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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

REMINISCENCES OF CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

By G. W. FOOTE.

(Continued.)

AFTER the Birmingham meeting, at which was founded the Republican League, of which Mr. Bradlaugh became president, and I secretary, he visited Spain on private business, taking with him a message from the Conference to Senor Castelar, the leading spirit of the short-lived Spanish Republic. I remember writing out the message in a clear, bold hand, and addressing the foolscap envelope in the same way. When Mr. Bradlaugh fell among the Carlists he cursed my caligraphy. Happily, however, the officer who scrutinised that envelope could not read at all, and Mr. Bradlaugh escaped the consequences of being known to carry about letters addressed to the devilish Castelar.

During Mr. Bradlaugh's first visit to America I was a frequent contributor to his journal, and I corresponded with him privately. I went down to Northampton and delivered a lecture at his request, under the auspices of his electoral committee. The old theatre—a dirty, ramshackle place as I recollect it—was crowded, and I had my first taste of the popularity of Mr. Bradlaugh in the borough. Every mention of his name excited the wildest enthusiasm.

While Mr. Bradlaugh was lecturing in the States a general election took place in England. It was impossible for him to return in time, but his friends looked after his interests. A committee was formed at the Hall of Science to raise the necessary funds, and Mr. Charles Watts and I went down to Northampton to conduct the election. We addressed outdoor meetings in the day, and crowded indoor meetings at night. Again I saw what a hold Mr. Bradlaugh had on his Northampton followers. They sang "Bradlaugh for Northampton" in the Circus with all the fervor of Scotch Covenanters on their hillsides "rolling the psalm to wintry skies."

Mr. Watts and I did not win the seat for Mr. Bradlaugh. Nor did he win it himself at the next election. But we managed to increase his vote, and he expressed his pleasure at the result.

Soon after the election Mr. Bradlaugh returned to England. Mr. Watts and I went down with him to Northampton. There was a crowded public meeting, I believe in the Circus; and I saw Mr. Bradlaugh, for the first time, in the presence of his future constituents. They were simply intoxicated with excitement. The shouts of "Bradlaugh" and "Charley" were deafening. Hats and handkerchiefs were waved in the air. The multitude rose to its feet and gave its hero a splendid welcome. Then we settled down to speech-making, but all that followed was somewhat tame and flat after that first glorious outburst of popular devotion.

The next election came quickly. It resulted in the return of a Tory majority for Benjamin Disraeli, and Mr. Gladstone went off to sulk in his tent. Two Tories were returned for Radical Northampton. Mr.

Bradlaugh let them in. He was determined to have one of the Northampton seats. To get it he had to make himself inevitable. He had to prove that if Northampton wanted two Liberal members, one of them must be Charles Bradlaugh. It took him thirteen years to demonstrate this, but he succeeded, as he succeeded in most things. At last, in 1880, he ran as official Liberal candidate with Mr. Labouchere, and both were returned.

I assisted Mr. Bradlaugh during his second (1874) election. It was then that I first saw Mrs. Besant. She had not yet taken to the platform, but she was writing for the *National Reformer*, and her pen was active during the contest. Mr. Watts was also there. Another figure I remember was Mr. George Odger, who labored among the Trade Unionists of Northampton in Mr. Bradlaugh's interest. George Odger was one of the ablest of all the working-class leaders I have ever met. He came from my own county, Devonshire, being born at Horrabridge, on the road between Plymouth and Tavistock. He was honest to the heart's core, as well as very able, but he was incurably indolent. You never could be sure of him at a public meeting. He had to be looked up beforehand, or he might forget the engagement and spend his time more agreeably. He was passionately fond of the theatre, and could talk by the hour on famous performances of old actors and actresses. During the daytime at Northampton I had long chats with him. He objected to fine hotels, and he objected to walking; so I had to sit with him in the garden of a semi-rural public-house, where our conversation was altogether out of proportion to our liquor. Odger liked beer; not much of it, but just enough; it suited his palate and his purse; and as I drank next to nothing, the landlord must have thought us unprofitable customers.

Mr. Bradlaugh had rooms at the George Hotel. It was the Tory house, but he preferred it, and Mrs. Besant, Mr. Watts, and the rest of us, fed and slept there during the election. This gave rise to a good deal of silly talk among Mr. Bradlaugh's enemies. One evening we were returning from a Town Hall meeting, and the Tories had been holding a small meeting at the "George." As we reached the foot of the stairs, we encountered a knot of Tories. One of them was Mr. Merowether, the Tory candidate. He was nearly of the same height as Mr. Bradlaugh, and well built. His friends were holding him back, but he broke from them, exclaiming, "Hang it! I will have a look at him." He stood at the very foot of the staircase and looked hard at Mr. Bradlaugh ascending. His expression was one of good-tempered insolence. After a long look at Mr. Bradlaugh, he returned to his friends, shouting, "Well, I'm damned if he's as bad-looking as I thought."

I left Northampton before the close of the poll. Mr. Bradlaugh was leaving the same night for America, having barely time to catch the boat at Liverpool. I drove round with him before leaving, on a visit to some of the polling stations. He had paid me a modest sum for my services, but

he found he had hardly enough to take him across the Atlantic, and he asked me to lend him what money I had. I fished seven or nine pounds out of my pocket—I forget which—and handed it to him. It was paid back to me by his order a few weeks subsequently; and the incident would not be worth mentioning if it did not throw a light on the libellous nonsense of Mr. Bradlaugh's enemies that he was rolling in wealth.

(To be concluded.)

JOHN WESLEY.

JOHN WESLEY, the centenary of whose death is about to be held throughout the Wesleyan world, and a statue to whom, opposite his residence in the City-road, will be unveiled on Monday, March 2, has certainly claims on the memory of those who call themselves after his name. Though he did not seek to establish a new sect and denounced as guilty of the sin of Korah those who dissented from the Church of England, he was yet the means of starting a body which in America, at least, outvies the Church of England in its number. His own testimony was that "if the Methodists left the Church, God would leave them." But the logic of circumstances was stronger than that of John Wesley. He was the most distinguished revivalist, not only of his own time, but of Protestant Christianity, and results of the work which he did remain in every portion of the globe. Yet we cannot class John Wesley among the really great men of the world. He had abundant faith and energy, but his devotion was that of a narrow mind. He brought great force to work in a well-worn groove. He roused more than any man of his time the dormant instinct of superstition, and although he sought to direct it into moral channels, he opened up no new path of progress and removed no old obstruction.

To save his own soul seems to have been the great—shall we not rather say the contemptible—object of his solicitude. This he hoped to achieve by a rigorous routine of systematic duty and self-abnegation. Descended from a pious family, imbued in youth with Puritanism, he made Methodists because he was first a Methodist himself, and he made Methodism superstitious because he was himself saturated with superstition.

Born in 1703, and dying in 1791, he represents the reaction against the Age of Reason which set in with the eighteenth century. Early in life he was saved from a fire at his father's rectory, and the Wesleys are therefore fond of speaking of him as "a brand plucked from the burning." But there was another incident which influenced his mind yet more powerfully. The Wesleys had a family ghost, "Old Jeffrey," so called from a suicide whose perturbed spirit it was supposed to be. In vain his father, the Rev. Samuel Wesley, exorcised it in the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghost. "Old Jeffrey" only treated him the worse, until at length its manifestations ceased as unaccountably as they began. The story was narrated by John Wesley himself in the *Arminian Magazine*. He devoutly believed in the reality of the apparition, and his views were largely affected by it. In his twentieth year he gravely wrote of a lad in Ireland, who ever and anon was taken up into the clouds. He stoutly contended that demoniacs still existed, and that the days of miracles were not over. He said of himself, "I have been preternaturally restored more than ten times." When his horses ran away with him in 1774, he says: "I am persuaded that both evil and good angels had a large share in this transaction; how large we do not know now, but we shall know hereafter." When a landslip occurred at Whiston Cliff, Yorkshire, he declared it was not produced by "any merely natural

cause, fire, water, or air, but by God himself," to impress the nobility and gentry who resorted there. A storm that burst over his chapel at Bristol in 1788 could not be accounted for "without supposing some preternatural influence. Satan fought lest his kingdom should be delivered up." Judgments fell on all the opponents of Methodism. Clergymen who preached against him were struck dead like Ananias, and the wig flew off the head of a Justice of the Peace who ventured to censure him. Wesley's own journals contain proof that his great revival spread by an organised system of religious terrorism. He and his coadjutors fairly frightened their hearers into nervous diseases which prostrated their powers of mind and body. His journals are full of such entries as this:

"June 5, 1772.—In the evening we wrestled with God for an enlargement of his work. As we were concluding, an eminent backslider came strangely into my mind, and I broke out abruptly: 'Lord is Saul among the prophets? Is James Watson here? If he be, show thy power!' Down dropped James Watson like a stone, and began crying aloud for mercy."

