

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

REMINISCENCES OF CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

By G. W. FOOTE.

(Continued.)

DURING the years immediately after the opening of the Hall of Science, Mr. Bradlaugh was there a good deal. Sometimes he attended the week-night entertainments and gave a reading from Shelley or Whittier or some other poet. The audience applauded as a matter of course. They always applauded Mr. Bradlaugh. But he was no reader. He delivered his lines with that straightforward sincerity which characterised his speeches. He cultivated none of the graces or dexterities of the elocutionist. Besides, he was too original to be a successful echo of other men. I think he only did justice to Shelley's lines "To the Men of England." But this is a piece of simple and vigorous declamation; very fine, no doubt, but rather rhetoric than poetry.

Mr. Bradlaugh was anything but a cold man. I should say he was electric. But his tastes, so far as I could discover, did not lie in the direction of poetry. Certainly I heard him once, in those old days, read a great part, if not the whole of Shelley's "Sensitive Plant." He loved Shelley, however, as an Atheist and a Republican, and I suppose he took Shelley's poetry on trust. But I do not think, though I speak under correction, that he cared very much for poetry *as such*. I could never discover from his conversation or writings that he had read a line of Shakespeare—the god of Colonel Ingersoll. His mind was of the practical order, like Oliver Cromwell's. He had a genius for public affairs. He was not only a born orator, but a born ruler of men. Naturally he had, as the French say, the defects of his qualities. And it may be that the terrible stress of his life tended to repress the poetical side of his nature, and less developed his subtlety than his strength. Yet his feelings were deep. His heart was easily touched. When William O'Brien delivered that great speech in the House of Commons after his imprisonment by Mr. Balfour, with all its needless indignities, there were two men who could not restrain their tears. One was an Irish member. The other was Charles Bradlaugh. One who witnessed the scene told me it was infinitely pathetic to see that gigantic man, deemed so hard by an ignorant world, wiping away his tears at the tale of a brave man's unmerited suffering.

Mr. Bradlaugh used to attend the social parties pretty often in those old days. He did not dance and he stood about rather awkwardly. It must have been a great affliction, but he bore it with exemplary fortitude. Once or twice I saw Mrs. Bradlaugh there. She had a full-blown matronly figure. Miss Alice and Miss Hypatia came frequently. They were not then living in the enervating air of London, and they looked extremely robust. I also remember the boy Charles, of whom Mr. Brad-

laugh seemed very proud. He was a remarkably bright lad, and full of promise. But he was carried off by a fever. Only a day or two after the lad's death Mr. Bradlaugh had to lecture at the Hall. I was away, and I wondered whether he would fulfil the engagement. He did fulfil it. A friend wrote to me that Mr. Bradlaugh walked through the hall and mounted the platform with a face as white and rigid as that of a statue. He made no reference or allusion to his loss, but all could see he carried a bleeding heart. His lecturing in such circumstances was characteristic. Weaker men would have indulged their grief; he was made of sterner stuff, and would not let it interfere with what he deemed his duty.

Splendid as was his eloquence at that time, Mr. Bradlaugh did not draw the large audiences that flocked around him a few years later. The Hall of Science was at first but half its present size, the platform standing on the right as you entered, with a small gallery on the opposite side. Its holding capacity could not have been more than half what it is at present, yet I have seen the place far from full. But the audiences grew larger and larger, and eventually the hall was increased to its present proportions, although for a long time there was not cash enough to put on a proper roof, and the building was defaced by a beastly great beam, on each side of which there was an arch of corrugated iron.

Those were glorious times. Difficulties were great, but there was a spirit at the Hall that laughed at them. How the foremost men about the place did work! Mr. R. O. Smith and Mr. Trevilion, senior, could a tale unfold. Whenever Freethinkers are at all dejected they should have a chat with one of those gentlemen. Perhaps it would make them ashamed of their dejection, and fill them with the spirit of the heroic days.

Friends have told me with what energy Mr. Bradlaugh fought the battles of the old Reform League. I know with what energy he threw himself into the Republic. He tried to get to Paris but failed. Jules Favre and his friends did not want him. Favre himself was an eloquent histrion, and no doubt he felt afraid of a man like Mr. Bradlaugh. But if Mr. Bradlaugh could not get to Paris he fought hard for France in London. Meetings at the Hall of Science did not suffice. There was money from French sources and St. James's Hall was taken for a big demonstration. The Positivists shared in the proceedings. Their chief man was Mr. Frederic Harrison. Mr. Bradlaugh and he were a tremendous contrast. In fact a London paper (I think the *Echo*) remarked that Mr. Bradlaugh spoke as well as Mr. Harrison wrote, and Mr. Harrison spoke as badly as Mr. Bradlaugh wrote. There was some truth in this, though like most epigrams it was not all true. Mr. Bradlaugh was a born orator, but not a born writer. Yet he often wrote with a forthright power, naked and unadorned, which could dispense with the aid of literary artifices.

(To be continued.)

T A B O O S.

VISCOUNT AMBERLEY, in his able *Analysis of Religious Belief*, points out that everywhere the religious instinct leads to the consecration of certain actions, places, and things. If this instinct is analysed it is found at bottom to spring from fear. Certain places are to be dreaded as the abode of evil spirits—certain actions are calculated to propitiate them, and certain things are dangerous and are therefore tabooed.

From Polynesia was derived the word *taboo* or *tapu*, and the first conception of its importance as an element lying at the bottom of many of our religious and social conventions; though this is not as yet by any means sufficiently recognised.

The term *taboo* implies something sacred, reserved, prohibited by supernatural agents, the breaking of which prohibition will be visited by supernatural punishment. This notion is one of the most widely extended features of early religion. Holy places, holy persons, and holy things are all founded on this conception. W. Robertson Smith, in his *Religion of the Semites*, p. 142, says: "Rules of holiness in the sense just explained, *i.e.*, a system of restrictions on man's arbitrary use of natural things enforced by the dread of supernatural penalties are found among all primitive peoples."

The holy ark of the North American Indians was deemed "so sacred and dangerous to be touched" that no one, except the war chief and his attendant will touch it "under the penalty of incurring great evil. Nor would the most inveterate enemy touch it in the woods for the very same reason."*

In Numbers iv., 15, we read of the Jewish ark. "The sons of Kohath shall come to bear it: but they shall not touch any holy thing lest they die." In 2 Sam. vi., 6-7, we are told how the Lord smote Uzzah so that he died, simply for putting his hand on the ark to steady it. So the Lord punished the Philistines for keeping his ark, and smote fifty thousand and seventy men of Bethshemesh, "because they had looked into the ark of the Lord" (1 Sam. v., vi.)

Disease and death were so constantly thought of as the penalties of breaking taboo that cases are on record of those who, having unwittingly done this, have died of terror upon recognising their error. Mr. Frazer, in his *Golden Bough*, instances a New Zealand chief, who left the remains of his dinner by the way side. A slave ate it up without asking questions. Hardly had he finished when he was told the food was the chief's, and taboo. "No sooner did he hear the fatal news than he was seized by the most extraordinary convulsions and cramp in the stomach, which never ceased till he died, about sun-down the same day."

All the old temples had an adytum, sanctuary, or holy of holies—a place not open to the profane, but protected by rigid taboos. This was the case with the Jews. It was death to enter the holy places or even to make the holy oil of the priests. Even the name of the Lord was taboo, and to this day cannot be pronounced. Take off your sandals, says God to Moses, for the place whereon you stand is taboo. The whole of Mount Horeb was taboo, and we continually read of the holy mountain. The ideas of taboo and of holiness are admitted by Prof. Robertson Smith to be at bottom identical.

Some taboos are simply artful, as the prohibition of boats to South Pacific women, lest they should escape to other islands. When Tamehameha, the King of the Sandwich Islands, heard that diamonds had been found in the mountains near Honolulu, he at once declared the mountains taboo, in order that he might be the sole possessor.

In Hawaii the flesh of hogs, fowls, turtle, and several kinds of fish, cocoa nuts, and nearly everything

offered in sacrifice, were reserved for gods and men, and could not, except in special cases, be consumed by women. Some taboos of animals being used for food seem to have been dictated by dread or aversion, but others had a foundation of prudence and forethought. Thus there is little doubt that the prohibition of the sacred cow in India has been the means of preserving that animal from extermination in times of famine.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

THE GROWTH OF FREETHOUGHT.

