

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

ALL MY "I."

THE orthodox world makes much of Sir G. G. Stokes, baronet, M.P., and President of the Royal Society. It is so grateful to find a scientific man who is naively a Christian. Many of the species are avowed, or, at any rate, strongly suspected unbelievers; while others, who make a profession of Christianity, are careful to explain that they hold it with certain reservations, being Christians in general, but not Christians in particular. Sir G. G. Stokes, however, is as orthodox as any conventicle could desire. Perhaps it was for this reason that he was selected to deliver one of the courses of Gifford Lectures. He would be a sort of set-off against the rationalism of Max Müller and the scepticism of Tylor. What other reason, indeed, could have inspired his selection? He has not the slightest reputation as a theologian or philosopher, and one of the leading reviews, in noticing his Gifford Lectures, expresses a mild but decided wonder at his appearing in such a character.

Let the Gifford Lectures, however, pass—for the present. We propose to deal with an earlier effort of Sir G. G. Stokes. Nearly two years ago he delivered a lecture at the Finsbury Polytechnic on the Immortality of the Soul. It was reported in the *Family Churchman*, and reprinted after revision as a twopenny pamphlet, with the first title of "I." This is the only pointed thing about it. The lecture is about "I," or, as Sir G. G. Stokes might say, "All my I."

Sir G. G. Stokes begins by promising to confine himself to the question, "What is it that personal identity depends upon and consists in?" But he does not fulfil the promise. After some jejune remarks upon this question he drops into theology and winds up with a little sermon.

"I cannot pretend that I am able to answer that question myself," says Sir G. G. Stokes. Why then did he not leave it alone? "But I will endeavor," he says, "to place before you some thoughts bearing in that direction which I have found helpful to myself, and which possibly may be of some help to some of you."

Sir G. G. Stokes does not mention David Hume, but that great thinker pointed out, with his habitual force and clearness, that personal identity depends upon memory. Our scientific lecturer, with the theological twist, says it "involves memory," which implies a certain reservation. Yet he abstains from elucidating the point; and as it is the most important one in the discussion, he must be held guilty of short-sightedness or timidity.

Memory involves thought, says Sir G. G. Stokes. This is true; in fact, it is a truism. And what, he asks, does thought depend on? "To a certain extent" he allows that it "depends upon the condition of the brain." But during the present life, at any rate, it depends *absolutely* on the condition of the brain. Look at the head of an idiot, and then at the head of Shakespeare; is not the brain difference the obvious cause of the mental difference? Are there not diseases of the

brain that affect thought in a definite manner? Is not thought excited by stimulants, and deadened or even annihilated by narcotics? Is it not entirely suspended in healthy sleep? Will not a man of genius become an imbecile if his brain softens? Will not a philosopher rave like a drunken fishfag if he suffers from brain inflammation? Is not thought most vigorous when the brain is mature? And is it not weakest in the first and second childishness of youth and old age?

The dependence of thought on the brain is so obvious, it is so demonstrable by the logical methods of difference and concomitant variations, that whoever disputes it, or only allows it "to a certain extent," is bound to assign another definite cause. A *definite* cause, we say; not a fanciful or speculative one, which is perfectly hypothetical.

Sir G. G. Stokes does not do this. He tries to make good his reservation by a negative criticism of "the materialistic hypothesis." He takes the case of a man who, while going up a ladder and speaking, was knocked on the head by a falling brickbat. For two days he was unconscious, and "when he came to, he completed the sentence that he had been speaking when he was struck." Now, at first sight, this seems a strong confirmation of "the materialistic hypothesis." A shock to the brain stopped its action and suspended consciousness. Automatic animal functions went on, but there was no perception, thought, or feeling. When the effects of the shock wore off the brain resumed its action, and began at the very point where it left off. But this last circumstance is seized by Sir G. G. Stokes as "a difficulty." *Some* change must have gone on, he says, during the two days the man lay unconscious; there must have been *some* waste of tissues, *some* change in the brain; yet "there is no trace of this change in the joining together of the thought after the interval of unconsciousness with the thought before."

Our reply is a simple one. In the first place, Sir G. G. Stokes is making much of a single fact, which he has not weighed, in despite of a host of other facts, not in the least questionable, and all pointing in one direction. In the second place, he does not tell us *what* change went on in the man's brain. May it not have been, at least with respect to the cerebrum, quite infinitesimal? In the third place, Sir G. G. Stokes should be aware that all brain changes do not affect consciousness, even in the normal state. Lastly, consciousness depends upon perception; and if all the avenues of sensation were closed, and the alteration of brain tissue were exceedingly slight (as it would be if the brain were not working), it is nothing very extraordinary that the man should resume thought and volition at the point where they ceased.

The second "difficulty" raised, rather than discovered, by Sir G. G. Stokes is this. "I am conscious of a power which I call will," he says, "and when I hold up my hand I can choose whether I shall move it to the right or to the left."

"Now, according to the materialistic hypothesis, everything about me is determined simply by the ponderable molecules which constitute my body acting simply and solely

according to the very same laws according to which matter destitute of life might act. Well then, if we follow up this supposition to its full extent, we are obliged to suppose that, whether I move at this particular moment of time—4.25, on the 30th of March—my hand to the right or to the left, was determined by something inevitable, something which could not have been otherwise, and must have come down, in fact, from my ancestors."

Now Sir G. G. Stokes "confesses" that this seems to him to "fly completely in the face of common sense." And so it does, if by "determined" he means that *somebody* settled the whole business, down to the minutest details, a thousand, a million, or a thousand million years ago. But if "determined" simply means that every phenomenon is *caused* in the philosophical—not the theological or metaphysical—meaning of the word, it does not fly in the face of common sense at all. Little as Sir G. G. Stokes may like it, he *does*—body and brain, thought and feeling, volition and taste—come down from his ancestors. That is the reason why he is an Englishman, a Whig, a bit of a Philistine, an orthodox Christian, and a very indifferent reasoner.

After all, does not this objection come with an ill grace from a Christian Theist? Has Sir G. G. Stokes never read St. Paul? Has he never heard of John Calvin and Martin Luther? Has he never read the Thirty-nine Articles of his own Church? All those authorities teach predestination; which, indeed, logically follows the doctrine of an all-wise and all-powerful God. Yet here is Sir G. G. Stokes, a Church of England man, objecting to the "materialistic hypothesis" on the ground that it makes things "determined."

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

PRAYERS, ANCIENT AND MODERN.

Two allied origins may be assigned for prayer. The primary one is that it has arisen from the supplications of slaves and prisoners of war. The gestures and forms of prayer, especially among Eastern nations, favor this view. The life of early man was a state of constant warfare, and the supplication for life by the vanquished to the victor gave rise to prayer, accompanied often with the offering of presents, as in Homer we read how Adrastus implores

Oh, spare my youth! and for the life I owe
Large gifts of price my father shall bestow.

Prayer and sacrifices in ancient times went together. Nothing for nothing was the motto of the gods or their priests, and for the petitions to be efficacious they must be joined with a substantial inducement. Reasoning from the powers he knew to those he did not know, early man concluded that the best way to obtain his wants was by flattery, gifts, and humble supplication. The attitude of prayer is the attitude of abject submission—the knees bent and the hands joined as if bound or powerless, or, as with Mohammedan prayer, the whole body prostrate on the ground. The Hebrew word for prayer means to bow. In Joshua (vii. 6) we read how that worthy "fell to the earth upon his face before the ark of the Lord." Elijah cast himself down upon the earth and put his hand between his knees (1 Kings xviii. 42). These attitudes may show that the demeanor of worshippers before God was like that of slaves before some potentate.

Another view of prayer, not without countenance in early custom, is that which looks on it as a magical ceremony, a development of the belief in the efficacy of words as charms or spells to obtain the wishes of the utterer. The mantras of the Hindoos are really incantations, and it is even supposed that these spells

can compel the gods or spirits to do what is required. Chants, charms, and incantations are closely allied to prayer, and some of the earliest Egyptian, Chaldean, and Hindu invocations are of this nature. Paul says, "Pray without ceasing." The only people who follow this injunction are the Buddhists, who have arranged prayer-mills worked by wind and water to effect their purpose. Some Hindus approach them closely in uttering so many million times the mystic word Om, or repeating the name of the god, as Ram, Ram, Ram, Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, etc. The belief in certain names being words of power is seen in the Bible.* It appears in the third commandment. The blasphemy of the son of an Israelitish woman, whose father was an Egyptian (Lev. xxiv., 11), was in uttering the sacred name, the penalty of which was death. When Jacob wrestled with the god or angel he demanded his name (Gen. xxii., 29), and so did the father of Samson of the angel who announced the birth of his son. But the wary angel answered, "Why askest thou thus after my name seeing it is secret?" (Judges xiii., 18). The Jews said Jesus wrought his wonders by aid of the Shem Hamphoras—the sacred, ineffable name, engraved on Solomon's seal.† The first gospel tells us that Jesus "cast out spirits with his word" (viii., 16). Jesus said that in his name his disciples should cast out devils, and whatsoever they asked in his name should be done. Paul says, "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow."

Early prayers are all for temporal benefits. The Vedas of the Hindus are full of requests for children, long life and riches. The Chinese, though so long elevated above barbarism, still preserve very matter-of-fact prayers for rain and good harvest, wealth and longevity, and even throughout the rituals of Christendom are found an array of supplications, unaltered in principle from savage times, that the weather may be adjusted to our local needs, that we may have the victory over all our enemies, etc.

Dr. Tylor tells us: "When a Zulu sneezes, and is thus for the moment in close relation to the divine spirits, it is enough for him to mention what he wants ('to wish a wish,' as our own folklore has it), and thus the words 'A cow!' 'Children!' are prayers. The Gold Coast negro would raise his eyes and thus address his god: 'God give me to-day rice and yams, gold and agries; give me slaves, riches and health, and that I may be brisk and swift.'"

The prayer of the Bushmen is pathetic: "O Cagu, are we not your children? Do you not see our hunger? Give us food." Cagu has a wife called Coti. How came he into the world? was asked. Such a question would unsettle any system of theology. The Bushmen replied, "Perhaps with those who brought the sun; only the initiated men of the dance know these things." Cagu, like Jehovah, is a successful and idealised medicine-man and magician.

Brinton, in his *Myths of the New World*, relates how some Algonkiu Indians once, mistaking a missionary for a god, petitioned his mercy and begged him to let the earth yield them corn, the rivers fish, and prevent sickness from slaying or hunger from tormenting them. They backed up their request with the offer of a pipe. The whole of the primitive philosophy of religion is contained in this ridiculous incident. Tobacco was, with its first users, a sort of incense offering to the ghost gods. Prescott, coming with some Indians to a lake they were to cross, saw his companions light their pipes and smoke, by way of invoking the winds to be calm.

* See my article on Rumpelstiltskin in *Freethinker*, April 21, 1889.

† See the *Jewish Life of Christ*.

The Hurons offered a similar prayer with tobacco to a local god, saying: "Oki, thou who livest on this spot, we offer thee tobacco. Help us, save us from shipwreck. Defend us from our enemies. Give us good trade; and bring us safe back to our villages."

