The author of this Bill is Lord Halsbury, late Sir Hardinge Giffard. He is a professional Tory, a warm Christian, and a thorough bigot. It is to the credit of the judges, including Lord Chief Justice Russell, that they are opposed to it.

Reynolds's Newspaper is very outspoken on this matter. "After all," it says, "so far as indecency is concerned, the book which is placed in the hands of every young person in this country, the Bible, contains scores of passages worse than anything which appears in a newspaper. We shall have the Lord High Jobber bringing in a Bill one of these days for the suppression of the Bible."

The clericals are hardly likely to be satisfied with the Government Education Bill. A special grant to poor schools, whether Board or Voluntary, the abolition of the 17s. 6d. limit, and the exemption of elementary schools from local rates, represent the minimum of their expectations. The serious item, the raising of the limit, will not be regarded by educationalists as deplorable, if only it carries with increased public expenditure increased public control.

Doubtless the object of the measure is to hinder the spread of Board schools. But it may only serve to make the voluntary ones less voluntary. The State, already providing the bulk of the means for all the schools, is entitled to insist that there shall be one standard of secular teaching in all of them, and that as high a standard as is feasible.

The school system at present is really an establishment of religion with a creed varying according to the votes of each district. The old Nonconformists, who swept away church rates and tests by their plain contention that the State has nothing to do with teaching religion, have given place to an elastic Nonconformist Conscience, which seeks to manipulate religious teaching in the chapel rather than the church interest. When they see the church triumphs they may return to the old position, that secular teaching should be national, but religious instruction left for the parents and churches to provide by their own voluntary efforts.

Mr. Augustus Birrell has given the following accurate definition of a voluntary school: "A voluntary school is one at which attendance is compulsory, of which four-fifths of the expense is contributed by the taxpayer, and which is as much under the absolute control of the vicar of the parish as was his own potato bed or his Bible class." The total income of these schools is £3,629,967, of which endowments and voluntary contributions combined realise only £768,915, while £2,658,331 is contributed from the public funds.

In Rome they baptise a Jew every Good Friday. It is said that the same member of the chosen race serves every year. Mr. W. W. Story, in his *Roba di Roma*, suggests in illustration the verse which says: "Ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves."

"Next year in Jerusalem," repeats every Jew at Seder night in keeping Passover. Yet the English Jews show an entire lack of interest in the schemes of Mr. Holman Hunt, and other good people, for getting them back to the Holy Land. Nor are they likely to, unless on the distinct understanding that Palestine is intended for the poor devils of the chosen race, and not for themselves.

The Rev. James Gall, struck by the fact that in the Greek as in the Revised Version the assertion is plain that Jesus should arise after three days, has written a book to show that his Lord and Savior was crucified on Thursday. His work is entitled *Good Friday a Chronological Mistake*. Mr. Gall hardly makes the story any the more probable by crowding out another day from the many events of Holy Week.

The bare enumeration of the things said to have transpired on the morning of the Crucifixion should suggest doubts as to their historic character. Jesus is brought before Caiaphas and accused of blasphemy; then before Pilate and accused of treason. Then Pilate sends him to Herod, and Herod sends him back to Pilate, who seeks repeatedly to

release him, finding no fault in him, yet at last consenting to his being crucified. He carries his own cross to the place of execution, and hangs there from the third to the ninth hour (*i.e.*, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.). Such a rare morning's work never took place in the law courts of civilised people either before or since.

Professor Joseph Estlin Carpenter, reviewing Professor Salmonds' book on *Immortality*, in the *Unitarian Inquirer*, says: "It is obvious, for example, that the word 'eternal' must have the same meaning as applied to punishment and to life in Matthew xxv. 46." This is fairly giving up the usual Unitarian position, and admitting that the barbarous doctrine is taught in the New Testament. Only Professor Carpenter argues that, if Jesus lived now, he would frame his thought differently. That is, he might be expected to be a little more humane.

The Romanising English Church Union is hard at work trying to prevent divorced persons marrying a second time. Yet even the Pope permits this for a consideration, and has just allowed one John Keefe, of Halifax, Nova Scotia, to do so.

How far some of our Romanising Anglicans go may be judged from the confirmation papers of the vicar of St. Matthew, Sheffield. Among questions asked are: "How often should people go to Confession?" and "Do you intend to come regularly to this Sacrament?" In other questions the boys and girls are asked to describe "the pains of Purgatory," and say how they can be lessened, and to state the effect of the "Sacrament" of extreme unction.

The ridiculous Legitimists of the White Rose League, who say that Mary of Burgundy is the rightful occupant of the British throne, are now concentrating their efforts on the canonisation of the immaculate Mary Stuart. If they have anything to do with it, her sanctity will probably end in a fizzle.

Dr. Lyon Playfair, in a speech which he once gave on Sanitary Reform, said that "For a thousand years there was not a man or woman in Europe that ever took a bath." The statement may have been a slight exaggeration, founded on a phrase in Michelet's *Sorciere*; but the fact is unquestionable, that the Dark Ages were the dirty ages. When divinity triumphed then disease was rampant. The ages of faith were also the ages of filth. St. Thomas à Becket, when martyred, had under garments in a state which Sir Henry Irving would rather resign his profession than reproduce on the stage.

It is not usually good policy to circulate the literature of antagonists; yet there are two Catholic works which so admirably show the true inner spirit of religion, and what Catholic religionists would like taught in the schools, that they have often been advertised on Freethought platforms. These works are Father Pinnamonti's *Hell Opened to Christians* and *The Sight of Hell*, by the Rev. J. Furniss. Mr. Lecky, the representative of Dublin University, has called attention to their teachings. Of course, Protestants have taught the same doctrines; but their works are now generally hid out of sight, while the Catholic ones are still on sale at leading Catholic publishers.

Latimer, for instance, was a sturdy Protestant who taught a literal fire. In his *Remains* (p. 236) he says: "I would advise every man to be more careful to keep out of hell than trust he shall find no fire in hell. There is fire burning, there is pain without pleasure, torment without easement, anguish, heaviness, sorrow, and pensiveness, which tarrieth and abideth for all liars and hinderers of the truth."

Even the sainted Jeremy Taylor, in his sermon on "Christ's Advent to Judgment," describes hell in most literal fashion. He says: "The pains of hell have no rest, no drop of water is allowed to cool the tongue; there is no advocate to plead for them, no mercy belongs to their portion but fearful wrath and continual burnings." Wesley, too, in his *Sermons*, vol. ii., p. 176, speaks of hell as if he had been there: "There is no grandeur in the infernal region, there is nothing beautiful in those dark abodes; no light but that of liquid flames; and nothing new but one unvaried scene of horror upon horror." Many similar quotations will be found in Mr. Wheeler's *Christian Doctrine of Hell*, showing that Catholicism preserves only what was once the accepted Christian teaching.

Richard Rolle de Hampole, who wrote *The Pricke of Conscience* in the Northumbrian of the fourteenth century, tells us a good deal about hell, which he locates in the middle of the earth, like the hollow in the yolk of an egg. He says the Devil will alternately torment with heat and cold:—

The fire es thar of swa grete pousté,
That it may never mar slekend be,
And swykh filthe and stynk es in that ugly hole
That nan erthely man taught es thole.

Hampole says:—

The devels, that ay salle be fulle of ire
Salle stopp (stuff) the synfulle ay in the fyre
Swa that thai salle glowe ay al fyre brandes.

So Burns has good authority for addressing the Devil as one—

Wha in yon cavern, grim and sootie,
Closed under hatches
Spairges aboote the brimstane clootie
To kill puir wretches.

The American papers, generally speaking, take the side of Ballington Booth against the "General." The *New York Sun* (March 14) plainly calls the old man "both a humbug and tyrant." On his calling for prayers for the seceders it says: "That is an old trick. By praying at a man you can both gratify your malignity by slyly casting upon him an imputation of wickedness, and impress people with your own pious superiority."

