

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

I sent my soul through the invisible,  
Some letter of that after-life to spell,  
And by-and-bye my soul returned to me,  
And answered—I myself am Heaven and Hell.

—OMAR KHAYYAM.

## IS SPURGEON IN HEAVEN?

WHEN Mrs. Booth died, the wife of the famous "General," the "Army" reported her as "Promoted to Glory from Clacton-on-Sea." It was extremely funny. Clacton-on-Sea is such a prosaic anti-climax after Glory. One was reminded of Sir Horace Gledower Sprat. But the sense of humor is not acute in religious circles.

Mr. Spurgeon frequently gave expression to his dislike and mistrust of the antics of the Salvation Army. He was far from prim himself, but he held that if people were not "won over to Christ" by preaching, it was idle to bait the hook with mere sensationalism. Yet by a strange irony his closest friends, in announcing his death to his flock, actually improved on the extravagance of the Salvationists. Here is a copy of the telegram that was affixed to the rails of the Metropolitan Tabernacle the morning after his decease:—

Mentone, 11.50.

Spurgeon's Tabernacle, London.

Our beloved pastor entered heaven 11.5 Sunday night.

HARRALD.

This Harrald was Mr. Spurgeon's private secretary, but he writes like the private secretary of God Almighty. A leading statesman once said he wished he was as cocksure of anything as Tom Macaulay was cocksure of everything; but what was Macaulay's cocksureness to the cocksureness of Harrald? The gentleman could not have spoken with more assurance if he had been Saint Peter himself, and had opened the gate for Pastor Spurgeon.

We take it that Spurgeon expired at 11.5 on Sunday night. That is the fact. All the rest is conjecture.

How could his soul enter heaven at the very same moment? Is heaven in the atmosphere? He who asserts it is a very bold speculator. Is it out in the ether? If so, where? And how is it our telescopes cannot detect it? If heaven is a place, as it must be if it exists at all, it cannot very well be within the astronomical universe. Now the farthest stars are inconceivably remote. Our sun is more than 90,000,000 miles distant, and Sirius is more than 200,000 times farther off than the sun. There are stars so distant that their light takes more than a thousand years to reach us, and light travels at the rate of nearly two hundred thousand miles per second!

It is difficult to imagine Spurgeon's soul travelling faster than that; and if heaven is somewhere out in the vast void, beyond the sweep of telescopes or the camera, Spurgeon's soul has so far not "entered" that its journey thither is only another thousand years, perhaps, it

will be nearing the pearly gates. *Perhaps*, we say; for heaven may be a million times farther off, and Spurgeon's soul may pull the bell and rouse Saint Peter long after the earth is a frozen ball, and not only the human race but all life has disappeared from its surface. Nay, by the time he arrives, the earth may have gone to pot, and the whole solar system may have vanished from the map of the universe.

What a terrible journey! Is it worth travelling so far to enter the Bible heaven, and sing hymns with the menagerie of the Apocalypse? Besides, a poor soul might lose its way, and dash about the billion-billion-miled universe like a lunatic meteor.

It appears to us, also, that Mr. Harrald and the rest of Spurgeon's friends have forgotten his own teaching. He thoroughly believed in the bodily resurrection of the dead, and an ultimate day of judgment, when body and soul would join together, and share a common fate for eternity. How is this reconcilable with the notion that Spurgeon's soul "entered heaven at 11.5" on Sunday evening, the thirty-first of January, 1892? Is it credible that the good man went to the New Jerusalem, will stay there in perfect felicity until the day of judgment, and will then have to return to this world, join his old body, and stand his trial at the great assize, with the possibility of having to shift his quarters afterwards? Would not this be extremely unjust, nay dreadfully cruel? And even if Spurgeon, as one of the "elect," only left heaven for form's sake at the day of judgment, to go through the farce of a pre-determined trial, would it not be a gratuitous worry to snatch him away from unspeakable bliss to witness the trial of the human species, and the damnation of at least nine-tenths of all that ever breathed?

As a matter of fact, the Christian Church has never been able to make up its mind about the state or position of the soul immediately after death. Only a few weeks ago we saw that Sir G. G. Stokes, unconsciously following in the wake of divines like Archbishop Whately, holds the view that the soul on leaving the body will lie in absolute unconsciousness until the day when it has to wake up and stand in the dock. The controversies on this subject are infinite, and all sorts of ideas have been maintained, but nothing has been authoritatively decided. Mr. Spurgeon's friends have simply cut the Gordian knot; that is, they are only dogmatizing.

Laying all such subtle disputes aside, we should like Mr. Harrald to tell us how he knows that Spurgeon has gone, is going, or ever will go to heaven. What certainty can they have in the matter? Saint Paul himself alluded to the possibility of his being "a castaway." How can an inferior apostle be *sure* of the kingdom of heaven?

Saint Paul taught predestination, and so did Spurgeon. According to this doctrine, God knew beforehand the exact number of human beings that would live on this planet, though Omniscience itself must have been taxed to decide where the anthropoid exactly shaded off into the man. He



also knew the exact number of the elect who would go to heaven, and the exact number of the reprobate who would go to hell. The tally was decided before the spirit of God brooded over the realm of Chaos and old Night. Every child born into the world bears the stamp of his destiny. But the stamp is secret. No one can detect it. Lists of saved and damned are not published. If they were, it would save us a lot of anxiety. Some would say, "I'm all right." Others would say, "I'm in for it; I'll keep cool while I can." But we must all die before we ascertain our fate. We may feel confident of being in the right list, with the rest of the sheep; but confidence is not proof, and impressions are not facts. When we take the great leap we shall know. Until then no man has any certitude; not even the most pious Christian that ever rolled his eyes in prayer to his Maker, or whined out the confession of his contemptible sins. All are in the same perplexity, and Spurgeon was no exception to the rule.

When predestination was really believed, the friends of the greatest saint only *hoped* he had gone to heaven. When they are *sure* of it predestination is dead. Nay, hell itself is extinguished. Spurgeon's friends think he has gone to heaven because they feel he was too good to go to hell. They knew him personally, and it is hard to think that a man whose hand once lay in yours is howling in everlasting fire. Such exceptions prove a new rule. They show that the human heart has outgrown the horrible doctrine of future torment, that the human mind has outgrown foolish creeds, that man is better than his God.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### CHRISTIANITY IN CHINA.\*

Oh wad the power the gittie gie us  
To see oursel as ithers see us,  
It wad frae mony a blunder free us.—BURNS.

THE colossal empire of China has usually been regarded as in the past a little world by itself, unknown to and unaffected by the events of Europe. Yet Christianity is no new thing in China. Apart from the lying legends about St. Thomas having visited that country, there is monumental evidence that Christianity was preached in China before the seventh century.† But it never seems to have attained any real footing. It is more than three hundred years since the Jesuit Father Ricci successfully established missions there, yet although the Catholic Christians are ten times more numerous than Protestants in China, they altogether amount only to about half a million. In regard to the Protestant missions Mr. Scarth, in 1860 (*Twelve Years in China*, p. 17), said that the number of missionaries probably exceeded the number of converts, while Mr. S. Kidd, professor of Chinese at London University, said that the Catholic successes were gained "by pandering to human passions and lusts."

And what has been the upshot of Christianity in China. The missionaries have made themselves and their creed so abhorred that they are continually in danger of outrages from the population, and the nations of Europe may at any moment be involved in war on their account. The virulence of the anti-Christian feeling is shown by the fact that at Kiang Yin on the Yangtze, the mob disinterred the bodies of missionaries which had been buried for two hundred years. When we remember that the Chinese are a peaceful, not easily stirred, people, and that they accord perfect toleration to all

religions, not only to Confucianism and Taoism, but to foreign faiths—as Buddhism, which is almost generally accepted, and to Mohammedanism, although it is far more strongly monotheistic and opposed to idolatry than Catholic Christianity, it is surely worth while inquiring how this has come about, and thanks are due to Mr. Alexander Michie, the traveller, for his contribution on the subject. Mr. Michie calls attention to the following facts.

"In the first place, the recognition of missionaries was forced on China by the treaties made with foreign powers whom China could not resist, and recent occurrences show that those powers from time to time interfere, with effect, for their protection. In what light the missionaries regard such interference is a question of secondary importance. Some we know to be professedly opposed to 'the arm of flesh' being stretched out in their behalf; but when trouble comes upon them there is a loud and pretty unanimous outcry among missionaries for the avenging sword, and considerable impatience is evinced when it is slow in appearing."