When a British officer, who had made himself much feared, died at Tinnevely, the natives deposited brandy and cheroots, which they knew he loved in life, upon his grave to appease his spirit. If the presents failed to secure the desired benefit, the inference drawn was that the spirit was not satisfied and required something further. Hence in dire necessity, the dearest possessions were given up. Many gods were supposed to require their people's only sons to be surrendered to him, but the God of the Christian is the only monster who was unappeased save by the sacrifice of his own only begotten son.

Jacob, who, like the rest of his race, was a good hand at a bargain, made terms with Jehovah in a thoroughly business-like spirit. After setting up a pillar and pouring oil on it, he said: "If God will be with me and will keep me in this way that I will do, and give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God: and this stone which I have set for a pillar shall be God's house: and of all that thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto thee" (Gen. xxviii. 20-22). The adoption of Jehovah as Jacob's God was entirely dependent upon his duly performing his share of the contract.

Sometimes it was quaintly suggested that were the worshipper in the place of the god, *he* would not neglect the interests of his devotee. Thus we read in the Rig-Veda, "Were I Indra, like thee, the sole lord of wealth, the singer of my praises should be rich in cattle." The principle of reciprocity and germ of the so-called golden rule of doing to others as we would they should do to us may be found in many of these ancient Aryan prayers, as in the pious Scotch epitaph:

Here lie I, Martin Elginbrod;
Have mercy on my soul, Lord God,
As I would do, were I Lord God,
And you were Martin Elginbrod.

According to Marshall, the prayers of the Todas are of a very matter-of-fact description. Every man, as he enters his hut at night, turns round and mutters, "May it be well with the male children, the men, the cows, the female calves, and everything," in which last expression the women and children must be included, if they are included at all.*

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

A FREETHINKER AT LARGE.

IV.—AN EVENING WITH THE FABIAN SOCIETY.

THERE are many valid reasons why we Secularists should regard the members of the Fabian Society as men and brothers. True, the Fabians are primarily and necessarily Socialists, and in that respect there is probably a wide divergence of opinion between them and the majority of us. But I have long felt that in the army of progress, which is always marching in one direction, there should be no internecine strife between the various regiments. Socialists are too apt to twit us with infructuous "Bible-banging"; and we, on our part, too often sneer at Socialists as visionary dreamers and schemers. There is no earthly reason why an unkind word should be uttered on either side. The parson is one of the most potent supporters of unjust privilege and social abuses, and the gospel of "contentment" is his favorite prescription for the "lower orders." In fighting the parson we are doing our own chosen work, and at the same time aiding those who seek to bring about some much-needed reforms in our social organism.

But there is a special reason why Secularists should take a friendly interest in the Fabians. These latter are, probably without exception, Freethinkers of the most advanced kind. George Bernard Shaw (a typical Fabian), in his debate on the eight hours question with Mr. Foote, spoke after this manner of speech: "I can only say, for myself, that the debate has been a pleasant one to me, because of the friendly terms on which Mr. Foote and I stand. I even imagine there is a bond between Mr. Foote and myself that may serve a little to explain this. Mr. Foote and I, on a certain subject, the subject of the established religion of this country, entertain the same views." And in this George Bernard Shaw might perhaps have claimed to speak for the society of which he is so prominent and active a member.

Now on December 18 another prominent and active worker, Hubert Bland, read a paper at a public meeting of the Fabian Society in St. James's Hall Restaurant. His subject was "Communism," but the paper promised to be of direct interest to Freethinkers, for the printed syllabus contained a reference to "The Work of Christianity." Therefore I sought the Fabians in their West-end lair, with a view of giving the readers of this journal some account of the proceedings.

The Banqueting Hall, in which the meeting was held, is a spacious and handsome chamber, lavishly decorated in gold and white. There I found some 150 ladies and gentlemen, most of whom were members of the society, patiently waiting for business to commence, and keeping up meantime a lively buzz of cultured conversation. At eight o'clock the domestic affairs of the society were taken in hand and disposed of with commendable alacrity. Then the chairman called upon Mr. Bland to read his paper, which would be followed by questions and discussion.

In his opening sentences Mr. Bland knocked the bottom out of *my* hopes and expectations. He warned his hearers that they need not anticipate any close adherence to the lines of the printed syllabus. He had, indeed, endeavored to evade the duty of framing his portion of that document; but he had been urged to compliance on the ground that "any fool could write three or four lines." He had accordingly written the required outline, but should not consider himself bound by it.

This cynical repudiation of responsibility was very shocking, for it reduced the solemn syllabus of the society to the status of the average program of a club smoking-concert. The only use that I have been able to discern in those fair-seeming sheets is to indicate the "artistes" who may *not* be expected to "appear." Of course, the item of special interest which I, beguiled by the syllabus, looked for in Bland's paper was conspicuous by its absence. A few words there were, indeed, about Christ; but, so far as my memory serves me, reference to "the work of Christianity" there was none.

Nevertheless, the paper was a very interesting one, and I did not at all regret the trouble I had taken to hear it read. Hubert Bland is a clear and forcible writer, with a pretty gift of humor of a somewhat acidulated kind. In giving a summary of the lecture I rely upon the excellent abstract which appeared in *Fabian News*, expanding or curtailing that at my own sweet will.

Instancing the grant of Free Education as a proof of the modern trend towards Communism, the lecturer stated that scarcely any member of Parliament now addresses his constituents without proposing to take something from the rich to give it to the poor. Traces of Communism are found in every form of society, and necessarily, since the most strenuous advocate of private property does not object to public highways. The questions at issue are: (1) what things can and what cannot be communised? (2) what ought and what ought not to be communised? It is often,

* Cited in Sir John Lubbock's *Origin of Civilisation*, p. 384.

though falsely, said that history repeats itself. And it is alleged that prehistoric man was a complete Communist. But the note of that period was almost absolute stagnation, till at length property very slowly replaced kinship as the foundation of the social order. Private property came to stay. It has changed its form, and surely will change again, times without number; but it will remain as a permanent factor of progressive evolution, or, in other words, it is a necessary condition of progress. It is one of those developments, like the upright position of a man, which can never be lost. We infer that it is a permanent factor because it has survived attacks from every side and of every sort during a millennium.

Human individuality has destroyed all attempts at pure communal life because some amount of private property is necessary for its full realisation. The external surroundings of a man are part of himself, and Socialists attack the present régime because it interdicts possession of property to the many in the interests of the few. All forms of private property that foster individuality must be retained, those that restrict it must be destroyed.

Coming to the practical aspect of the subject, the lecturer contended that Anarchist Communism is shipwrecked on the law of rent. The typical Richmond-terraces cannot be occupied in common; each site or field possesses advantages over other sites or fields, and the occupier retains rent for himself unless he pays it to another. Moreover, few men like to work—at least in a regular and systematic fashion; and irregular or intermittent work is fatal to a society dependent on systematic production. Communism plus coercion is possible, but the lecturer thought the game would not be worth the candle.

There are three forms of Communism: communal possession, communal administration, and communal use and enjoyment. Hyde Park and a Board School are communalised in all these ways. The Huddersfield trams are communally owned and administered, but not so used. Certain Crown property is communally owned, but not so administered or enjoyed. Complete communalism is applicable to but few things, such as water, means of transit, theatres, etc. Bread, for example, might be communally produced and distributed; but *filet de veau à la Normand* cannot be so provided. [I may say, in passing, that I am not quite sure as to the particular fish that Bland mentioned; but I have got the French all right.] The second class, things to be both owned and administered communally, includes all industries sufficiently organised to be taken over; and the list will be constantly extending. Under the third category, property to be administered privately, but owned by the community, will probably be included a great part of the land and new unorganised industries. But when all has been communalised that is fit for it, much private property will remain. Although private life will be simpler, and the extremes of luxury and squalor totally unknown, people will still differ in their desires, and therefore in their surroundings. The mean public buildings of to-day will disappear with the palaces of the idle and wealthy. Yet all these changes will avail nothing unless they are outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual grace.

At the conclusion of the paper, questions were invited, but few were forthcoming. In the course of discussion one gentleman told the lecturer that he (Bland) did not understand the meaning of communism, and, amidst some half-repressed merriment, proceeded to explain the genuine article.

At length the present writer ventured to take part in the debate, and of course he made a fool of himself, as he generally does. As an "outsider," he said, he had come prepared to curse the lecturer, but, to his amazement, he remained to bless. He felt that

Bland had completely justified the position of "intelligent Individualism" by his defence of private property as an institution. The lecturer's aim had been deadly true, and his bullet had reached the heart of Communism; but had it not also passed through the vital parts of Socialism in its flight? It appeared to him (the simple-minded G. S.) that Bland had vindicated private property and refuted the logical basis of Socialism.

In replying to this ingenuous criticism, Bland figured as the Machiavelli of Fabianism. Of course, he said, the guileless G. S. had completely misunderstood the tenor and purport of his paper; but this, he added (and here I must flounder in italics), *was precisely the effect which he had intended to produce.* I felt tempted to sing, with the Psalmist, "The proud have digged pits for me," although they had certainly not "fallen into them themselves." On leaving the hall I asked myself—and at the time of going to press I am still pausing for a reply—Why should a keen and subtle dialectician like Hubert Bland deliberately go out of his way to entrap a poor simpleton like me? Is this also one of the "Methods of Fabianism"?
 GEORGE STANDRING.

HOLY SHUFFLING.

ABOUT twenty years ago, when I began to realise the true nature of theology and to feel disgusted with its total want of honesty, I told a friend or two that I considered theology the most corrupting thing in the world. I had been forced to this conclusion by reflecting upon the facts of the case. The Bible, which the clergy held to be God's word, they habitually and of set purpose misinterpreted, twisted, flatly contradicted, in order to make it support their creeds and standards. They start with a set of false assumptions, such as the inspiration and infallibility of the Bible, the correctness of their own standards and the certain damnation, or at least serious loss, of all that differ from them. The chief work of their life is to twist the Bible so as to make it support their standards and babble the jargon of their own particular sects.

If the expositor be a Roman Catholic, he finds in the Bible nothing but his own dogmas and assumptions; if a Protestant, he can find nowhere the slightest support or countenance given in the Bible to a single doctrine the Catholics hold, except those the Protestants also hold. The Calvinist learns from the Bible that only the elect will be saved, and that "God" foreordained whatsoever comes to pass; the Arminians denounce this, and preach the very reverse.

And so you might go through the sects and call their attention to the above painful exhibitions of bigotry, narrow-mindedness, and dishonesty. The sects are in reality sects of squabbling, cantankerous fools, and worse, quarrelling and mutually hating each other because each has embraced a lie which it doggedly holds fast to as the truth.

But their shuffling is best seen in the ways in and by which they bolster up their several dogmas. They have no case, and resort to all sorts of shifts and evasions, suppression of truth, surmises, assumptions, and positive falsehoods to bolster up their own fads and to discredit rival ones. Here before me is a little book entitled *The Old Documents and the New Bible*, by Professor Patterson Smyth, Trinity College, Dublin. The work bears date 1890, and deals with the Old Testament. There are many admissions in it that do a Freethinker's heart good to read, as they fully confirm our repeated allegations *re* the total want of evidence for the Bible and Christianity.