The *Baltimore Catholic Mirror* says of the Salvation Army split, that the proceedings of orders, counter-orders, and manifestoes remind one of broad-stage burlesque. "The whole thing, in fact, with some comic lines and a topical song or two, and a little marching and dancing, would make a capital subject for a piece at one of the minor theatres; and in this spirit the incident has been received by the readers of newspapers."

Ballington Booth's lady recruits have rebelled against the dark-brown color which had been chosen for their uniform. They were horrified at the proposed hue, so dowdy, snuffy, and funereal, gained their point, and will be clad in heavenly blue. *Sacré Bleu!*

You have to go abroad for the news. The *New York Sun* reproduces from the *Ave Maria* a statement from the *Freeman's Journal*, of Sydney, that someone has the testimony of an eminent bishop that the Prince of Wales was baptised a Catholic. It says that when the time came for the baptism of Albert Edward two dignitaries of the Church of England arranged to divide honors on the occasion, with the result that one poured the water, while the other read the form of baptism. This was the perfection of Protestant politeness; but, all the same, it was a blunder which made the baptism invalid.

After the ceremony, the story continues, the Queen of the Belgians, who had been an observant witness, spoke to the Queen privately, and pointed out that the interesting infant had not been made a Christian in the proper way. Victoria was much troubled, and asked: "What can I do?" "Oh," said her Belgian Majesty, "it is easy enough," adding: "I have here in the palace a Belgian priest, my chaplain; let me call him in to baptise the child properly, and no one will be any the wiser." This, we are to believe, was accordingly done, and the paper goes on to state how, ever since, the Prince has shown his sympathy with Catholics. Any rot seems good enough to cram down the open gullets of credulous religionists.

Dr. Paul Carus writes in *Open Court* on "Goethe a Buddhist," and of course finds passages to illustrate his view. This reminds us of those who write to prove that Shakespeare was a lawyer, a physician, or a soldier. This is not strange, coming from Dr. Carus. We believe he calls himself a Christian and a Buddhist at the same time.

Colonel T. W. Higginson, in an article in the *Christian Register* on "Prayers," has this to say of his experience with Unitarian ministers in the matter of "saying grace" at the table: "Last winter, having occasion to preside at a literary dinner of perhaps a hundred ladies and gentlemen, I asked one of the most eminent Unitarian clergymen, who sat near me, whether he thought I had better invite anybody to say grace. He said promptly that it was ceasing to be customary, and advised against it. It was not done. Last summer another eminent Unitarian minister, one of the elders in Zion, happened to dine with me, and I asked him, as a matter of courtesy to him, to ask a blessing. He did so; but it seemed as if he did not expect it, and I thought it would be better not to take the thing for granted again." It must be very embarrassing for a Unitarian minister to go through the insane mummery of asking God to bless the food before them before so intelligent a sceptic as Colonel Higginson. We had hitherto supposed that the Colonel was a merciful man.

A press dispatch from Carthage, Ill., says: "James McAvoy, a groceryman, has gone crazy over religion. A protracted meeting has been in progress, and McAvoy was baptised in a creek through the ice. The excitement maddened him. While being taken to the asylum, he continued to shriek: 'Help! Help! The crucifixion.' He claims to have witnessed the sublime tragedy." Can any of our orthodox friends cite an instance where a person was

ever thus affected by listening to a lecture by a Freethinker or a scientist?

A painful scene was witnessed in the Congregational Church at Kilburn, near Derby, on Sunday evening. Mrs. Bullock, a middle-aged lady, was taken ill just before the sermon, and died before medical assistance could be obtained.

The *Tattler* (March 19) reports the elopement at Halstead of the wife of a well-known local man with a bandsman of the Salvation Army. He left a note saying: "I have taken Emma, and will take care of her. God bless you. You will hear from me in a day or two." He was as good as his word, and wrote to say that "Emma is all right." If this informal certificate does not console the husband, it is at least a proof that the bandsman is satisfied, and has been spared the disappointment of finding that after stealing another man's wife she was "all wrong."

John Markle, of Anderson, Ind., went insane, says a press telegram, a few days ago, as the result of taking too much interest in a revival meeting. He got away from his guards and ran to the church, where he broke the doors to pieces, entered and completely cleared the church, demolishing furniture and causing general damage. He was captured, and is now under heavy guard. Poor fellow! He was too heavily charged with religion. This is not an isolated case.

The Rev. Albert Brett, pastor of the Jubilee Church, in the New North-road, Hoxton, went into the witness-box and swore he was not the father of the child of Miss Hardwick, one of his congregation. He even swore he had never put his arm round her waist or kissed her. He put his wife into the witness-box to say she believed him, and the Rev. Mr. Trengode and the Rev. Mr. Bourne to give him a most excellent character. But Mr. Corser held that the evidence of the girl was corroborated. He made the usual order of 5s. a week to support the child, and allowed five guineas costs.

Considering that a jury has just awarded £12,000 for aspersions on a woman's character, we think the Rev. Mr. Brett gets off remarkably cheap for having injured a young girl's prospects for life. We wonder if his congregation will, like that of the Rev. Mr. Crosby at Battersea, pass a resolution of sympathy with their pastor. The case illustrates the danger of pastoral visits and spiritual ministrations.

H. J. Philo, one of the Rev. J. Wilson's rescue band at Woolwich, was charged with improper conduct with a female in the public street, and bound over in a sum of £5 to be of good behavior for three months.

The Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association recently held its thirty-ninth annual meeting at the premises of the Young Men's Christian Association in Aldersgate-street, London. The chairman was Mr. John Jenkins, late President of the Trade Union Congress. The other speakers, however, were very curious working men. The list included Prebendary Webb-Peploe, Mr. A. A. Woods, and the Rev. Richard Roberts (Wesleyan). Of course the Association is run in the interest of Sabbatarian piety. The ministers of religion dare not let the working men speak for themselves on this question.

Mr. Charles Hill, the secretary of this bogus Working Men's Association, "deeply regretted the resolution adopted by the House of Commons in favor of opening the national museums and galleries on Sunday." His regret is natural; it may even be called professional; but it will hardly induce the House of Commons to rescind that wicked resolution.

Lord Young has given at Glasgow an important decision with regard to fortune telling, palmistry, and spirit mejuns. He holds—and Lord Trayner concurs with him—that the practice of these do not constitute an offence unless intent to deceive, or roguery, is also proved.

"Infidels" are supposed to be fond of Bible burning, but the pastime in our experience is exclusively a Christian one. The *American Sentinel* reports a case in the interior town of Giboya, in the State of Bahia, where the vicar, who was also the mayor of the town, had the books of a colporteur seized, and subsequently forty-seven Bibles, fifty Testaments, and one hundred gospels were saturated with oil and set on fire in the market-place.

The *Methodist Times* gives an analysis of the collection at one of Mr. Price Hughes's recent Sunday afternoon meetings in St. James's Hall. There were 2,357 separate pieces of money in the collecting boxes. "Gold is rarely given at St. James's Hall," and there was not a solitary gold piece on this occasion. There were 2 half-crowns, 19 shillings, 168 sixpences, 128 threepenny-bits, 1,661 pence, 322 half-pence, and 7 farthings. This gives a total of £13 2s. 5½d., and,

reckoning the audience at 2,500, the average contribution is 1½d. each. This is about the general average of collections, we believe. The love of Jesus doesn't seem to make much difference at St. James's Hall.

The *Sydney Bulletin* appends to a picture of a squatter, leaning on a gate and talking to a parson, the following dialogue: Selector—"There won't be a bite o' grass for the winter; this 'ere drought will ruin me." Rain-making Parson—"I fear, my friend, you have not looked above for aid." Selector—"Well, no; we mostly get our rain from the nor'-west."