"Secondly: Toleration of Christian missionaries, extorted by force from China, placed Christians on a different platform from the other foreign religions, Mohammedanism and Buddhism, to which China of its own motion extended complete toleration. Christianity is therefore inseparably associated with the humiliation of the empire, a calamity which is yet fresh in the memory of the living generation.

"Thirdly: The sole ground on which toleration was claimed for Christianity was that it taught men to be virtuous. Only in the German treaty, made subsequently to the others, was this qualification omitted. The Chinese, however, see that if Christianity teaches virtue it also does many other things not specified in their treaties; and the people, circumstanced as they are—innately suspicious and fearful of change—have some difficulty in recognising in the actual Christianity of real life the innocent disguise which theoretical Christianity was made to wear when presented to them at the point of the bayonet.

"Fourthly: From whatever cause or combination of causes, missionaries of every creed—and they are varied enough—have aroused the detestation of the people of China of all classes."

This last fact is most notable of all. Missionaries pretend that the hostility shown towards them only comes from the mandarins and learned class. This is nonsense. Their works against the Christians would have little effect unless they coincided with the popular disposition. Mr. Michie says the people are always and everywhere ready to rise at a moment's notice. Could a people, who are constitutionally passive, be worked upon in this manner by the artificial infusion from without of feelings which they did not share?

Now what are the causes of this deep-rooted hostility? Race hatred and prejudice may be credited with a large share. But there is something more than that. The attitude of the missionaries themselves is largely responsible for the feelings of enmity. They regard the Chinese as benighted heathen given over to Satan, and whose only salvation lies in becoming even as themselves. Mr. Michie says:

"The missionaries act naturally in laying hold of the excrescences of Chinese superstitions and practices, and applying to them their own criteria, thereupon condemning them as base and damnable; in disparaging Confucius and his works; scoffing at the polytheistic Buddhists, and pouring contempt on the monotheistic Mohammedans, with indiscriminating scorn. When they have once attached an 'ism' to any of these things, its doom is sealed, and Anathema is the only word that remains to be spoken concerning it. The inconvenient morality of the Chinese, when it cannot otherwise be disposed of, is referred, without more ado, to the Father of Imposture. All this may be natural; but the effect of it is no less natural."

Another cause of hostility is the acquaintance of the celestials with the Christian sacred books, which they regard as barbarous and filthy records. The Bible has been circulated throughout literary China, even in quarters where the missionaries could not penetrate. Mr. Michie says:

"It was an unpleasant discovery, after thirty years of work at high pressure, to find that when the harvest was looked for, tares—nay brambles and baleful weeds—instead of wheat had covered the ground. Of the poss. of such

\* *Missionaries in China*, by Alexander Michie (Tientsin). London: E. Stanford.

† *Gibbon, Decline and Fall*, ch. xlvi.



a result the blasphemous uses to which the Tai-ping Rebels turned the Old and New Testaments might have afforded the missionaries some warning. But they seem to have gone on wholly unaware what effect the Bible was producing on the minds of the thousands into whose hands it had been put. They simply did their plain duty and left the consequences to take care of themselves, or, as they prefer to phrase it, the results were in God's hands. The more thoughtful heads—and it required some courage for them to say so—now recognise that the Bible is not a proper book to be indiscriminately read by people quite unprepared for its teachings, and out of sympathy with its spirit. They have seen that the foulest attacks made against Christianity by the Chinese *literati* are loaded to the muzzle with missiles from the Bible, which is a perfect arsenal of weapons to be used against the missionary cause. The seed which is wafted far and wide on the wind cannot be controlled, nor can the soil into which it falls be either selected or tended. The hard things in the Bible which stagger thoughtful youths at home, though familiarised with them from earliest infancy, produce startling effects on the minds of those who have no teacher to explain and no mother to cover them with the gentle authority of her love."

Missionary tracts, Mr. Michie tells us, "are coarsely illustrated by such scenes as Jonah being swallowed by the great fish, and Jael in the act of driving her tent peg through the temples of her sleeping guest." The story of the Incarnation, which lies at the very foundation of Christianity and much else in the Bible, offends the sensitive heathen. Again listen to Mr. Michie.

"It so happens that, impure as the Chinese imagination may be, the whole body of their classical literature does not contain a single passage which needs to be slurred over or explained away, and which may not be read in its full natural sense by youth or maiden. And to people nurtured on a literature so immaculate in these respects there are things in the Bible which are calculated to create a prejudice against its teachings, even in well-disposed minds."

The foundation of Chinese ethics, the support of all their social life, is the sentiment of filial piety. Wong Chin Foo, a Chinese who has lived since his seventeenth year among Christians, in a paper in the *North American Review*, entitled "Why I Am a Heathen,"\* says: "It is our motto 'If we cannot bring up our children to think and do for us when we are old as we did for them when we were young, it is better not to rear them at all.' But the Christian style is to expect their parents to do all for them, and then for the children to abandon the parents as soon as possible." When they hear that in the Bible there are such injunctions as to hate father and mother for the sake of Christ (Luke xiv. 26), and to let the dead bury their dead (Matt. viii. 22), they are astonished that any such creed can claim to be divine. The doctrine of giving up all here for the sake of a promised reward hereafter does not commend itself to the shrewd Chinese. Mr. Serr, in his *China and the Chinese*, vol. ii., chap. x., p. 216, says the common expression made use of with reference to missionaries by these discerning pagans is "Lie-preaching devils." Wong Ching Foo says: "I looked into Presbyterianism, only to retreat shudderingly from a belief in a merciless God who had long foreordained most of the helpless human race to an eternal hell. To preach such a doctrine to intelligent heathen would only raise in their minds doubts as to my sanity, if they did not believe I was lying."

The Chinese are a practical, not an ideal race. They resent seeing their daughters converted by Christian priests to become brides of Christ. They are lacking in piety; they neither appreciate nor understand that holy avidity for the salvation of precious souls which is accompanied with the introduction of opium, whiskey, and rifles. The longing of these Celestials for the sweet bye-and-bye in realms above is not sufficiently strong to make them hold all worldly things but as dust and ashes in the balance. They are apt to judge a tree by its fruits. The Rev. George Smith, M.A. (*Visit to the Consular Cities of China*, p. 54) records that they thus expressed themselves: "Perhaps this doctrine may be

very good, but we wish that you would first try it on the English themselves, for they are wicked men. When this doctrine has made them better, then come and speak to us." Says Wong Chin Foo—"Call us heathen if you will, the Chinese are still superior in social administration and social order. Among 400,000,000 of Chinese there are fewer murders and robberies in a year than there are in New York State." China, moreover, is never at war with petty States and has no national debt. As a nation they are tolerant. For the last thousand years they have made no martyrs to opinion, nor have religious wars disgraced their annals, unless the Taeping rebellion may be so classed, owing to its leader having parodied Christian theology and drawn his inspiration from the Hebrew scriptures. They are content with their own faith, and do not want Western beliefs and customs forced upon them, as Wong Chin Foo says, "at the point of Christian bayonets." This is the great grievance and cause of humiliation; and in the permanent interests of the missionaries themselves it should be made clear that, when they get into trouble with natives, the Western Powers will not think of going to war on their behalf.

J. M. WHEELER.

## FRUITS OF CHRISTIANITY.

(From a Lecture by Henry Frank, at Chickering Hall, New York.)

CHRISTIANITY as such has unfortunately been a hindrance to the social, intellectual, and economic progress of the race. But before I proceed with this discussion, let me remind you that we do not desire, if we could accomplish it, the swift overthrow of organised ecclesiasticism. Why? Because it would be unwise to shatter these places of refuge, for there are thousands and thousands of human beings who cannot live without their mother Church, who sleep upon her bosom as the suckling child sleeps upon its mother's breast, who, nurtured beneath the shadow of her spires and under the fringe of her altars, daily partake of the food which she supplies, without which they would sink into baser depths of degradation. I have said repeatedly, and say again to-night, the Church will vanish when it has ceased to be of advantage to the human race. She must live so long as society and the hunger of the human heart, however false that may be, demand her continued existence. Nevertheless, it is a fact not to be forgotten that the Church, as a body, has been the enemy of all human progress.