OF late much has been written by persons who imagine that they know a great deal about the Secular movement, on what they are pleased to term its decay. No doubt such persons heartily wish that the Freethought movement were dead. But experience shows that what Christians most fervently desire is generally the most unlikely thing to happen. Secularism as an organisation, it may be granted at once, has during the past ten years undergone fluctuations; it has made many strides forward and then appeared to stand still for a time; but to-day it may honestly be said to be in as strong and healthy a condition as it has ever been in its past history. For over sixteen years I have been connected with the movement and the prospects of our party were certainly never brighter than they are to-day.

This is not a matter of belief, but a matter of positive knowledge. For example. I recently sent a copy of my work, *The Bible and Evolution*, to several Free Libraries, and have now succeeded in getting it in the catalogues of such libraries as Camberwell and Rotherhithe, and Bermondsey Institute Library, where a few years ago such a book would have been rejected with scorn. A few years ago too the public press took very little notice of our meetings, but now whenever we go into the country we get good accounts of our lectures in almost all the provincial papers. Now this is a certain sign of growth; it is a sign that the editors of newspapers have discovered that the reading public wants to know not only what we are doing, but what we are saying on all the great problems that engages human thought.

And here let me point to the fact that the newspapers have not only given prominence to the great political and social work accomplished by our great General who has just passed away, but have also spoken respectfully of his magnificent efforts towards intellectual freedom.

Undoubtedly Mr. Bradlaugh was for years the life and soul of the Freethought movement. With his great brain he grasped every branch of the subject firmly, and proclaimed his views with a clearness and force that were perfectly irresistible; so that in time Freethought became identified with his name, and many persons were called "Bradlaughites" who were really prominent Freethinkers. During the last two or three years, however, in order to husband all his physical energy for political work, Mr. Bradlaugh was unable to devote the time and labor in furthering the interests of the Freethought cause that he had given in former years.

The younger members of the party did their best and with a very fair measure of success. But naturally many who had been drawn to our movement by the strong individuality of Mr. Bradlaugh, ceased to display the same amount of activity when he had transferred his labor to another field. And so it naturally seemed that as an organisation we were on the wane. Soon after Mr. Foote became President of our Society, however, a new era of activity opened to us. New members joined us week by week, and to-day we can honestly claim to have as large a number of members on our books as we have had for several years past.

* Adair. *History of the American Indians*, p. 162, sq.

Granted that Mr. Bradlaugh's withdrawal from the leadership of our party had its effect in diminishing, for a time, the strength of our membership, is it any wonder when we remember the electrical force with which he attracted and held his followers together? When I was at Rushden a week ago some of his old Northampton constituents told me that his death would cause many to take no interest in politics for some time. The truth is, the love of the people for Mr. Bradlaugh made them take an interest in all he did; and his withdrawal from any branch of public work naturally caused a falling off in the fervor or zeal of his followers.

But while it is true that as an organisation we have suffered, it is also true that our principles have gone on growing steadily and uninterruptedly for the past twenty years. What are these principles? In the first place, that man has no knowledge of God. If there be a God, who is an infinite being—man, with his finite brain, can have no idea of him. God, therefore, is unknown. But this world is a solid fact. We know it each for ourselves; we are so satisfied about it that we never attempt to prove it. We would as soon attempt to demonstrate that two and two make four. Our experience satisfies us every hour of our lives.

We are also satisfied that the laws of nature are invariable, unchangeable. Experience gives us no warrant for believing that an effect ever happens, or has ever happened, without an adequate cause; we are therefore bound to discredit miracles. Nor can we believe for a single moment in the efficacy of prayer. If a hungry man were to go out in the street and pray for food, and a leg of mutton were to hit him on the head, he would never think of looking up into the clouds to see where it came from. He would be far more likely to look round to see if a butcher shop were handy. People do not believe in miracles unless you place them in the distant past or future. The Secularist, therefore, discards the superstition of divine interposition. He relies exclusively upon science and experience.

And it must be remembered that it is science that has made this world worth living in; science that has built all our houses; science that has given us art; put pictures on our walls, books on our shelves; science that has built our temples, our school-houses, our museums; science that has given us the steam-engine, the telegraph, the electric light, the phonograph; in short, science that has given us all that is valuable in the world. And it is this belief that is growing everywhere. What has theology done compared with science? This is the question the people are asking to-day. Upon the answer they give to this question will depend the future of our race. Happily the people are becoming rapidly intelligent; their eyes are being opened to the facts, and, for our part, we are content to await the result. We believe that in a free and fair encounter Truth is certain to prevail.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

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W. H. Reynolds (Treasurer), New Cross, S.E.

WHO RULES THE WEATHER? GOD THE FATHER OR GOD THE SUN?

LET us suppose, for the sake of argument, that Godalmity rules the weather. Then he perpetually surmounts the two frigid zones with icebergs and avalanches, while he clothes the torrid zone with luxuriant vegetation. The sun, which does nothing but give light, has nothing to do with the climate of any of the five zones. It is Godalmity who tips the mountains with snow and gilds the sunny valleys with golden corn. Some irreligious people think that atmospheric temperature and moisture have something to do with wet or dry weather. Not at all. Some quasi-scientists insist that the inclination of the earth's axis, terrestrial rotation, and orbital motion cause the trade winds to fly obliquely alternately. What rot! How is it possible that the sun, at a distance of 90,000,000 miles, can rarify a mass of air forty-five miles thick, so as to cause it to rise spontaneously, while into the vacuum there rushes an equivalent area of surrounding atmosphere, which, in its velocity, wrecks ships, demolishes houses, creates storms and hurricanes, etc., etc. Nonsense! Tempests are the breathings of Godalmity, who gives to the air every condition necessary for specific weather in specific places, in specific degrees at specific times for specific purposes. He brews the storm wholesale, and dispenses every snowflake retail. He irrigates this planet very partially. Some localities he annually deluges with rain, particularly mountainous districts, knowing in his omniscience how suitably adapted for showers sloping grounds are. On the contrary, such places as Sahara, Suez, and Peru, having no fall in gradience, are not allowed any fall of rain. What omniscience! The whiteness of the bear, bunting, crow and hare in arctic regions are not the result of social and climateric surroundings; Godalmity endowed them with that whiteness so as to hide from each other safely in the snow. The dusky Ethiopian owes his swarthy complexion to the great weather-maker, as do also the black and brown bears of the tropics. The sun has nothing to do with the hatching of ostrich's eggs, or with the variegated tints of butterflies' wings. None whatever; Godalmity hatches those and paints these. Certainly. If all this is not clear enough to the reader, let him suppose that Godalmity has nothing to do with the weather. Let him study some of the elements of Physiography, say Meteorology, and when he learns the indisputable causes of meteorological effects, he will see beyond doubt that, instead of one great agent ruling the weather, thousands of agents in the shape of atmospheric conditions are continually performing changes of weather in all their countless phases.

P. W. BALDWIN.

WILL SOME CHRISTIAN TELL US.

What God was doing before he created everything out of nothing.

Where he got his material.

The appearance of the earth when it was "without form."

If it rotated round the sun before there was any sun.

How the earth brought forth herbs and fruit before the sun was created.

If man is in God's image, in whose image is the monkey.

How woman was made out of man's rib.

Why Adam and Eve were forbidden to acquire knowledge.

Why God placed trees in their way he did not mean them to eat.

If it was fair to pit an innocent woman against the Devil.

Why were serpents punished for the Devil's sin.

What they walked on before they went on their bellies.

Their opinion of a father who, for a single act of disobedience, punishes his children's children for ever.

Why God chose one favored race and left the rest benighted heathens.

How he came to alter his designs afterwards.

Why he should write his will instead of speaking to all face to face.

Why Christ never authorised any one to write about him.

Why gospels to Jews should be written in Greek.

How it is the original MSS. have disappeared.

Why they were not published among the people who could correct any error.

Who separated the true gospels from the many spurious ones.

Why don't God work miracles now.

If the trade no longer pays.

How is it a divine revelation sets everyone at loggerheads.

The name and address of a genuine Christian.—LUCIANUS.

BLASPHEMY IN GERMANY.