In an Adelaide suburb the Wesleyans erected an imposing edifice, and dedicated it "to the glory of God." Shortly afterwards the Anglicans ran up a small wooden mission-hall right opposite the front door of the other place, and inscribed over the door: "Erected to the greater glory of God." Yet the unification of the Churches is talked of.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

The blood accusation against the Jews has turned up again in Hungary. But not with the old success. The Catholic priest who charged a Jewish tradesman at a Hungarian village with the "ritual" murder of a peasant child of five was sentenced at Budapest to a fortnight's imprisonment and a fine of fifty florins.

The writers in *Joyful News* seem to keep stories of the conversion of infidels on the stocks. They are fond, too, of hymns. We should think a favorite must be the lines—

I love the old, old story,
Although it is not true;
It satisfies my longings
As lies alone can do.

It is calculated that 9,500,000 head of sheep have been lost in Australia through the drought of last year.

Ladies wear just as large hats at church as they do at the theatre; but there is no church-hat question, while the theatre-hat question is one of the most pressing social problems of the day. A man behind a big hat in a theatre inwardly swears; but behind a big hat in a church he inwardly prays.

"May the day be long distant," says President Steyn, of the Orange Free State, "when the Afrikaner shall forget his Bible and his gun." Bible and guns have always gone well together.

Rev. Sebastien Bowden, of the Brompton Oratory, is seeing through the press a book on Shakespeare, in which he maintains that the great poet was a Catholic. We shall read this book when it is published, and criticise it in the *Freethinker*. We are decidedly of opinion that Shakespeare was a Freethinker.

Priests.

They have the strongest interest in the depravation of the human intellect; for the demand for their services for the temporal aid of the deity altogether depends upon human ignorance and incapacity, and is exactly proportional to it. Why does a man apply for the divine assistance? Because he does not know how to accomplish his ends without it, or how to procure the requisite apparatus for the purpose. If he knew any physical means of attaining it, he would unquestionably prefer them. Every extension, therefore, of physical methods in the gratification of our wishes displaces and throws out of employment by so much the labor of the aerial functionaries. No one prays for the removal of a disease by supernatural aid when he once knows an appropriate surgical remedy. He, therefore, who lives by the commission which he charges on the disposal of the former has a manifest interest in checking the advance and introduction of the latter.—*Bentham and Grote*, "Analysis of the Influence of Natural Religion," p. 124; 1866.

How to Help Us.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—April 5 and 12, South Shields. May 3 and 4, Birmingham; 10 and 17, Plymouth. June 7, 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.

MOTHER.—Pleased to know you are grateful for our criticism of ecclesiastic views on the infliction of pain upon animals.

E. SMEDLEY.—We really cannot undertake to confute every Christian falsehood you happen to meet—and you seem to meet plenty. Some of the things you appear to regard as staggering are simply ridiculous. The fellow who says that Ingersoll was a friend of slavery might just as well say that Bradlaugh was a champion of the House of Brunswick. Do you read the *Freethinker*? If you do, it is difficult to understand why you ask such questions.

R. DAVIDSON wishes the £5 he invested in the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company to go to Mr. Foote's lecture scheme.

J. BYERS (BELFAST).—A special effort will be made in your city very shortly. Mr. Foote hopes to take the matter in hand himself.

CELSUS (Hull).—(1) The poor Christian creature who asks in the *Hull Daily News* when the N.S.S. issued its last balance-sheet is either very ignorant or a liar by suggestion. The N.S.S. publishes a balance-sheet every year. It is sent to all the Branches, and to all individual members who apply for it. It is also handed to press representatives at the Annual Conference, though, of course, it is not inserted as a paid advertisement in Christian journals. (2) Glad to hear your theatrical friends thought so highly of our articles on *The Sign of the Cross*, which are being reprinted in pamphlet form.

H. P. WARD.—An article on "Christianity and Hospitals" in the *Westminster Review*, October, 1877, should be consulted.

MR. T. J. THURLOW notifies that his address is 350 Old Ford-road, E.

J. NICHOLSON.—We think with you that Mr. Bradlaugh is well entitled to a place in the series of "Remarkable Men."

LIVERPOOL CHORISTER.—Many thanks. The reference will be very useful. Mr. Foote is amplifying and revising his articles on *The Sign of the Cross*, which will be published next week in pamphlet form.

S. R. THOMPSON.—We hope you will be able to do something at Rochdale. The apathy of the local Secularists is unintelligible.

C. LEWIS.—Many thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

P. D.—Will answer next week.

MARTIN WEATHERBURN.—Highly gratified to have your appreciation of the lecture scheme. Mr. Foote's health is improving. He will resume lecturing next Sunday (April 12) at Chatham.

ANNUAL CHILDREN'S PARTY FUND.—S. Gimson, 5s.; per Miss Brown, 7s. 6d.; Mrs. Thompson, 2s.; W. W. Roberts, 2s.; per S. Hones, 4s. 6d.; A. Cottrell, 1s.

BENSHAM, subscribing to Shilling Month, says: "Your Lecture Scheme is a good idea, and I am glad to see the execution has not fallen behind the inception, as far as the money at your disposal allowed. You got a valuable recruit when you secured Mr. Cohen." This correspondent thinks the *Freethinker* has improved latterly, and particularly enjoyed our articles on *The Sign of the Cross*.

G. BRADY.—Thanks for your good wishes with the subscription.

H. A. CUMBER writes: "Pleased to read your exposure of scurrility in the *Idler*. There will be no reply, as usual. Without a torture chamber and a stake, Christians cannot defend their faith. Free-thinkers should be proud of your pen."

A. BAXTER.—These attempts to suppress insuppressible Sunday trading—for some of it is a sheer necessity—nearly always die out in time. The disease breaks out, now here and now there, probably because the Sabbatarian organisations must do something for their livings.

D. KAY (Rochdale) regards the President's Lecture Scheme as an "excellent method for reaching the masses," and thinks Shilling Month should come oftener.

J. BEAZER.—Glad to hear you will join the N.S.S. All Free-thinkers should do so.

MUCH correspondence stands over till next week in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence from London.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Nya Sanningar—Hull Daily News—Secular Thought—Independent Pulpit—Liberty—Liberator—Tattler—Dunoon Observer—Echo—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Workers' Friend—Freidenker—Der Arme Teufel—Cheshire Observer—New York Public Opinion—Truthseeker—Isle of Man Times—Open Court—Freethought—Crewe Chronicle.

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

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

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

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

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS lectured at the Athenæum, Tottenham Court-road, on Sunday evening, Mr. G. W. Foote being in the chair. Mr. Watts's lecture on "The Science of Life" was a very admirable one, and was evidently much appreciated. One auditor said he had travelled a hundred and fifty miles to be present, and was more than satisfied. Mr. Foote made an appeal, which was well responded to, on behalf of the Children's Party. He also made an announcement with respect to future propaganda in West London—as to which more will appear in next week's *Freethinker*.

Mr. Watts lectures three times to-day, Sunday, April 5, in South Shields, and during the week in the surrounding districts. He will also lecture three times in South Shields on Sunday, April 12.

Mr. William Heaford is devoting the Eastertide to a lecturing tour in Scotland. He delivers two lectures to-day (April 5) at Edinburgh, and three lectures on the following Sunday at Glasgow. On the intervening week-nights he delivers five lectures, under Mr. Foote's Lecture Scheme, as follows: April 6, Dunoon; 7, Paisley; 8, Motherwell; 9, Hamilton; 10, Cambuslang. No doubt Mr. Heaford will have excellent meetings everywhere, as he deserves to.