In the preface the author notes, what must be patent to most, that in our grandfathers' days the Bible was much too sacred for criticism; "to admit the possibility of mistakes in its text would have been little

short of heresy." "But old times have changed," he says. Yes, indeed! Where our grandfathers worshipped, even the pious of to-day inquire, investigate, and doubt. Yes, the sons and grandsons of the old blind believers are inquirers, doubters, sceptics. This is progress—towards Secularism. Everyone that uses his reason upon the foundations of his faith is, so far and in that respect, a Sceptic and Secularist.

The author admits that "not all the assaults of scepticism have so shaken the ancient reverence for the scriptures in the minds of Christians at large" as the publication of the Revised Version.

Dr. Smyth refers to the Shapira forgeries in 1883, when the learned world was almost taken in by a clever fellow who tried to palm off pretended ancient Hebrew MSS. upon the critics. The incident shows how extremely easy it must have been in former days to circulate forgeries as true and authentic documents, and how extremely difficult it must be to decide the age of a manuscript.

The doctor says (p. 5), "The Jews have a trick of putting down to Ezra or to Moses every important event in the history of their Bible."

And this fact itself shows how impossible it must be to place rational confidence in them. The Jews are the only possible witnesses in favor of the Old Testament; and this Christian admits that they are totally unworthy of credit! Well, they, it is alleged, wrote the Hebrew Bible. The inference is too plain to be evaded—The book, like its authors, is totally unreliable. Besides, the Jews will assure you that the Hebrew Bible never meant what the Christians allege; and they ought to know. It is plain, therefore, that the use the Christians make of the Old Testament is most ridiculous.

The author speaks of the different readings of the Bible and notes the peculiarity of the Hebrew and kindred languages, that the letters of the Alphabet are all consonants, the vowels being supplied in reading. That in itself is extremely doubtful. Grammarians have never yet decided how to read the Hebrew, whether to supply vowels or to find the vowels in the alphabet—in other words, it is still an unsettled problem whether the Hebrew alphabet consists of consonants only or consonants and vowels. This is a nice predicament to be in regarding this pretended revelation!

The doctor asserts that the context, in almost every case, "will decide the sense and be a sufficient guide to any intelligent reader." That means, if it means anything in particular, that the reader who knows how to read the text knows how to read it—a paltry truism. But the question is, How do you know the correct way of reading it? The Jews, as he says, read their MSS. to-day, without any vowel-marks. Just so. Like shorthand the marks employed have a set, fixed meaning agreed upon by the inventor or the parties using them. The Jews have decided that certain marks (or letters and clusters of letters) shall signify a certain thing; and tradition keeps up the meaning. But, as Dr. Smyth confesses, this gives no certainty in some cases; and he supplies an example, "Israel bowed himself on the bed's head" (Genesis xlvii., 31). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reads it (xi., 21) "on the top of his staff." In this he follows the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. The Hebrew word here is (in English letters) HMTTH. The Jews read into it the following vowels, thus, HaMiTTaH, meaning the bed; the Greek translators read it HaMaTTeH, the staff. Staff and bed are very different things.

It is instructive to note further that the Catholic Testament reads (Hebrew xi., 21), "adored the top of his staff," and that seems the true translation. The Protestants, however, to favor their views, render it, "worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff." But here the word *leaning* is flung in without any sufficient reason; and is one evidence of the dis-

honesty of pious translators, who are anxious, not to find the truth, but to bolster up and defend their dogmas.

Dr. Smyth, though anxious to put the best face possible upon the case, is yet troubled by the difficulty. He says that "the bed," and "the staff" in the above text make equally good sense. Thus it will be seen how mistakes might occur through this method of consonant-writing, and the danger would, of course, be much increased if the old Hebrew manuscripts were written, as they probably were, like the old Greek ones, without any division between the words. For example, if we should write in English Gen. i., 1, "NTHBGNNNGDCRTDTHHVNSNDTHRTH."

Yes, that will give the reader an idea of the perplexities of God's "most sure word of prophecy." The reader who has time may exercise his ingenuity in trying how many senses he can manufacture out of those letters.

—*Liberator*.

JOSEPH SYMES.

(To be concluded.)

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO FREETHINKERS.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

I address you in memory of CHARLES BRADLAUGH. We, the Directors of the Syndicate formed to acquire the Hall of Science, London, are entering into a provisional agreement to purchase that institution, that it may continue a home of Freethought and the centre of the associated Branches of the National Secular Society.

We have examined the balance-sheets of that institution for the last ten years, and are satisfied that the price asked is a moderate one as an ordinary business transaction, apart from the universal wish to maintain a living testimony to the virtues of our dead LEADER.

We desire that all the Branches of the N. S. S. shall join us and be enrolled in our "Book of Life."

We also desire that all who knew and respected Mr. Bradlaugh, though outside his propaganda, shall avail themselves of this opportunity to be enrolled in the above-mentioned book, either by sending donations or by applying for shares.

You will see by the prospectus that no one can hold in one name more than two hundred pounds.

You will see that a sum of about £3,000 will be enough to secure our position and start. And while on this I desire to record the unanimous opinion we all hold of the kindly and liberal manner in which Mr. R. O. Smith, the present leaseholder, has met us.

Of the £3,000 he asks for his position, which holds for 86 years, he agrees that £1,000 of it shall remain payable by instalments, and without any payment of interest beyond what may be paid to the ordinary shareholders; and he joins the Board of Directors, in which we will have the benefit of his long experience, obtained while he conducted the concern with the advice of Mr. Bradlaugh.

To those who are not acquainted with the Hall of Science, I should state that it stands some 50 feet back from the front of the street. The front portion of the premises represents an ordinary dwelling house of 50 years ago. This portion we will be bound to rebuild within ten years, so as to bring it on a par with modern improvements that have been made in adjoining properties.

We propose, however, not to wait the ten years allowed us by the lessee, but to make the improvement as soon as funds will allow. This may require an outlay of several thousand pounds, and will depend on the support we receive from the country. We desire to have reading-room, class-rooms, and club-rooms, where all who are members may meet for intellectual, recreative, and social purposes, with a separate entrance for those coming to lectures. We know that we could not better carry out the aspirations of our late leader than in providing the means

of instruction and amusement. His theory was that you can never improve man's character or condition by mere advice; you must give him the opportunity of cultivating all his faculties up to the point of temperance.

The classes which were founded at the Hall of Science—the high-grade which pupils took at the Government examinations—and the library of over 7,000 volumes which he accumulated amid all the persecution and trouble he passed through, confirms the views we have of perpetuating his memory.

We hope also, in carrying out these views, that there will result a body of men and women capable of representing the Freethought party and combating the superstition that degrades even to this time so large a proportion of mankind. We hope also to provide a meeting place for all members from the provinces on visiting London to meet their fellows, and get what advice may assist them, and compare notes with each other to their mutual advantage.

We do not intend to enter on this desirable project after the manner in which religious bodies generally do—namely, making a start when they have scarce money enough to put in the foundations, and for years after bothering their people to increase their subscriptions. We desire that every one who subscribes for one share shall feel that he has made himself liable to pay twenty shillings and no more, and so on according to the number of shares he subscribes for; and we want a great number of shares subscribed for, because the more there are the longer will be the time in which we will require to call up the whole of the money.

I shall have a copy of this paper sent to the secretary of every Branch of the N. S. S., and I ask him to bring it before his committee on the very first opportunity, so that he can send to our Secretary *pro tem.*, Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C., a statement of the names and number of shares required by his Branch, by the 28th of this month, as we wish to complete our provisional arrangement by the 30th, the anniversary of Charles Bradlaugh's death. If we find the feeling of the party with us we will conclude. If not, I for one shall have to consider if it is worth while helping those who will not help themselves.

I have lived for fifty years, disencumbered of the fears that surrounded my infancy, and I would like to assist in elevating the minds of the youth of my country. But if the fathers and mothers of that youth are careless of the good of their offspring, I must leave them to grow up in the general mental drudgery which has allowed a few to filch from us the land of our country; which in more recent times has deprived the poor of the tithes, which in the old Catholic times went to their support when there were no poor rates—all spoliations, which will be got back when men know their rights, but which rights they will never learn while they are pupils of the churches, who fatten on their labor and their fears.

GEORGE ANDERSON.

Mr. Maden, the Gladstonian candidate for Rossendale, declared himself in favor of Secularists having the same liberty of bequest that Christians have, and also of a repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Mr. Richard Spencer, who put the last question, was received with hooting, but the candidate's answer was straightforward and courteous. We hope he will get in.

"I heard something in your sermon which I never heard in a sermon before," said Archbishop Whately to another church dignitary. "What was it?" asked the gratified man of God. "Oh, I heard the clock strike twice."

A minister in San Diego the other day startled his audience by saying, "I have forgotten my notes, and shall have to trust to providence, but this evening I will come better prepared."

ACID DROPS.

The Bishop of Manchester has made a tardy apology for stating that M. E. Monteil's *Freethinker's Catechism*, which states that God is only a word, was taught in the French public schools. He has discovered his error and acknowledged it; but meantime the falsehood has done its work, being reprinted on the bishop's authority in all parts of the world.

A Christian missionary, writing to the *Hong Kong Telegraph*, says it is the Europeans who prevent the success of the Gospel in China. He affirms that nearly every single European and American in China keeps his concubines and drinks to excess. Yet these are Christians, and the Chinese judge a tree by its fruit.

Another writer says the statement as to single men is a deliberate falsehood, and adds: "People at home, who never go abroad, do not know that when they are thinking of half-starved missionaries wandering about and living in mud hovels, many are in reality enjoying the best things of this life, living on first-class food, under punkahs, lying back in long chairs, quaffing cool drinks, or enjoying a trip up country in a well-furnished house-boat, while the mercantile community are earning a living by the sweat of their brows."

The Russian famine is said to have resulted in the pauperisation of nearly half the empire. Absence of rain in Southern India has already sent foodstuffs up to famine prices, and in many places the people are suffering from want of drinking water. They have the consolation it is all divinely arranged.

In an atrocious case of murder by four soldiers in a Russian barracks, one of the murderers said: "I thought we should never succeed in getting him into the loft; but God helped us." Possibly he believed in supernatural help in answer to a murderer's prayer.

Emboldened by their opposition to law, the Eastbourne Salvationists have grown, if possible, in cheek. When a tradesman came out to ask the band to stop because his wife was ill, the captain said, "Bring out the dear sister, that we may pray for her."

Our only General, having raked in the shekels both from Australia and India, will have a grand display on his homecoming. He will arrive in a special steamer, which will be met by nine Salvationist steamers. He will make his triumphal entry into London on Feb. 13. The subscribers pay. Booth does not believe in "self-denial" for himself.

Peterborough is all agog about a ghost, or a squadron of ghosts, infesting the house of a railway man named Rimes. Unearthly noises are heard by night, and things are knocked about unmercifully. At any rate, such is the report; but we dare say there are several Freethinkers in Peterborough who would be glad to take the haunted house rent free. Very likely the ghost would go off to another house tenanted by believers.