Bigotry is rampant in the country of Lessing, Goethe, Feuerbach, Strauss and Schopenhauer. Dr. Voelkel, editor of the *Neues Freireligiöses Sonntags Blatt*, is one of the most pronounced and popular, and therefore one of the most hated, Freethought lecturers in Germany. No less than nine prosecutions have been entered against him for blasphemy. But he has only been convicted twice, once to a term of two weeks, and now (Feb. 12) at Leipsic to a term of six months' imprisonment. Our sympathy is with the brave doctor, and we trust he will have good friends to look after his interests while incarcerated.

REVISED VERSION.

I said recently that if a literal and modernised translation of the Bible were put forward, all the guilt would be off the Christian idol. Just as a specimen, I have taken the first narrative in the New Testament. Premising that my version is in no degree coarser than the original, I ask who would reverence as the word of God such stuff as this: "The birth of Jesus Christ happened in this way. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before he had connection with her she was found to be with child, by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph, her husband, being just and undesirous of making a public example of her, resolved to get quit of her privately. While thinking of the matter, the Lord's messenger appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid of marrying Mary, for the child has been begotten in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you must call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. This is all done to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: 'Behold the virgin will be with child, and bring forth a son; and they will call his name Immanuel (which means God with us).' Then Joseph woke up and did what the messenger of the Lord told him, and he took the woman, but did not consummate the marriage till after the birth of her first son, who was called Jesus."—J. M. W.

CHILDREN'S PARTY.

A full meeting of the Committee was held on Sunday evening, and the various sub-committees were appointed. Subscriptions are needed, which may be sent to me. I have received the following:—H. Seal, £1; J. Tapp, junr., 1s.; Mrs. Marks, 5s.; W. T. Lecky, 4s.; W. Hunt, 5s. Collected by Mr. Reen, 6s. A Friend, per G. S., 6d.—R. FORDEN, secretary.

THE AMERICAN CHURCH AND SLAVERY.

It cannot be denied that the modern Abolition movement received very little sympathy from the church and clergy of this country as a whole. It is a pregnant and striking fact that American slavery was never afraid of American religion. The solemn meeting could be held in safety in the neighborhood of a slave-auction. Neither had any quarrel with the other. They were, in fact, upon friendly terms, for men were sold to build churches, and babes to buy Bibles, and women to support missionaries; and few refused the price of blood when it was offered at the treasury of the sanctuary. In fact, a man so careful and so religious as was the late James G. Birney, himself a repentant slaveholder, and who at great sacrifice emancipated his slaves, was compelled to admit that the American church was the bulwark of American slavery. It opposed the anti-slavery movement by silence, and by holding aloof from it at the North, and by open and direct advocacy of slavery at the South. Books were, however, written, printed, and circulated by eminent divines both North and South, to prove slavery to be, like the church itself, a divine institution, and denouncing all opposition to it as infidelity.—*Frederick Douglass*.

THE CONCEIT OF ORTHODOXY.

From whence, then, could arise the solitary and strange conceit that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because they say, one man and one woman had eaten an apple? And, on the other hand, are we to suppose that every world in the boundless creation had an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a redeemer? In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life.—*Paine*.

ACID DROPS.

Mr. W. T. Stead is nothing if not peculiar. We turned with a natural curiosity to what he had to say on Charles Bradlaugh in the *Review of Reviews*. There is a good portrait on one page, and on the opposite Mr. Stead's judgment of the man, written in a rather slipshod manner, with a most damnable iteration of "many" and "things." According to Mr. Stead the Atheist leader was "in many things a great moral teacher." This is quite true. But Charles Bradlaugh talked very little about morality, while Mr. Stead hardly talks of anything else. Charles Bradlaugh never cast stones at his neighbors. He left Mr. Stead and his like to praise (without practising) the moral of the story of the woman taken in adultery. It did not occur to him that a man of any self-respect needed a warning against prying into his neighbors' private life—which is always most difficult to understand fully—or holding them up to public scorn and detestation. It seemed to him that a man should just look after himself, just ascertain the right course and pursue it without playing the Pharisee. And certainly in a clamorous, sensitive age like this, such a strong, self-contained, good man was "a great moral teacher." Nor would it injure Mr. Stead to take a leaf, or half a leaf, out of Charles Bradlaugh's closed book.

Charles Bradlaugh was "a sturdy soldier of righteousness," and in this light the Nonconformists regarded him. Not all of them, Mr. Stead. Few of them so regarded him in the old days, before he rose to political eminence, although he was the same man then as he was afterwards. Samuel Morley was a typical Nonconformist, and he begged the Northampton people to return a Tory rather than an Atheist. Nor was it the Nonconformists who formed the basis of Charles Bradlaugh's power at Northampton. Certainly they "repeatedly returned him to Parliament" after he once won the seat. But he fought thirteen years to gain it, and he was only accepted, more or less grudgingly, when he had made himself indispensable. And he would never have reached that vantage ground without the steady, unweariable support of the Freethinkers and Radicals who were indifferent on the subject of religion. Mr. Stead talks freely about the Northampton Nonconformists, and we do not wish to say anything disrespectful about them, for they have acted well since 1880. But if Mr. Stead will take the trouble to inquire he will find that some of Charles Bradlaugh's staunchest friends in Northampton were not Nonconformists at all.

Charles Bradlaugh was "a militant and aggressive Agnostic." Well, Mr. Stead—to give you the lie direct—he wasn't. He expressly disclaimed the name of Agnostic. He distinctly called himself an Atheist.

Mr. Stead's nerves are shocked by "Atheist." Charles Bradlaugh was less squeamish. He would have smiled, perhaps a little sneeringly, at Mr. Stead's calling him "a soldier of God." Charles Bradlaugh was a soldier of Humanity.

Though "a soldier of God," in Mr. Stead's judgment, Charles Bradlaugh did not know it. He was one of "the unconscious and unrecognised sort." Mr. Stead has had the secret disclosed to him, perhaps in a recent interview with the Almighty. We are informed that "all who do good are to that extent soldiers of God"—which is a pretty piece of impudence on Mr. Stead's part. It is saying that Charles Bradlaugh was a devotee of Mr. Stead's religion without having the sense to see it; though all who know anything of the two men are aware that there was, so to speak, more sense in Charles Bradlaugh's little finger than the whole of William Stead's body, head and all.

We advise Mr. Stead to take Dr. Johnson's advice and clear his mind of cant. Lying about dead Atheists is bad enough and heaping filth on their graves is loathsome; but even more nauseous is it to see Christians shedding maudlin tears over an Atheist's grave, and hiccupping "He was one of us!" Charles Bradlaugh was not one of you, and you know it very well. Clear your minds of cant. Be honest for a moment. Admit that a soldier not of God, but of Freethought and Humanity, can be noble and valiant, and strong and tender, and true and honest to the heart's core.

The Northampton election is in a certain sense an eye-opener. Mr. Manfield, who opposed Mr. Bradlaugh before 1880, is returned by the biggest majority ever known in the borough—quite a thousand more than the highest majority Mr. Bradlaugh ever scored against his Tory opponents. Allowing for the enlarged register, it seems pretty evident that a good number of Liberal bigots would not vote for Mr. Bradlaugh to the very last. The fact is, Mr. Bradlaugh conquered the constituency. It was his indomitable will rather than the good wishes of the majority that secured him the seat. Now he is gone a mediocre man, compared with him, wins in a canter. We commend this to the attention of those who fancy the war with bigotry is practically over.

Why do working men not go to church? This question might be kept as a standing headline in the religious papers. It is now being ventilated in the *Independent*, whose Scottish correspondent has discovered that even in kirk gaun Scotland it is beginning to be evident that the flower of the artizan population are, to say the least, very lukewarm in their appreciation of the church and its services. The correspondent would fain put it down to the ministers not having endorsed the late railway strike. We imagine it will be found owing to causes far more permanent in their nature than this. For one thing, working men are learning that however it may be with shopkeepers, they get no good by church-going.