The temptation to cite from Wesley's journals is strong, for they conclusively show the unbounded credulity of the man. Yet one more extract must suffice.

"May 25, 1768.—It is true that the English in general, and, indeed, most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all account of witches and apparitions as old wives' fables. I am sorry for it; and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment which so many that believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge these are at the bottom of the outcry that has been raised, and with such insolence spread throughout the nation, in direct opposition, not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best men in all ages and nations. They well know (whether Christians do or not), that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible."

He decided his own perplexities by the lot, or turning up hap-hazard a verse in the Bible. He did not allow it to be possible that a good man could disbelieve in Christianity. David Hume he called "the most insolent despiser of truth and virtue that ever appeared in the world." He was a bitter opponent of Wilkes and the English reformers. As fervently as he believed in the Bible saying, "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," did he believe that "the powers that be are ordained of God." He spoke and wrote against the American "rebels" daring to assert their independence. In his *Address to American Colonies* he says:

"If your ancestors were subjects, they acknowledged a sovereign; if they had a right to English privileges, they were accountable to English laws, and had ceded to king and Parliament the power of disposing, without their consent, of both their lives, liberties, and properties."

He tells them their calamities will never be moved till they "fear God and honor the king." Contrast with the labors of John Wesley those of Thomas Paine, whose whole life was an attempt to emancipate his fellows from ancient bondage. A weak point in Wesley's system, if not in his character, appears in the rules of the Kingswood School for the children of preachers. It was a fundamental rule that the boys were allowed no play. "He who plays when a child will play when a man" was his dictum.

As Mr. Froude said of Henry VIII., "in his relations with women he seemed to be under a fatal necessity of mistake." Impelled by the missionary spirit he went to Georgia, and fell deeply in love with a Miss Sophia Hopkey. But the will of the Lord was against the match, and soon after he refused her the sacrament when she presented herself at the altar, a proceeding which led to his being driven out of Georgia. In 1746 he expressed himself in an autobiographical hymn—

I have no sharer of my heart
To rob my Savior of a part
And desecrate the whole.
Only betrothed to Christ am I,
And wait his coming from the sky
To wed my happy soul.

But in 1749 the Lord willed that he should engage himself to a young widow, Mrs. Grace Murray, but the lady coquetted with and eventually—much to Wesley's disgust—married one of his lay preachers. Undeterred by this disaster, in 1751, Wesley—after consulting the Lord—ventured on marriage with a widow with four children and an independent fortune. The marriage was a most unhappy one. The Lord was always pulling one way and Xantippe Wesley another. When, after much jealousy and wretchedness, over his fondness for and attention to one Sarah Ryan, she left him, he piously said that as he had not sent her away neither would he call her back.

While the Christian world is engaged in extolling Wesley as a prodigy of all that is excellent, we have felt it our duty to point to certain deductions that must be made. But let us fully acknowledge there was much that was admirable in the man. He was an indefatigable worker. For single-hearted devotion he cannot be surpassed. His long life is a continuous record of labor. Rising at four in the morning, living temperately, and toiling incessantly, where he put his hand to the plough, he never once looked back. The intrepidity with which he encountered opposition compels our respect. Buckle called him "the first of theological statesmen." The spread and prosperity of his sect bear witness not only to his zeal, but to his great powers of organisation. Would that there were many who devoted to the task of promulgating Freethought the ardor and tireless activity devoted to the service of superstition by John Wesley.

J. M. WHEELER.

AN "INFIDEL" INTERVIEWS MOODY.

BY SUSAN H. WIXON.

(From the "Freethinker's Magazine.")

SOME ten years ago, I was staying in Saratoga, and while there Moody came to town to conduct a series of meetings and pick up a few dollars for himself from the plethoric pockets of the Saratoga sinners. The meetings were held in a large church, and Moody's hooks were well baited to catch the sinful fish who hovered about the delightful watering-place.

At the hotel where I stopped was a Mrs. R., who hailed from Boston. This lady invited me to accompany her to Mr. M.'s meeting. On the way thither she queried whether I would talk with the great "saver of souls" at the close of the service.

"Yes," I said, "if he would talk with me, I would be glad of the opportunity."

At the close of the service, which consisted of song-singing, story-telling about lost souls, and victims of God's wrath, and the like, those who would like to remain a few moments for conversation were told they could do so. Quite a large number took advantage of the invitation and stayed, Mrs. R. and myself among them. There was some praying by different persons, and then Mr. Moody, who was, of course, the central figure, suggested a period of *silent* supplication, as he termed it, and said that if each person, without Christ in his heart, should pray that he (Christ) would enter the heart, without doubt he would do so, then and there. Here was a test. I whispered to myself, "Now, if Christ will come to me, I will bid him welcome. I pray thee, Christ, if thou art anywhere within hearing distance to come to me."

He did not come. The gas was turned down. It was very still.

The evangelist prayed, and then, by his direction, there was some singing, in a low, soft tone—

"Come, Holy Spirit, heavenly dove,
With all thy quickning powers,
Kindle a flame of precious love
In these cold hearts of ours."

Then another verse of the same hymn was rendered in a yet lower tone. It was like a melodious whisper.

I looked around upon the curious sight. The gas was turned low, which made the people on their knees appear shadowy and weird-like. There was Moody, the ruling spirit of the hour, engaged in supplicating—what?—that Christ, the Invisible, would become visible—that he would descend for the express purpose of snatching some few souls from an everlasting punishment that had been prepared by the Maker of a Universe. He, an all-wise, all-knowing, all-comprehending being had caused a "lake of fire and brimstone" to exist for the torment and destruction of the many and entertainment and delight of the few!

The preparatory act being ended, Mr. M. invited all who wished to have a little conversation with himself. I was quick to avail myself of this opportunity. I said, "Mr. Moody, you have talked this evening a good deal about being *saved*—what do you mean by the term?"

"Why! to be redeemed from the wrath to come—from everlasting pain—from the worm that dieth not," was his reply.

"Here or hereafter?"

He gazed at me, and I shall always remember the quizzical look, as if he was undecided whether I was orthodoxically ignorant or not, as he answered:

"Hereafter, of course!"

"But, tell me *how* we are to be saved."

"How? By belief in Jesus, who died for our sins."

"But I do not understand how simple *belief* can do the business," said I. "Explain, please."

A sudden light flashed into his eyes, as he quickly remarked

"Ah! you're an Infidel. I thought as much. You've been reading Infidel books. Here, Miss —, come and talk with this Infidel."

"I beg pardon, Mr. Moody, I would prefer to talk with you," and I moved my seat nearer the evangelist.

"What did you read the Infidel books for?" he inquired sternly.

"For information—I wanted to know both sides of the question."

"You did, hey! If a man should write you a villainous letter about your mother, would you read it?" he asked.

"Well, how would I know it to be villainous until I did read it?"

"Do you believe in the Bible as the word of God?" he asked abruptly.

I cannot imagine how a God could possibly write, or cause to be written, so much that is malicious, profane, licentious, obscene and unreliable," I calmly answered.

"Oh, that was simply written to show how the people lived in the old times. But Christ brought peace and purity in the world."

"Ah!" I said. "Did he not declare that he would cause divisions in families. Did—"

Here I was interrupted by the evangelist: "That is all right. If your mother is a Christian and you an Infidel, you ought to be separated at once!"

"Is this Christianity?"

"Yes. If you were a daughter of mine and read Infidel works, I would not have you in my house a minute! I would have nothing to do with such a daughter."

I simply said I felt very thankful that I had a better father.

The evangelist continued in a somewhat vehement manner, and contended that I was a dangerous person. "Why," he said, "you would create a rebellion in heaven in half an hour!"

This amused me, and I told him I guessed he was about right, and it wouldn't be the first rebellion in that much-talked-of place, either.

"You would be cast out," he went on, "as Lucifer was. You know too much—you would be telling the Almighty what to do."