The debate on "Theism or Atheism: Which is the More Reasonable?" which took place last May at Derby between Mr. Foote and Mr. W. T. Lee, the ablest speaker in the Christian Evidence camp, is now published as a handsome booklet, after revision of the reporter's transcript by both disputants. It runs to nearly a hundred pages, is handsomely printed on first-rate paper, and is bound in strong paper boards. The price is one shilling. No doubt it will have a very large sale, and we may invite Freethinkers who purchase a copy to lend it to their more orthodox friends after reading it themselves.

The ladies' party in connection with the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school was a decided success on Saturday, March 28. The tea was a good one, and an attractive program of singing, dancing, etc., was gone through during the evening. The chief event was the presentation, by the teachers, scholars, and friends of the school, of an illuminated address and the complete works of the Lancashire poet, Edwin Waugh, to Mr. John Pollitt, as a recognition of his valuable services to the school. Mr. Pollitt, replying to the address of Mr. Warren, mentioned that his connection with the school extended over a period of forty-five years, the last thirty years being an unbroken one. During that time he had been in almost every position in the school, from a scholar upwards, and he recounted many anecdotes of the past.

Correspondence still continues on Secularism in the *Hull Daily Mail*. "Fairplay" contributes another keen epistle on the Secular side, and the Rev. Frank Ballard explains why he does not care for public debates. He admits Mr. Watts's courtesy, but appears to fear his skill in discussion. "Fairplay for Both Sides" is a Christian. His grammar is abominable, his statements are false, his manners are vulgar, and his tone is malignant. How up-to-date he is may be inferred from his announcement that Thomas Cooper and Joseph Barker have left the Secular Society, and his accuracy from the statement that the Sydney Secularists built a Lyceum at a cost of forty thousand pounds!

The recent Secularist lectures have stirred up a controversy on the subject, "Is Christianity True?" The editor of the *Dunoon Observer* very fairly admits letters from all parties, and our Glasgow friends may congratulate themselves on their forward movement down the Clyde.

Humanity, the organ of the Humanitarian League, for April, contains a report of the last of the addresses at the Memorial Hall on "The Rights of Men and of Animals," by Mr. Leadbeater, who gave the "Theosophical View." We see that the League's annual meeting takes place at 32 Sackville-street, Piccadilly, on Tuesday, April 21, at 4 o'clock.

The Huxley Memorial will, it is stated, take the form of a statue at the Natural History Museum, and a medal at the Royal College of Science.

It is a curious fact that the statue of Giordano Bruno, recently erected in the courtyard of the University of Naples, is opposite that of another Dominican, St. Thomas Aquinas, who is hailed as the greatest philosophical glory of the Christian Church.

Mr. Waugh, Secretary of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, once encouraged the Bishop of Chester

in stating that the worst ill-users of children were Secularists. We denounced the statement at the time, for it is a subject on which we feel keenly, and called upon both these clerical gentlemen for proof or retraction. They vouchsafed neither, but maintained a "dignified silence." At a recent meeting of the Chester Branch of this Society, however, as reported in the *Crewe Chronicle* of March 28, Mr. Waugh spoke as follows: "He once said one of the causes of cruelty to children was materialism—infidelity. He wished to withdraw that now. It was an early statement made upon inadequate data. They had found cases of cruelty where there had been religious teaching, and even religious habit." It is better late than never, but Mr. Waugh need not have taken years to withdraw a baseless accusation.

SHILLING MONTH.

SUBSCRIPTIONS RECEIVED.

(Where merely the name is given the amount is one shilling.)

J. Cherry, 2s.; Ixion, 2s.; H. Good, 2s. 6d.; Bensham, 10s.; T. B., 5s.; J. C. B., 5s.; G. B., 5s.; W. Hardiman, 1s. 6d.; H. A. Cumber, 2s.; Celsus, 2s.; A. Firth, 4s.; T. Thelwall, 2s. 6d.; J. Cuff, 5s.; J. Barrett, J. Goodson, Mother; Le Diable, 10s.; G. Childs, 2s.; Walters Family, 5s.; T. H.; Tom Beach, 2s. 6d.; Martin Weatherburn, 5s.; C. H. Gask, 2s. 6d.; J. Sumner, junr., 3s.; C. H.; H. Barratt, 4s.; Cayford, Quinney; R. Wilson, 2s. 6d.; F. Morgan, 2s. 6d.; Alchem, 5s.; G. E. Lupton, 10s.; D. Bass; A. Baxter, 5s.; D. Kay, 2s. 6d.; J. Leipper, 5s.; R. Green, 2s. 6d.; W. C., 1s. 6d.; J. Kimberly, 2s.; F. Simons; W. Holroyd, 2s.; W. H. Twyman; D. Jones, 2s. 6d.; Miss Hull, 5s.; J. Edmonds, 2s.; J. Whitby, Mr. Arnold; R. H. Side, 5s.; "Amigo," 5s.; B. Dundas; A. Hurren, 2s.; C. Conway Monk, 3s.; W. W. Roberts, 3s.; Mr. Ives, J. H., W. H. Paskey; W. Lake, 2s.; H. J. Dangey, 5s.; J. Beazer, 2s.; J. Primrose, 4s.; Mr. and Mrs. Turnbull, 2s.; D. Prosser, 1s. 6d.; G. G.; F. Rogers, 5s.; G. Dixon, 2s.; G. Rolff, 2s.; J. Bramhall, E. Drewen; C. Atkinson, 2s.; S. Hudson, 5s.; Servant Girl; A. Banks, £1 1s.

Barnsley:—A. Addy, T. Wombwell, E. Creedy, W. West, E. Wadmore, J. Wadmore; G. Irving, 2s. 6d.; J. Savage, 2s.; G. Pankhurst, 2s. 6d.; H. Smallwood, G. Almond, W. Dyson.

Per Miss Vance:—W. Caisey; William Davey, 2s. 6d.; Ipswich; F. Cotterell, 2s. 6d.; C. Shepherd; S. E. C., 2s.; Mrs. Bater; E. Bater, 2s.

Chester-le-Street:—N. Richardson, T. Birtley, T. Lowther, W. Shiply, J. Clark, J. Carr, R. Hamilton.

SALVATION ARMY AFFECTION.

THE "KISS OF PEACE."

IN the St. Kilda (Victoria) Police Court a series of cases were heard arising out of quarrels between two families connected with the local branch of the Salvation Army. There were four charges—namely, Charles J. Collis *v.* J. Richardson, using threatening language; Louisa Collis *v.* Matilda Richardson, unlawful assault; A. Z. Collis *v.* J. Richardson, application to bind to the peace; and Matilda Richardson *v.* C. Collis, assault.

Mr. Gaunson, in opening the case for the Richardsons, said the young man Charles Collis had been "keeping company" with Matilda Richardson. As a result the girl became a mother, but the infant had died. On Sunday, January 19, Miss Richardson, meeting Collis in the porch of the Salvation Army Barracks, called him a "coward," when he turned and struck her a swinging blow on the face. With that the girl's father closed with Collis, and a general scrimmage took place.

Matilda Richardson gave evidence bearing out Mr. Gaunson's statement. Witness admitted having slapped Collis first when he sneered at her. He had ruined and deserted her. Mr. Gaunson: Did you consent to your ruin?—No. He pulled me into the room and locked the door. A meeting was going on in the barracks. The captain was reading the Bible. The door in the partition was unlocked. What was there to prevent you calling out?—I could have called out. Was that the only act of impropriety you allege against this young man?—Yes. He had attempted to assault me before. I know Captain Freeman. He was in the habit of giving me a "kiss of peace" perhaps twice a week. Was this kiss public or private?—Well, he didn't kiss me before everybody. (Laughter.)

Mr. Morgan, in opening for Collis, said it was no wonder the Army grew—when such luxury as kissing such delicate cheeks as had been exhibited there that day was carried on. He called Wagland (a well-known cricketer), Louisa Collis, Anne Dowall, and Ada Wells.