"Why working men do not come to church" is occupying the attention of the Rev. J. L. Rentoul, of Sunderland. Preaching on the subject last Sunday evening, the reverend gentleman first denied that working men do not attend church and chapel as well as other classes, and finally, in a beautiful fit of Christian charity, he declared that the strongest reason for a working man not attending church was his own intemperate habits. Mr. Rentoul is in favor of closing the publichouses on Sunday; but if he thinks this will stop Sunday drinking, or drive the workman to the gospel-shops, he is very much deceived. The desertion of the churches has increased, is increasing, and cannot be diminished. Kingdom-Come is losing its attraction for the masses of the people, who want a better share of this world instead of fine promises of glory in the next world. A bird in the hand is worth any quantity of birds in the bush—especially when the bush is invisible.

The recent discovery of a work by Aristotle suggests a reflexion on the Christian boast, which even Mill was weak enough to countenance, that the clergy were preservers of learning in the Dark Ages. They were preservers of learning precisely as an ignorant quack doctor preserves the lives of as many of his patients as are too strong to succumb to his treatment. He points with an air of triumph to the survivors. In the same way the Church points to the Greek and Roman literature that has survived its negligence or vandalism. But much of this survived by accident. And what of the hosts of writings by the greatest poets, philosophers, and historians that were lost for ever in the Christian deluge? Fish up these, O priests of the evil faith, before you prate of your preservation of ancient learning.

Suppose Bill Sikes broke into your house, and stole a lot of your plate and other valuable articles, and then sent you in a bill for a large commission on all he had not taken away. It would be rather cool, certainly; but no cooler than the Church asking us to thank it for all the treasures of antiquity it did not succeed in destroying. Thank you for nothing! Give us back what you "burgled."

Canon Creighton is the new Bishop of Peterborough. He will take Dr. Magee's old salary. But how about his opinions on the Sermon on the Mount. Dr. Creighton ought to tell us whether he agrees with Dr. Magee that the state would go to ruin in a week if it tried to carry out the teaching of Jesus Christ.

The *Ironclad Age* opines that Catholic and other Christian missionaries, were at the bottom of the Indian Messiah craze, which resulted in so much bloodshed, and gives some evidence in support of its opinion.

John Johnson, a youth of eighteen, committed a burglary at All Saints' Church, Finchley-road, St. John's Wood, and stole £23 worth of the parson's property. A police sergeant

saw him through the vestry window dressed in the parson's surplice, probably to look like the man of God. On being charged before the magistrate, it appeared that John Johnson had added to the enormity of his crime by drinking some of the bottled Blood of Christ. But he pleaded, "I only had a mouthful of that; I could not stand that stuff." We should think not. John Johnson may congratulate himself on being still alive.

One of the North American Christianised Indians had a great partiality for the Blessed Sacrament, and took every opportunity of partaking. Being spoken to on the subject, he said, "Yes, I love my Jesus; but"—with a leer—"rum is better."

According to the Rev. H. Vian-Williams, of North Shields, who has been preaching on "the late Charles Bradlaugh," it was Christianity that suffered by his persecution. Well, there is a grain of comfort in that. Mr. Williams praises Mr. Bradlaugh as a man and a reformer, but thinks his death showed "the cheerlessness and hopelessness of Atheism." Perhaps so, to Mr. Williams. But the Atheist's hopes are not his hopes. The Atheist hopes for better things for the human race in this world, and Charles Bradlaugh's life—a far more important thing than his death—gave a mighty impetus to progress in that direction.

The *Lancet* of Feb. 14 reports a shocking case of religious mania at Mezzoinso in the province of Palermo, Italy. A fine girl of eighteen, in an access of pious frenzy, and speaking in the name of the Lord, got the whole household to kneel down. Taking a heavy piece of wood, she smashed in the skull of her brother Biagio; then she threw herself upon the corpse, like a wild beast, and with hands and teeth tore away his genitals. No wonder the *Lancet's* correspondent concludes with the line of the Roman poet—*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!*

Under the heading "Awful Judgment—Blasphemers be Warned," the *Tuam News*, a Catholic journal, extracts from the equally pious *People* of Wexford, a curious story professing to come from "Howard Lake, Min." It states that "Of all the hideous human malformations ever heard of in the State, the five week's old offspring of Charles and Sarah Millar, of McLeod county, is the most atrocious." God Almighty does occasionally indulge in monstrous vagaries known as "freaks of nature." The nondescript offspring of Mrs. Millar appears to be of this character.

This is how it came about, according to the most voracious and pious *People*. Two months ago, three weeks prior to Mrs. Millar's confinement, a Jewish pedlar came to the house selling colored oleographs of the Crucifixion. He was told to go about his business, but pressed his wares in such a manner that Mrs. Millar became exasperated and declared that *she would sooner have the Devil in her house than the portrait of her Savior*.

"The full meaning of the preference she expressed did not dawn on the unfortunate woman until she was brought face to face with the frightful creature to which she had given birth. The child, or—as many persons believe—the Devil, was born with hair all over his body nearly two inches long. The face and hands even are not exempt, they are similarly coated. The features are absolutely fiendish in expression and the eyes shine like two little beads from beneath a pair of shaggy brows."

This is not all. This *enfant terrible* was born with teeth and a tail 18 inches long. Two short horns protrude from the skull, and the claw-like hands are furnished with claws like that of an eagle. The feet are exactly like the hoof of a goat, and the hair covering the body is as coarse as a goat's hair and similar in appearance. The creature could crawl from its birth, and refusing the natural sustenance of a normal child of like age, it left its mother's side, sliding on its hands and knees all over the house, devouring any scraps to be found. Here is marvellous confirmation of the great truths of religion and illustration of the wickedness of refusing to buy oleographs of the Crucifixion. Blasphemers beware!

Mary Lamprecht, of Philadelphia, after hoisting in a full dose of religion, expressed a desire to go to heaven right off. So she cut the throats of two of her children and partly cut her own. The religion of Jesus must have blood.

William Cook, the landlord of the "Ship Inn," Louth, Lincolnshire, hanged himself, leaving a letter to his children saying, "God comfort you all." Poor consolation this.

Truth says: "Here is a warning to members of the Church of England who are too strenuous in maintaining the privacy of their pews. At Cartmel Priory Church the other day, on the occasion of a visit by the Bishop of Barrow, the vicar, before the service, showed two ladies into a front pew. Another lady subsequently arrived and ordered them to remove, although she was alone and the pew contained seats for six. It subsequently appeared that the ladies thus evicted were the wife of the Bishop of Barrow and her mother, who is the wife of the Bishop of Carlisle. The discovery of this fact must, I should hope, have been wormwood and gall to the evictor, and it should teach the owners of private pews that it is possible to entertain angels unawares—even in church."

Dr. Randall Davidson, the bishop-elect of Rochester, is to have an episcopal palace built in South London to overlook Kennington Park. He must strive to rival in grandeur his brother at Fulham Palace. Does not the New Testament say a bishop must be given to hospitality? *Ergo*, a palace and sumptuous dinners are of divine appointment.

The Bishop of Liverpool, in sending round the hat for an Augmentation Fund for parsons' salaries, complained that clerks in business houses are paid better than many of his clergy. Well, he has himself over £4,000 a year. In his diocese are the vicars of Halsall, with a living of £3,500 a year and only 1,681 of population, and Winwick with £3,200 and a population of 729. Surely such well-paid men of God as these are the persons to shell out for their poorer brethren.

Talk about the decay of secularism. Here in one week are the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of Ripon demonstrating how much secularism has affected their religion. Lecturing on the Bible to an audience of young men at the Regent-street Polytechnic, the Archbishop quite deserted the ground that the book on which his authority and pretensions are built is altogether divine. He said it was a mistake to regard it as a single book instead of a library of books, but did not say that his Church had promulgated this mistake by calling it God's Word, and all inspired by the same being. Nor did he inform them that it was Freethought criticism which had cleared up this error.

The Archbishop also told these Christian young men, "It was very important that they should always bear in mind the real humanity of the sacred writers." Was ever such rationalism promulgated by an Archbishop before? Why is this important now? Simply that some excuse shall be found, so that when the errors, exaggerations, and contradictions of the Bible are pointed out they shall not be supposed to reflect on God, their inspirer, but only on the real humanity of the sacred writers.