"I shouldn't wonder," I remarked, laughing, "I think I would be apt to nudge his *Lordship* occasionally, and I would suggest keeping a quick eye upon wicked shepherds, who delude the people, the whited sepulchres, the platters full of dead men's bones, the scribes, Pharisees and hypocrites, the generation of vipers that Jesus mentioned, who used to live on the earth and who left their descendants behind when they died."

(To be concluded.)

The Committee appointed by the Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland to sit on the Confession of Faith have decided not to tamper with that venerable document. They have a shrewd suspicion that the more it is stirred the more it will stink.

THE "DECAY OF SECULARISM."

NOTHING in this world, says Ingersoll, flourishes like a good, sound, healthy religious lie. We are not astonished, therefore, now the Infidel Shoemaker trick is played out, that Hugh Price Hughes, and his cronies, Messrs. Stead and Lunn, should shout abroad that Secularism is decaying. Happily we can afford to laugh at them. Since the Manchester Conference, held last Whit Sunday, the President of the National Secular Society has signed certificates for over 600 new members, which is more than a hundred in excess of the whole of 1889. Nor is the financial position of the Society less flourishing. At the Executive meeting on Wednesday evening there was a total balance in hand of £254 16s. 6d. This is the highest point reached since March 1887, when the Society received a legacy (indirectly, of course) of over £100. The normal balance at this moment is about equal to the accidental balance of four years ago; and this in spite of the fact that in this year the Society has done without an item of £63 which it enjoyed annually for the previous ten years. It will be seen, therefore, that Messrs. Hughes, Stead and Lunn are shouting a silly falsehood. So far from decaying, Secularism is showing more life and activity than ever.

ACID DROPS.

We have taken little notice of the swarm of ordinary Christian preachers who, in alluding to Mr. Bradlaugh, have sought to show that he became an Atheist because injudiciously treated when young, and that he would have ceased to be an Atheist if only he had lived a few years longer. Such stuff is simply incredible to anyone who knew the man. But here is the fair-minded Unitarian *Inquirer*, in *Recollections* by one who did know him, saying "though he was an Atheist intellectually, he was not an Atheist morally. He believed in righteousness, and worked for the triumph thereof. And righteousness is God." What playing with words is this, and what a base implication that morally Atheism is unrighteous, coming, too, from a writer who apparently discards the personal deity disbelieved by Atheists.

A correspondence on the late Mr. Bradlaugh has been occupying the columns of the *Western Daily Press*. It is wound up by a very arrogant effusion from one John Milne, who says "Atheists there have been in the past who were really men of unquestionable genius, but they were always really ashamed of their weakness of belief." Please give us the names of these Atheists who were ashamed of their Atheism, Mr. Milne.

The Rev. Ezra Inman, a retired clergyman, of Leytonstone, is charged with violently assaulting his housekeeper with a flat iron. It appears he was drunk, and said he was of royal blood. Perhaps he comes of the stock of old King David.

"Anti-Bradlaughite" writes from Maidstone to a Tunbridge Wells paper, giving a long account of a disciple of Mr. Bradlaugh who was hung for poisoning the child of a girl he had seduced. Of course the man's name and that of the town are both concealed out of "regard for the feelings," etc., etc. The same old story! There must be a lot of fools in Tunbridge Wells for an editor to print a whole column of such rubbish.

The same paper reports a discourse on Infidelity by the Rev. Dr. Campbell Strickland. This gentleman has discovered that the French Revolution abolished marriage. We compliment him on finding what has escaped the attention of all the historians of that period.

Last Sunday afternoon the roads about Middlesborough were thronged with pedestrians. At the same time Newport-road Church was partially filled by a meeting called to discuss why working men don't go to gospel-shops. The minister of this particular gospel-shop, the Rev. J. Fleming Shearer, admitted that the complaint was real. Broadly speaking, the working classes did not go to church. What was the reason? Some of the speakers said it was Sunday drinking; others

said it was dull, foolish sermons; others said it was the greed and despotism of Christian employers; others said it was the indifference of the working man to Kingdom Come. But whatever the reason was, only one speaker had a remedy. His name was Robert Robson, and it was the opinion of this plain-speaker that "If ministers would charge men three-pence each to hear a sermon, and provide them with a pint of beer, they would get the working men to church—their churches would be crowded." Perhaps it is worth a trial.

An advertiser in the *Daily Telegraph* is anxious to promote Scriptural holiness in the North of London. He is also anxious to gain assistance of a few others "in possession of a clean heart." Is this a euphemism for a full pocket?

Captain Binger a distinguished French explorer, has written a book on *Slavery, Islamism and Christianity*. He declares that Mohammedanism is far more successful as a civilising medium in Africa than Christianity. Wherever it spreads it succeeds in reforming the savage. It uproots cannibalism and drunkenness, defines the sexual relations and popularises schools.

Similar testimony was recently given in a paper read before the Egyptian Institute at Cairo by Chafik Effendi. He stoutly maintained that the attitude of Mohammedanism towards slavery was infinitely more logical and humane than that of Christianity. He pointed out that Christianity, while preaching a doctrine of human brotherhood, tolerated, and even practised, slavery. On the other hand, Islamism maintained, as an inflexible rule, that the children of free parents could never be enslaved, and that no member of the Mussulman Church could, under any circumstances, be reduced to bondage. Any slave, on embracing Mohammedanism, became *ipso facto* free. Practically this was found more successful than the Christian method.

A real miracle, at least in the opinion of the natives, has occurred in Jerusalem at last. It is an electric light at a new mill. The Arabs and Jews are much puzzled by it, and keep at a respectful distance. Probably it would frighten the twelve Apostles into fits.

By way of doing something popular for his £15,000 a year, the Archbishop of Canterbury discoursed to 1,500 men (ten pounds a piece!) at the Regent-street Polytechnic on Sunday afternoon, Feb. 15. His Grace told them how to read the Bible properly; that is, how to read it without becoming Freethinkers. First of all he said the Bible was not a book, but a literature, which is quite true. Then he said that this literature covered a space of 1,600 years "from 1,500 B.C., to the close of the first century." But this is a falsehood, and the speaker would never dare to say it before a meeting of scholars. He knows very well that there is not a scrap of the Old Testament which can be carried back a thousand years before Christ. He also knows that it requires hydraulic pressure to get all the New Testament documents inside the first century of the Christian era.

His Grace told the 1,500 men that God inspired the Bible. He also told them that it improved as it went along. What a compliment to Omniscience!

The proper way to read the Bible is to read it like the Archbishop; that is, to read it in a way which is perfectly consistent with your own interests. When "Blessed be ye poor" and "Woe unto you rich" are compatible with £15,000 a year, it is very evident that the sceptic lacks the fine subtlety of the Christian mind.

"Whatever Atheists, on the one hand, and doctrinaires, on the other, may say, the overwhelming majority of the Nonconformists of this country will refuse to accept purely secular teaching." So says the *Methodist Times*, and we quite believe it. But is it possible to conceive worse humbug? Catholics have as much right to have their doctrines, and Church of England folk their articles, taught in public schools as nonconformists have to get Bible reading and teaching. Freethinkers also have the same right to have their principles taught. But the Nonconformist is deaf to the voice of other people's rights. His theory of religious equality is Procrustean. He insists on docking or stretching his fellow citizens to his own size and form.

Hugh Price Hughes is a nice man, and a nice man is defined by Swift as a man with nasty ideas. This reverend gentleman (Hughes, not Swift) is hot against "immoral women" going to theatres and music-halls. He is also sarcastic on Mr. Ambrose Austin, who declares that after thirty-five years' experience in London he is unable to tell whether any of the spectators at the "Empire" in Manchester are immoral. Hughes has keener perceptions. He could tell you a woman's character to a fraction. Nature has given him a nose for smelling out improper females. If he presided over the Divorce Court, juries and witnesses might be dispensed with. Hughes would settle every case straight away, by the grace of God and that nose.

What sweet charitable souls are the Hugh Price Hugheses of this world! How they love to harry the unfortunate victims of the lust of professed Christians! "Immoral women" must not walk the streets. They must not enter a theatre or a music hall. They must slink away and cease to affront the pious gentlemen who want to take their pleasure without seeing a woman of that sort. Oh for a Swift or a Sterne to dissect these wretched Pharisees, and hold them up to the scorn and loathing of mankind! Those "immoral women" have the same human rights as an archbishop—no more and no less. They have as much right to sit in a theatre or a music hall as Price Hughes. If they misconduct themselves, let them be treated accordingly; but their general character, or what they do outside, is no concern of anybody, least of all of Christian preachers who overlastingly mouth about their Savior, who was a friend rather than an enemy of harlots.