The Bench, after a short retirement, decided to dismiss all the cases, each side to pay its own costs.

—*Reynolds's Newspaper.*

LECTURING NOTES.

ON Saturday, March 14, I left London for ten days, during which time I delivered eight lectures and held two nights' debate. My first lectures were at Leicester, where I had two capital audiences, the forenoon gathering being the largest, the local friends informed me, they had had on a Sunday morning for many years. In the evening, of course, the hall was full. Many present spoke very highly of Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme, and the sum of £1 5s. was subscribed to aid its usefulness. The Sunday-school at Leicester is in a flourishing condition under the able superintendence of Mr. S. A. Gimson.

From Leicester I proceeded to Derby, and debated two nights with the Rev. James Hyde. The Christian portion of the audience was not large, inasmuch as members of the various orthodox churches failed to support my opponent, who is a Swedenborgian, and, therefore, holds but few religious views in harmony with the popular faith. The subject for discussion was "The Christian Deity," but it was difficult to get from Mr. Hyde a description of the Bible God that any but the followers of Swedenborg could possibly understand. My opponent held the very convenient opinion that the language of the Bible has a double meaning, real and apparent. Hence he urged that all the texts of the book which favored his conclusions contained "real truths"; while those passages either in the Old or in the New Testament that were opposed to his views contained only "apparent truths." It is not for me to express any opinion as to the merits or demerits of the discussion, except to state that Mr. Hyde is an earnest and gentlemanly disputant, and that the audiences behaved admirably on each night.

On Thursday and Friday, March 26th and 27th, I lectured in Nottingham under Mr. Foote's Lecturing Scheme. The audiences were good, but not so large as I have had upon previous occasions. Nottingham has not been very active of late. The Freethinkers there are numerous, and there are also a few hard and earnest workers; but their influence is sadly impaired by a small band of grumblers, who waste their time in spreading scandal, rather than in directing their attention to useful and much-needed propagandism. For some time past certain malicious reports, emanating from Nottingham, in reference to our President, have been in circulation. Unsolicited by Mr. Foote—who, however, made no objection when I told him what I intended to do—I, as Vice-President, determined to ascertain, if possible, what truth (if any) there was in such reports. I was prompted to adopt this course purely in the interest of our movement, for nothing retards the progress of the Free-thought cause more than insinuating charges against those to whom the arrangements of the affairs of the N.S.S. are entrusted. If there are any reasons for making damaging charges, those reasons should be frankly stated. It was feeling the necessity of this course being acted upon that induced me to invite the two principal officers of the Nottingham Secular Society to confer with me upon the rumors in circulation as regards our President. But, after two hours' consultation with these officials, and subsequently with several of the members, I could elicit nothing in justification of the reports, which appear to me to be as false as they are vindictive. I told the Nottingham officials that, unless they attempted to prove their case, or withdraw their imputations, I should deem it my duty to record the result of my inquiries. They would do neither, and I have therefore expressed my opinion upon their conduct; and there the matter ends, so far as I am concerned. There is plenty of practical work to be done in order to advance the interests of Secular advocacy, and the friends throughout the country will see by whom it is being accomplished.

Sunday, March 29, was a grand day in Hull, when I gave three lectures under Mr. Foote's scheme. In the morning four hundred persons were present, and in the afternoon and evening more than seven hundred attended each meeting. Admission was free, and the collections were exceedingly good. There was a brisk sale of *Freethinkers* and of general Free-thought literature. Captain Munro, who presided morning and evening, and my old friend, N. Billany, who officiated in the afternoon, made excellent chairmen. The Rev. F. Ballard attended in the afternoon and spoke briefly, not in reply to my lecture, but to inform the audience that he should reply elsewhere. He positively declined to meet me in set debate. The Christians mustered

in good force and listened very attentively; and I was pleased to find so many ladies present at each meeting.

The large audiences at Hull show what good is being done by the carrying out of the Lecturing Scheme; and the general desire among our Secular friends throughout the provinces, as well as in London, is that, with the aid of this Fund, further successes may be achieved in other large towns, and also in the surrounding districts. I am now arranging a fortnight's tour in the North, and also one in Plymouth, and other places in the West. Personally, I feel proud of the good results of Mr. Foote's scheme, and I sincerely hope that it will receive the pecuniary support which it deserves.

CHARLES WATTS.

A VISION OF HEAVEN.

It was in the year of our Lord, 1893, the seventh day of the ninth month, hour midnight. The editor had toiled all day trying to harmonise the two wings of the Texas Democracy—had held out the olive branch of peace until his arm ached. He was now reclining on a pile of exchanges in the sanctum, listening to the dreamy rhythm of the music that floated in from an adjacent beer garden, the monotonous clickety-click of the Morgenthalers and the impromptu observations of the office cat to a visiting Thomas feline on the back gallery. The music of the beer-garden orchestra gradually swelled into a mighty anthem, the office cat's sad complaint became a pean of praise, the rat-tat-tat of the Morgenthalers, the click of golden slippers keeping time to celestial music on the ballroom floor of a house not built with hands, and the fitful gleam of an arc light filtering through the dust and grime of an uncurtained window—a Jacob's ladder, on the top rung of which a seraph poised with outstretched wings, like a bluejay on the top twig of a Washingtonian cherry-tree.

"Ascend," he commanded, and the editor complied.

"What's the matter, now?" he asked the seraph, as the latter gave him a lift and pulled in the ladder, like a country belle taking the cube-root of a yard of gum. "Has another rebellion broken out in heaven?"

"Naw," said the seraph, with a shrug of his wings; "I thought perhaps you'd like to write up our town. Of course, if you do so, it must be for its news features. We are not placing any advertising at present. Times are too hard, and corner lots in the New Jerusalem are not what they were during the city's boom days. Immigration has fallen off to such an extent that St. Peter says the entrance fees don't pay for greasing the hinges of the gate, and he's thinking of padlocking it and applying for a new job. The committee on ways and means say we'll have to pave the streets with silver, and set the throne with stage jewels, if business doesn't improve pretty soon."

"What's the trouble?"

"Too much hide-bound orthodoxy and too little Christianity. Now, were you to suggest that St. John had a bad case of the jimjams when he saw all those funny things, the people down below would probably mob you. The preachers would thunder against you from the pulpit, and Deacon Twogood pronounce you a blasphemous Atheist. Of course, every man's an Atheist who doesn't see God through Deacon Twogood's telescope, and every man a blasphemer who applies historical criticism to the Bible—who attempts to separate the word of God from the folly of the redactors. Still, these good people continue to build palatial churches in which to practise hypocrisy, while men with families to support are glad of a chance to toil from sun to sun three times a week for a dollar a day! A man in that condition naturally becomes an Anarchist, if not a criminal; and if his children do not turn out thieves, and his wife a prostitute, it is no fault of either society or the Church. I think the Almighty is getting tired of lending his name to such religious layouts, and I don't blame him. If he ever asks my advice, I'll tell him to smash with his thunderbolts every church on earth that cost more than \$5,000, and start the fool-killer on the trail of every preacher who prattles about blasphemy while children are begging bread and women are dying of want. What the old world needs is a religion of humanity—one broad enough and liberal enough to take up into its bosom every creature created in the image of God."

By this time the editor and the other seraph had reached a narrow gate, over which was inscribed in golden capitals, "Orthodox Heaven." The seraph pulled the bell, and St. Peter peeped out through the wicket. Seeing that it was a newspaper man, he threw wide the gate and removed his crown as a mark of respect.

"I'd best give you a return check," he said. "You're from Texas, and you'll want to go back in an hour or two."

"Where's Judas Iscariot?" asked the traveller.