To this accusation the only reply of ecclesiastical apologists is, in a word, that Christianity, as it is, and as it has been, is not the exposition of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. They say: "We cannot excuse the Church; we admit she has hoisted tremendous boulders and hurled them upon the path of human progress; we admit she has opposed the scientific development of the ages; we admit that she slew some of the most sacred spirits that ever stood as martyrs devoted to the cause of freedom"; all this these apologists say: "We admit, for we cannot lie, but, if you please, do not look at those blotches on the Church, but look at Jesus, and behold him only!"

For a moment let us study the Church's methods of obstruction. Christian apologists say that every boon the race is heir to has been the gift of Christianity; that wherever the Bible is, wherever there is found a Christian altar, there you will discover the highest intelligence, the most advanced civilisation. I deny it. To support the Christian claim they point to England, to America, to Europe as magnificent illustrations of Christian triumphs. Then let me point to Russia, to Spain, to Italy, to Mexico, and South America as illustrations of the degradation of

\* Reprinted in *Freethinker*, Aug. 28, Sept. 4, 11 and 25, 1887.



Christian civilisation, and the base degree of bigotry to which Christianity can reduce its followers.

"But," say the Protestant apologists, "you refer to Catholic countries—these are not Christian!" What is Christianity? Christianity is but the exponent of a creed, and nothing more. They tell you Christianity is the popular appropriation of the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. I deny it. The teachings of Jesus Christ are not to be heard in any of the Christian churches of the world to-day. From this platform to-night I challenge any minister of the gospel to prove the contrary to me.

What has Christianity accomplished for the ethical advance of the race? When Christianity was ushered into the world, woman, say its advocates, was debased socially, domestically, and ethically? Not until Christianity came, they argue, with its large bosom of love, and took woman to its embraces, did she attain intellectual progress and social freedom. My answer to this is, that even American women have not yet secured the domestic and legal rights which the Roman matron enjoyed under the republic and empire. Nay, but more than this, that plague-spot upon the civilisation of the modern world—that social stigma, that venomous, wriggling viper, which enthralled our domestic institutions and corrodes the very fabric of our civilisation—the stigma of prostitution—was unknown in the ancient heathen world in the proportions which it manifests to-day. You have a German Emperor who stands appalled with the consciousness that there are fifty thousand prostitutes confronting him on his trembling throne; you hear the appalling fact from England that that little isle is covered with sixty thousand of these unfortunate social outcasts, who are not so much to blame as is the social system which creates and degrades them. It is Christian economics, Christian sociology, Christian religion, which permits and encourages this shameful condition.

Once more I challenge the Christian pulpits to give me a single instance where the Christian Church as a body has inaugurated, fostered, and carried forward to successful issue any great moral, social, or economic reform in the history of the world. What has Christianity accomplished for the scientific advancement of the race? The claim is made that Christianity has ever fostered intellectual and moral progress, science, and education. I am compelled to deny this assertion. Christianity only fosters and encourages education so far as education fosters and encourages the Church of Christ, and no further. Christianity has never permitted any education in any of the schools which, for a single hour, questioned the authority of her dogmas or the supremacy of her power. In 1872, Pope Pius IX. published an encyclical letter which had the same effect in the scientific world that the late letter of Pope Leo XIII. had in the economic world. The only difference was that the letter of Pope Leo was more humane, more honest, more considerate of the needs of the race than was the encyclical of Pope Pius IX. In that letter he said: "Let him be anathema who shall say that man can or ought of his own efforts by means of constant progress arrive at last at the possession of all truth and goodness; let him be anathema who says that it may come to pass in the progress of science that the doctrines set forth by the Church may be taken in any other sense than that in which the Church has ever received and yet receives them." And this in the age of Darwin, Tyndall, and Hæckel.

Protestants, however, claim that is the Catholic position—which is not Christian. But the Evangelical Alliance, which is the common representative of the Protestant sects, at the same time emphasised and endorsed the aggressive spirit of the Catholic Church in defiance of the advancement of science.

(To be concluded).

## WAS JOHN STUART MILL A PESSIMIST?

It is a habit among the orthodox to describe advanced Freethinkers as persons holding a cold, barren belief, which some briefly characterise as "the doctrine of despair." The Secularists, however, are prepared for such allegations from the supporters of superstition. What such persons say of their belief Freethinkers are prepared to meet—by argument if necessary, if not by ridicule or by contempt. But when persons who should be our friends use terms of reproach against us, they play into the hands of the enemy and give them a weapon wherewith to smite us. This has been done so often in the past that we have got quite used to it; and yet when a short time ago Mr. John Page Hopps, a Unitarian minister of repute, reproachfully described the great philosopher, John Stuart Mill, as a "Pessimist," I felt constrained to write a few words by way of correction. But Christian editors do not believe in allowing the Freethinker an opportunity of correcting Christian mistakes, and therefore we have to make our views known through the only medium at our disposal, viz., our own Freethought journals.

Now let us ask the question at the head of this article—Was John Stuart Mill a pessimist? Of course, if the eminent philosopher had been a pessimist, there would have been no crime in that. Many extremely able thinkers have held this view of the universe; but what we object to is that the views of a great Freethinker should be misrepresented simply because he was a Freethinker. What is a pessimist? A pessimist is one who believes that nature is radically wrong; that it is hopeless to attempt to extirpate the evil in the universe; that man's wisest course, therefore, is to bear the trials and troubles of life with equanimity—for there is no peace for man but that of the grave. This world is a vale of tears; a world of suffering, to be endured without a resolution to

Take up arms against a siege of troubles,  
And by opposing, end them.

Now, John Stuart Mill was never a pessimist in this sense of the term. True, he did not regard nature in her spontaneous action as in the smallest degree friendly to man. Nature, in fact, paid no regard to any form of animated existence; she mowed down all alike—ruthlessly, remorselessly.

"In sober truth," he says, "nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to one another, are nature's every day performances. Killing—the most criminal act recognised by human laws—nature does once to every being that lives; and in a large proportion of cases, after protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their fellow living creatures" ("Essay on Nature," p. 28).

But though nature has no regard for man—and if there be a God behind nature he is responsible for nature's cruelty—man himself, being a part of nature, is capable of modifying nature's spontaneous course, and by using one law to counteract the influence of another, he may convert what was really a destructive into a beneficial force, and thus what might have produced a painful result is made to produce pleasure.

To demonstrate the pessimistic tendency of John Stuart Mill's philosophy, Christians sometimes refer to the painful incident in the philosopher's life, so truthfully depicted in his *Autobiography*. This crisis in Mill's mental history the philosopher has described in the following interesting lines:—"I was in a dull state of nerves, such as everybody is occasionally liable to; unsusceptible to enjoyment or pleasurable excitement; one of those moods when what is pleasure at other times, becomes insipid or indifferent; the state, I should think, in which converts to Methodism usually are when smitten by their first 'conviction of sin.' In



this frame of mind it occurred to me to put the question directly to myself: 'Suppose that all your objects in life were realised; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to could be completely effected at this very instant, would this be a great joy and happiness to you?' And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered 'No.' At this my heart sank within me; the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means? I seemed to have nothing else to live for" (*Autobiography*, p. 134). The lines from Coleridge's "Dejection" exactly described his mental condition:

A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear;  
A drowsy, stifled, unimpassioned grief  
Which finds no outlet or relief  
In word, or sigh, or tear.

This depressed state of mind did not last very long, and when at last it gave place to a more pleasant and healthful feeling, the result was produced without an appeal to Christian sources of comfort or to supernatural aid. Mill read the story of a poor boy, Marmontel, who, having lost his father, resolved to be to his mother and his brothers all his father had been—indeed, supply the place of all that they had lost. And Mill argued that if a poor boy like Marmontel could find inspiration to work for so worthy a result, why could not he, John Stuart Mill, with larger knowledge and greater powers, work with the same enthusiasm for humanity.