The present writer was recently listening to a Christian commercial traveller in a Newcastle hotel. He was talking about a telling preacher, who had done wonders in Liverpool. "Why," he said, "he soon filled his church. He preached purity; and his preaching had such an effect that the police soon began to turn the girls off the streets." Bah! The present writer felt ready to vomit. One man ruins a girl, or helps to do it, for she cannot do it by herself; another man preaches purity sermons against her when she is in the gutter; and another man puts his hand on her shoulder in the street and bids her "go!" in the name of all the other men who made the law. It is enough to make a sensible, humane man sick; enough to make him loathe the very name of Christian purity. It is not purity at all. Rather it reminds one of Milton's "lust hard by hate."

While South America still suffers from drought, floods in West Virginia are causing enormous damage and much suffering. The town of Parkersburg is completely submerged and cut off from all communication. He doeth all things well!

The Rev. John Williams, of Bayswater, was charged with being drunk and disorderly. He pleaded that some years ago he had a sunstroke, and was let off with a fine of 5s. and doctor's expenses. Persons who have had sunstroke should keep from intoxicants. Even the Lord's blood in the Holy Sacrament may set up cerebral excitement.

A good story is current in Bedfordshire as to a somewhat sycophantic parson on the Woburn estate, who, in a sermon improving the occasion—before he knew of the circumstances of the Duke of Bedford's death—said that they were quite providential, as the Duke had often expressed to him his desire to die suddenly. This cleric's feelings, when hearing of the inquest, may be more easily imagined than described.

According to the *Birmingham Daily Mail*, at one of the churches in that city one unpleasantness after another has led to the departure of churchwardens, organist, choir, and vergers. Recently, the vicar's wife dusted and swept the church, whilst her husband tolled the bell. The result was the advent of one old woman, who, with the members of the vicarage household, formed the whole congregation.

"The Man in the Moon," making his notes upon passing events in the *Cheltenham Mercury*, asked if the Holy Ghost had been walking in St. Paul's-street. The question drew down on him the wrathful indignation of some clerical gentlemen, and he now explains that his words were not intended to convey any disrespect to their three-headed idol. He says that "the phrase is one known in almost every village in

the land, and is frequently used, as it was by me, when a young girl begins to develop a certain rotundity, the author of which is not known." We hope the explanation will satisfy the clericals.

The *Evening News and Post* charges *Light*, the spiritist organ, with being in possession of facts showing the fraudulent character of the "mejum" recently exposed, but concealing the same until after the case was taken up by the newspapers. How is this, Dr. Moses?

The Rev. Wm. Langley Pope, D.D., was charged before the Newton-Abbott magistrates with brawling in church on Sunday, Feb. 8. On that day the Rev. Henry Francis, of Hillingdon, was administering the sacrament. Dr. Pope took bread, and, to everyone's astonishment, returned to his pew. He went back to the communion rail, however, and attempted to wrest the chalice from Mr. Francis. After a short struggle Dr. Pope gained possession of the vessel, and, standing with his back to the people, drank some of the wine. He then handed the cup back to the officiating clergyman, and said, "You are not a Christian, and are unfit to administer the sacrament." The doctor then walked to his pew, and stood gesticulating with his Bible during the remainder of the sermon. He was let off with a fine of £2.

According to T. Taplet Short, the ministerial secretary of the Wesleyan Committee of Privileges, a parson in the Eastern Counties, when a nonconformist funeral took place, gave instructions to the sexton "not to toll the bell but to charge for it all the same." The incident displays the attitude taken by many of the clergy towards the Burials Act of 1880.

The *Daily News* says: "Religion and war go hand in hand in Russia. At the opening of the new works for the manufacture of smokeless powder, beside the famous gunpowder works at Ohta, near St. Petersburg, the parish priest blessed the machinery, which was thereupon set to work, and produced eight poods of this new powder."

The late Mr. Sharman seems to have a worthy successor in the Unitarian pulpit at Preston. Referring to the long hours of the men employed by the municipality, this gentleman (the Rev. R. S. Clarke) said in 1889 we, as a people, contributed £1,300,000 to foreign missions. He thought it time a mission was started to convert Christians to humanity, and instead of holding meetings in support of missions to the heathen, it would be wise to hold them for the purpose of sending missionaries to convert Preston to decency and common sense.

The power of prayer and the efficacy of the Holy Ghost were strikingly exhibited in the case of the dispute between John Wesley and George Whitefield. Both earnest men of Christian faith and exemplary Methodists—the one held that the Bible taught the doctrines of Arminius, the other that its teaching was the entirely antagonistic view of Calvin. Both studied the sacred scriptures, and prayed earnestly that they might have divine guidance and co-operate in preaching the same truth, and both believed that they had received this divine assurance. Yet both differed to the end of their lives. Whitefield declared that Wesley made the Gospel of none effect, and Wesley declared that "Calvinism had been the grand hindrance of the work of God."

The reason why clergymen live to be seventy years of age on the average, says the *New York Herald*, is that they have an annual attack of bronchitis, which can only be cured by a tour through Europe—expenses paid.

The Catholic journals take the trouble to deny a statement made in *Cassell's Family Magazine*, to the effect that some relics of Judas Iscariot were preserved at Milan. The Archbishop of Milan not only denies this, but says that "it would be contrary to our religion." Why so? Judas Iscariot was the instrument of bringing about the scheme of Christ's redemption. One would think a lock of his hair, or the thirty pieces of silver, or the rope with which he hanged himself (according to Matthew), or the belt through which his bowels gushed (according to the Acts of the Apostles), or the waggon wheel which crushed him to death (according to Papias), ought to be almost as interesting to Christians as the knife which circumcised their savior.

D'Arvieux, a French traveller, attributes, wrongly, an extraordinary kind of Atheism to the mysterious sect of Druses in Syria. "They acknowledge," he says, "that there was a God once, but they affirm that after he created heaven and earth he was blown away by a high wind, which carried him so far off that he has never been heard of since. Thus are they said to account for the absence of divine government in human affairs." This is a pious opinion which should commend itself to those good Theists who, while contending there is a God, yet admit the world goes on exactly as if he had evaporated.

Some modern Theosophists hold an opinion no less whimsical, but directly the reverse of that attributed to the Druses. They believe that at present there is no God, only Dhyanis Chohans, Mahatmas and Pitris, who were once human beings, and are now on their road towards godhood. In especial, they are usually found to believe that they are themselves germ godlings with a good deal of the infallibility of the omnipotent.

Poor Colonel Olcott, who had the control of the well-worked Indian section of Theosophists handed over to him, seems not altogether at ease. It appears from the *Madras Times* of Dec. 28 the "President Founder" wishes to hand over the presidency to be directed by commissioners, at any rate for a time. He is reported as saying: "So far as he was concerned, he would feel himself justified in ceasing, at his old age, to waste energy and trouble in endeavoring to keep the Indian branches up to their work with the wretched help he received from them of late. Friendly words and smooth compliments he had received always, but nothing beyond that."

Prof. Blackie finds that piety is declining in Scotland, owing to a superfluity, and consequent vulgarisation, of preaching. He has a plan to reform it altogether by having only one sermon per Sunday in each church; a union of pulpits taking preachers in rotation; and an order of preachers composed of pulpit orators, without special parish work.

Catholic firms vie with each other as to the smallest size into which they can compress their portable deity. One well-known establishment advertise that they sell in a box 5in. by 3in., with a depth of 1½ inches, crucifix, candles, holy oil and all necessary to administer either the sacrament or last unction. Of course the candles need more space than the Infinite Deity.

A toy shop in the Edgware-road has a mechanical toy, evidently of French construction, exhibiting the story of Jonah and the whale. There is the sea, the whale, and the doll prophet. You drop a penny in the slot, and the whale opens his jaws and Jonah is thrown inside. After time for a prayer, the prophet is ejected again.

Mr. Gladstone, speaking at the opening of a Free Library in St. Martin's-lane, said "Christianity was the parent of philanthropy." The phrase is a part of the common stock of Christian clap-trap. But Mr. Gladstone is a Greek scholar. He knows that the word philanthropy was used by Plato, and that the virtue so designated was in existence three hundred years before Christ. Will he kindly give a few thousand words to explain his meaning?

Present Truth takes the true Christian attitude in regard to miracles. It says "the miracles of the Bible are not to be explained, but believed." The ministers who try to explain the miracles usually end in explaining them away, while holding on to the most astounding miracles, the belief in a God and the divinity of their own religion.