"Oh," said the man on the door, "Judas has been in hell nearly 2,000 years. You see, he sold his Savior for thirty pieces of—"

"Yes, yes; but he had the decency to go hang himself. Now, there was another disciple who went back on his Master because he feared the rabble would ride him on a rail, then sat down and bawled like a spanked baby because he was born a coward and—"

But St. Peter was pointing out to a Populist the shortest road to Perdition, and evidently did not hear. A man of majestic mien, and carrying a golden harp, came forward and grasped the wanderer's hand.

"Do they still read my poetry down below?" he asked eagerly. "What do the modern critics say of it?"

"Permit me to introduce King David," said the seraph. "Davy, this is the editor of the *Great Religious*." The psalmist was delighted, and wanted to present the pilgrim to Mrs. David, No. 923; but the editor checked him. He didn't care to make female acquaintances in a strange city.

"Let's see; aren't you the party who despoiled Uriah's wife, then had that gentleman murdered to conceal your crime?"

"Oh, please don't put that in the papers," pleaded Saul's successor. "Of course, on earth little things like that are charged up to a fellow, but they make no difference in the orthodox heaven. If a man is only pious and strictly orthodox, all things are forgiven him. Ah, here is my distinguished ancestor, Father Abraham. Allow me to present you."

"Come, nestle in this bosom with Lazarus," said the patriarch; but the pilgrim, being somewhat choicer of his bed-fellows, dodged the embrace.

"Are you the party who gave up his wife to the lustful Orientals, saying, 'She is my sister'?" Are you the party who preferred the life of a cuckold to the death of a gentleman? But he had already seized a harp and joined in the serpentine dance about the throne, crying with his cracked voice: "Holy, holy, holy."

Lot and his two daughters came tripping by to the sound of timbrels. The seraph beckoned the husband of the pillar of salt, and he came to a standstill.

"You are the party whose righteousness saved him when Sodom and Gomorrah did the Herculaneum act?" He nodded. "Well, I'd just like to ask you, for the information of the medical fraternity, how a man who is dead drunk can accomplish what you did in the cave at—"

"Don't mention it," pleaded the beloved of the Lord, and he blew a blast on a golden trumpet, pulled his crown about his ears, and joined in the sacred dance with his youngest daughter for partner.

"Who are those people bearing down upon us with crashing cymbals and loud hosannahs?" asked the scribe.

"That," replied the seraph, "is Murderers' Band. Those people were all hanged for infamous crimes; but when they found they were in for it—that they could not get a commutation of sentence to life imprisonment—repented and were jerked to Jesus. That fellow who leads the procession, and whose hallelujah is particularly unctuous, murdered his mistress, a sweet little girl whom he had debauched, and whom he compelled to enter a house of infamy to supply him with whisky money. The papers printed an account of the crime and his execution some time ago."

"Catch the celestial bird and give him to me," pleaded the scribe. "I long to hear him warble." He came with his ambrosial locks streaming wide on the celestial air, a song in his mouth, an instrument of melody in his hand.

"Hello, Jim! How did you break in here? Where's Julia?"

"Oh, Julia's in hell!" said Jim, gaily, as he swept the strings of his instrument and cried, "Glory, glory, glory."

"You see, she didn't have time to repent. She tried to shake me, and I brained her with a hatchet. I got religion, and here I am, with two pair of reversible wings—came direct from the scaffold. But Julia's frizzling in everlasting fire. Strike the timbrel, blow the trumpet, and let there be joyful noise unto the—"

"Whoa! Shut off that sanctified 'Ta-ra-ra-Boom-de-aye,' and tell me about Julia. She was a child; pure as a lily, sweet as the incense that rises from Buddha's altar. You led her astray. You dragged her down to the lowest depths ever touched by womankind. You beat her. You brought Chinamen to visit her, took the price of her shame, bought whisky, and murdered her because she dared plead with you not to further humiliate her. You say that she is in hell. Do you ever go to see her? Do you ever carry a cup of cold water to cool her parched lips? Does her agony haunt you? Does it cause the anthem to die on your lips, and the hot tears to scald your cheeks? Do you pray God to allow you to change places with her?"

"What are you giving me? T'ink I'm a chump? We'uns up here don't worry about der lost. That's their biz; see?" And he was gone—chanting Solomon's assignation song.

Just then John Calvin came along. "Where's Servetus?" asked the scribe. "Where should he be but in hell?" retorted John. "He was a heretic, and I burned him. Of course, he was an honest, truthful, kindly-hearted man, with more brains in his little finger than I had in my head; but he got wrong in his scriptural views, and, as in duty bound, I made a bonfire of him. Praise the Lord God Almighty,

who is a merciful God!" And he drifted on to meet Henry VIII., who was gaily whistling, "Katharine, my Katharine."

"Have you any respectable people up here?" asked the scribe, pulling the seraph aside by one of his pin-feathers.

"Well," said he, glancing about apprehensively, "to give you a straight deal, I think the respectable people are all in hell. And, to tell you truly, I believe they are far happier down there than this job lot of pious murderers and sanctified hypocrites up here. Of course, the climatic conditions are not conducive of ecstasy, but the society is infinitely more select, and there's such a thing as human sympathy and love among the lost. Of course, I don't want you to give me away, but—"

"Nine columns short—wires all flat—two machines ker-flummixed—news editor tearing his hair—foreman cussin' a blue streak—what'n Helen Blazes we goin' t' do? Say?"

It was the "devil." The "Vision of Heaven" vanished, and the weary editor cried out in agony, "This is Hell!"

—*Brann's Annual.*

THE DEBATE AT DERBY ON THE CHRISTIAN DEITY.

BEING fond of listening to debates, and wishing to see if our champion, Charles Watts, the hero of so many fights, still retained his old form, I journeyed from Birmingham to Derby specially to hear the discussion between him and the Rev. J. Hyde (Minister of the New Jerusalem Church).

Derby, judging by the number of churches I saw there, appears to be a very orthodox place, and it is strange that the unco' guid did not attend in larger numbers to support the rev. gentleman in his endeavor to crush the exponent of Secular views.

The Freethinkers mustered in good force, and I gathered from the expressions of opinion after the event that they were well satisfied with the way their side of the question was stated and defended.

From a private source I heard that at any rate one member of the rev. gentleman's congregation "felt sorry for Mr. Hyde." So did I, for, without prejudice, it must have been apparent right through both evenings that he was no match for Mr. Watts.

The rev. gentleman opened the debate with an essay on what he called "The Mode of Procedure." He laid it down that the Revelation from God had two sides—human and divine—that there were in the Bible general and apparent truths, and that the contradictions in it were only in the vehicle, not in the substance. The divine mind clothed itself in the imperfections of the human in order that it might be better understood. The Bible in one part stated that God was infinite—which Mr. Hyde said was a "real truth"; all other statements in the book seeming to infer that he was not were only "apparent truths." The infinite mind he described as limitless and inexhaustible.

Mr. Watts, in his opening speech, called attention to the fact that although, as the chairman had stated, Mr. Hyde had sat down six minutes before his time had expired, he had given no description or definition of the word God. Mr. Watts asked that the words of the Bible should be accepted in their ordinary sense as meaning what they said. If the Bible were a divine revelation, it ought to contain something not known to man before. If God has given a clear revelation, as Mr. Hyde alleged, how is it that there are so many different ideas concerning God, and so many sects having different conceptions as to what the Bible taught? These he described as trifling obstacles he should like cleared away. Wherein lies the difference between the human and divine? What was the difference between the natural and supernatural? How was it that a knowledge of God was so limited? Was God the creator of the universe? If so, there must have been a time when it was not. Could the rev. gentleman conceive of such a time? Should not God's intelligence be superior? Does it govern the world on principles of mercy and justice? If not, why not? Mr. Hyde professed, like his master, Swedenborg, to have a light that other unfortunate people have not.