Then the Bishop of Ripon, addressing the members of the Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society on the subject of "Buddha," extolled, as a teacher of righteousness, Gautama Buddha, who lived ages before Jesus Christ. He called him a prophet and highly praised his teaching. Dr. Boyd Carpenter is better than his faith. He forgets that his master, Jesus Christ, said "all that ever came before me are thieves and robbers"; that the New Testament declares there is no other name under heaven save that of Jesus whereby men can be saved; and that the eighteenth Article, which he has sworn to uphold, curses those "that presume to say, That every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and the light of nature." But Christians are becoming more liberal than their creeds, and the liberalising influence has come from Freethought and secularism.

The Jesuits are always busy. Twelve of the most learned of the English ones, including Fathers Clarke, Lucas, Purbrick, and Smith, are now set to the task of preparing an English Commentary on the Bible. No doubt they will be able to show that it contains more Catholic teaching than is generally allowed by Protestants. The first volume of their work will not appear until the beginning of 1893. We should like to have a Freethought Commentary on the old Jew books ready by the same time.

The Lenten Pastoral of Cardinal Manning is a melancholy document. He finds that "the piety of even the good languishes." But he has the consolation that it was all prophesied, and therefore comes within the counsels of God.

The *Free Christian*, a theological hodge-podge of Bible nonsense, looks forward to "Anti-Christ" coming as "an improved man," a sort of combination of General Booth and Sequah.

Jesus Christ has turned up in Melbourne. The *Adelaide Advertiser* states that he went up to the altar of St. Mark's, Fitzroy, and announced, "In the name of God, I am Jesus Christ, the son of God." As frequently prophesied, he was arrested, but refuses to give any other name.

When he has pumped Scandinavia Booth is going to try and collect the shekels from Germany. But, remarks the Berlin correspondent of the *Times*, the Germans are too much occupied with the stern duties of real soldiering to care for the mock militarism of corybantic Christianity.

Our heavenly Father mingles his weather up in surprising fashion. Here we have foregleams of summer, followed by frost and fog. In North America snow blizzards have stopped railway traffic and caused much distress, while in South America the heat is so excessive that about 40,000 animals have perished in the provinces of Buenos Ayres alone, from want of water, while in China floods prevail, and in Turkestan sheep on the steppes have been frozen to death in flocks.

A pious paper, the *Scottish Guardian*, in its issue of Feb. 6, has the following: "*Erratum*.—In our last Dublin Letter, 'the fad of St. Athanasius' Creed' should read 'the God of St. Athanasius Creed.'" Tut, tut! 'tis all one and the same.

The people are not really held in poverty and servitude by force. They are thus kept down because they believe it is God's will, or that for some other reason it is right that they should be. People cannot be enslaved by physical force; they can only be enslaved by their own superstitions.—*Twentieth Century*.

The American bigots have gone pretty far with their Sunday Laws. In Tennessee one R. M. King, a Seventh-Day Adventist, who keeps the Saturday holy by not working, has been sentenced to two years' imprisonment for ploughing on Sunday. The National Religious Liberty Association have employed counsel to defend him on appeal against this iniquitous sentence.

The Spiritists of Brooklyn have started an Anti-Fraud Society, determined to expose and hold up to ridicule the contemptible impostors called public mediums, and the fools who are duped by them. Something of the same sort is much wanted here, judging by recent revelations.

A correspondent of the *Christian World* gives an account of the Shaloputs, a new Russian sect. They dance in their meeting-places until nearly delirious. They also go in for "spiritual" marriages, with the usual phenomena of such connexions. Of course the Russian government is trying to put them down. But there is an astonishing vitality in such sects. They have held their own, more or less, ever since the days of primitive Christianity.

Mr. Spurgeon scorns the idea of Christian ministers competing with the managers of theatres. Let them fill their churches and chapels with the good old Gospel. Mr. Spurgeon says, "I would rather hear of a minister becoming a chimney sweep, in which calling he might do some good, than that he who was called to be God's watchman should become the world's fiddler. God keep us from that! Stick to your last, cobbler! Keep to your pulpit, minister!"

Good, Mr. Spurgeon, excellent, magnificent! But what are the men of God to do? You can draw a big crowd. They, or most of them, can only draw their salaries. And if the people won't come to them, they must go to the people. There is such a thing as stooping to conquer, and whether they conquer or not, thousands of ministers are good at stooping.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Saturday, Feb. 21, Oxhill (no bill arrived): "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."

Sunday, Feb. 22, Lecture Hall, Nelson-street, Newcastle; at 11, "The Grand Old Book: a Reply to the Grand Old Man"; at 3, "A World Without God"; at 7, "An Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."

Friday, Feb. 27, at the United Workmen's Temperance Hall, Dodington-grove, Battersea-park-road; at 8 p.m., "The Grand Old Book." Admission free.

March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Hall of Science.

April 5, Birmingham; 12, Camberwell; 19, Belfast; 26, Liverpool.

May 10, Camberwell.

June 7, Camberwell; 14 and 21, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

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

H. SMITH.—The verse has already appeared in the *Freethinker*.

E. WEST.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

W. PERRY.—Apply to Mr. Forder, who will give you copies of the N. S. S. principles for distribution.

H. WISEMAN.—There is not, and never was in any proper sense of the words, any official organ of the N. S. S. Its official reports and notices appear in the *Freethought* papers that will insert them. Mr. Foote, as president, uses this journal for what he has to say to the members.

A. WHEELER.—We hope the Finsbury Branch will be still more successful in the new year.

E. HODDER wishes to know of a newsagent who sells this paper in South Kensington. The West London is the nearest Branch. Address, H. Courtney, 8 Norland-road north, Notting-hill, W.

C. H. KELF wishes to know of a *Freethought* newsagent in Cork. We wish you all success in your new quarters.

J. M.—The phrase death-knell, on p. 62, was used by Mr. Wheeler as a poetic simile, without any intention of its being taken literally. He regrets using a term open to misconstruction.

F. N.—Mark xiv., 18, should be Mark xvi., 18.

J. MYLES.—Your question is unanswerable by us. Suppose you address the gentleman himself.

W. HOLLAND.—The gentleman is now editing a political paper in Ireland, and is no longer able to contribute to our columns.

T. THURLOW.—We have read your lines with pleasure, but their form is hardly good enough for publication.

H. J. SUTTON.—(1) *Freethinkers* use the Christian era, and write 1891, for the same reason that Christians go on calling the days of the week after the names of Pagan divinities. It is a mere matter of convenience. (2) The principles and objects of the N. S. S. are in general circulation. Copies can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or of any Branch secretary. Surely you do not want us to explain the meaning of *National*.

A. WESTCOTT.—We have again and again printed a statement of the facts of the case. More new members have joined the N. S. S. since the last Conference than in the whole of 1889. As an outsider you cannot expect further information in the way you demand. If you want any particular number of the *N. R.*, buy it at the office; and if you want official information as to the progress of the N. S. S. during the whole of the year 1890-1891, you must wait until the report of the next Conference is published.

TOLEMAN-GARNER.—Mr. Foote will write you when he returns to London.

W. H. CHEESEMAN.—Your opening paragraph is impertinent. The rest has gone unread into the waste-basket.

W. H. NORRIS.—We think you mistook the writer's meaning. His lines do not strike us as spiteful, but rather the reverse.

C. W. K.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. P. S.—Thanks for the cutting. See paragraph.

ANY Lecture Notices not marked so on envelope are forwarded to Mr. Foote as private letters.

C. W.—You will see from the "Bradlaugh Memorial" circular in another column what has been decided by the N. S. S. Executive. It agrees with the spirit, if not with the letter, of your suggestion.

C. K. LAPORTE.—You write in a fit of depression. Our cause is not lost because Mr. Bradlaugh is dead. You pay him a poor compliment in supposing that *this* is the fruit of all his labors. There is plenty of life in our party, and we shall make good progress if *Freethinkers* will only imitate Mr. Bradlaugh's example instead of merely crying over his grave.

SEVERAL correspondents remain unanswered, owing to Mr. Foote's absence in the north.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschenthum—Echo—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—La Vérité Philosophique—Progressive Thinker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Two Worlds—Star—Truthseeker—Lucifer—Twentieth Century—Tuam News—South Wales Liberal—Halifax Courier—Nottingham Daily Express—Adelaide Advertiser—Islington Gazette—Hull Critic—Spennymoor Journal—Southport Guardian—Kent and Sussex Courier—Boston Guardian—Armley and Wortley News—Lincolnshire Chronicle—Leeds Mercury—Newcastle Daily Journal—Sunderland Echo—Boston Sunday Herald—El Motin—Watts's Literary Guide—Lancashire Evening Post.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

The next number of the *Freethinker* will contain an article by Mr. Foote on Sir Edwin Arnold's new poem *The Light of the World*, in which he dishes up Jesus Christ for the modern public.