From this moment Mr. Mill had something to work for—a great result to accomplish. And with what unselfish heroism he worked for humanity; writing books for their edification, expounding the principles upon which the liberty and progress of the race depend. Throughout the whole of the works of Mr. Mill I fail to find anything in favor of a pessimistic philosopher; indeed, Mill—like the late George Eliot—appears to have been a meliorist, and his writings breathe a spirit of hope for the ultimate triumph of man over the destructive forces of nature. Though Mill, the philosopher and Freethinker, was decidedly not a pessimist, Jesus, the founder of Christianity, was. He believed that this world was only a place of suffering as a preparation for a better world, where all wrongs would be righted—all sorrow changed to joy. He said, "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted"; but the comfort was to come, not in this world but in the next; when man had no brain with which to feel, and no tears to shed. The fact is the philosophy a man believes in depends very often more upon his temperament than his reason. Poets for instance, as a general rule, reason more through their feelings or emotion than the rational faculty—the brain. And that is why we rarely find a poet who is also a good logician. But in the case of Mr. Mill we have a reasoner, who looked facts in the face, but who nevertheless came to the conclusion that man's highest efforts in this world will produce happiness for him here and now, and pave the way for higher happiness for humanity in all subsequent ages.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Judge (to a very homely old maid)—"Miss, in what year were you born?" Witness—"In the year 1866." Judge—"Before or after Christ?"

Rev. Dr. Primrose—"I hear your husband is dangerously ill. I hope he's prepared if the worst should come?" Mrs. Surface—"I'm happy to say he is. Pa insisted upon his taking out an insurance policy before he married me."

A lady once consulted St. Francis on the lawfulness of using rouge. "Well," said the saint, "some pious men object to it, others see no harm in it, but I hold the middle course, so you may use it on one cheek."

## WANTED: A NEW TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE.

MR. STEAD thinks we need a new translation of the New Testament, rendered into the "vernacular English of to-day." He also thinks it would be one of the "most difficult and delicate of tasks, but one which if well performed would confer a real benefit upon the English-speaking world." In this I quite agree with him, though perhaps in a different sense. If I were, as a friend, giving Christians advice as to the advisability or otherwise of rendering any portion of the Bible into English "as she is spoke," I should certainly give them the advice *Punch* gave many years ago to those about to marry—Don't.

The Bible owes no small measure of its dignity and impressiveness to the archaic style of its diction. Shorn of its obsolete expressions, its "thees" and "thous," its "verily, verily," and "peradventures," etc., and presented in ordinary every-day newspaper English, it will lose much of that dignified character which the present translation confers on it.

As showing how it would look in the modern dress, Mr. Stead wishes it to appear in, I will give a few examples. Should the proposition put forward by the editor of the *Review of Reviews* be taken up by the Christian church, the members of that community are at perfect liberty to use the following contributions free of charge. Perhaps after seeing how it looks, they will not go on with it.

The account of the birth of Christ could be rendered as follows: "Now the birth of Christ happened in the following manner—When his mother Mary was courting Joseph she was noticed to be in an interesting condition. Now Joseph, being a decent sort of fellow and not wishing to show her up, felt inclined to lay low and keep it dark. But while he was thinking it over in bed one night he fell asleep and dreamt that he saw an angel, who told him not to break off the engagement, but to marry her as there was no harm done, because the father of the child was a ghost! So when Joseph awoke, being a great believer in dreams, he made it up with Mary and was eventually married, but the marriage was not consummated till she had given birth to her firstborn, whom they named Jesus" (Matt. i. 18-25).

The following sublime parable would lose much of its impressiveness when put into modern English. I will first give it in the Authorised Version:—"The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened." Unauthorised: "The kingdom of heaven is like some barm which a woman took and put into a peck and a half of flour till it was raised."

Again, the beautiful and striking illustration contained in the following passage would hardly be improved in the "vernacular English of the day":—"No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment and the rent is made worse" (Matt. ix. 16). This holy and awe-inspiring text would lose much of its grandeur translated something like this: "Nobody patches an old pair of trousers with a new piece of cloth, because the new cloth stitched on the hole is apt to tear out some of the old stuff and make the hole bigger." The last state of that particular hole would evidently be worse than the first. Matt. vi. 17 says, "But thou when thou fastest anoint thine head and wash thy face." This important and soul-stirring injunction might read, "When you fast, oil your hair and wash your face." Matt. iv. 10, where Jesus says, "Get thee hence Satan," would look rather too warm rendered "Go to hell, Satan." The passage in Matt. v. 40 could appear, "If any man puts you in the county court for your coat, let him have your overcoat as well."

Many other examples might be given, but these are sufficient to show what the new translation would be like.

H. J.



## THE NATIONAL SECULAR HALL SOCIETY.

THE directors of this Society have arranged to pay Mr. R. O. Smith a deposit of £400 on February 15. The purchase of the Hall of Science, therefore, is no longer a dream. The first serious step is taken, and the directors mean to carry the project to a successful issue. They have themselves given it a generous support. Mr. George Anderson has taken 100 fully paid up shares, and will take more as he finds the Freethought party bestirring itself in its own interest. Mr. R. O. Smith takes 100 shares. Mr. W. H. Reynolds and Mr. T. P. Smith take 50 each, and will take more on the same conditions as Mr. Anderson. Mr. Cooper takes 25, Mr. G. Standing 25, Mr. R. Forder 10, and Mr. G. J. Holyoake 10.

My own shares will be 50. Towards paying for them I have received the following donations:—Mrs. Bussie, £5; Mrs. Donaldson, £10; "G. R.," £10; R. Nicholls, £10; B. Dobell, 10s.; A Friend, per Mr. George Anderson, £2 2s.; per Mr. Forder—T. Breary (S. Africa), £5; Staley-bridge Branch, £1; W. Ling, 2s. 6d.; Friend, 3d.; J. Wright, 1s. Total, £43 5s. 9d. Any donations I receive beyond £50 will be invested in further shares to be held in trust by persons of my selection. I am unable to give money myself, for the duties of the presidential office consume a great deal of my time, which is withdrawn from profitable work, besides involving me in considerable out of pocket expenses, which I cannot charge on any fund. I have made a hard but a wise rule, never to take a penny of the National Secular Society's money while I am President.

It is most desirable that the whole of the next payment (£1,600) should be raised by Midsummer; although, in case of necessity, we have made an alternative arrangement with the vendor. Every Secularist in the kingdom, and especially in London, should if possible take shares, and take them without unnecessary delay. Applications are pouring in daily, and there is certainly no reason for complaint; nevertheless the promoters of this scheme are desirous to see it supported extensively by the rank and file of the Freethought party, and will welcome a multitude of small shareholders.

Several prominent Freethinkers outside the board of directors have taken shares, including Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. Touzeau Parris. Promises of support at an early date have been received from other lecturers.

Prospectuses, with application forms for shares, are being widely circulated. Many persons not connected with Branches, or not even members of the N. S. S., may not have received copies; but they shall have them sent immediately, if they will forward their addresses to Mr. Forder. A postcard is sufficient.

This purchase is not intended to be the last. The Society has wide powers, and the directors hope it will be an agency for multiplying Secular Halls in all parts of the country.

It only remains to add that Mr. R. O. Smith has retired from the board of directors for the present. He will return when the purchase is effected. G. W. FOOTE.

COLONEL INGERSOLL QUASHES DR. BUCKLEY  
(From the New York "Evening Telegram").

[CONCLUDED.]

"THIS awful doctrine, these frightful texts, filled the future with fear and flame. Building on these passages, the orthodox churches have constructed a penitentiary, in which nearly all the sons of men are to be imprisoned and tormented forever, and of this prison God is the keeper. The doors are opened only to receive.

"The doctrine of eternal punishment is the infamy of infamies. As I have often said, the man who believes in eternal torment, in the justice of endless pain, is suffering from at least two diseases—petrification of the heart, and putrifaction of the brain.

## GOD'S PARDONING POWER.

"The next question is whether Christianity has deprived God of the pardoning power.

"The Methodist church and every orthodox church teaches that this life is a period of probation; that there is no chance given for reformation after death; that God gives no opportunity to repent in another world.

"This is the doctrine of the Christian world. If this dogma be true, then God will never release a soul from hell—the pardoning power will never be exercised.

"How happy God will be and how happy all the saved will be, knowing that billions and billions of his children, of their fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, wives, and children, are convicts in the eternal dungeons, and that the words of pardon will never be spoken!

"Yet this is in accordance with the promise contained in the New Testament of happiness here and eternal joy hereafter to those who would desert brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children.