The *St. James's Gazette* recommends the Theosophists to buy the haunted house at Peterborough and put in an illuminated brother or sister as a guardian of the spot. The Mahatma boom having fallen off lately, a new sensation must be rather badly needed.

We condole with our friend Charles Watts. *Secular Thought*, of Toronto, spoils an otherwise excellent number with a diabolical portrait of our colleague, who cannot even say "an enemy hath done this," for it is done by a good friend. The portrait is something like Mr. Watts; it would be exactly like him if his jaw had been dislocated in a bruising match, and his face had been puffed by seven years' fatty degeneration of the heart. Having your portrait printed is one of the terrors of public life.

Why do the heathens rage? Because of rum and missionaries.

Church and Nonconformity are very loud about "Temperance." Yet the English papers print a letter from a South African king, begging our Christian Government to

keep their infernal strong drink out of his dominions. English Christianity, thy name is—well, is it not Hypocrisy?

Why do Christians object to fun? One of them says that a recent lecture by Mr. Foots contained a good deal of fun, and quotes from some dull dictionary-maker the definition of fun as "a low form of merriment." But when you poke fun at Bible stories the "lowness" is in the matter you criticise. Apparently this Christian thinks the story of Balaam's ass high and solemn, and derision of it low and frivolous. But he forgets that tastes differ. Does not the proverb say that one man's meat is another man's poison?

The Rev. John McNeill has left the Presbyterians of Regent-square in a considerable fix, and is starring it with Moody and Sankey at Aberdeen. The *Scotsman* reports one of his good phases, "The blood-curdling thing about God was the time he took." That's the sort of stuff to fetch them. With Moody, Sankey, and McNeill there should be a great revival.

Mr. C. Kegan Paul, the publisher, has published an account of his conversion to Catholicism. Mr. Paul seems always to have been considerably under the influence of Cardinal Newman, and he found Positivism (which has been defined by Dr. Huxley as Catholicism minus Christianity, and by Dr. Bridges as Catholicism plus Science) a preparation for swallowing the trinity, transubstantiation, infallibility, and the liquefaction of the blood of San Genarro.

The title "Reverend" is not secured to the Established clergy by right, as one of them found who tried to prevent the insertion of the title on a Wesleyan minister's tombstone. It was, indeed, "conveyed" from the lawyers about the time when they had to drop the prefix "Sir," borne by such notable parsons as Sir Hugh Evans, Sir Nathaniel, and Sir Topas.

The rector of Castleford (the Rev. J. Simpson) preached a very heartless and silly sermon on the occasion of the Wheldale colliery disaster, which he ascribed to the godlessness of the town. He is reported as saying: "He wondered whether this dreadful calamity involving the sacrifice of five lives would be enough to make the men of Castleford turn from their godless ways; perhaps it would need a catastrophe that would involve all Castleford and bring bereavement into well-nigh every home. He was called to conduct services in one parish where 400 human beings were slain by one fell stroke in a colliery explosion. Castleford did not want such a calamity as this, but if it did not improve it may be the greatest mercy on the part of a merciful God to cover the whole town with the pall of death." What a nice kind of a merciful God the Rev. J. Simpson has. Some Castleford folks don't believe in him, and so he gets angry and kills the wrong people of course.

Francis Reyden, a tramp, is, if not the inventor, the ingenious executor of a pious fake to entrap the generosity of the godly Yorkshire folk sojourning at Harrogate. When he saw a likely "catch" approaching, Francis would kneel down on the pavement, and not too loudly, but just loudly enough, offer up a prayer. For this pious proceeding a worldly policeman arrested him, and an ungodly magistrate sentenced him to prison for seven days. The S. A., who are far more of a nuisance in begging under pretence of religion, ought to do something for Francis Reyden. He would make a capital convert.

There has been a Church of England scandal in Paris. Miss Leigh, otherwise Mrs. Lewis, the wife of the Bishop of Ontario, carries on "Unsectarian Homes," largely subscribed for in England. It appears, however, that there is a discrepancy amounting to some £1,300 in the accounts.

Frederick Storey, the manager of Cook's Theatre, Greenock, who murdered one of the female performers, made the usual edifying ending on the gallows, after confiding in the mercy of God and reciting the Lord's Prayer. No doubt angels were waiting to guide him to glory.

The Rev. Arthur Denny is another clergyman who has got into trouble, charged with indecently assaulting a police constable. One wonders what it is in the profession which makes them prone to such offences.

James Grenwell, an omnibus conductor, when charged with stealing a parcel from Jones Bros., Holloway-road, said an angel had appeared to him in a dream, and told him his sins were forgiven, that he was to tell the magistrate so, and he would say "I forgive thee also." The magistrate, believing he was wrong in his mind, ordered him to come up when called on. James, however, went thieving again, and was soon found attempting to steal a tobacconist's till. No angel appeared the second time, and he has to do three months' hard.

A Birmingham Nonconformist minister, in a recent sermon spoke of "angels half an eternity old." A lot of women of his church want to know to whom he referred.

Wanted (very badly indeed), some knowledge of the present address of the Principals of the firm of Lord, God, Almighty and Co. (unlimited), or any authorised representative of the House. Many creditors wish to know where to present their accounts. The clergy either cannot or will not give any information *re* the firm. Send to office of this paper. N.B.—Large commissions on all sums that can be recovered from the said firm.—*Liberator*.

"As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Cor. xv., 22). Adam being a myth, nobody dies in him, "even so" no Christ is needed to make anybody alive.

We have heard an altogether authentic tale of a very wealthy and pious lady who cautioned a friend not to have anything to do with "Christian science," not because it was a system of quackery and delusion, but because it had the word "science" in its designation. "I confess, dear," she said most earnestly, "I don't like that word 'science.'"—*Boston Investigator*.

The January number of *The Cross Bearer*, a monthly Church magazine, has an imaginary dialogue between a schoolmaster of a British school and an argumentative wife of a working man, who insists on her children having church religion. She says, "What, have them brought up like heathen, with never a prayer nor a catechism, nor a proper minister talking to them!" And when told that religion is left to home influence, she says, "You mean that Joe and I must teach our children the best half of their learning, and you must have all the pay." "Have all the pay" is good in the days of free education. The paper is amusing as illustrating the attitude parsons would like the people to take in order that the men of God may retain their influence.

Balaam's ass showed wisdom in speaking, but supplied a bad precedent to his successors. There has never yet been an ass who saw an angel and kept silence.

The Rev. C. Abbot, preaching on the miracle at Cana in Galilee, says there was a large party there. There is no authority for this in the gospel beyond the record that Jesus, his mother, and disciples were there. But we hope Mr. Abbot is correct, for the blessed gospel does say that when they had well drunk, Jesus made into wine six water-pots containing two or three firkins apiece, and this must have been from 108 to 162 gallons, which should have accommodated a large party even on such a convivial occasion.

"Give us this day our daily bread,"
He prayed at early morn;
And then went out on the exchange
To raise the price of corn.

A new sect of Bible cranks has arisen in Michigan, U.S. They call themselves "The New House of Israel, or the Living Temple of Israelites of the Last Days." The speedy approach of the long-announced J. C. is a belief which they combine with communism in worldly goods.

Says the *Carrier Dove*, a San Francisco Spiritist organ, it is not to be expected that when two friends make a bargain that the first to die shall return after death, that the agreement can always be carried out. The spirit may have something better to do, or circumstances may prevent his finding a means or medium. This is plausible. But to test the Spiritists, we would publicly invite not only our friends but our enemies and all who ever knew us, together with the entire crew of gods, ghosts, angels, devils, mahatmas, and

bogiemen, to put in an appearance when and where they please. Surely all cannot be incapable of doing the thing, if it is to be done at all.

Mr. Felix Adler, of the New York Ethical Culture Society, writes in the *International Journal of Ethics* on the Problem of Unsectarian Moral Instruction. He holds that the teacher need not take up with any school of ethics. Religion says we ought to do right because it is the will of God or for the love of Christ; philosophy says for utilitarian or transcendental reasons, or in obedience to the law of evolution. The teacher, thinks Mr. Adler, need not choose; he is not to explain why we should do right, but to let the young see what is right. We fancy Mr. Adler shows, by wishing morality taught as a dogma, that he had not got beyond the very outskirts of his subject.

Last Sunday, just about 7.30 p.m., as all God's children were at Holy Trinity Church, Harrow Green, Leytonstone, a fire broke out in the church. The old one has not smelt the sweet savor of burnt offerings for a long time, and it is thought he was at the bottom of the business. Fortunately the people did not stay to go to heaven in a fiery way like Elijah, and no one was hurt, though God's house is considerably injured.

One of the delegates at last Sunday's meeting of the Free Speech Defence Committee, formed to fight the question of open-air meetings at Chelsea, stated that a man had been discharged by the Board of Trade for having a copy of the *Freethinker* in his possession. We should be glad to have the full particulars of this case. Such acts of bigotry must not be allowed to pass unchallenged.

The Colensoites of Natal have elected the Rev. W. Aysret as their bishop, but the Archbishop of Canterbury refuses to institute him as he refused to institute Sir G. W. Cox. He doesn't believe the Holy Ghost could settle down comfortably inside a heretic.

The "unco guid" of the Nottingham Town Council will not permit the art museum of the Castle to be inspected on Sunday. Yet they call the Castle Museum "the people's drawing-room." Nice drawing-room—a place they cannot enter on their one day of leisure.

James Parsonson, of Croydon, who seems pious enough for the son of a parson, was accused of indecently assaulting Rose Sylvester, a girl under the age of 16. It is alleged that as she was returning from posting some letters, the prisoner sprang on her, pushed her down, and, after threatening to cut her throat, assaulted her. She was positive as to his identity. When charged Parsonson said, "Do you think I, a member of a Christian church and a father of a family would do such a thing?" It appears that on this very night he was on his way from Park-street Church, where he that evening received the hand of fellowship. The Rev. W. J. Loxton spoke to his respectability and the vicar of Leatherhead wrote in his favor, but he is fully committed for trial.

The dead body of a man was found in Lauriston-place, Edinburgh. From the fact that he had a Roman Catholic Prayer Book in his pocket, it is thought that he was either coming from or going to early Mass, when he dropped dead.

Lady Florence Dixie, who has been somewhat of a sports-woman herself, exposes in the *Westminster Review* "The Horrors of Sport." In their treatment of animals Hindus and Buddhists have always been far more humane than Christians.

The mortality caused by wild animals in India during 1890 was 2,460. God is so impartial he occasionally cares more for tigers and snakes than for human beings.

At St. Mary, Moorfields, a large-sized group, representing the birth in the manger between the ox and the ass, has been on view, and attracted the attention of many. Since Epiphany the figures of the Wise Men from the East have been added. It is just possible that the whole legends arose from representations of this character, in which the new-born child penetrated the re-born sun of the New Year.