Capital audiences attended Mr. Foote's lectures at South Shields on Sunday. Many *Freethinkers* came from Newcastle, Sunderland, and other towns. The evening meeting was a very large one, and the "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh" was listened to with profound attention. Mr. Foote was again pressed to publish this discourse.

We are glad to hear that the Sunderland Branch is surmounting its difficulties and gradually growing in strength. Mr. Foote has promised to visit the town as soon as possible, and one of the theatres will probably be secured for his lectures. Unfortunately the Newcastle Branch seems to be in some adversity. The matter will be looked into on Sunday, when Mr. Foote will have an opportunity of talking with the committee and many of the members.

The Shields *Daily News* gave a brief report of Mr. Foote's lectures. The *Gazette* gave a long report of the discourse on Charles Bradlaugh, but the reporter worked in some of his own flowers of rhetoric. He did not misrepresent what Mr. Foote said, but he added a good deal of his own.

Three members of the South Shields Branch of the N. S. S. are on the North Shields Town Council. The *Freethinkers* of that district don't mean to hide their light under a Christian bushel.

On Monday evening Mr. Foote paid his first visit to Blyth. He found a capital audience in the Central Hall, which included some of the leading men in the town. The chair was taken by Mr. Bryson, ex-president of the Northumberland Miners. Two Christians availed themselves of the opportunity for discussion. The lecturer's reply was evidently relished, judging from the laughter and applause. Mr. Foote had to catch a train, and left a body of local *Freethinkers* in the ante-room taking steps to form a Branch of the N. S. S.

We beg to call the attention of our readers to the "Bradlaugh Memorial" circular which is printed in another column. A prompt and generous response to this appeal will be more useful than any amount of idle grief to the great cause to whose advocacy and organisation Mr. Bradlaugh gave the best years of his life. No time will be lost in pushing forward the project. As soon as possible the Committee will be enlarged, and we hope shortly to publish a good first list of donations.

While Mr. Foote's "Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh" are appearing in the *Freethinker* our friends might take the opportunity of introducing the paper to their less heterodox acquaintances. Our circulation is improving again, and if our friends will try to give the paper a little of that publicity which we are too poor to pay for in the shape of lavish advertising, we have no doubt that the improvement will be maintained. Much good might be done just now by getting the contents-sheet displayed by newsagents, or getting them to take extra copies and expose one in the window or at the door.

Recent events, and an inevitable pressure of general work, have prevented Mr. Foote from working at the new edition of his *Bible Romances*. He will be in London, however, during the whole of March, and before leaving town again he hopes to complete the book. There will be four or five fresh numbers. When these are printed the volume will be bound in paper and in cloth.

Next Friday, (Feb. 27), Mr. Foote delivers a Free Lecture on "The Grand Old Book," at the Temperance Hall, Dodington-grove, Battersea Park. Mr. J. H. Ellis will probably take the chair. Any amount of discussion is invited. The lecture begins at 8.

Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science on the five Sundays in March. He is preparing a special series of discourses which will probably be interesting to Freethinkers and inquiring Christians.

Only about seventy persons can be accommodated at the Manchester Hotel on Monday evening, March 2, when the Testimonial will be presented to Mr. Robert Forder. Thirty tickets, at least, will be required by his friends at the Hall of Science. Only forty, or less, are disposable outside, and some discretion will have to be exercised in allotting them. The tickets are half-a-crown, and applications must be made to Mr. G. Standring, 7 Finsbury-street, E.C., or at 28 Stone-cutter-street. Mr. Foote will make the presentation.

A resolution of grief and sympathy at the loss of Mr. Bradlaugh has been sent from the Brooklyn Philosophical Club of America.

One of the most notable testimonies to the humanitarian worth of Mr. Bradlaugh comes from the daughter of Bishop Colenso. Lecturing at the Working Men's College on the wrongs of the Zulus, a question to which she has devoted her life, she said, speaking of her own difficulties in putting their claims before the English people: "No one has more readily acknowledged our claim, no one has shown himself more neighbor to the Zulu who has fallen among thieves—though the Zulu be a savage, one of the least among all these our brethren—no one in Christian England has ministered to him more than Mr. Charles Bradlaugh." This reference was warmly received by the audience.

—Mr. Charles Watts, in the pages of *Secular Thought* for Feb. 7, pays his tribute to the character of Mr. Bradlaugh, with whom he worked for nearly twenty years.

Last Sunday a meeting of the new Leeds Branch was held at Crampton's Hotel, Briggate. A strong committee was formed, and we expect to hear of useful work being done during the summer. Mr. Fisher read Mr. Bradlaugh's article on "Individualism in Politics" in the *New Review*, and some discussion followed.

Mr. Bradlaugh's last work on *Labor and Law*, which was in great part finished before his death, will shortly be published. It will be included with several recent essays on similar topics, and the volume will contain a recent photograph as frontispiece.

Only a few copies of the N.S.S. Almanack are left. It is the last Almanack that will ever contain an article by Charles Bradlaugh. The article he wrote specially for it has a very pathetic interest in the light of subsequent events. No doubt the few copies remaining will quickly be bought up.

The South Wales *Liberal* has over a column of interesting reminiscences of Mr. Bradlaugh by Mr. S. P. Wills.

The frozen lamb sent by the New Zealand Freethinkers for Mr. Foote's Christmas dinner, arrived early in February. It was probably delayed by the strike at Melbourne. But it arrived in excellent condition. The verdict of our editor and his "sub" is, that they never tasted a better cut.

The Finsbury Branch sends us a copy of its annual balance-sheet. With the exception of a slight balance on the wrong side, it is a very healthy document. Mr. A. Wheeler, the secretary, assures us that the Branch has made more new members during the past twelve months than in any previous year of its existence.

Mr. Bertram Dobell, of 54 Charing Cross Road, W.C., has published the first part of a *Catalogue of a Collection of Privately Printed Books*, which when complete will be the most important English bibliographical work of this description. As may be expected, several of the items are of a Freethought character. The work is not a bare catalogue, but interesting notes on the writers and characteristic specimens of their works are given. For instance, in cataloguing the *Ædipus Judaicus* of Sir Wm. Drummond, the design of the work is stated in the words of the author, and the most spirited part of his attack on the literal belief in the Old Testament is extracted. Mr. Dobell unites to a most extensive acquaintance with books a still rarer appreciation of their contents. He is a bibliophile and not a mere bookseller. We trust his great labor will not be without its reward.

James Lick, the Freethinker who founded the Lick observatory, bequeathed 100,000 dols. to erect a monument representative of the history and industries of California, and it is about to be reared in front of the new city Hall of San Francisco.

A conference of officers and authorities of museums, art galleries and libraries, has been convened by the Sunday Society at Prince's Hall, on Saturday, March 14, with a view to helping on the movement for Sunday opening. A visit to various London art collections will be made on the following day.

La Vérité Philosophique for February devotes much of its space to Mr. Bradlaugh. In addition to a biographical sketch by the editor, M. Cilwa, it reprints the notices which appeared in *La Lanterne* and *Le Matin*. The monthly Bulletin of the French Freethought Federation, also has words of sympathy.

There was a notable gathering of Asiatics, under the presidency of Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, at the National Liberal Club, to pay tribute to the services of Mr. Bradlaugh in the cause of India. Telegrams and letters from Indian students at Oxford and Cambridge were read, and a resolution of admiration and condolence was moved by a Hindoo, seconded by a Mohammedan, and supported by a Parsee, the Atheist thus drawing testimony to his worth from representatives of the great faiths of India.

The South Place Ethical Society has published a discourse on "The Pleasures of Malignity" delivered by John M. Robertson. The lecture, which is published at twopence, is well worth reading.

Mdlle. Hugo would not go to a church to be married to young Daudet. She loved him, and his Catholic relatives put pressure upon her, but she remained firm in her refusal. She resolved to follow her grandfather's teaching, and would not consent to accept the service of a priest.