"It seems to me clear that Christianity did not bring 'tidings of great joy,' but that it came with a 'message of eternal grief'—that it did 'fill the future with fear and flame,' that it did make 'God the keeper of an eternal penitentiary,' that the penitentiary 'was destined to be the home of nearly all the sons of men,' and that 'it deprived God of the unpardoning power.'

"Of course you can find passages full of peace in the Bible, others of war—some filled with mercy, and others cruel as the fangs of a wild beast.

"According to the Methodists, God has an eternal prison—an everlasting Siberia. There is to be an eternity of grief, of agony and shame.

## NO IDEA OF INTELLECTUAL LIBERTY.

"What do you think of what the doctor says about the *Telegram* for having published your Christmas sermon?"

"The editor of the *Christian Advocate* has no idea of what intellectual liberty means. He ought to know that a man should not be insulted because another man disagrees with him. What right has Dr. Buckley to disagree with Cardinal Gibbons, and what right has Cardinal Gibbons to disagree with Dr. Buckley? The same right that I have to disagree with them both.

"I do not warn people against reading Catholic or Methodist papers or books. But I do tell them to investigate for themselves—to stand by what they believe to be true, to deny the false, and, above all things, to preserve their mental manhood. The good doctor wants the *Telegram* destroyed—wants all religious people to unite for the purpose of punishing the *Telegram*—because it published something with which the reverend doctor does not agree, or rather that does not agree with the doctor.

"It is too late. That day has faded in the west of the past. The doctor of theology has lost his power. Theological thunder has lost its lightning—it is nothing now but noise, pleasing those who make it and amusing those who hear.

"The *Telegram* has nothing to fear. It is, in the highest sense, a newspaper—wideawake, alive, always on time, good to its friends, fair with its enemies, and true to the public."

## ABUSE PROVES NOTHING.

"What have you to say to the doctor's personal abuse?"

"Nothing. A man may call me a devil, or the devil, or he may say that I am incapable of telling the truth, or that I tell lies, and yet all this proves nothing. My arguments remain unanswered.

"I cannot afford to call Dr. Buckley names. I have good mental manners. The cause I represent (in part) is too great, too sacred, to be stained by an ignorant or a malicious personality.

"I know that men do as they must do with the light they have, and so I say:—More light!"

Professor Drummond says that Socrates went about asking questions, and Jesus Christ went about answering them. But the questions set people thinking, and the answers don't wash. Besides, Jesus Christ knew how to evade questions when he was cornered. He was equal to Socrates then.

The latest new religion is being preached at Princeton, Kentucky, by Mr. Terry. He has made a calculation from the Bible that Christ came to the earth in 1784 and is still here, and that the world will end in October, 1914. He says that people have been living in the dark ages, and the truth has been revealed only by him.

Waggy—"My resources are very low, my dear, just now. I shall have to either give up our pew in the church, or you will have to forego your new winter bonnet." Mrs. Waggy—"Well, one is of no use without the other, so I guess we'd better sacrifice both."



## ACID DROPS.

"Onlooker," in a letter to the *Newcastle Daily Leader*, dealing with the insults to jurymen and witnesses that still take place under the Oaths Act, charged Mr. John Morley with having caused the obnoxious clause to be inserted "against the wish of Mr. Bradlaugh." Thereupon a *Leader* interviewer called on Mr. Morley, who explained that he opposed the introduction of the clause, and that Mr. Bradlaugh carried it in spite of him. So far as our recollection goes this is substantially true, although it should be added that, without inserting the clause in question, Mr. Bradlaugh knew that his Bill would be defeated. It is not true, however, unless our memory is at fault, that Mr. Morley led the minority which voted against the Bill. We think he walked out of the House and did not vote at all.

Mr. Bradlaugh's measure was certainly not an ideal one. It was our painful duty to say so at the time in the *Freethinker*. The Freethought view is that the State should have absolutely no concern with *opinions*, religious or otherwise; and jurors and witnesses should not be required to say publicly that they have no religious belief, nor even that the religious belief they do hold is different from that of their fellow citizens. But it should be remembered, after all, that Mr. Bradlaugh could not hope to abolish the Oath altogether, which is the logical upshot of religious equality. He could only hope to amend the existing practice, and he moved along the line of least resistance. His measure was assuredly a step in advance, and by-and-bye it will doubtless be possible to improve it by making the Affirmation optional, without giving the judges any inquisitorial powers.

Pious Emperor William of Germany looks very much like riding for a fall. Ever since he got rid of Bismarck he has been prancing about on his imperial steed like a riding-master out for a holiday. He relaxes the law against the Social Democrats, and at the same time he tells them that he may have to shoot them down in crowds. Then he patronises the clerical party, and gets a Bill drawn up for stuffing Christianity into Freethinkers' children in the public schools. And all the while Social Democracy is growing. The emperor indeed sees that it must triumph in all the large towns at the next elections. Yet he goes on worrying and insulting the Social Democrats and the Freethinkers as though they could never prove dangerous to his throne.

Blasphemy prosecutions have come to be common in Germany, even against women, who have been sentenced to imprisonment. And this is how the government treats its opponents in the political and social camp. At Magdeburg a Social Democrat named Peus was arrested for treason, his real crime being that his language was not complimentary enough to the Emperor. During the trial his wife was confined and seriously ill. The poor woman begged to see her husband; she offered a high sum as bail, and petitioned, if that were impossible, that he might be brought to the house under escort. But her prayer was not granted, and the poor woman died in her misery. Such is the loving kindness of emperors and priesthoods!

The Boothite chief officers are circulating a paragraph in the papers to the effect that the money spent on ten steamers to go out and welcome the "General" will not be wasted. They intend to give 12 banquets to 20,000 persons at 1s. per head, and hope to realise £1,000 for the hospital at the Isle of Wight for sick Salvation officers. Such is the explanation. It looks far-fetched, and is probably a red herring across the scent of the British public.

Last Sunday afternoon the Eastbourne Salvationists gave up their usual enjoyment. They did not go out into the streets and make a joyful noise unto the Lord. Does this mean that they have thrown up the sponge? Or does it mean that they are waiting for their only "General" to come and lead them to battle?

According to a comic contemporary, which is occasionally serious, the "whole energies" of the Salvationists at Eastbourne "were directed towards goading the spectators to illtreat and otherwise assault them." This is queer on the face of it, but did not the first Salvationists, the early Christians, flock to the magistrates and beg the favor of martyrdom?

As boomer of the new Lantern Gospel and founder of the National Society of Lanternists, Mr. W. T. Stead asks for suggestions for good lantern slides of the Bible. We shall be happy to lend him a series of illustrations which appeared in our own journal, including those for which the editor was prosecuted and imprisoned.

A preacher of 1659, quoted by Mr. Gomme in his presidential address to the Folk Lore Society, said the soul was a great bone. This bone was the *os sacrum*, or sacred bone, because it was supposed to be the seed whence would arise a new body at the resurrection. This was the general belief of Christians during the middle ages, and great indignation was expressed at physicians who dared to hold that the *os sacrum* would decay like other bones.

According to a Dalziel telegram, the "astral body" of Madame Blavatsky has appeared to Henry B. Foulke, of Philadelphia, and designated him as her successor. We believe this is the third or fourth person who has been designated in the same way as the Blavatsky's successor. And the cry is, still they come.

Mrs. Besant told an interviewer that she did not think Madame Blavatsky had appeared in her astral form anywhere. Mr. Foulke was a member of the Theosophical Society, but by no means a prominent one; and while she did not think him capable of wilful deceit, she did think he was a man who might easily be imposed upon. Very likely. There are a good many of that sort in the Theosophical Society.

Mrs. Besant resented most fiercely the imputation that she could be imposed upon, but when it suits her turn she levels the imputation at a rival or opponent. Circumstances alter cases.

The Rev. Ananias Hughes is reported as saying at a Nonconformist Conference at Bradford, that "A good deal of modern Atheism is a sort of providential bonfire burning up a good deal that is untrue." Does this include the story of the Converted Atheist Shoemaker?

Mr. Gladstone speaks of Cardinal Manning as "lifted above the flesh." This is the cant language of religion. Happily the Grand Old Man is far too acute to put it in practice. He is a family man and a man of the world; he likes temperate enjoyment, and is not above drinking a glass of good wine.