"Argus," the writer of "Things in General" in the *Westminster Times*, seems to know nothing in particular. "Argus" has had his myriad eyes drawn to the fact that the Westminster Liberal and Radical Club, "only last month and on a Sunday," permitted their premises to be used for a lecture by a Mr. Johnson for the Westminster Branch of the National Secular Society, on "The Existence of Jesus." "Argus" is indignant, and calls the Nonconformist conscience to revolt at this blasphemy, which leads him to denounce the Club as "a local curse," "a blight upon the Liberalism of Stuart Mill," of all men in the world. "Argus" is perhaps unaware that the accusation of Atheism, which he flings at the Westminster Club, was applied to Stuart Mill when he sat as member for Westminster.

When Charles Bradlaugh lay dying, his brother by birth, but in nothing else, tried to gain a little cheap notoriety by attempting to enter the sick room. He was naturally denied admittance, and he then proceeded to advertise his woes. Well now, this same W. R. Bradlaugh, unless we are very much misinformed, tried his dirty worst to prevent the Bolton Branch of the N. S. S. from having the use of the Spinners' Hall for Freethought lectures. He actually wrote an impudent letter, saying that he would prevent the hall from being so used if it cost the Spinners a hundred pounds. The committee despised his threats, and found his bark a great deal worse than his bite. Our readers will see from this how much real *brotherliness* there was in W. R. Bradlaugh's little comedy at Charles Bradlaugh's deathbed.

Talmage licks creation at tall talk. He calls upon "the armies of heaven to bear down upon the foe," and prays the Almighty to get ready his thunderbolts. This is Talmage's way of refuting "infidelity." But it won't work. The armies of heaven have other business, and thunderbolts are a played-out superstition. What the Almighty should do is to give Talmage more logical power, but the case seems hopeless.

Among the things prohibited by the old New England Puritans was tobacco, but we read of their growing it and drying it in the church loft for sale to the "ungodly Dutch." It would be hard to beat that. What an exquisite blend of godliness and gain!

A little boy, on returning from a visit to the menagerie, was asked by his father what animals he had seen. "Well," he answered, "I saw a lion, and a tiger, and an elephant, and a hyena, and a Polar bear, but I didn't see any cross-eyed bear." "What do you mean by a cross-eyed bear?" asked the father, in great astonishment. "Why," said the boy, "don't you know the bear we sing about in Sunday school—the consecrated cross-eyed bear?" In this case the line of the familiar hymn, "The consecrated cross I'll bear," had been imperfectly caught, and then received from the child the only construction which his limited vocabulary enabled him to give it.

If mind can be followed down to the first instinctive motions of the earliest forms of matter, and is proved to depend on the organism, may it not yet be shown that the first motion that signifies intelligence is as truly a development from the inherent nature of matter as is the growth of the structure? The assumption that there is an eternal distinction between mind and matter, and that it was necessary at some point for a God to step in and conjure the principle of mind into matter, would thus be shown to be false by the proof of the theory that matter has always possessed the principle of determining the actions of matter which we call mind.—*Robert C. Adams.*

HOW TO HELP US.

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

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Jan. 17, Tyne Theatre, Newcastle-on-Tyne, at 7, "Liberty and Law: their Claims and Conflicts."

January 24 and 31, Hall of Science.

Feb. 7, Milton Hall; 14, Leeds; 21 and 28, Hall of Science.

March 6, Mertyr.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—January 17, Milton Hall, London; 24 (afternoon), Wolverhampton; evening, Birmingham; 26, 27, 28 and 29, Sheffield; 31, Birmingham. Feb. 7, Hull; 14, Glasgow; 15, Hamilton; 16, 17, 18 and 19, public debate in Glasgow; 21, Edinburgh; 28, Birmingham. March 7, Birmingham; 14 and 21 (morning and evening) Hall of Science, London; 28, Birmingham. April 4, Manchester; 11 and 17, Birmingham; 25, Sheffield. May 1 and 8 (morning and evening), Hall of Science, London; 15 and 22, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

A. C.—There are now about 12,000 Jesuits, who are probably doing more mischief than any 120,000 other persons living.

JAMES MITCHELL.—Mr. Forder has handed us your letter. We are glad to know you were converted from Christianity by the *Freethinker*, and that you express your gratitude by circulating this journal among your acquaintances. You find many professed Christians only half-believers, and your experience is common in other parts of the country.

S. S. MATTHEWS.—The "Parson's Creed" has for years been one of our tracts. We get a copy sent to us about once a month. Readers are informed that we don't want it.

S. S.—Thanks. See paragraph.

J. H. WATERS.—It has merit, but is hardly up to the mark.

F. THORNETT.—Mr. Stanley Jones acknowledges subscription. The address—Irlan-lane, Flixton, does not find you. Please send full address.

W. S. TAYLOR has succeeded in getting *Bible and Evolution* and the *Student's Darwin* into the Birkenhead Free Library.

REX REGES.—We are not aware that the Romish doctors have ever debated the question, "Has woman a soul?"

J. P. CORDON.—You quite apprehend our meaning. Scientific articles in the *Freethinker* now and then would certainly be useful, but we are not able to pay "eminent authorities" to write them. You forget that the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has plenty of capital. We have not. It is also "respectable," and we are not. You must be satisfied with this journal as we are able to turn it out, or cease taking it.

H. INGLE, 318 York-road, Camden-road, N., sells this journal and all Secular publications.

CABREL.—Canon Shuttleworth is not a "creedless Christian." His distinction is that he has a good deal of human nature and a rooted hatred of intolerance.

VEGETARIAN.—Thanks for your seasonable greeting. We hope to merit your good opinion. Kindly fill in the application form for shares which is sent you by post.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are once more warned that their communications cannot be answered.

T. PAYNE.—Pleased to learn that this journal has helped to free you from superstition.

M. L. B.—Many thanks.

G. STANDING acknowledges the following for the Forder Election Fund:—T. E. Green, 10s. 6d.

F. B.—Scarcely up to the mark.

W. BLYTH.—The sentiment is good and the verse is not without merit, but you need to study the laws of versification. The workmanship of poetry has to be learnt, like that of shoe-making.

T. BIRTLEY.—(1) We hope the Chester-le-Street friends, who are going to drive into Newcastle in brakes to hear Mr. Foote's lecture, will be rewarded. (2) Mohammedans date from Mohammed as well the Christians from Christ. Dating from the birth of Christ, however, was not thought of till the sixth century, it was propagated by Bede in the eighth century, and became legal and popular in the tenth. See Gibbon, chapter xl.

R. NICHOLLS.—Your birthday present of £10 shall be invested "in the Hall of Science scheme in the name of G. W. Foote absolutely" as you desire. Thanks also for your good wishes. Mr. Foote is in good health, though often a little weary.

H. MOORE, newsagent, High-street, Grays, exhibits the *Freethinker* for sale.

F. GOODWIN.—We are obliged for your efforts to promote our circulation. Glad to hear you find it easier to do so since the enlargement.

TRKOLOGOS.—"Kiss the Son" is a Christian mistranslation of Ps. ii. 12. They wanted to find J. C. everywhere. Of the various versions offered in the Revised Version "receive" instructed and "worship in purity," the latter is the better. Other mistranslations with like purpose may be found in Ps. xxii. 16, and Ps. xlv. 8.

H. WARRINGTON.—The person you mention sent us impudent letters and postcards, and was warned that future communications of his would go in the waste-basket.

COGITO.—You are under a misapprehension. Dr. Allinson only advertises *his books*, and he has as much right to do that as Dr. W. B. Richardson or any other popular medical author. His advertisement in our columns is unexceptionable, and we are not going to refuse it (he pays for it, you know) because it offends the susceptibilities of other medical men. For our part, we think it intolerable that a medical Trade Union should be allowed by the law to bar a man from practising on any ground but medical unfitness. Dr. Allinson's case is on all fours with Dr. Allbutt's; yet in the one you see tyranny, and in the other legitimate exclusion. The principle in both cases is sheer despotism. An examining body to issue degrees, as a guarantee of proficiency, may be right enough; but such a body should never be allowed to revoke degrees. All except the proficiency the public can judge for themselves. We thank you for your good wishes, and hope you will see, although you are a physician, that doctorcraft is as bad as priestcraft, and that liberty is good for all classes.

T. R. FOX.—Our sub-editor wrote the paragraph from a newspaper report. We know nothing of the matter personally. If Mr. Salt is not the Secularist candidate at Sunderland, let the Branch officially tell us who is, and we will advocate his claims.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Truthseeker—Lichtfreund—Freidenker—Liberator—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Progressive Thinker—Cosmopolitan—Flaming Sword—Better Way—Echo—Ironclad Age—Liberty—Crossbearer—Open Court—Star—Modern Thought—Newcastle Evening Chronicle—Standard—Castleford Gazette—Bristol Mercury—Cheltenham Mercury—York Evening Press—Bolton Star—Sunday Chronicle—Twentieth Century—Christian Herald—Westminster Times.

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.

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

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

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

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.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Bolton had about four inches of snow in the streets on Sunday, and there was a fresh fall of slushy snow in the evening; but, despite the unfavorable weather, the audiences at Mr. Foote's lectures were the largest the Branch has seen for years. Had the weather been decent the meetings no doubt would have been splendid. As it is the Branch is well satisfied. Six new members were enrolled during the day; a fact that gladdens the heart of Mr. Hampson, the secretary, and his brave wife, who are two of the Branch's main pillars.

Saturday's *Bolton Star* devoted to Mr. Foote a half a column of its "Personal and Social" paragraphs. It concluded by saying, "He is a man not afraid of his convictions, and of such men we would that there were more."

There was a capital sale of Freethought literature at Mr. Foote's lectures, thanks in great part to Mrs. Hampson's two bright little girls who took papers and pamphlets among the audience. Nearly a hundred copies of the *Freethinker* were disposed of, and this should lead to an increase of our circulation in Bolton.

Tyneside friends should muster in strength at Mr. Foote's lecture this evening (Jan. 17) at 7 o'clock in the Tyne Theatre, Newcastle, under the auspices of the Sunday Society. Elijah Copland takes the chair. The subject of Mr. Foote's lecture is "Liberty and Law: their Claims and Conflicts."

The "Weekly Notes and Program" of the Tyneside Sunday Lecture Society gives a capital sketch of Mr. Foote's public career. It is signed "K. H. G.," and is written with candor and impartiality. No attempt is made to gloss over Mr. Foote's heresy. The terms of the following paragraph are too flattering, but we are grateful for the kindly spirit which inspired them:—"Few men can show such a record of energetic and untiring service in the cause of Progress and Freethought; few have been more maligned and misunderstood; and few there are who have had the honor of suffering so much as he for the cause he has espoused. In spite of struggle and hardship and suffering, his courage has never failed him, and we bespeak for this indomitable pioneer a cordial and hearty welcome on our platform."

Last Sunday Mr. Charles Watts lectured at the Hall of Science, London. In the morning he examined General Booth's scheme, which he pronounced to be a social delusion. In the evening he criticised the manifesto recently published in the *Times* by thirty-eight parsons. The leading positions of that document were subjected to a searching analysis. Mr. Watts held the attention of his audience throughout. "Is the Bible in Danger?" may be fairly described as a most useful and interesting lecture.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures this evening (Jan. 17) at Milton Hall on "Secularism: its Relation to Life and Death." North London friends will no doubt take the opportunity to hear him.