At the first of Charles Watts's Academy of Music meetings in Toronto, the *Empire* says, about 2,000 men and women jammed themselves into the building. Mr. Watts has since been lecturing in Iowa.

As will be seen from our "Lecture Notices," Mr. G. Bernard Shaw occupies the platform at the Hall of Science, London, next Sunday. Mr. Shaw's abilities are known to our London readers, and as this is we believe his first appearance as a Freethought lecturer, we trust he will be accorded a hearty reception. His subject will be "Freethinking: New and Old."

The *Armley and Wortley News* devotes a column of report to Mr. Foote's recent lectures at Leeds.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

SPECIAL MEETING of the Executive on Feb. 12, Mr. Foote in the chair. Present: Miss Vance, Mrs. Thornton Smith, Messrs. Bater, Baker, Beadle, Courtney, Gordon, Heaford, Ivatts, Killick, Leys, Larkin, Reynolds, Samson, Smith, Standring, Truelove, Warren, Wheeler, and Forder, secretary. Mr. Foote explained that he had called the meeting to at once consider the raising a memorial by the Freethought party to Mr. Bradlaugh. Most of the members having spoken it was unanimously determined that such a memorial should be raised. Mr. Forder moved and Mr. Ivatts seconded, "That it take the form of a Memorial Hall and Institute"; carried. A committee was then elected, the names are appended to an appeal issued by them, which will be found beneath. Pending the appointment of a Treasurer, subscriptions can be sent to R. Forder, the secretary.—
R. FORDER, secretary.

"BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL."

TO THE FREETHINKERS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

Following the example of our American brethren, who have raised a "Paine Memorial Hall" in the city of Boston, the Executive of the National Secular Society has resolved to raise a fund for erecting a Freethought Hall and Institute in memory of Charles Bradlaugh, whose name will thus be continuously associated with the spread and maintenance of those principles which were the inspiration of his life.

Thousands of Freethinkers are mourning the loss of their great leader, and anxious to express their feelings of admiration, gratitude, and affection towards him. What better opportunity could they desire than the one which is now offered?

Although the present state of the law does not allow of a Freethought Society holding any kind of property, there are methods by which this project can be satisfactorily realised.

Donations will be held by the National Secular Society, or by the appointed Treasurer on its behalf, until the project is ripe for execution; when the total amount will be invested in the Hall and Institute in the names of a sufficiently large number of elected persons, who will act as Trustees for the Freethought party.

The remainder of the required amount will consist of shares in a Building Company. These will be fixed at One Pound each, so that the poorer Freethinkers may participate in the commemoration of their lost leader.

The subjoined names are those of a Committee appointed at a special meeting of the National Secular Society's Executive on Thursday, February 12. As soon as possible the Committee will be increased, so as to include a larger number of Freethought workers throughout the country.

Mr. Robert Forder has been elected as Secretary to the Committee, and donations or applications for shares can be sent to him immediately.

Further particulars will be given in subsequent announcements. Meanwhile, we have the honor, ladies and gentlemen, to remain,

Yours very truly,

G. W. FOOTE, *President, N. S. S.*

R. Killick, E. Pownceby, W. H. Reynolds, J. Robertson, J. M. Robertson, F. Rutt, J. Samson, R. O. Smith, Thornton Smith (Mrs.), Geo. Standring, E. Truelove, E. M. Vance (Miss), J. M. Wheeler, G. J. Holyoake.

ROBERT FORDER, *Secretary.*

The *Spennymoor Journal* gives insertion to another ably written defence of Mr. Foote, from the pen of Mr. Philipps in answer to the attacks of the editor.

UNINSPIRED MISPRINTS IN "HOLY WRIT."

PEOPLE are still to be found who profess to believe that the scriptures were in some fashion "inspired" by God; but even Mr. Gladstone's robust faith does not include the doctrine that the divine inspiration extended to the numberless printers that have been concerned in the reproduction of the Bible since the days of Faust and Gutenberg. Yet surely it is essential that the Almighty should have shed his spirit upon the compositors and proof-readers no less than upon the original scribes. The craftsmen who turned the poet's "See the pale martyr in his sheet of fire" into "See the pale martyr with his shirt on fire," can play the very printer's devil with any "copy," however divine its source may be. The Bible has passed through a very large number of editions, in various languages, and a collection of some of the most notable mistakes which have occurred, either through wilfulness or inadvertence, in reprinting the "sacred volume" may not be without interest for Freethought readers.

In an English edition, published in 1634, the twelfth psalm contains this remarkable verse: "The fool hath said in his heart, There is God," instead of "There is no God." The editions issued by Field, who was printer to the University of Cambridge in the seventeenth century, are full of misprints; and he is even said to have accepted a bribe of £1,500 from the Independents to substitute the word "we" for "ye" in the sixth verse of the third chapter of the Acts. From the Clarendon Press, in 1617, was issued an edition in which the heading to the "Parable of the Vineyard" (Luke xx.) was printed "Parable of the Vinegar." In more than one edition the seventh commandment has been made to read: "Thou shalt commit adultery." The unhappy printers were in one case summoned before the High Commission, during the reign of Charles I., and fined £30,000 for that obvious blunder.

One very curious perversion of the text is on record, but its authenticity is doubtful. It is alleged to have been perpetrated by the widow of a German printer. A new edition of the Bible was being prepared in her house; and it is said that she rose one night and surreptitiously made a small but most important alteration in the third chapter of Genesis, at the passage in which the sentence pronounced against sinful Mother Eve dooms the female sex to perpetual subjection to the male. The accepted version runs: "And he shall be thy lord," the last word being represented by the German *herr*; but the malicious widow altered the first and second letters so that the sentence read: "And he shall be thy *narr*," or fool. The dame is said to have been burned for heresy, and this detail gives some historical color to the story; but, in default of verification, we may safely attribute this typographical joke to the prolific Ben Trovato.

An Oxford printer once produced an edition of the Bible which had been read and re-read with such scrupulous care that he exhibited a copy in a public place and confidently offered a reward for the detection of a single misprint in the volume. Sharper eyes than his, however, soon discovered and marked numerous errors which he, with all his attention, had failed to note; and the unhappy printer was so mortified by the exposure of his failure that he blew out his brains—probably with a Seidlitz powder.

GEORGE STANDRING.

An appeal for aid on behalf of the natives of Aguilla, West Indies, states that long-continued drought led to the total failure of the provision crops. Three thousand five hundred have to receive assistance from Government to save them from actual starvation.

THE MESSIAH CRAZE IN SAN FRANCISCO.

WHILE a great deal of attention is being paid to the Messiah craze among the Sioux Indians, the Piutes, the Mexicans, and the colored people of several localities, the craze that exists close at home appears to have escaped the notice of the chroniclers of contemporary events. Nevertheless the delusion is among us, and is nowhere stronger than in San Francisco.

The root of this folly, according to those who believe in it, was planted several thousand years ago. At that time a character called Jehovah, so the disciples of the craze tell us, created the earth upon which we live, out of his omnipotence. Of the same material he made a pair of perfect human beings plentifully endowed with ignorance, which they were forbidden to replace with knowledge. This first pair, being perfect, were disobedient, and acquired information in a surreptitious way, whereupon their creator cursed them and their descendants forever. But the creator, being unchangeable, shortly changed his mind, and here is where the Messiah craze began; for, so the delusion has it, he took it upon himself to beget, out of wedlock, an only son, whom he delivered over to the descendants of the disobedient first pair, to be offered up by them as a sacrifice to himself. The offence committed by the human race in the act of acquiring knowledge was one which the creator could in no wise forgive; but he promised them a show for their lives provided they would, in the goodness of their hearts, put his only begotten son to death in the most ignominious manner then in vogue. The race accepted the proposition, and the son, the Messiah, who is called Christ, was crucified; whereupon the creator was so pleased that he offered free grace and pardon to all who should profess a belief in the beneficence of the sacrifice and admit that the murder was necessary to their redemption from sins which they had never committed. As a consequence many believed. But it appeared later that the creator had, after all, been merely playing a trick upon the race. His son, though crucified, did not die. He was not a human being in fact, but the creator himself disguised as a man, and when he had gone through the formality of being crucified and buried, he arose from the grave between two days, startled his acquaintances by appearing among them as a ghost, and then went back to his previous abode, threw off his disguise, and still lives to witness the damnation of the world he died to save. He is like the conjurer's assistant who is apparently carved to pieces inside a basket, but who appears in the audience while a committee, chosen by the spectators, are removing the basket in order to view his remains.