Mr. Craven, M.P., has put a pertinent question to Sir J. Mowbray. He asks him as an Ecclesiastical Commissioner whether it has been with the consent of the Commissioners that the Dean and Chapter of Westminster have, in their leases on the Belsize Court estate, Hampstead, prohibited the erection of any Dissenting chapel, and also the use of any house for any purpose in connection with any sect dissenting from the Church of England. He also asks if the Ecclesiastical Commissioners insert similar prohibitions in their own leases, and, if so, by what authority. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners are chosen by Parliament to represent the

interests of the nation in dealing with Church property. Although chosen from members of the Church of England, they have no right to use their position to the advantage of their own sect.

Dr. Parker belongs to the salt of the earth. He knows it and won't let folk forget it. Therefore he is an authority on salt, and no wonder he preached a sermon on it the other Sunday. Nevertheless, the oracle of the City Temple's notions on salt are somewhat peculiar. He supposed a lump of salt had lost its savor, and asked these questions about the insipid article:—"It has lost something. What has it lost? It is the same weight, it is the same color; I see no difference. It has lost the one thing without which every other thing is nothing."

Gods, angels, and little fishes! Here's chemistry for you! Before Parker preaches about salt again he should go to an evening school.

Prophet Baxter is again putting out his old bills announcing the coming of the greatest war ever known in the world between May, 1891 and 1892, uniting 23 kingdoms into 10, and to be followed by England's loss of India and Ireland. Baxter will soon have to shift his dates further on. But the author of *Louis Napoleon, the Destined Monarch of the World*, has frequently done this before, and finds it affects but little the gullibility of the pious.

While the debate on the Sunday Closing Bill was proceeding in the House of Commons, a prayer meeting on the same subject was proceeding in a room at the Westminster Palace Hotel, under the auspices of the British Women's Temperance Association. Strangers were admitted to the latter assembly without an order.

The country of Goethe and Heine seems to be going backward in some respects under the rule of pious young William. We have already reported the sentence of six months imprisonment for "blasphemy" on Dr. Voelkel. Now we have to record the death of Sigismund Berensson. He was summoned to answer charges of "blasphemy" at Hamburg, and he appeared before the tribunal on Monday, February 23. He was suffering severely from influenza, but that was no business of the Christian court, and the poor fellow died suddenly there before his prosecutors could secure their victim. He is now beyond their reach; but probably they are consoled by reflecting that he is in the hands of their God.

"Death has been busy again," says the *Christian Commonwealth*. We should like to know when he was idle.

The Deceased Wife's Sister Bill is lost again. The House of Lords have kicked it out. Bishops and bigots were too many for it. Yet the bishops know that Jacob was a man whom God "loved"; and they also know that this canny old patriarch married his wife's sister without waiting for a decease. He took them on together.

We should like to take part in the next debate on this Bill in the House of Lords. If the bishops were present it would be the liveliest sitting the House ever had.

General Booth has been holding forth at Stockholm on his Social Scheme. He had a big audience, and as he spoke in English the Swedes must have been highly edified. However, the General's lieutenant over there, a gentleman named Dixon, telegraphs "50 souls, and £85 income for the day." "Fifty souls" is good. Evidently it is a fine plan still, as it was in the days of Peter, the General of the first Salvation Army, to preach in unknown tongues.

The West London Mission has started a dispensary in connection with Cleveland Hall. We hope the physic will be better than the doctrine. At the same time, we wonder what a Christian has to do with physic. King Asa made Jehovah savage by consulting the doctors in his illness, and Jesus Christ performed his cures without medicine, although on one occasion he used clay ointment. James, the reputed brother of Jesus, prescribes prayer and anointing oil for all disorders, and expressly says that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick." Clearly the West London Mission is straying from the teachings of the Grand Old Book.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

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

Sunday, March 1, Hall of Science, Old-street, London. E.C., at 7, "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."

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

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

May 10, Camberwell; 24, Manchester.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

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

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

If 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.

M. BROWN.—You certainly could not get a living in London by canvassing for this journal.

H. T. BAILEY.—Thanks for the extract, which is useful.

G. MORLEY.—Rather too long for reproduction in our columns. There ought to be a Branch at Merthyr, and if you can start one in your own place we should be glad. It is some time since we heard from the Cardiff friends.

A. BAKER thinks his little boy Peter was the last child publicly named by Mr. Bradlaugh. The place and date were—St. James's Hall, Manchester, March 9, 1890.

J. F. DEWAR.—It appears this week. Thanks.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following: Per W. Leys, Woolwich: W. Leys, 1s.; J. Woodward, 6d.; Allen, 6d.; Gee, 6d.; Honcroft, 6d.; Low, 6d.; Allfrey, 6d.; R. Martin, 10s.; Chard, 6d.; Robinson, 6d.; Gilletley, 6d.; Moore, 6d.; W. D., 5s.; W. Button, 2s. 6d.

W. HOLLAND.—Delighted to hear that the *Freethinker*, which you first saw casually in a shop window, was instrumental in converting you from Catholicism.

A. W. EXALL.—The better course would be for you to communicate directly with the West Ham Branch.

W. J. CAISEY.—We note your suggestion that poorer Freethinkers might subscribe five shillings per month for one year to the Bradlaugh Memorial. The purchase of Mr. Bradlaugh's library was a point considered.

J. HENLEY says the Hammersmith open-air lectures will be given on the north side of the Bridge.

SCREPTIC.—Dr. Friedlander is a man of considerable learning and authority among the Jews, but we do not think he has either the erudition or impartiality of the late Dr. Kalisch, all of whose writings we recommend.

X.—Thanks. Your well-written letters do excellent service.

T. KEEBLE.—Cuttings always welcome.

G. JAMES.—If creation does not mean making from nothing, were the materials from which "the heaven and the earth" were fashioned co-eternal with God?

H. PORTER.—Colonel Ingersoll's denial that he had ever made such a prophecy was given in our columns a few months ago, but the lie spreads all the same.

T. BARNETT.—Some one has misled you. Mr. Bradlaugh did not believe in a supreme being. He was an Atheist.

W. M.—Mr. Foote will try and find time for the letter.

W. H. WEST.—The extract is quite correct. The fact was published in Mr. Bradlaugh's own paper at the time.

T. DAVIES.—Mr. Foote was never a Christian preacher, local or otherwise.

B. H. GREEN.—Shall appear.

S. SODDY.—Pleased to hear of your successful visit to Southend. If the local "saints" wish to form a Branch of the N. S. S. they should communicate with Mr. Forder.

F. A. DAVIES reports that the adjourned meeting of North Lambeth Freethinkers will be resumed at the residence of Mr. V. Rogers, 114 Kennington-road, on Sunday morning, March 1, at 12 o'clock.

J. GLASS.—Mr. Forder will send your certificate. Glad to hear our writings have been so helpful. Tell us what special line you want to read in and we will advise.

A. BURCHELL.—The *Star* apologised for that paragraph on Mr. Bradlaugh.

G. FAULKNER.—If W. R. Bradlaugh authorised the *Glasgow Evening Citizen* to make such a statement he ought to be horsewhipped. It is not to his interest to provoke Mrs. Bonner. Prudence should check his tongue.

T. R. ALLINSON.—So you are still at large. We doubt if they will have the courage to run you in. Good old Church Rates!

H. P. WRIGHT.—Hardly up to the mark.

A. HEMINGWAY.—The date is booked.

D. CROWLEY.—Of course we do not accept Jesus as the Son of God. Nor do we believe he was an impostor. We are not sure that he ever lived at all. Anyhow we are satisfied that the Gospels are mostly, if not entirely fiction. You find the Old Testament brutal, but you forget that Jesus gave it his sanction, unless the New Testament lies.

C. HUNTER.—The Rev. Mr. Ford is well meaning and courteous, and not without ability, but he hardly knows where he is intellectually.

G. F. PELHAM.—Unitarians often criticise the Bible freely, but they shut their eyes to the logical issues of their criticism.

J. RUSHWORTH.—See Deuteronomy xxiii, 2, and James v, 17, 18. We hope the Leeds Branch will go ahead.

W. HUNTER.—Thanks for the cutting. Sorry to hear the bigots injure your business. England is a paradise for hypocrites, and a hell for honest thinkers. Mr. Foote hopes to visit Plymouth in June or July.