Mr. Touzeau Parris, a man of ability and extensive information, occupies the London Hall of Science platform to-day (Jan. 17). His morning subject is "What is Property?" In the evening he discourses on "Incarnation Stories."

Next Thursday evening (Jan. 24) the London Hall of Science platform will be occupied by the Rev. J. Fleming Williams, a member of the London County Council, who will discourse on "The Relation of Christianity to the Working Classes." The chair will be occupied by another member of the County Council, Mr. G. W. Benn. The admission is free. We hope Mr. Williams will have a bumping audience. We also hope there will be an animated but good-tempered discussion.

Mr. A. B. Moss is persevering courageously with his experiment at Deptford. His lecture this evening (Jan. 17) will be on John Stuart Mill. We hope the Deptford friends will help to give him a good audience.

The annual Children's Party at the London Hall of Science will be held on Thursday, Feb. 25. Subscriptions towards the expenses should be sent to the treasurer, Mr. R. Forder. £5 is devoted to this fund out of Mr. George Anderson's new year's cheque.

There is hope for English freedom yet. Henry Loader, who is prosecuted by the police at Newcastle for selling Dr. Allbutt's *Wife's Handbook*, has been tried and not found guilty. Despite an old-fashioned, foolish, and bigoted speech by the Recorder, the jury would not follow his leading. After an absence of two hours and forty minutes they came back to the court "looking warm and tired." "We are pretty equally divided," said the foreman, "and all very positive about our views." Their only difference was about one chapter of the Handbook; the rest of it, apparently, they all considered legitimate.

Loader is to be tried again three months hence. Perhaps the police mean to go on getting him tried until Newcastle howls at them. But we fancy their only hope lies in a packed jury. If that can be managed, Loader will see the inside of a goal; but if it cannot, he will probably get off, and Malthusian prosecutions will no more be heard of on the Tyne-side.

Mr. Foote will meet the Branch and confer with them on this matter before leaving Newcastle. The question is not one of the truth or falsity of Malthusian principles, but of the right to ventilate them. It is a question of liberty or despotism, and Freethinkers can only take one side.

Newcastle Malthusian Defence Fund.—Collection at Eldon Hall Meeting, 14s. 6d.; Mr. Hetherington, 10s.; J. W.

Morpeth, 5s.; Mr. Fletcher, 6d.; A. T. Dipper, 2s.; Peter Weston, 5s.; H. Smith (Farsley), 1s.; Mr. Brough, 1s.; Mr. Wetherell, 2s.; Mr. Respond, 1s.; A. Smith, 1s.; Mr. Herman, 2s. 6d.; James Hay, 1s.; Mr. Hann, 6d.; Mr. Temple, 1s.; Mr. Doods, 1s.; Mr. Every, 1s.; Mr. Thompson, 2s.; Mr. Carr, 1s.; Mr. Loader, 3s. 11d.; Mr. Fraser, 2s.; Mr. Harris, 2s. 6d.; Mr. Hubert Richardson, 10s.; A. T., 1s.; E. P., 1s.; G. J. P., 1s.; O. J. P., 2s.—JOSEPH BROWN, Hon. Sec. to Defence Committee, 86 Durham-street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

The annual dinner of the London Secular Federation is reported in another column. Mr. R. Forder was absent on account of illness. Happily he has recovered. Mr. G. J. Holyoake was also absent. He sent a humorous letter, explaining that he was the victim of a lazy cold that wouldn't go though he was tired of its company. Mr. Watts spoke well, though very briefly. Miss Vance was in special good form. Mr. Wheeler had a marked reception. Messrs. Moss and Parris had their share of the honors.

The President devoted himself to begging, and succeeded in raising the wind to the tune of £24 13s. 6d. Of this amount £11 4s. was paid on the spot as follows:—R. O. Smith, £1 1s.; E. C. Furby, £1 1s.; R. H. Side, £1; Mrs. Bayston, £1; Mrs. G. B. Pearce, 10s. 6d.; R. A. Fincken, 10s.; J. Rowney and family, 10s.; B. Wehrle, 10s. 6d.; Philalethes, 10s.; G. Ward, 10s.; J. Dean (Putney), 10s.; Few Friends, 8s.; T. W. Osborne, 5s.; C. Crawfoot 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Cookney, 5s.; A. Arnsby, 5s.; Miss M. A. Robins, 5s.; H. Hancock, 5s.; J. Albert, 5s.; Mrs. N. Guest, 5s.; Mr. and Mrs. Davis, 2s.; Mr. and Mrs. R. Fox, 4s.; E. J. Turney, 2s. 6d.; E. M. Crowfoot, 2s. 6d.; F. Curtis, 2s. 6d.; Sam Standing, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. M. Lightomber, 2s. 6d.; J. Smith, 2s. 6d.; G. Cheal, 1s.; G. Fakey, 1s.

Freethinkers should never lose an opportunity of defending Secularism in the local press. We notice in the *Bolton Star* a good letter on Secular Education by Thomas Holstead. It is a pointed reply to a local Christian, who asserts that non-religious education trains up children as imps of the Devil.

Dr. J. E. Carpenter will give a series of eight Wednesday evening lectures on "Theology in the Book of Isaiah," at the University Hall, Gordon-square, W.C.

Mr. Sam Standing, having taken up his residence in Manchester, has issued a circular to the Branches in the district, sketching out a scheme of propaganda and organisation. If he can carry out a half of what he proposes he will achieve a great success. We hope Mr. Standing will be cordially supported in this generous effort. His scheme is well worth a trial, and there should be no insuperable difficulty in forming a Lancashire Federation. There is a very lively one on the Tyneside, and it should be even easier to organise one in the populous district between Manchester and Liverpool.

Mr. W. W. Collins sends us from Christchurch, New Zealand (the place we once got a frozen sheep from—but Mr. Collins is anything but a frozen sheep), a pamphlet containing his lecture in reply to the local bishop and the Governor of N. Z. on "Freethought and Education." Mr. Collins has lost none of his eloquence, and he skilfully uses the bishop's admission of "the earnestness of Freethought lecturers, teachers, and politicians." If this paragraph meets our old colleague's eyes, he will know that we wish him good-speed in his noble work.

By twenty-one votes to six the Stockton Town Council have decided to open the Free Library News Rooms from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. on Sundays. Several councillors offered to themselves assist as attendants to obviate Sunday labor.

Civil marriages, performed before the sheriff, are on the increase in Scotland.

The Rev. H. R. Haweis is the authority for the following story. The other day, at a fire, there was a cat with her kittens in one of the rooms. When the fire broke out the cat rushed out of the room, but, remembering her kittens, she ran back, fetched one out and put it down, and went back for another, and got it out safely. Almost exhausted and very much burnt, she returned for the third, but never

came back. She was burnt to death. "The ruling passion strong in death." The cat's instinct induced conduct which, in the case of man, we should extol as the highest heroism.

Dr. Knut Wicksell, one of the conductors of *Fritankaren*, and a representative of Swedish Freethinkers at the Paris International Congress, has received from the French Academy an honorium of 500 francs for the publication of a scientific treatise, "Sur la Population."

The *Expositor* has a brief memoir of Prof. Abraham Kuenen by Canon Cheyne. It is noticeable that the English Professor praises for his sobriety and moderation the Dutch biblical critic, who put the bulk of the Bible over five hundred years later than the time assigned by the orthodox.

The *Westminster Review* contains a trenchant criticism on Mr. W. T. Stead's spook stories, under the title of "The Logic of a Ghost's Advocate" It is contributed by Mr. D. G. Ritchie, author of *Darwinism and Politics*.

Secular Thought (of Toronto), so far from declining, has enlarged to sixteen pages, and its new year number (commencing vol. xi.) appears with a new and improved title-page. We congratulate Mr. J. Spencer Ellis on his efforts to sustain this highly creditable organ.

When the Italian troops took possession of Rome the percentage of illiteracy in the Papal city was 90 per cent. Now it is barely 45. Education is gradually undermining priest-craft in Italy.

If choice must be made between the Agnosticism of Robert Ingersoll and the Theism that enforces the doctrine of the eternal damnation of human souls, or with the Christianity of the vicarious atonement, with the revivalists' cry of "Jesus died and paid it all," the world will not be long in choosing.—*Unity*.

A mass meeting will be held in the largest hall in Chicago on Feb. 28 for the purpose of protesting against the closing of the World's Fair on Sundays. The meeting is being arranged for under the auspices of the American Secular Union.

"Asmodeus" contrives to pitchfork a little blasphemy into his stray notes in the *Cheltenham Mercury*. We seem to recognise the flavor of the brimstone.

The Westminster Branch held its half-yearly general meeting on Sunday. There was a very favorable report and a good balance-sheet. It was decided to hold a New Year's social gathering.

"The *Freethinker*, we are glad to observe, has been enlarged once again, and it bespeaks the growing sympathy for Free-thought in Christian England. The scale of foreign postage, too, has been reduced, and we hope to see the circulation of the *Freethinker* doubled in India, where it is badly wanted."—*Calcutta Cosmopolitan*.

Advertising in the *Freethinker* has been commented upon from the advertiser's point of view. Here is a statement from the purchaser's point of view. "S. S." writes: "I went to a tailor in consequence of seeing his advertisement in the *Freethinker*. I have taken the trouble to refer back, and find I have paid him £48, besides recommending him other customers." Now then, advertisers, hurry up, and don't lose a good thing.

We hope our friends will continue to bombard the news-agents. Those who have not begun to do so should try at once to do us a little service in this direction. The great thing is to get the *Freethinker* fairly before the public. Wherever it is put on sale it finds customers.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

DONATIONS AND COLLECTIONS.—Belfast Branch, donation £1 15s, collection 18s. 10d.; Liverpool Branch, 10s. 6d.; S. A. (Sheerness-on-Sea), 5s.; B. E. Marks, 5s.
BENEVOLENT FUND.—F. Smallman (Manchester), £5; B. E. Marks (Sheerness-on-Sea), 10s.; S. A. (Sheerness-on-Sea) 10s.; Nottingham Branch, 10s.; Spennymoor Branch, 5s.; Heckmondwike Branch, 3s.; W. T. Leekey (London), 2s.; J. Mitchell, 1s.; W. F. Dale, 7d. STANLEY JONES, sec.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

ANNUAL REPORT.

THE past year (1891) opened well for the Federation. Its third annual dinner at the Bridge House Hotel was a distinct success. A large company of ladies and gentlemen assisted at the function, and the subscription forms were filled in to a very gratifying amount.

At the end of January, however, the death of Charles Bradlaugh, the great leader of English Freethought, fell like an eclipse upon the work as well as the spirits of his party. Recovery from such a calamity was necessarily a work of time, and months elapsed before it was possible to proceed with the old energy and resolution.