Belief in this Messiah is the craze now prevalent in San Francisco. In spite of his death, the deluded ones hold that he still lives. They have built vast structures in his name, wherein week after week they partake of his body and his blood; and though a thousand times devoured and digested, he remains so far unconsumed that he is expected to revisit the earth and to take as his disciples all those who have eaten him.

Many of those afflicted with the craze regard it as unlawful to be reasonable on the subject, and they would visit with dire penalties all who differ with them in point of sanity. Being deluded themselves, they insist that no one else may rightly be otherwise. A most dangerous phase of the matter is that they desire to crown their Messiah as the king of nations in advance of his reappearance, and force every knee to bow before his throne. For this purpose they have organized strongly and seek by legal enactments to suppress all objectors. They have dedicated a day to him, on which they demand that all worldly affairs shall be neglected. They build him temples which the world's people must protect without charge. They engage men to preach about him, and these must be accorded privileges that other men may not enjoy. In fact, wherever a victim of this craze is found, will be found a man or woman who thinks himself or herself superior to the unaffected classes, and in possession of virtues that can be acquired only through belief in the Messiah.

The epidemic among the untutored savages and negroes is of little importance, but the delusion that afflicts so large a portion of the people of this city is widespread and powerful for evil. It is filling the world with bigots, impostors, fanatics, and a mischievous superstition against which the march of progress and enlightenment is slow and painful. —*Freethought.*

A FREETHINKER'S DEATH-BED.

Josiah Paine Mendum, the publisher for upwards of fifty years of the *Boston Investigator*, died as he lived unawed by superstition or the fear of death. The *Investigator* publishes an affecting account of his last moments. For several weeks he has realized his approaching dissolution, and with scrupulous care arranged his affairs that they might be left in order. The account continues: "About four o'clock Saturday afternoon he experienced what appeared to be a nervous shock. He roused from his couch and sank back exhausted. A change was at this time apparent to those who were with him, as it must have been with him also, for turning to his eldest daughter, who had been since the first a most constant and loving attendant at his bedside, he said: "Lydia is this death?"

"Yes, father, it is," was the reply.

He rested awhile propped upon his pillow, and then asked: "Lydia, are you here?"

"Yes, father."

"Well, dear, do not leave me." And with that he again grew quiet.

These were his last words, except, later in the evening in response to the nurse's question if "the pain had left him," to reply "pretty much," or to ask in a voice now almost inarticulate, for a drink of water. But long after speech had failed him, his strong mind held its seat, and he would by gestures indicate the desires his lips could no longer express.

At ten o'clock he rested quietly with his closed eyelids, painless and apparently asleep, and thus he was at 1.30 Sunday morning when his son, Ernest, left the room, with instructions to be called if any change transpired, or if his services should be again needed in the sick room. He was not summoned. His faithful services were never required again by that devoted father, for very gently and painlessly his breathing became more and more feeble, till, like the last sigh of a summer zephyr, it ceased entirely, and the loved and loving father, the kind and trusted friend, the wise counsellor, the brave and valiant worker, who asked only what was right and struggled with all the strength of patient, enduring manhood to effect it, was at rest—asleep for ever with the beloved wife who had preceded him by some nineteen years—asleep with the philosophers and all the noble dead, whose example he had cherished, and whose memory it was his life's work to honor—asleep with Voltaire, with Gibbon, with Volney, and with Paine—asleep with D'Holbach, with Hume, with Darwin, and with Mill—associated in eternal rest with Phillips, with Garrison, Martineau, and Wright, and finally once again united by death most kind, after a brief interval of a year and a half, with his life-time friend and fellow-worker, the sage and venerated Seaver.

ON A SUNDAY TRAIN.

Willie—"Mamma, isn't it wicked for us to ride on a Sunday train?"

Mamma—"No, my son. We are on the way to Church."

"It's wicked to work on Sunday, isn't it?"

"Certainly."

"Then it's wicked to run trains on Sunday, isn't it, mamma?"

"I presume so. Don't bother me, Willie."

"But isn't it wicked for us to ride on 'em?"

"Hush, Willie. Look at your lesson paper."

"The men that run the trains can't go to church, can they?"

"I suppose not. Quit talking, my son."

"That's the reason why it's wicked for them to run the trains; now isn't it, mamma?"

"It is a work of necessity to run these trains, Willie. Somebody has to do it. Now, don't talk any more."

"You wouldn't want me to work on a Sunday train, would you, mamma?"

"No, my son."

"But it's all right for me to ride on one, isn't it?"

"Don't talk any more, Willie."

"I won't."

[Pause.]

"Say, mamma, ain't it a good thing I don't have to work for a living? I might have to run on Sunday trains, you know, and that would be wicked, wouldn't it?"

"Willie, you must hush!"

"But there's nothing wicked in my riding on 'em, is there?"

Willie is lifted up and carried squirming into the next car —*Chicago Tribune.*

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

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

LONDON.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N.: 7, social evening for members and friends.
 Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, entertainment. Monday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting. Friday, at 8, at the Temperance Hall, Doddington Grove, Battersea Park Road, Mr. G. W. Foote, "The Grand Old Book."
 Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, E.: 7.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Religion and Secularism Contrasted." Admission free.
 Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7. dramatic recital; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The God of Israel." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).
 East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road: 8.30, Mr. W. J. Rainsey, "The Kingdom of Heaven Unsited for Man."
 Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7, Mr. George Bernard Shaw, "Freethinking: New and Old."
 Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Tuesday at 8, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Philosophy of Secularism."
 Kilburn—Liberal Club, Belsize Road, High Road: Friday, at 8, Mr. E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery, and is it Woman's Friend?"
 Leyton—Mr. Beadle's, 10 Daisey Villas, Manor Road: 7, a meeting of members and friends.
 Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W.: 7.30, ballad concert. Monday, at 8.30, social meeting. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes (practice).
 West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Is Secularism Decaying?" Thursday, at 8, Mr. Sam Stranding, "English Christianity: its Rise and Decline, IV.—Its Dying Struggles."
 Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street: 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "The Life and Character of Charles Bradlaugh."
 Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road): 7.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "The Foundation of the Christian Hope."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.15, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Christian Kaleidoscope."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street: 7, a concert in aid of Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.
 Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street: 12 noon, debating class, Mr. Williamson, "Physical Religion"; 6.30, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "With Stanley to Equatoria" (with lantern illustration).
 Grimsby—Hall of Science, Freeman Street: Mr. J. Hooper, 11, "Birth, Life, and Death of Christ"; 3, "An Hour with our Heretical Poets"; 7, "Life and Death of Charles Bradlaugh."
 Leeds—1 Cobourg Terrace: 6.30, inaugural meeting of committee.
 Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: 3, discussion class, Mr. Behricksen, "What is Sin, and Can it be Prevented?"; 7, Mr. Bergmann, "Modern Materialism—what is it?"
 Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints': 6.30, Mr. J. Grange (of Leeds) "Thought the Greatest Want of the Age." Free. Wednesday, at 8, dancing (admission sixpence).
 Newcastle-on-Tyne—Lecture Hall, Nelson Street: Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "The Grand Old Book: a Reply to the Grand Old Man"; 3, "A World Without God"; 7, "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh." Tea will be provided for country friends in waiting rooms after the afternoon lecture (tickets 9d. each.)
 Oldham—Hall of Science, Horsedge Street: Mr. Seth Ackroyd, 3, "The Bible and Fresh Light from Ancient Monuments"; 6.30, "Mr. Bradlaugh: How he Lived and Died in the Service of Man."
 Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 3, debating class, "The Tempest"; 7, Mr. Skipper.
 Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street: 7, musical and other recitals, singing, etc.
 South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street: 7, business meeting.
 Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street: 6, Mr. B. Dawson, Selections from the Poets.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Feb. 22 (morning), Battersea. March 1, Woolwich; 6, Battersea; 29, Camberwell. April 5, Woolwich.
 TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—March 8, Woolwich; 29, Reading.
 STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Feb. 22, Bolton. Sept. 7, Liverpool.

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