W. V.—It is a repetition of what other preachers have said, and has been substantially answered in our columns already.

T. K.—We could only deal with the facts disclosed in the report, though we do not doubt your statements.

W. S. TAYLOR.—*Darwin Made Easy*, by Dr. Aveling, will be sent to you post-free by Mr. Forder for one shilling. Haeckel's work is expensive.

W. R. LILL.—It is beneath contempt. Let W. R. Bradlaugh alone. He is not worth powder and shot.

E. CHAPMAN.—The more you study the effects of Christian superstition, the more, we think, you will approve our policy.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschenthum—Echo—Neues Frereligioeses 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—Christian Life—Sporting Chronicle—Devon Evening Express—Glasgow Evening Citizen—Church Evangelist—Scottish Nights—Cape Argus—Brighton Times—New York World—New York Herald—Evening Sun—Temperance Gospel Banner—Wigan Observer—Comet—Inquirer—Newcastle Leader—Leek Times—Chatham and Rochester News—Joyful News—Bournemouth Guardian—Market Rasen Mail—Jewish World—Morpeth Herald—Northampton Reporter—Birmingham Daily Mail—Independent Pulpit—Bournemouth Visitors' Directory—Freethinker's Magazine—Hull Critic.

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.

By a special request Mr. Foote will deliver at the London Hall of Science this evening (March 1) the "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh," which has attracted such crowded audiences and excited so much interest in the provinces. Mr. Foote will take this opportunity of speaking to Secularists on the future of Freethought, and on the Bradlaugh Memorial. The occasion will be a good one for London friends to hand in their donations and applications for shares.

Mr. Foote has been unable to get through his arrears of work on returning from the north. His promised article on Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of the World* is therefore postponed till next week.

Mr. Foote's northern tour has been very successful. The Blyth meeting has been already reported. On Tuesday evening Mr. Foote lectured at North Shields. Councillor Leslie Johnson took the chair, after materially helping to swell the audience. There was some discussion, though not of a profitable character. On Wednesday evening Mr. Foote lectured at Willington. The hall was crowded, and many persons were unable to obtain admission. The discussion lasted for an hour and a half. One Christian was surprised to learn that he had only ten minutes. He thought he should speak until he chose to leave off. At Spennymoor on Thursday there was another fine meeting. Four Christians had ten minutes each. One of them "challenged" Mr. Foote to a public discussion. Of course Mr. Foote neither accepted nor declined, but followed his old rule, and left the

matter to be decided by the Branch. The challenger was a person named Stevenson. He shook hands with Mr. Foote on the platform, and called him a villain and a vagabond before leaving the room. Mr. Foote does not mind that. He only regrets the fellow shook hands with him. Of course there will be no debate between this person and anyone connected with the Spennymoor Branch, but if possible a debate will be arranged with some local minister.

When Mr. Foote rose to reply to his Spennymoor critics the bigoted section of the Christians made a hideous noise, and he had fairly to shout them down. It took ten minutes to do this, and the lecturer's sides ached afterwards. However he got the meeting well in hand, and his replies were for the most part heartily cheered. Altogether, the Spennymoor Branch is delighted with the result of its first hit out in the district.

Mr. Phillips, the secretary of the Spennymoor Branch, is a young man of great intelligence. His letters in the local paper do him much credit. Mr. Fletcher, the president, an older man with a good head and heart, took Mr. Foote to Tudhoe colliery, about two miles from Spennymoor, where he remained all night. The Christians had been saying (nothing is too small for them!) that the President of the Secularists wouldn't go and sleep in a miner's cottage. Poor ninnies! He has often done so, and found the best of welcomes.

Friday evening is an unfavorable time for lectures at Middlesboro', yet Mr. Foote had an excellent audience there, and a most appreciative one. There were two ministers in the meeting, but neither of them took advantage of the chairman's invitation to discuss. One of them seemed to enjoy the lecture.

On Saturday evening Mr. Foote lectured for the Oxhill Branch. Starting from Newcastle with Mr. Joseph Brown, he journeyed by train to Lintz Green, and then had an hour's drive over hilly country in an open trap. It was bitterly cold, and the lecturer had to be unthawed before taking the platform. There was only time to do this partially, and the result was a want of "go." The drive back was far from pleasant, and Messrs. Foote and Brown only caught the last train to Newcastle by the skin of their teeth.

Sunday was a livelier day. Mr. Foote was in good form, and his audiences were the largest he has ever had in "canny Newcastle." The evening Oration on Charles Bradlaugh was delivered to a crowded house. A good deal of discussion followed the morning and afternoon lectures. Brief reports of the evening meeting appeared in the *Chronicle* and the *Leader*.

After the lecturing was over, Mr. Foote visited the Branch's rooms and presided over a members' meeting. His object was to discover, and if possible remove, the causes of the late internal difficulties. After a good hour and a half's talk the matter was honorably and amicably arranged. Now it is settled we hope all the members of the Newcastle Branch will work together loyally. At the annual meeting in June there will be an opportunity of making any changes that may be then desirable.

Mr. G. B. Shaw drew a large audience, including several literary gents, to the Hall of Science last Sunday. Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner was also present. Mr. Shaw imported as much Socialism as possible into his lecture. Freethought, he contended, consisted rather in the advance of the will and spirit of man than in holding any particular opinions. Personally he was an Atheist. Mr. Cunningham Graham, William Morris, and Mr. Hyndman were more advanced Freethinkers than Morley, Bentham and Mill. Freethinkers in the past had been mainly influenced through men like Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, and Herbert Spencer—all men with the middle-class bias of individualism. The new Freethought is that which has the social element at the bottom of it, etc. There were many brilliant points in Mr. Shaw's discourse, but the general effect on our sub-editor was that of being sermonised on the Freethought movement by a Socialist outsider.

Mr. J. M. Robertson seems to have shared this feeling, for he started in warm opposition, and spoke twice, Mr. Forder, who also wished to oppose, kindly giving way. He pointed

out several little inaccuracies, and denied that Freethought teaching had any class bias, and twitted the Fabian Socialists with being silent as to their views on religion and the population question. Two other gentlemen also spoke in opposition, and many more were desirous of doing so, when the hour came to close. Mr. Shaw in his reply was calm and fluent as ever. Mr. Shaw donated his share of the proceeds to the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Fund.

Some Leicester Secularists contemplate taking a piece of ground for Sunday cricket. Let them remember the words of the Capuchin in Schiller's *Wallenstein's Camp*:

Is the Sabbath a day for this sport in the land,
As though the great God had the gout in his hand?

Professor Huxley has sent a cheque for two guineas to the fund for the Leicester Secular Hall. We are glad to think that the £500 needed will be realised.

A capital portrait of Prof. Huxley appears as extra double page supplement to the *Illustrated London News* for Feb. 21.

Members of the Finsbury Park Branch N. S. S. are particularly requested to attend next meeting on Monday, March 2, at 8 p.m., at 155 Winston-road, Green-lanes, N.

Mr. Henry Porter has a useful letter in the *North Lindsey Star*, which stated that Mr. Bradlaugh advocated Socialism and latterly modified his attitude towards Christianity. Mr. Porter proves the inaccuracy of both statements.

The *Chatham and Rochester News* gives a column of report to the Bradlaugh Memorial Service, held by the Chatham Secular Society. Mr. A. R. Andrews presided, and among the speakers were Mr. F. J. Boorman, W. B. Thompson, J. J. Taylor, and A. E. Rowcroft.

The *Wigan Observer* gives insertion to an excellent letter from "Avenger," vindicating Mr. Bradlaugh from the calumnies of the Rev. P. Hains. The *Wigan Comet* also takes notice of Mr. Hains's charges, and refutes them.

Fritankaren pays its tribute to the late Charles Bradlaugh, and Captain Thomson translates from our columns Mr. Wheeler's New Year article on "Our Position."

Mr. Standing's free lecture, at the Temperance Hall, Battersea, on "The Church and the People," was well attended, considering the wretched weather. A Roman Catholic and a Socialist offered some opposition, which was smartly replied to. Mr. J. H. Ellis occupied the chair. He will also preside at Mr. Foote's lecture on Friday, February 27. Mr. A. B. Moss gives the third lecture, on "The Glory of Secularism," on March 6.

Mr. Perks, Liberal candidate, was asked by Mr. Malkinson at Market Rasen, if he would vote against the Blasphemy Laws. His reply made it evident he did not quite understand the question. He said he was in favor of allowing people to hold meetings in their own houses and public buildings, but not to publicly blaspheme God in the streets. Friends who put these questions to candidates should draw their attention to the Act of William III., by which those who deny the Christian religion to be true can be sentenced to a term of three years' imprisonment. Ask if they will vote for the repeal of that Act.