That lamentable loss entailed another difficulty. The raising of large sums of money for special purposes diminished the ordinary income of Secular organisations, and the Federation has shared in this common disadvantage. Not wishing, however, to postpone its work, the Federation went on with it unhesitatingly. The result is an expenditure beyond income in the balance sheet, and a deficit which will doubtless be covered by increased income during 1892. To remove this deficit as soon as possible, the friends of the Federation are earnestly requested to contribute generously to its funds at the outset of the New Year.

Six Courses of Free Lectures have been organised by the Federation in various parts of London. Some were very successful, and all were encouraging. The twenty-four lectures were delivered by the following: G. W. Foote, 8; G. Standing, 4; A. B. Moss, 2; C. J. Hunt, 2; Touzeau Parris, 2; Stanley Jones, 2; J. M. Robertson, 1; Thornton Smith, 1; R. Forder, 1; H. Snell, 1. All the lecturers gave their services gratuitously, without taking so much as their railway fare.

During the summer the Open-air Lectures were carried on most efficiently. Thanks to a grant of £20 from the N. S. S. Executive, the poorer stations were financially sustained. Several were visited by the President, and the collections taken at his meetings were paid over to the Federation. Miss Vance has continued to carry on the open-air station at the Midland Arches in the Federation's behalf; and Mr. D. Colville, in addition to other kind assistance, presented the Federation with a new lecture-stand, which was lent to the fresh station at Hammersmith.

Several grants have been made to Branches, in some cases affording great relief. During the year, three new Branches (Leyton, Lambeth and North Finchley) have joined, and the number of affiliated Branches is now sixteen.

In April, a large and highly successful children's party was organised by the Federation at the Hall of Science. Special thanks are due to the Committee and other ladies and gentlemen who toiled to give the little ones a long evening's enjoyment.

The Federation's Summer Excursion took place in July. It was highly successful in point of numbers; the boat which left London Bridge for Hampton being, in fact, uncomfortably crowded—a defect which will, if possible, be remedied on any future occasion. But it is an illustration of the soul of good in things evil that the Federation profited to the extent of £13. The excursionists who were close-pressed on the 12th of July may console themselves by reflecting that their discomfort paid for many Freethought lectures to the benighted Christians of London.

Three years ago the Federation raised a special fund and ran two candidates at the School Board elections. Nothing of the kind could be attempted at the recent elections. Nevertheless something has been done. Mr. Moss drew up a list of "Questions for Candidates"; Mr. Foote presented for distribution 20,000 copies of a tract on "Religion in Board Schools," written by himself and Mr. Wheeler; and the Federation vigorously supported the candidature of Mr. Robert Forder in Finsbury. Mr. Forder was nearly elected, and his polling, in comparison with that of another Secular candidate in 1888, was extremely encouraging.

During 1891, as in previous years, the Federation has printed at its own expense a common Lecture List for all the affiliated Branches. This assistance must be continued; and as some of the Branches are very poor, and some only carry on open-air work in the summer, it lies with the wealthier individual Freethinkers of London to provide for the necessary expenses.

Mr. E. Pownceby continues to act as secretary with zeal and ability; and the Federation is indebted to the treasurer, Mr. R. O. Smith, for faithful service and acts of kindness.

From the beginning the work of the Federation has been characterised by the utmost harmony. Its officers and its Council are ready to carry on a more active propaganda of Freethought than ever in 1892. All they require is the financial support of those who are too immersed in business to share the work, but who should contribute, in the way that is open to them, to the success of "the good old cause."

On behalf of the Council,

G. W. FOOTE, *President.*

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

A NEW departure was made in holding the fourth annual dinner of the London Secular Federation at the Hall of Science on Thursday, Jan. 7. There was a large attendance. With the exception that the dinner took an extra long time—possibly from the abundance of courses—we think all were satisfied. The President, Mr. Foote, in his address appealed to the generosity of the richer members of the party to support the work of the Federation. Mr. A. B. Moss responded to the toast of "The London Secular Federation," and Mr. J. M. Wheeler for the Writers and Mr. C. Watts for the Speakers of the party. Miss Vance made a neat speech for "The Ladies," humorously proposed by Mr. Standing, and Mr. Foote eloquently responded to the toast of "The National Secular Society," proposed by Mr. Touzeau Parris, who spoke hopefully of the prospects of the society and the unity of Freethinkers, urging all to support the President. An excellent entertainment was contributed to by Mdme. Saunders, Mdme. Burgwitz, Miss Annie Williams, Mr. A. Guest, Mr. C. Richmond, Mr. H. Walters, and Mr. G. Beresford. Messrs. Holyoake and Forder were unavoidably absent.

J. M. W.

THE SHELLEY CENTENARY.

It has now been definitely decided by a joint Committee of the Shelley Society and the Independent Theatre Society to give a private performance of "The Cenci," in May, 1892.

Every subscriber of one guinea will become, for the year, a member of the Shelley Society, and will thereby be entitled to receive two tickets for reserved seats at the "Cenci" performance (with such additional tickets as circumstances may permit), and a copy of the Society's publications for 1892.

All those who wish to secure the privileges of membership are requested to send in their subscriptions to me not later than Feb. 7. Any further sum which may be offered, so as to augment the Guarantee Fund in case of need, will be welcomed.

(Signed) T. J. WISE.

Hon. Sec. of Shelley Society.

52 Ashley-road, Crouch Hill, London, N.

OBITUARY.

Sir George Biddell Airy, the seventh Astronomer Royal, who died on Jan. 2 at the advanced age of over 90 years, was a confirmed though cautious Freethinker. In his *Notes on the Earlier Hebrew Scriptures* (1876) he attacked the foundations of Bibliolatry. Educated at Cambridge, he distinguished himself at an early age by his love for mathematics, being Senior Wrangler in 1823 and Astronomer Royal from 1836 to 1881, and President of the Royal Society from 1871 to 1873. He wrote much, chiefly upon astronomical subjects.

Died Jan. 3, Wilhelm Fredrich Voss, aged 60. Of German birth, he resided long in England, where his excellent workmanship assured him good positions, until reduced by long years of painful illness. A Democrat and Freethinker by conviction, he passed away quietly and without misgiving. The funeral took place on Saturday, Jan. 9, at Finchley Cemetery, where Mr. J. M. Wheeler read a brief Secular Burial Service.

Modern Thought, of Bombay, records the death of Mr. Edward Behatsek, a distinguished scholar and writer of that city. It says Mr. Behatsek was a Freethinker, and required none of the consolations of Christianity on his death-bed. He has left his fortune to the giving of prizes to poor boys studying in the primary schools of Bombay, irrespective of their caste or creed.

The whole system of sacrifices in the Old Testament is calculated to harden the heart. The butchery of oxen and lambs, the killing of doves, the perpetual destruction of life, the continual shedding of blood—these things, if they have any tendency, tend only to harden the heart of childhood.—*Robert G. Ingersoll.*

THUS SAITH THE LORD.

I'm a God that stands no nonsense!
Saith the Lord.

Ev'ry rival's competition
Will but land him in perdition—
See my book, the first edition,
Saith the Lord.

Look at Satan and his angels,
Saith the Lord;
When I heard the rebels boasting
That to me they'd give a toasting,
I, at once—well, now they're roasting,
Saith the Lord.

Look at Adam in the garden,
Saith the Lord;
When the pippin he did grapple
I induced the blooming apple
To take lodgings in his thrapple
Saith the Lord.

In advance, his race I blasted,
Saith the Lord;
Cursed them all with curse prodigious,
Made them cruel and litigious,
And inclined to be religious;
Saith the Lord.

As regards the meddling tempter,
Saith the Lord;
For abetting Adam's "falling,"
With a curse I knocked him sprawling,
Lopped his legs, and sent him crawling,
Saith the Lord.

Look at Noah's saucy neighbors
Saith the Lord;
Ev'ry parent, son and daughter,
With their flocks, I drowned in water—
'Twas a change from fire and slaughter,
Saith the Lord.

Mrs. Chloride Lot of *Sodium*,
Saith the Lord;
To the city turned to view it;
On the spot I made her rue it—
There she stands a sort of cruet,
Saith the Lord.

Look at Pharaoh's plaguy story,
Saith the Lord;
Why repeat it?—it not new is;
All do know—the tale quite true is—
How I finished him at Suez,
Saith the Lord.

Look at all those brats at Bethel,
Saith the Lord;
Old Elisha's hair was thinner
Than approved each budding sinner—
Both the bears approved the dinner,
Saith the Lord.

Look at Christ, the mad blasphemer,
Saith the Lord;
All my laws seemed merely fiction,
Judged by all his deeds and diction;
Hence his death by crucifixion,
Saith the Lord.

I'm a God that cares for no one!
Saith the Lord;
Since I finished off creation,
I've gone in for recreation,
Bloody wars and desolation,
Fire and sword.

Ev'ry deed that terror raises,
Pain and woe in all their phases,
Winding up with hell and blazes!
Saith the Lord.
Sound his fame!
Writhing wretches! sing his praises!!
Praise his name!!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

BOOK CHAT.

Two years or so before his death Charles Bradlaugh began revising his *Impeachment of the House of Brunswick*. About sixty pages were completed, and the task was then set aside for more pressing obligations. The revised portion and the unrevised remainder are now published in a neat two-shilling volume, with a brief preface by Mrs. Bonner. An index, prepared by Mary Reed, enhances the value of what is, politically, the most characteristic of Charles Bradlaugh's writings.

Swan Sonnenschein and Co. have just issued a second edition, containing several new articles, of *Religious Systems of the World*. It is now a large octavo book of more than eight hundred pages, and such a storehouse of information and criticism as it would be difficult, if not impossible, to match. Some of the articles, those on Protestant sects, for instance, are rather pitchforked under the title; the other articles, however, and they are the great majority, deal with all the chief ancient and modern religions. We are not surprised, therefore, that the first edition was so soon exhausted; and we shall be surprised if a third edition is not called for in the course of a year or two.

Certainly this book is extremely Catholic. Catholics, Protestants, Positivists, and Atheists all sit down together, not in the kingdom of God, but in Messrs. Sonnenschein and Co.'s publishing office. Mr. J. M. Robertson contributes two articles—one on Mithraism, and the other on the Religions of Ancient America; Mrs. Besant writes on Theosophy; and Mr. G. W. Foote expounds the Gospel of Secularism.

Mr. Foote's article is just a little out of its proper place. It is the last but one, and it should have come last. All the world's religions have been spinning cobwebs of imagination, and Secularism which sets them all aside, and looks to our knowledge of this life as our sole guide in it, should close up the procession. "Before me many, after me none."

In one sense the volume will advance Freethought, as the hospitable entertainment of the gods of the empire in the Pantheon at Rome brought them all into discredit. The judicious reader will notice the serene claims to infallible truth of these rival religious systems, and he will begin to suspect them all. According to the exponent of Swedenborgianism, if "the New Church is not a philosophical and spiritual interpretation of man and his surroundings, it is nothing." Mrs. Besant makes the same claim for Theosophy. But the reader cannot take both, and he will probably take neither.

Mrs. Humphrey Ward's new novel, *The History of David Grieve*, will be published simultaneously in London and New York next week. It is understood that, like *Robert Elsmere*, it deals with theological opinions.