The Bishop of Worcester says that Birmingham ought to have a clergyman to every 2,000 inhabitants. At present the proportion is only one to every 4,856.

Even the grave does not close up religious animosity, and a scene ensued at the Lynn borough cemetery, at the burial of a young man, who was a convert from Romanism. The Catholic priest, Father Wriggleworth, prohibited the Rev. Mr. Perry from coming on the ground where the body was to be interred.

The Ritualistic *Church Times* writes strongly in favor of "prayer for the faithful departed," without as much as mentioning the doctrine of purgatory, which is at the very basis of the idea.

The Methodist Rev. Thomas Waugh, lecturing at Gainsborough, took occasion to say that "Bob Ingersoll," as he called the colonel, "had a big following in America—men who had caused sorrow and broken hearts in their families; and if Bob Ingersoll did as he said he would [if he found out his mistake]—walked up and owned he was mistaken—it would not avail him for the wet faces, the sorrowing and broken hearts"—broken, we suppose, at the thought of giving up eternal hell.

The Rev. Stewart Headlam tells the following two stories of prayer—one of a man who publicly prayed thus: "O Lord, we thank thee and we bless thee for the about-to-be-disestablished Church of Ireland"; and of another, engaging in prayer before a roaring Protestant lecturer "took the floor," who prayed, "Be with our lecturer to-night, Lord; he has come a long way, Lord."

Father Barbo caused a hubbub in the Cathedral of Bazas.



Preaching a charity sermon, he took occasion to denounce the Republic. "France can only be saved," he exclaimed, "by the restoration of our Royalty." Thereupon a number of people got up, rebuked the preacher, and left the cathedral. The legal authorities have opened an inquiry, and it is reported that Father Barbe seeks to crawl away from danger by explaining that he was not allowed to finish the sentence. The "royalty" he meant was the royalty of Jesus Christ. Too thin, Father Barbe, too thin.

The Rev. W. F. Chambers, whose conversion to the Roman Catholic faith we announced a little time ago, now says that he took that step in a moment of great mental depression. By permission of the Archbishop of Canterbury he has been re-instated in his living at St. Peter's, Folkestone.

Prof. Crookes' dictum that the Jews may use the electric light on the Sabbath day is not allowed to pass unquestioned. Good Hebraists say that Exodus xxxv. 3 means "Ye shall cause no light to appear in your habitation on the Sabbath day." It is also asserted that Prof. Crookes is wrong in saying there is no combustion, since a very fine film of carbon is consumed. We expect the Jews will consult their convenience without over much regard to Moses in the matter.

The elaborate fuss and outward shows made at funerals is not enough for "A Clergyman," who writes to the *Morning Post* suggesting that our postage stamps should be put in mourning, and calls on the Government to issue a black embossed penny envelope stamp. "A Clergyman" might purchase some dye and put his cats and canaries into mourning, warranted to change to violet, and afterwards to white. Perhaps, after all, "A Clergyman" is only an enthusiastic stamp collector, who has space in his album for another variety.

Here are two incidents from the *Daily News'* report of the terrible fire at the Hotel Royal, New York. A man was seen at a fourth storey window, with the flames close behind him, calmly surveying the crowd below. They called to him to jump for his life, but he shouted down, "Never mind, it will be all right to-morrow," and fell backwards into the flames. A cool customer that! One that the priests could have made very little of. The other incident was this. A fireman mounted a ladder reaching only to the third storey. Standing on the top rung, with his back to the wall, he coaxed a woman in a fourth floor window to put her feet on his shoulders. He then lifted her down in front of him, and carried her safely to the ground amid wild cheering.

That brave, cool, skilful fireman deserves a monument far more than hundreds of famous generals. Think of him with his back against the wall, feet upon the ladder, and shoulders bent forward. Fancy the woman's feet touching him, and the hero's nervous fingers grasping her legs. A single tremor in his frame would have been the death of both, but not a muscle quivered, and savior and saved went down safely. Suppose, however, he had failed and lost his life. If the orthodox creed be true he would very likely have gone from a burning hotel to a burning hell. All his bravery and devotion would not have saved him if his belief was off the straight line that leads to heaven. Bah! It is enough to make one sick.

The extent to which the Irish priests are prepared to go was shown by Dr. Nulty, the Bishop of Meath, who in church declared the office of coroner of West Meath must be held by neither Parnellite nor Protestant, and who, moreover, had elections taken in church to decide on the one Catholic candidate who should be supported.

Mary Ellen Shaw, a widow of Cheadle, North Staffordshire, accuses Thomas Hill, a local preacher and gardener in the employ of the Rev. E. Phillips, of being the father and murderer of her illegitimate child, which she declares he took away a few hours after its birth, and which she never saw afterwards.

The Rev. Mr. Anderson enjoys two livings, being rector of Kemberton and vicar of Sutton Maddick, in the Shifnal district. He is nearly ninety years of age, and for nearly twenty years has lived at a distance away, never visiting his parishes, where his work is done by curates. Godliness with contentment is great gain.

In America, Stephen Girard left an immense fortune to build an orphanage at Philadelphia, into which, by the terms of his will, no minister should enter, and the children should be taught a purely secular education. At present the orphanage has a chaplain, whose salary is paid out of the money left by Girard, and the school is opened with prayers and hymns. Quite recently Lord Gifford left a sum of money for lectures on natural religion, and by the terms of his will prohibited any "reference to or reliance upon any supposed special, exceptional, or so-called miraculous revelation," and already Sir George Stokes has been discoursing on Immortality, and, in direct violation of the terms of the will, basing his main argument on Revelation. Such is Christian liberty of bequest, while Freethinkers may be robbed of money bequeathed to build them a hall wherein to expound their principles.

"Feet Washers" is the name of a new religious sect in that great home of crankery, the United States. They claim to revive that much disputed article, real, original, and only genuine primitive Christianity. They find their instructions in John xiii.—"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." This they say with truth is as clear as any other commandment. They have feet washing once a month, when the women of the fold in meekness wash the feet of the male portion of the church and dry them with their hair—the habit, individually, however, not being restricted to monthly washings.

Famine exists in Finland as well as in Russia, and terrible cold prevails in both countries. The horses are almost all eaten, and no fuel can be fetched from woods. In the Saratow district 896,000 starving people depend on public charity.

The last letter from Emin Pasha says, "The Mussulman party takes advantage of the everlasting disputes between the Christian natives." Quarrels among Christians are perennial. "As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be."

The *Newcastle Daily Leader*, in a spirited article headed "Across the Tweed," points out that Moody and Sankey's big audiences in the Scottish towns are made up of church-goers, and concludes that their influence is "largely confined to the circles that were already religious." "What does strike one about Scotland," the writer says, "is the extraordinary prominence that is still given to religious controversy and religious effort compared with the scant results that come to the surface. They are really no better than other people for all the fuss they make, and the fierceness with which they assail lapses of life and doctrine in their midst. This is the melancholy part of it."

Johnnie McNeill is now free to indulge his eccentricities. He informed an Aberdeen audience that his weight was fifteen stone and a half; so Johnnie is fattening, for he is not a Bradlaugh in bodily any more than in mental stature. Johnnie also rebuked a lady for coughing, adding, "I know your cough by your Peterhead accent." Then he introduced the old wheeze about doing all the coughing during the hymn. Johnnie is cultivating a fine wit—for a preacher.

Behold how history is written! A paragraph appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and has since gone the round of the press, often without acknowledgment, that Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Spurgeon resembled each other in liking a cigar and being teetotallers. Now Mr. Bradlaugh was a teetotaller in the early part of his career, and Mr. Spurgeon was a teetotaller in the later part of his career. Mr. Bradlaugh gave up teetotalism, however, many years before his death, although he drank very moderately, and generally a light wine which would burst the drinker before it intoxicated him.

Mr. Archibald Grove, editor of the *New Review*, and Liberal candidate for North West Ham, has committed a great sin. He has actually delivered a lecture at the Enterprise Working Men's Club. Now this place was some time ago polluted by the presence of Mr. Foote and other Secular lecturers, and a clique of Wesleyan bigots say they will have an explanation before they vote for Mr. Grove. His election, however, is pretty sure, and he will probably take no notice of these petty creatures.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Feb. 14, Gladstone Hall, New Wortley, Leeds, at 11, "Who Wrote the Bible?" 3, "Why I am an Atheist"; 6.45, "The Way to Heaven."