In reply, Mr. Hyde said we must go to the Bible for a description of God. Man cannot discover what is infinite; but it is revealed in its proper place in the Bible. I am here, said he, to discuss the Bible God, not my opinions. He repeated this five or six times, as Mr. Watts subsequently pointed out; but he afterwards left the subject alone, and all the efforts of Mr. Watts to draw him back to it were unavailing: he was content to impress on us once more the difference between real and apparent truths. Pressed over and over again, he at last said God was infinite love and infinite wisdom, and that by divine he meant that pertaining to God. Mr. Watts caused considerable laughter by saying that his opponent had only an idea of an idea of which he had no idea at all. In the course of one of Mr. Watts's speeches some Christian friend shouted out: "That is only *your* opinion." "Just so," retorted Mr. Watts;

"that is all it is—a matter of opinion, and mine is worth as much as my opponent's."

On the second night Mr. Watts said that his opponent had left it to him to commence the debate by telling the audience what the Christian Deity was according to the Bible. He proceeded to give chapter and verse to show that God had sanctioned adultery, murder, deceit, and falsehood, and asked: Could we ascribe to a God of infinite love acts of gross brutality which we would not think of being guilty of ourselves? He instanced the cruel tests imposed by God upon Abraham and Jephthah, and caused a burst of applause by his passionate rejection of the doctrine of hell and eternal torments. No human father would be guilty of such barbarous punishments as were attributed by the Bible to God.

Instead of replying to this speech, Mr. Hyde read another prepared essay on real and apparent truths, and said that, if Mr. Watts had kept in view what he said on this point in his opening speech, all would have gone well. He then proceeded to quote passages contradicting those quoted by Mr. Watts. All Mr. Hyde's quotations were real truths, and all Mr. Watts's quotations were apparent truths, conveyed by the imperfect condition of men's minds. Hell was made by man's wickedness, and not by God. Mr. Hyde contended that God and Christ were one and the same person, despite Mr. Watts's quotations from Christ's sayings to the opposite.

In his concluding speech Mr. Watts claimed that the Agnostic position was the only safe one, and that we could lead a good and moral life without a profession of belief in the Christian Deity. Mr. Hyde, in winding up, argued that God had given us talents which should be used in God's interests, and that it was immoral teaching to tell man to use those talents in his own interests. He is the power by which we live.

One satisfactory feature of the debate was the closing speech of the Chairman (Councillor Wilkins), who said he had listened to Mr. Watts with much pleasure, and that he was of opinion—and the conviction strengthened as he grew older—that God would judge us by our actions, and not our belief. This little speech proved to me that Mr. Watts had not labored altogether in vain. It only needs more public debates, followed up by the President's scheme of free lectures, to make our principles more extensively known, and they would soon become more widely appreciated and professed. The members of the Derby Branch of the N.S.S. are to be congratulated on their activity in bringing about such a debate.

C. H. CATTELL.

LOOKING FOR THE LORD J. C.!

(Tune: "Looking for a Coon like me.")

WHAT juggin's those people are

Who are looking for the Lord J. C.!

For long ago he "crossed the bar,"

Yet they're looking for the Lord J. C.!

From Nature's book Freethinkers learn

A man, once dead, can ne'er return;

But Nature's teachings Christians spurn,

And they're looking for the Lord J. C.!

Chorus.—Oh! they're balmy,

It seems very evident to me,

For they turn their eyes towards the skies—

Looking for the Lord J. C.!

Long since has passed the promised date

For the coming of the Lord J. C.!

Yet patiently the "mugs" still wait

For the coming of the Lord J. C.!

Said Christ—whose statements were "no class"—

"This generation shall not pass

Till all's fulfilled"; yet many an ass

Is looking for the Lord J. C.!

Chorus.—Oh! they're balmy, etc.

The Prophet Baxter hoardings fills

With announcements of the Lord J. C.

The date is printed on his bills

Of the coming of the Lord J. C.!

Each year a new date's prophesied;

And, though each date is falsified,

The "mugs" accept him as their guide;

And they're looking for the Lord J. C.!

Chorus.—Oh, they're balmy, etc.

They're all bamboozled and misled

Who are looking for the Lord J. C.!

We wish they'd look to earth, instead

Of looking for the Lord J. C.!

For mis'ry, poverty, and crime

Would vanish soon from every clime

If Christians wasted not their time

In looking for the Lord J. C.!

Chorus.—Oh! they're balmy, etc.

ESS JAY BEE.

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. BERTRAM DOBELL, 77 Charing Cross-road, has followed up his publication of Thomas Taylor's translation of *Iamblichus on the Mysteries* by his version of *The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus*, in the introduction to which Taylor contends that these hymns are not only genuine, but that they were the actual invocations used in the Eleusinian Mysteries. Taylor was so thoroughly steeped in this literature that his opinion must always be of some weight. The consensus of modern criticism is against this view, and the eighty-seven hymns comprised in this volume are usually set down as the production of the Neo-Platonic school. It must be confessed it is not easy to see how these hymns could be composed when Paganism was in decay. Taylor seems to have believed them the composition of a personal Orpheus. To us it seems more likely that, like the Psalms attributed to David, they represent the work of various individuals and various ages, extending perhaps from the time of Onamacritus, B.C. 520, to their redaction in their present form by the philosophers of the Alexandrian school.

Be this as it may, the Orphic Hymns are certainly of high interest and value for the light they throw on the philosophic character of Paganism. The learned Heinus called them "a true liturgy of Satan," while Thomas Taylor, their translator, regarded them as little less than divine. Here, too, Taylor himself appears as a poet, or at least with the adornment of rhyme. His notes are numerous, and of almost as great interest as the hymns themselves. The hymns are not only addressed to the gods and goddesses, but to Ether, Health, Sun, Moon, Zephyr, East Wind, Death, etc. The book is excellently printed, and is, indeed, all that a reprint should be.

The Greater Victorian Poets, by Hugh Walker, M.A. (London: Swan Sonnenschein), is a series of studies on Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold. There can be little doubt that the author has selected the names of the poets who have done most in shaping the thought of their time, though some might wish to see also the names of Swinburne, Morris, Thomson, and Meredith. Mr. Walker says: "The idea of a universal reign of law, grasped, before the present century, only by a few choice minds, but now the property of all who can think; the idea of the ultimate oneness of the great forces of nature; above all, the idea of evolution, the master-thought of the century: these appeal to the imagination; they alter our whole conception of the relation of man to the universe; and they not only may, but must, leave their mark upon poetry." The critic regards poetry as a criticism of life, and judges it by its influence upon thought as well as upon the feelings.

Mr. Walker goes through all the chief works of Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold in chronological order. He often compares them, but never as if the abilities of one were a disparagement of those of another. His criticism is, indeed, a disinterested endeavor to display the best. He treats his author specially in relation to the Poetry of Nature, the Influence of Science, their Social and Political aspects, and their attitude in regard to Faith and Doubt. Arnold is described as the poet of doubt, who points to another faith. He says: "Arnold from the beginning rejected the popular creed, but he did so with pain." His view was that we must abandon our "all too human creeds," and look within for veracity. This Mr. Walker might have illustrated more fully than he has chosen to do from Arnold's masterpiece, *Empedocles on Etna*. Mr. Walker says: "Arnold never retracted these negations. If his poetry left the question in any doubt, his prose would settle it. But in one of his latest poems, *Geist's Grave*, he speaks of death as the

Stern law of every mortal lot,
Which man, proud man, finds hard to bear,
And builds himself, I know not what,
Of second life I know not where.

He rejected the supernatural wholly from his belief and his life. Some will think that in doing so he rejected religion, and that consequently the discussion of him in his religious aspects is, except negatively, rather futile. Such, however, was not his own view. He believed in a scheme of things surely setting towards righteousness. His life was guided and his verse inspired by that belief, and to ignore it would be to ignore its vital principle.