Carlyle's niece, who nursed him on his death-bed, and her husband (who is also her cousin) are engaged upon a work dealing with their uncle's life which is designed to correct the impressions created by the manner in which Froude edited his papers.

Wilhelm Strecker has written, and Max Spohr, of Leipzig, has just published, an important work entitled *Welt und Menschheit vom Standpunkt des Materialismus* ("The World and Mankind from the Standpoint of Materialism"); 1892. The veteran Dr. Ludwig Buchner supplies a preface.

Last year was the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of St. Ignatius Loyola, and the Jesuits celebrated it by the publication of a Biography by Father Genelli, which is now translated into English by the Rev. T. Meyrick, and published in New York. As both author and translator are *e societate Jesu*, we suppose it may be considered authoritative.

Old Dr. Erasmus Darwin, the grandfather of Charles Darwin, in the notes to his *Botanic Garden* (1790), throws out an explanation of the Cain and Abel legend. He suggests "Abel" was the name of an hieroglyphic figure representing the age of pasturage, and Cain the name of another hieroglyphic symbol representing the age of agriculture, at which time the uses of iron was discovered. And as the

people who cultivated the earth and built houses would increase in numbers much faster by their greater production of food, they would readily conquer or destroy the people who were sustained by pasturage, which was typified by Cain slaying Abel."

Mr. H. Halliday Sparling, the son-in-law of William Morris, has been engaged in compiling a selection from the writings of good old Robert Owen, to form part of the half-a-crown Social Science Series published by Swan Sonnenschein and Co. This series has been very successful, the early volumes, such as Dr. Schaffle's *Quintessence of Socialism*, Edward Carpenter's *England's Ideal*, and D. G. Ritchie's *Darwinism and Politics*, still selling almost as well as ever.

Mr. Henry George's open letter to the Pope with reference to his last Encyclical is published as a half-crown volume by Sonnenschein under the title of *The Condition of Labor*. It is written with ability and lucidity, though it contains nothing new to those who have read Mr. George's *Progress and Poverty*. We commend it to all who desire an admirable statement of the positions of the Single Tax party. Freethinkers, however, will do well to skip the early pages, where Mr. George talks with wearisome iteration of the "Creator's intentions." Poor God seems to have been misunderstood till Mr. George undertook to explain him. We hope the Almighty is duly sensible of the honor.

A new volume of the shilling Camelot Series (Walter Scott) is Douglas Jerrold's *Handbook of Swindling, and Other Papers*. Readers with a taste for satire and irony will find it capital reading. The Handbook is a gem.

CORRESPONDENCE.

STATEMENT BY MR. ARTHUR HUNT.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

DEAR SIR,—As inquiries are being made regarding me, I will, if you will allow me, endeavor to remove the burden of replying to them from other people's shoulders, and answer them once for all myself. Upwards of four years ago I resigned my position as diplomaed lecturer of the N. S. S. for private reasons, which I then laid before the President. Since then I have taken no part in secular work. A few weeks ago, having certain literary matter in hand, I wrote to a few gentlemen asking whether they would place their platforms at my disposal. I put into the hands of the secretaries of the Nottingham and Camberwell Branches statements explaining the cause of my resignation, after which both Branches offered me engagements, which I accepted.

Since doing so I notice that some people are seeking for further information. As I cannot reply personally to everybody, I wish to say that I adhere to the statements I have already made, and do not desire to add anything to them excepting proofs if necessary.

I have cancelled my engagements, which I made perhaps too hastily. In conclusion, I wish to say that if I lecture again my lectures will be of a literary nature, even if I select religious subjects; and I do not wish it to be understood that, upon those subjects, I shall lecture as the advocate of any sect or body.—Yours truly,

ARTHUR HUNT.

21 Notintone-place, Nottingham, Jan. 5, 1892.

FREETHOUGHT IN THE SERVICE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—For two or three weeks an idea, formed by conversation with several army men, has been in my mind; and that idea took a more practical shape at the L.S.F. dinner from a similar cause.

In the army, navy and Royal Marines are many Freethinkers; but for obvious reasons they are out of touch with each other. An "Atheist" can have no place *as such* in the united service; nor can Secularists, with few exceptions, dare to show themselves. All depends upon the bearing of the superior officers, whether commissioned or non-commissioned. A man who runs amuck of his superiors, from corporal upwards, can have most uncomfortable experiences without his superiors going a single inch beyond the rules of the service. The result is, as a soldier said to me last night at the dinner, and another in the North since Christmas, Freethought has to be a *sub rosa* matter, and it is not advisable to have regimental Branches. Added to this is the necessarily migratory life of the soldier himself through the drafting system.

My idea is to form Army and Navy Sections, worked by retired men of each branch of the service, who would keep themselves well posted in the movements of regiments and ships, and who would be the centre for communications to and from members of the N. S. S., so that introductions and recommendations could be given and Freethinkers find congenial society without having to pump their comrades. A civilian could scarcely do this.

During my nineteen years' volunteer service I have seen considerable of barrack life and know many sergeants and others in the army; but I have no naval experience beyond the Royal Marines. It would not be difficult to find the suggested intermediary and to organise Freethought in the services. All I propose now, however, is that army and navy men should correspond with me at once and make their suggestions, so that I may be in a position to propound a definite and practical scheme to the Annual Conference at Whitsun.

Yours fraternally,
SAM STANDRING,
 Col.-Sergt. 9th Vol. Batt. K.R.R.
 2 Morton-street, C-on-M, Manchester.

PROFANE JOKES.

Willie: "I wish I'd been Adam," Nurse: "Why?"
 Willie: "He never had to be a baby and have a big, strapping woman like you to wash his face."

Brown: "It is said that heaven never made two men alike." Mrs. Brown: "Of course not, or you would never hear of a woman getting married twice."

When the sermon is extremely long,
 The tired and wicked sinner
 Has but a single thought—to wit,
 "Shall I be late for dinner?"

And this is the old fogie who snoozed in church, and when the plate came round murmured, "Scotch hot, waiter, and gin and bitters for the lady."

"Poor woman! have you no husband to help you to earn a living?" "I have a husband so-called, but he is deeply engaged in something else." "Of what nature?" "Trusting in Providence."

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: 7, H. Snell, "Has the Religion of Christ been of Service to the World?"

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, C. J. Hunt, "Materialism and Spiritism." Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7, musical entertainment; 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Antiquity of Man."

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30, debating class, Mr. Love, "Woman and the Bible"; 4, general meeting; 6, tea; 7, entertainment (all members of N. S. S., 6d.; public, 9d.).

Deptford—Lecture Hall, High-street: 7.30, A. B. Os, "The Life and Philosophy of John Stuart Mill"; music and recitals.

Finsbury Park—Rock-street Hall, 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-road: 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Resurrection"; 7, Mrs. Samson will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "The Evolution of the Devil." Admission free. Saturday, at 8, free social concert.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Touzeau Parris, "What is Property?" (free); 6.45, music; 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Incarnation Stories" (3d., 6d., and 1s.). Thursday, at 8, R. v. Fleming Williams, "The Relation of Christianity to the Working Classes."

Lambeth—New Nelson Hall, 24 Lower Marsh: 7.30, Victor Roger, "The Population Question."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, Charles Watts, "Secularism: its Relation to Life and Death."

Tottenham—Lecture Hall (corner of Seven Sisters'-road): 3.30, Lucretius Keen, "The Origin of Man."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, W. H. Smith, "The Stone Age in Britain." Thursday, at 8, open debate.

West London—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon-road (close to Latimer-road Station): Friday, at 8.30, adjourned general meeting.

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter-street: 7, P. R. Pratt (Fabian), "Socialism, the True Remedy for Poverty."

OPEN AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, C. J. Hunt, "God, where art Thou?"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 11, Paper by S. G. Middleton, "Charles Bradlaugh: 1880-1890"; 7, miscellaneous concert.

Chatham Secular Society: 6.30, W. Heaford, "Bruno: Free-thought hero and Martyr."

Cheltenham—29 St. George's-place (late Juvenile Oddfellows' Hall): 7, a meeting.

Derby—41 Copeland-street, Traffic-street: 7, important business meeting.

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: Miss Ada Campbell, 11.30, "The March of the Gods"; 2.30, "Hereditry"; 6.30, "Why I am Not a Theosophist—a Reply to Mrs. Besant."

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden-street: 11, The President, "Principles of Secularism"; 3, philosophy class, "Seeing and Thinking"; 7, Mr. Doeg, "The Humor of Theology."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': Sam Standing, 3, "Jonah and his Whale" (free); 6.30, "St. Paul at Ephesus" (3d. and 6d.).

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, important business meeting. Mr G. W. Foote will be present.

Newcastle Sunday Lecture Society, Tyne Theatre: 7, G. W. Foote, "Law and Liberty: their Claims and Conflicts."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 7, W. Charlesworth, "The Fear of God."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 2.45, reading circle; 7, a meeting.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 3, members quarterly meeting; 5, tea; 7, miscellaneous readings and recitals.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Jan. 17, Hall of Science; 20, Autonomic Club; 24, Leicester.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Jan. 17, 24, Deptford; 31, Camberwell. Feb. 7, Southampton; 14, Manchester; 21, Reading; 28, Deptford. March 6, 13, 20, 27, Deptford.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Jan. 17, morning and evening, Battersea; 24, Lambeth; 31, morning and evening, Finsbury Park. Feb. 7, Lambeth; 21, Westminster. March 6, Southampton; 20, Westminster.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Jan. 17, Ball's Pond; 24, evening, Camberwell; 31, evening, Lambeth. Feb. 7, evening, Westminster; 21, evening, Camberwell. March 6, evening, Westminster; 20, evening, Camberwell. April 3, Southampton.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Jan. 17, Libra Hall; 21, Finsbury Park; 24, Libra Hall. Feb. 14, Battersea; 21 and 28, Libra Hall. March 6 and 13, Libra Hall. April 3, afternoon, Victoria Park; 10, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 17, morning, Mile End Waste; 24, afternoon, Victoria Park.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Jan. 24, Ball's Pond. Feb. 7, Enterprise Hall, Stratford; 14, East London; 21, Portsmouth; 28, Lambeth. March 6, morning, Battersea. May 1, morning, Clerkenwell Green.

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GENERAL OBJECT.

The Society, according to its Rules, has full powers for the most extensive operations that may be possible in the future for the erection and maintenance of Secular Halls in London and in the Provinces.

One of the Society's rules secures that no member shall be eligible as a Director unless he is a member of the National Secular Society.

IMMEDIATE OBJECT.

The purchase of the Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C., and the conversion of the same into a first-class Secular Hall and Institute.

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At present the National Secular Society is paying £250 per year for the use of the large Hall on Sunday morning and evening, and on Thursday evening, with certain other uses of the minor Hall and Committee-room.

From an investigation of the past ten years' working of the Hall of Science the Directors feel confident that, with careful, efficient management, a nett income of £600 per annum would be realised. This would leave a good balance of profit after deducting the rent and five per cent. interest on the purchase money.

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