Monday, Feb. 15, Victoria Hall, Pudsey, at 7.30, "Oration on Charles Bradlaugh."

Feb. 21, Hall of Science; 22 and 23, Debate at Bristol with Rev. J. M. Logan; 28, Hall of Science.

March 6, Merthyr; 13, Wolverhampton; 20, Manchester; 21, Warrington; 27, Hall of Science.

April 3, Hall of Science.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—February 14, Glasgow; 15, Hamilton; 16, 17, 18 and 19, public debate in Glasgow; 21, Edinburgh; 28, Birmingham. March 6, Birmingham; 13 and 20 (morning and evening) Hall of Science, London; 27, Birmingham. April 3, Manchester; 10 and 17, Birmingham; 24, 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.

W. CLARKSON.—The gentleman who has one hundred fully paid up shares in the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company and £105 in the Memorial Fund, and who calls upon the Freethought party to support the Hall of Science scheme as the only practical memorial of Charles Bradlaugh, is the same gentleman who so generously presented a fine portrait of Mr. Bradlaugh to the Manchester Secular Hall.

W. SIMONS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

H. PARKER.—Mr. Foote is not likely to go into a debate unprepared.

M. CAPELL, newsagent, 62 Earl-street, Edgware-road, N.W., supplies this journal and other Secular publications.

G. PILLING.—Wesleyans have endowments, but they are not subventioned by the State, except so far as their buildings are exempted from taxation.

OLD BIRD.—Perhaps we have misunderstood you. But, as Lamb says, print settles it. We shall see. Send us the paper you mention. All right.

Horus.—(1) Canon Driver's new volume, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, and Dr. Giles's *Hebrew Records*. (2) The earliest date of writing is still disputed. (3) Giles's *Christian Records*, and *Supernatural Religion*. (4) Classes will be held at the Hall of Science when we get full possession of the premises.

JOSEPH BROWN.—We note your statement that the N.E. Secular Federation has got a guarantee for all the expenses if the N. S. S. Conference should be held at Newcastle. The matter will be decided as soon as possible. That is why the nomination papers are sent out earlier this year.

R. F. F.—Send your kind offer in regard to the Children's Party to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C. Delighted to hear that your mother is one of our recent converts. We reckon one woman as worth two men, at least in this connexion.

G. NAEWIGER.—Pleased to hear such a good report from Hull. MAIA KARMA.—Thanks for the reference, but Mr. Sketchley is no authority on ecclesiastical history.

P. STRZELECKI.—We do not keep bound volumes of the *Freethinker*, though we may do so in future. Mr. Forder might be able to supply you with the numbers you require. Thanks for enclosures.

R. O. SMITH acknowledges on behalf of the London Secular Federation:—W. Littleton, 10s. 6d.

WALTER MACFARLANE (Greenock).—Your letter was received by M. Cilwa, editor of *La Verité Philosophique*, but as you gave no address he cannot communicate with you.

SILESIUS.—Mrs. Honoretta Pratt was cremated September, 1709, and a monument to her is in St. George's burial ground, Uxbridge-road, stating she did this as an example.

J. E. LING.—The report of your visit to Ball's Pond does not surprise us. The place has never been of much use to Freethought, and we note with relief that the Directors of the Company propose to sell the property and wind up. As a site for a Bradlaugh Memorial it is simply absurd. Our impression is that the only way to secure such places for Freethought purposes is to have them in the possession and control of a central body.

J. NICHOLSON.—No apology is needed. We are much pleased with your letter. It is most encouraging to find that an open-air lecture of ours in Victoria Park, eighteen months ago, was the means of leading a man of sixty to Freethought; and encouraging, too, to learn that he feels happier and better for the change.

W. T. COPE.—We fear there is little likelihood of Colonel Ingersoll's lecturing in England.—It is not the best plan, we fancy, to circulate this journal among the clergy. They are pledged. Better convert the laymen.

W. D.—We saw the foolish statement. It is not worth notice.

S. H. ALISON.—Thanks for cuttings.

A. RILEY.—Sorry we have no space for your account of the negro champion's lecture on "Christianity and Labor." His foolish platitudes will do no good to the workers. We are not surprised at your disappointment.

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—Modern Thought—Independent Pulpit—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Standard and Diggers' News—Edinburgh Evening News—Newcastle Leader—Manchester Guardian—Club and Institute Journal—Bradford Observer—Hyde, Marple and Glossop Reporter—Lucifer—Moralist—Retford, Workshop, Isle of Axholme and Gainsborough News—Hull Daily News—Lancashire Evening Post—Manchester Examiner and Times—Church Reformer—Federation Française de la Libre Pensée Bulletin Mensuel—Citizen—New Hampshire Telegram—Open Court—Twentieth Century.

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

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.

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## SUGAR PLUMS.

The *Freethinker* ran out of print last week, and we fear that several regular subscribers were unable to obtain copies. Those who wish to make up their files will probably be able to do so, for there are always some copies returned as unsold by the newsagents. We are printing a still larger edition of this week's number.

Now the hard weather has relented, and the fogs have lightened, and the influenza has abated, it is an excellent opportunity for our friends to push the circulation of the *Freethinker*. A great many might take extra copies and lend or give them to liberal minded acquaintances. Others might induce newsagents to take and expose copies for sale, guaranteeing them against loss on those that remain unsold. As a rule the loss is very trifling if any, for the *Freethinker* generally finds a sale when it is given a chance. Great good is also done by getting newsagents to display a contents-sheet. We shall be happy to send one copy or more of this catching placard to any one who can make use of it.

Mr. Foote had a capital audience at Milton Hall on Sunday evening. Prior to the lecture the Milton Band gave some musical selections that were well appreciated. The lecture itself was listened to with rapt attention, and very warmly applauded. Mr. Robert Forder, who took the chair, made an eloquent appeal on behalf of the Hall of Science scheme; prospectuses were freely distributed, and several persons applied for shares on the spot.

The public debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. J. Moffat Logan will take place in the St. James's Hall, Cumberland-street, Bristol, on Monday and Tuesday, Feb. 22 and 23. Mr. Logan opens on the first night, the question being "Did the belief in the Resurrection of Jesus originate in the knowledge of the fact that he had risen?" Mr. Foote opens on the second night, when the question is, "Did the belief in the Resurrection of Jesus originate in imagination, prophecy, legend, and mythology?" There is to be a charge for admission, and the profits will be given to the Children's Hospital.

No minister of religion can be found to take the chair at this debate. Even the Unitarian minister has declined.



This shows how much a good debate is needed in Bristol. The bigotry of that city wants a good shaking, and Mr. Foote will try to administer the prescription.

The Camberwell Branch held its annual Children's Party last Sunday. About 300 little ones enjoyed themselves thoroughly. There was plenty to eat and drink and a first-rate entertainment, followed by a big distribution of toys.

On the first Sunday in March the Camberwell Branch will hold a social gathering. The tickets are 1s. each, which includes a tea we believe, and the nett proceeds will go in aid of the funds of the London Secular Federation. South London friends should not miss this enjoyable Sunday evening.

The annual Children's Party at the London Hall of Science takes place on Thursday, February 25. We learn that the children are to have a set tea before the games begin. It is thought that they will go well in the running matches with two pounds of cake and bread-and-butter and a quart of tea inside. We are also able to say, as usual, that money is wanted for the expenses. Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., is the honorary treasurer.

Mr. Forder acknowledges the following fresh subscriptions:—B. E. Marks, 5s.; S. A., 5s.; J. Tapp, 1s.; Cabby, 1s. Per W. Cookney: S. Kambell, 2s. 6d.; Baillie, 6d.; G. Burton, 2s.

Mr. H. Rowden has done good service by writing to the *Club and Institute Journal*, pointing to the disabilities under which the N. S. S. labors, and which alone might prevent the Society's Branches from following the suggestion of the *Journal* and establishing clubs.

Tuesday's *Daily Chronicle* contained a review of Mr. Palmer's book on Inspiration. "In respect of many things," the reviewer said, "we live in a transition period, and of no human interest can this be more truly said than of man's theological conceptions. So rapidly are new views taken up on these subjects that the heresy of yesterday is the commonplace of to-day." True, and when it gets commonplace it appears in the newspaper.