Mr. Symes, noticing Mr. Ball's important work, *Are the Effects of Use and Disuse Inherited*, says he discusses a most essential subject in a remarkably able and temperate manner. "I am sure," he adds, "if Darwin could still speak, he would say that one independent pupil like this author gave him more gratification than a whole swarm of mere followers."

The *Statesman and Friend of India* and the *Englishman*, of Calcutta, both give appreciative notices of Mr. Bradlaugh, which a friend sends over to us from India.

The *Freethinkers' Magazine*, of Buffalo, New York, in addition to the Interview with Moody, which we extract, has papers on: Probing Nature, by H. E. Cresswell, and on the

Antiquity of Man, by A. B. Moss. Under the title "Another Church Prop Gone," Prof. A. L. Rawson examines the drawing in the Roman Catacomb, in which a figure with ass's head is found on a cross, with the inscription "Alexamenos worships God." Prof. Rawson gives it as his opinion that it is merely a sarcasm aimed at some Roman malefactor who had been, or was about to be, crucified, and who had suddenly turned pious, as such persons do in our day. It affords, he says, no evidence of *the crucifixion*.

Mr. Voysey's latest published Theistic Sermons are on the Gospel of St. John, which he pretty fully examines. His conclusion is vigorously expressed. He says: "St. John's work, even as fiction is so badly done that it bears the indelible proof of its own refutation, of its own inherent falseness."

The division in the House of Commons last week on Mr. Pritchard Morgan's motion in favor of disestablishing the church in Wales is decidedly encouraging. The motion was rejected by 235 votes against 203, a majority of only 32; this is 21 less than in 1889.

A large meeting of local Freethinkers was held last Sunday morning at the residence of Mr. V. Roger, and it was unanimously resolved that application be made to the Executive for permission to form a Branch of the N. S. S. in North Lambeth. The following officers were elected, viz.:—Mr. V. Roger, 114, Kennington Road, president; Mr. G. Shambrook, 20, Cramp-ton Street, Newington, vice-president; Mr. F. A. Davies, 48, Hercules Road, Lambeth, secretary. The meeting adjourned until March 1. As very few members of the late Branch were present, there must be a great number of Freethinkers in the locality outside the movement. Those wishing to join should at once communicate with either of the above gentlemen.

On Monday evening (March 2) the Forder Testimonial will be presented. There is to be a dinner at the Manchester Hotel, Aldersgate-street. The tickets are half-a-crown. A few still left can be obtained at the Hall of Science on Sunday. Mr. Foote will preside. An illuminated address will be presented to Mr. Forder at the Conference.

Applications for the post of Secretary to the National Secular Society should be sent in at once to Mr. Robert Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. The matter will be settled by the Executive as quickly as possible. All who applied last year, and still wish to be candidates, must renew their applications.

More than 600 new members have joined the N. S. S. since the last Conference. The next Conference is on Whit-Sunday. We should very much like to see the number of fresh enrolments increased to a thousand by then. There are many readers of the *Freethinker* who have not yet joined the N. S. S., and we should be delighted to see them join before the Conference.

The "Bradlaugh Memorial" bids fair to be a success. But there is nothing like taking time by the forelock, and we appeal to the Freethought party to be prompt in their response. There should be a long list of donations next week, though the first week's list is far from contemptible. Mr. George Anderson, always a generous supporter of the cause, gives a hundred guineas and will take a hundred shares in the Company. We have received a promise of £100 from F. S., another good friend of the movement. These early gifts should stimulate the generosity of other Secularists.

THE SOULLESS DOG.

He is very imprudent, a dog is. He never makes it his business to inquire whether you are in the right or in the wrong, never bothers as to whether you are going up or down upon life's ladder, never asks whether you are rich or poor, silly or wise, sinner or saint. You are his pal. That is enough for him, and come luck or misfortune, good repute or bad, honor or shame, he is going to stick to you, to comfort you, guard you, give his life for you, if need be, foolish, brainless, soulless dog!—*J. K. Jerome, "Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow, p. 83."*

"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.*

G. J. Holyoake, 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.

ROBERT FORDER, *Secretary.*

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO TUESDAY, FEB. 24.

Geo. Anderson, £105 and one hundred shares; R. Forder, £1 1s. and five shares; Dr. Duncan, £1; L. H. G. (Battersea), £2 2s.; S. R. Stephenson, £2 2s.; H. T. Bailey, 5s.; Major Harris, £20; Mrs. Cotton, £5.—R. FORDER, SEC.

AMERICAN TRIBUTE TO MR. BRADLAUGH.

At a meeting of the Secular Society of Pittsburg, Pa., Jan. 31, 1891, the following resolutions were passed:—

Whereas: By the death of Charles Bradlaugh the world has lost one of the foremost and most fearless champions of civil and religious liberty, who died a martyr to the cause he espoused.

Therefore,

Resolved: That in Charles Bradlaugh we recognise a man whose brilliant attainments were supported by an indomitable courage and unswerving persistency which enabled him to push to a successful issue, before his death, the great object for which he contended.

Resolved: That the members of the Pittsburg Secular Society hereby desire to express their sense of grief at the loss of one of the most faithful and most gifted co-workers in

the Freethought world, and to record the pleasure and profit they have experienced in his brilliant intellectual attainments.

Resolved: That we hereby extend our deepest sympathy to the bereaved relatives and friends of the deceased, hoping that, even in the sadness of their affliction, they may yet find consolation in knowing that the worth of his private qualities and the value of his public services are properly appreciated.

Resolved: That a copy of these Resolutions be properly engrossed and sent to the family of the deceased, and that a copy be sent to the daily press of this city and the American and English Freethought papers.

F. C. KNIGHT
W. S. DOUTHITT
F. A. PIERCE
HARRY HOOVER } Committee.

MR. FOOTE AT BLYTH.

THE audience that assembled to hear Mr. Foote last Monday night was a large one, much beyond expectation, and was composed of all classes of thinking men in Blyth, high and low, rich and poor. The enthusiastic reception offered to Mr. Foote was certainly encouraging for a little town that is given to so much bigotry and boycotting. Mr. Foote is a young man, pleasant in appearance, most courteous, and was frequently eloquent and inspiring. The salaried clergy, as usual, were absent, either chess playing at some friend's house or tea drinking among some old maids, thus leaving their congregations to wander from the Water of Jordan into the blooming meadows of Religious Freedom. Where was the Rev. P. Peace? He is a man of common sense, reason, and ability. Where was the Rev. Father Dromgoole, an acknowledged debater? Where were the Revs. James, Greenwell, Burton, Allison, Clifton, Collinson, etc.? These are all paid for teaching and converting the people from the "error of their ways," yet they did not present themselves to refute the champion of Freethought. However, the only opposition was a couple of lame ducks, who had but a very hazy idea as to debating or asking questions, and Mr. Foote treated them with sympathy and in such an educated manner that they did not feel his power of debate. Blyth is certainly behind at present as regards the pluck and ability of its clergy, when they allow a Freethought lecturer to come and go without shaking his doubts. It is often remarkable that as soon as a Freethought lecturer leaves the town the Sunday following is a great day in the pulpit, and spouting against Freethought is carried on to a large extent, but no "discussion or questions are allowed." Praying and hymn singing alone will never convert reasonable men or keep them in a faith of this kind.

It was no surprise to see Mr. John Bryson, ex-President of the Northumberland Miners, on the Freethought platform as chairman on Monday night. Mr. Bryson, as his head indicates, has a big heart, and his love of justice for freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of opinion, reminds one of his early days of heroism in demanding liberty for his fellow men. Mr. Bryson, in the heyday of his career, and when president of the miners, never attempted to conceal his opinion on the Freethought question, and his presence on Monday night was an omen of good.—*Morpeth Herald.*

CHILDREN'S PARTY.