In *The Greater Victorian Poets* Mr. Walker finds everywhere the thought and the life of the time in which they live. He says the great practical task of the century has been the reconstruction of society after the upheaval of the French Revolution; and we find each of the three poets, in his own way, engaging in the task—Arnold insisting over and over again on its magnitude and difficulty, and on the need of lucidity and a wide outlook to accomplish it; Tennyson on his belief in ordered progress, and his desire to

"conserve the hopes of man"; Browning proclaiming his own debt to freedom, and his wish that everyone should enjoy it. To those who care for the critical appreciation of these three great poets Mr. Walker's work may be heartily commended.

Magic Squares: An Introduction to the Study of their Formation, by Thomas Squire Barrett, F.S.S. (Berkhamsted: Slater, 210 High-street), is a concise explanation of how to make the various kinds of squares which were regarded as talismanic in their occult virtues by the ancients, to whom the properties of numbers appeared divine. The little book will be very interesting to all who delight in arithmetical and mathematical recreations. The author is the writer of the article on "Magic Squares" in *Chambers's Encyclopedia*, and is also author of *A New Theory of Causation*.

There was not much of the poet about Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, but he wrote a parody of Tennyson's *Despair* in the *St. James's Gazette*, which was, at any rate, characterised by sterling common sense. The lines ended—

"In the world in which we are living there's plenty to do and to know;
And there's always something to hope for till it's time for us to go.
'Despair' is the vilest of words, unfit to be said or thought,
Whether there is a God and a future state or not.
If you really are such a wretch that you're quite unfit to live,
And ask my advice, I'll give you the best that I have to give:
Drown yourself by all means; I was wrong and you were right;
I'll not pull you out any more, but be sure you drown yourself quite."

Mr. Bertram Dobell in London, and the Labour Press in Manchester, will shortly issue Mr. Edward Carpenter's new work, *Love's Coming-of-Age*, and a new issue of *Towards Democracy: Complete Poems*, from the same pen.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE ROMAN CHURCH AND ANIMALS' RIGHTS.
TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Students of the history of the broader humanity know that in the Dark Ages, when Christianity was rampant, the two great causes which the priests succeeded in persecuting out of open existence were those of Freethought and Humanity. Nor need we go back into the far past for examples of the Roman Church's attitude towards the lower races; for there is to-day the school of the Rev. Joseph Rickaby, S.J., who holds that animals are as stones, and of Bishop Bagshawe, of Nottingham, who says that animals have no rights because they have no reason: and the paradox of the thing is, just as the Roman Catholics then burnt man at the stake because he had "the radical capacity for pure reason"—the worst of heresies in the eyes of the priests—so now they hold that animals have no rights, because they have "no radical capacity for pure reason." Compare this awful inhumanity with the simple words of the great jurist, Jeremy Bentham: "The question is not, Can they reason? but, Can they suffer?"

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

PROFANE JOKES.

Rector (going his rounds)—"Fine pip that, Mr. Dibbles; uncommonly fine!" Contemplative Villager—"Ah, yes, sir; if we was only all of us as fit to die as him, sir!"

Dolly (to her brother Tommy)—"Do you know, Tommy, that you come from heaven?" Tommy—"Did I?" Dolly—"Yes." Tommy—"Well, I must have come down a devil of a whop."

A sky-pilot went to visit a restless sufferer, a good woman, and her friends asked him to read a chapter of the Bible to her. This he proceeded to do. In a few minutes she was sound asleep. "Ah," said a friend, "see the soothing power of the Word!"

The Sunday-school superintendent was telling the wee small folks of the custom in certain countries of chaining the prisoner's hands and feet together. "And," she asked, "don't you suppose that if someone came and released them they would be very happy and grateful?" It was unanimously agreed that they would. "And," continued the superintendent, coming to her point, "Jesus was sent to the world to release people from their sins. Are any of you here bound with the chains of sin?" "No," piped the four-year-old offspring of the minister; "I'm not, but you might speak to my grandmother about Jesus—I've heard her say that she is."

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.

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (Prince of Wales-road): 5.30, tea and soirée.

BRADLAUGH CLUB AND INSTITUTE (36 Newington Green-road, Balls Pond, N.): 7.15, C. Cohen, "Christianity, Woman, and Morality." Wednesday, at 8.45, R. Forder, "The Signs of the Zodiac—Lecture XI, Leo" (continued). Saturday, at 8.30, concert.

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Stanley Jones, "Jesus Christ."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Reform Club, Well-street, Hackney): 7.30, G. Spiller, "Jesus of Nazareth."

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 12, meeting at the Bradlaugh Club and Institute.

WEST HAM SECULAR ETHICAL SOCIETY (61 West Ham-lane): 7, Messrs. Banham and Fletcher, "The Marriage Laws."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Resurrection."

CAMBERWELL (Station-road): 11.30, C. James, "Can we be Saved?"

HAMMERSMITH BRIDGE (Middlesex side): 7. S. E. Easton will lecture.

HYDN PARK (near Marble Arch): 12, E. Calvert, "Is the Right of Free Speech Conducive to Truth and Progress?" 3.30, "Religious Symbolism."

ISLINGTON (Prebend-street): 11.30, J. Rowney, "Our Easter Problem."

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."

OLD PIMLICO PIER: 11.30, Arthur B. Moss, "Paganism and the Sign of the Cross."

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butcher's Hill): 11.30, S. E. Easton will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BARNSELY (Black-a-moor Hotel): 8, members' meeting; friends invited.

BRISTOL (Shepherds' Hall, Old Market-street): 7, social gathering. Good Friday, 10.30, meet at Bristol Bridge for ramble to Dundry.

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, musical entertainment—special talent.

FALLSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY-SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Ernest Evans, "Four Scientific Men who have Modified the Thought of Intellectual Europe."

GLASGOW (Brunswick Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class accompanies W. Gilmour to Paisley; 6.30, J. P. Gilmour, "The Revival of Phrenology" (illustrated with anatomical specimens and diagrams).

HAMILTON (Lesser Victoria Hall): Thursday, at 8, W. Heaford, "Is the Bible Reliable?"

HULL (Cobden Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Trumper, "Merrie England."

KILMARNOCK (Large Temperance Hall): Friday, at 8, W. Heaford, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 7, Mr. Read, "What Must I do to be Saved?"

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, E. G. Taylor, "The Education Question."

MOTHERWELL (Lesser Burgh Hall): Wednesday, at 8, W. Heaford, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

NOTTINGHAM (Morley Hall): morning, Touzeau Parris, "Christianity Modified Paganism"; afternoon, "Causes Leading to the Formation of the I.L.P."; evening, "Sin Against God an Impossibility."

PAISLEY (Tannahill Hall, Moss-street): Tuesday, at 8, W. Heaford will lecture.

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

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, Charles Watts, "Cromwell and the Commonwealth"; 3, "The Atonement a Theological Delusion"; 7, "Is Man a Religious Being?"

STOCKTON-ON-TRES (Boro' Hall Dining Room): Thursday, at 7.45, Charles Watts, "Is Man a Religious Being?"

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BARNSELY (May Day Green): 6.30, W. Dyson, "Resurrection of Jesus."

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 3, S. R. Thompson, "The Christian's Guide Book." Special business meeting after the lecture.

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—April 5, Balls Pond; 12, 19, and 26, Manchester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S E.—April 5, m. Westminster; 12, Mile End; 19, Camberwell; 26, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 12, Balls Pond; 26, Glasgow. May 3, Fallsworth; 10, Balls Pond.

POSITIVISM.

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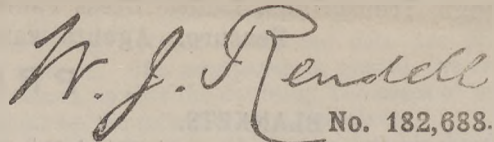
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