Per Miss Robins: W. Rowney, 3s.; Mrs. Samson, 1s.; Mr. Ward, 5s.; Mr. Baggs, 6d.; S. Standing, 1s.; Miss Ward, 1s.; Mrs. Rowe, 3d.; Miss Robins, 2s. Per Mrs. Fisher: Mr. Dipper, 1s.; Mr. Watkin, 6d.; Mr. Martin, 1s.; Mr. Sims, 1s.; Mrs. Pearce, 2s. 6d.; J. Gray, 6d.; Mrs. Ellis, 2s.; Mr. Annis, 6d.; Mr. Wilkes, 6d.; Mr. Harrend, 6d.; Mr. Lingard, 6d.; A. Smith, 1s.; Jones, jun., 1s.; Mr. Joslyn, 1s. Per Miss Vance: Mrs. Wackerbath, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. Hopkins, 1s.; G. Brown, 1s.; Mrs. McMillan, 6d.; G. E. Lupton, 2s. 6d. Miss Lupton, 1s.; Mrs. Lupton, 1s. Per Miss Brown: W. R. Lupton, 1s.; G. Brown, 1s.; E. Brown, 1s. 6d.; A. Brown, 1s.; F. Curtis, 1s.; H. T. L., 1s.
R. FORDEB, Secretary.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

W. H. Whitney, 1s.; W. Pearce, 5s.; B. L. Coleman, 5s.; Mrs. Blyth, 5s. This fund is now closed.
W. H. Reynolds (Treasurer), New Cross, S. E.

THE LATE MR. BRADLAUGH'S EARLY CAREER.

A REPLY FROM MRS. BRADLAUGH-BONNER.

MRS. BRADLAUGH-BONNER writes:—In your issue of Feb. 19 you reprint certain allegations made by a "Christian Evangelist," Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh, about my father, Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, M.P., in the *British Weekly*. He says:

"On the death of my father, my brother obtained a furlough and came home for a fortnight. I opened the door to him, and shall never forget his paroxysms of grief or forget the cry of anguish of my big soldier-brother when he discovered that my father had been buried some days. 'If I could only have knelt by his coffin and asked his forgiveness,' was his repeated cry. At the expiration of his furlough he returned to Ireland, keeping up a regular correspondence with his mother, constantly informing her of the hatred he had towards his captain, saying that unless she obtained his discharge he would put a bullet through this officer. My mother purchased my brother's discharge from the 7th Dragoon Guards on the eve of the commencement of the Crimean War."

When Mr. Bradlaugh, sen., died, his son William Robert was seven years old, and his memory is, therefore, not to be trusted, the more especially as his sister, who was more than seventeen, emphatically denies the statement as to the "repeated cry." The "cry" was not only never "repeated," but it was never made. There is the same want of accuracy in what Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh says as to the correspondence between my father and his mother. My father's eldest sister, who read all the correspondence with his mother, knows nothing about the threat to "put a bullet" through the captain; and as Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh was but eight years old when my father left the army, it is hardly likely that he would have had special confidence made to him on this point. As to the purchase of my father's discharge, the facts are these:—After the death of Mr. Bradlaugh, sen., the family felt greatly in need of the protection and help of the only grown-up son, and my aunt (now Mrs. Norman) wrote to her brother Charles to inquire the amount of the purchase-money. He wrote back (I quote the letter itself):—

"As you wish, I send on this sheet what it would cost to buy me off, but I would not wish to rob you and mother like that:—For the discharge, £30; compensation for getting clothing, 17s. 6d.; passage money home, £1 16s., = £32 13s. 6d., or about £32. I could come home in regimentals, because clothes could be bought cheaper in London, and I would work like a slave. But do not think, my dear sister, I want to take the money from you and mother, though I would do anything to get from the army."

An aunt of his mother's, a Miss Elizabeth Trimby, died at this time, leaving a small legacy, which was applied to the purchase of his discharge. Afterwards my grandmother thought the money ought to have been used for her personally, and my father paid it to her to the utmost farthing. If Mr. W. R. Bradlaugh, who has much cause for gratitude to my father, is quite incapable of that feeling, he ought at least to preserve a decent silence at a moment like this.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

NOT THE LAST SUPPER.

The Ox Hill and Chester-le-Street Branches of the N. S. S. held a joint supper on Saturday night, at Mr. W. Taylor's Hostelry, Annfield Plain. The Chester friends were the visitors. Mr. Brown, Secretary of the North-Eastern Secular Federation, was elected chairman, and Mr. Robinson, of Tow Law, filled the vice-chair. Numerous songs and recitations were well rendered, and some capital stories told. The health of the President—Mr. Foote—and also of Mrs. Besant, was toasted, and a message of condolence with our late and lamented leader was agreed to in silence. Everyone left the room under the impression that such unions were a real source of strength to all true Freethinkers, and hoping that it would not be the last.

The Rev. Mr. Yates, of Bonham, Texas, will doubtless have less faith hereafter in the literal validity of scriptural promises than he had a few weeks ago. He read in Mark xiv., 18, that if a believer drank any deadly thing it should not hurt him, and to prove that the Bible meant what it said, and that he was a true believer, he took ten grains of strychnine. A physician, assisted by a stomach pump, saved his life, but he is now willing to concede that the last part of the gospel of Mark is a wicked and fraudulent interpolation, whose author he would be pleased to interview.—*Freethought.*

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, Mr. J. Rowney, "Bible Creation."
 Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, Mr. Victor Rogers, "The Eight Hour Day Dream." Monday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, Mr. Nelson Palmer, "Our Duties as Citizens." Thursday, at 8, dramatic class. Friday, at 8, at the Temperance Hall, Doddington Grove, Battersea Park Road, Mr. A. B. Moss, "The Glory of Secularism."
 Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, E.: 7.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "God's Holy Book: Is it True?" Admission free.
 Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mr. F. Millar, "What has Christianity Done for Woman?" Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).
 Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."
 Hammersmith — Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Tuesday at 8, a lecture.
 Leyton — Mr. Beadle's, 10 Daisey Villas, Manor Road: 7, a meeting of members and friends.
 Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W.: 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. Touzeau Parris, "Jesus Christ Neither God nor Man." Monday, at 8.30, social meeting. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes (practice).
 West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Mr. J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Vital Force." Thursday, at 8, Mr. Graham Wallas, M.A., "Robert Owen."
 Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street: 7, Mr. S. Soddy, "The English Language and the Confusion of Tongues." Monday, at 8.30, at the "Duke of Ormonde," Prince's Street, annual supper.
 Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road): 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Bible Prophets."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: 11.15, Mr. W. Heaford, "His Majesty the Devil."
 Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side): 3.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist and Why I Remain one."
 Hyde Park, near Marble Arch: 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "How I Became a Secularist and Why I Remain one."
 Tottenham — Corner of West Green Road: 3.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Destructive Secularism."
 Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill: 11.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Charles Bradlaugh."

COUNTRY.

Chatham—"Old George Inn," Globe Lane: 6.30, Mr. W. B. Thompson, "The Great God Cant."
 Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street: 12 noon, debating class; 6.30, Mr. W. Gilmour, "The Jesuits."
 Heckmondwike — At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms: 2.30, a meeting.
 Huddersfield — Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street: Mrs. Thornton Smith, 11, "The Menace of the Blasphemy Laws": 3, "Salvation"; 6.30, "The Evolution of Conscience." Admission free.
 Leeds — Crampton's Hotel, Briggate: 6.30, meeting to receive report from provincial committee and nominate officers.
 Liverpool — Camden Hall, Camden Street: 11.30, committee meeting; 3, discussion class; 7, Mr. Harry Smith, "Wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?" (Gen. xxxi, 30).
 Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints': 6.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "The Soul Idea and Immortality." Free. Wednesday, at 8, dancing (admission sixpence).
 Oldham — Hall of Science, Horsedgate Street: 6.30, Mr. C. H. Cheese (of Manchester), "Why Men Believe in God."
 Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 3, committee meeting; 7, Mr. Peahorne, "A Peep at Charles Lamb."
 Sheffield — Hall of Science, Rockingham Street: Mr. Robert Law, F.G.S., 3, "The Wonders of a Piece of Limestone"; 7, "The Evidences of an Arctic Climate in Great Britain."
 Spennymoor — Victoria Hall, Dundas Street: 10.30, general meeting; 6, Mr. T. Phillips, "Some Objections to Socialism Considered."
 Slatybridge—Mr. J. Taylor's, 12 Bayley Street: 7, committee meeting.
 Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street: 7, Mr. J. Marr, "Is there a God?"

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—March 1, Woolwich; 6, Battersea; 29, Camberwell. April 5, morning, Westminster, evening, Woolwich. May 3, morning, Clerkenwell, evening, Woolwich; 17, morning, Westminster, evening, Woolwich.
 TOLMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—March 2, Woolwich; 29, Reading.
 STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—March 1, Manchester; 15, Bolton. Sept 6, Liverpool.

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