In another review the same journal speaks of "Tom Paine's sterling *Rights of Man*," and prophesies that it will outlive tons of Anti-Jacobin poetry. Perhaps so, though the Anti-Jacobin satire was extremely good in its way. But what about the *Age of Reason*? That book sells a lot better than the other.

Mr. Joseph Brown, the honorary secretary of the Newcastle Malthusian Defence Committee, had an interview with Mr. John Morley at the Central Station Hotel. Mr. Morley said he foresaw difficulties in the way of introducing the Loader prosecution in the House of Commons. He would be told that the responsibility lay with the Watch Committee and the Newcastle police. On his return to London, however, he would consult a legal authority on the matter, and then communicate with the local Malthusian committee. For the rest, he held that the public had a perfect right to discuss the population question without the fear of legal proceedings.

The Newcastle Watch Committee instructs its clerk to say that it cannot interfere with the Loader prosecution. Good! It is always well to know who are your enemies. The Malthusian Defence Committee will have great pleasure in fighting the Watch Committee as well as the police.

The North Eastern Secular Federation held its annual meeting at Newcastle on Sunday. There was a good attendance of delegates. Mr. S. M. Peacock, president, who took the chair, was warmly congratulated on his return at the top of the poll in the South Shields School Board elections. The secretary read a capital report of work during the year. Income was £96 5s. 4d. and expenditure £99 2s. 1d. This left a balance on the wrong side, but it was hoped that the well-to-do Freethinkers in the district would give the Federation increased financial support.

Mr. Joseph Brown, the Federation secretary, acknowledges the following subscriptions:—Mr. Gilhepsy, 5s.; Captain Thomson, 5s.; Ebchester Branch, 3s. Mr. Brown will be

delighted to receive further amounts by cheque, post-office order, or registered letter. Nothing will be turned away. Address 86 Durham-street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

The new Derby Branch celebrated Thomas Paine's birthday. Thirty members and friends sat down to tea, after which there were games, toasts, and singing. On Sunday morning last the open-air meeting was unfortunately a scene of Christian rowdism. Local Freethinkers should attend to-day (Feb. 14) and sustain the lecturer.

The Hull Branch held its third annual meeting on Sunday night. There was a good balance on the right side. Twenty-one new members had been enrolled, the outdoor meetings had been very successful, and a larger place had been taken for indoor gatherings. Mr. Naewiger, who was re-elected as secretary, was presented with a purse in recognition of his valuable services. The veteran N. B. Billany was re-elected as president.

The Chatham Branch of the N. S. S., for which we appealed in our last issue, has received: W. L., 2s. 6d.; J. W. Gott, 2s. 6d. A local friend promises £5 when the building is completed. We hope further support will be promptly forthcoming. The Chatham folk desire to open their Hall at Easter, and Mr. Foote intends if possible to take part in the opening ceremony.

Baskerville Hall Fund (Birmingham).—Mr. G. J. Holyoake has received the following: Thomas Allsop, further subscription, £5; Thomas Hayes, £1; W. C. Dorking, £1; M. Derome, £1. Mr. Holyoake has also received £1 from Mr. Leslie Stephen for the Liberty of Bequest Fund.

The Ulster Branch sends us a copy of its annual report. It contains a good record of work. The Branch has shifted into Crown Chambers Hall, which is centrally situated, and comfortably seated for 200 people. The meetings there are well attended. During the year the Branch has sold 3,968 papers, pamphlets and books, as against 2,870 in the previous year. The circulation of the *Freethinker* is stated to be increasing in Belfast. We may add that the balance-sheet is a healthy document, showing an income of £83 10s., and a balance of nearly £4 on the right side.

The Ulster Branch would be glad to hear from any Freethinkers in the province. Letters should be addressed to W. M. Knox, 13 Shandon-street, Belfast. A copy of the report will be forwarded gratis.

The *Arena*, of Boston, gives as frontispiece to its February number a portrait of Herbert Spencer. It is accompanied by a survey of the philosopher's life and work by Mr. W. H. Hudson, for many years Mr. Spencer's private secretary.

Sir Edwin Arnold was asked by a New York acquaintance the other day if missionaries of the Christian religion were making much impression on the Buddhists of India. He replied, with a laugh, that they were making about as much impression as if anyone should attempt to perfume the ocean by pouring cologne water into it.

Colonel Ingersoll, in his recent Chicago lecture, said: "In this city we are going to have the greatest fair ever witnessed by mortal men. A fair worthy of Chicago—that is saying enough; a fair that will represent not only your progressive spirit, your great attainments, but there is to be a fair worthy of this great republic. And I want that fair open to every human being that comes here. I want that fair open every day in the week. I want it open on Sunday. I have no objection to everybody going to church who wishes to, but I do not wish them to go to church for the same reason that the man who went home about four o'clock in the morning. His wife said to him: 'John, what makes you come home this time of night?' He replied: 'Mary, to be honest with you, every other place is shut up.'"

Higher criticism, says Henry McDonald in the *Twentieth Century*, is that method by which the better educated class of Christians apply common sense principles to elucidate the tangled skein of contradictions in the Christian scriptures.

Miss Alice M. B. James writes an excellent letter in the *Literary World* on The Shelley Centenary, and claims that



outsiders from the Shelley Society should have an opportunity of participating in doing honor, on Aug. 4, to one whom they recognise as

a portion of the loveliness

Which once he made more lovely.

We believe that something will be done in this direction, and that Freethinkers will unite in celebrating the centenary of this great poet of progress.

Freethought will soon be agitated in Norway. A year ago missionary A. E. Jenson left Christiania with a recommendation in his inside pocket. It was given by one of the foremost clergymen in Christiania, and stated that Mr. Jenson was very pious, a great Evangelist and infidel-smasher, and advised all clergymen to procure his assistance. Since he left Christiania Mr. Jenson has visited Germany and Denmark, and at a visit to the Stockholm Freethinkers he found he had lost his Christianity. He has now returned to Norway and will there work for Freethought.

*Lucifer, the Light Bearer*, an American Anarchist and Freethought organ, has removed its office from Valley Falls to Topeka, Kansas. It appears with a new heading.

*The Moralist*, published at Barre, Massachusetts, is a monthly paper edited by Ella E. Gibson, and devoted to the interests of the Brotherhood of Moralists. The eleventh number is now before us. We are glad to see that the gallant editress is one of the legatees in the will of Photius Fisk, and we hope the legacy will help her to keep the *Moralist* flag flying. It is pleasant to find our own articles appreciated in America. The *Moralist* reprints one of our articles, and is flattering enough to say that another on "God in Japan" is "worth its weight in gold"; indeed, it says that "the *Freethinker* is a grand journal, it has a grand editor, and its contributors are among the grandest on our globe." On the strength of this eulogy we think of wearing stand-up collars.

In Wisconsin, Oregon and Washington legal decisions have declared that the Bible is a sectarian book, not to be used in public schools. Other States should go and do likewise.

Paine's birthday has been celebrated with extra *eclat* in America this year. In New York Col. Ingersoll and M. D. Conway were announced to speak at Chickering Hall, and the latter gentleman also at the German Masonic Hall. At Paine Hall, Boston, meetings were held morning, afternoon, and evening. Among the speakers were Messrs. Wakeman, Remsburg and Washburn, and Miss Susan H. Wixon. At San Francisco a convention of the California Freethinkers was held.

Several English medical journals have recently called attention to a fact, sustained by common observation, that the young women of the present day are better developed physically, taller, plumper, stronger, and healthier than the young women of fifty, one hundred, one hundred and fifty, or two hundred years ago, and that in this continuous and perceptible improvement of condition and aspect there are no steps backward. This, the journals say, is the result of improved health, the result of a more scientific mode of life, better hygienic conditions, larger latitude in outdoor exercise, better nutrition, better physical culture, and softening and equalising of the climate. And we ourselves will comment that the means by which we have obtained this "more scientific mode of life, better hygienic conditions," more "exercise," and better "nutrition and physical culture" has been the dethronement of Christianity by science. It has been the displacement of the priest by the investigator and the teacher. It has been the diversion of attention from the supernatural to the natural. It has been the neglect of another world and attention to this.—*Truthseeker*

The Spanish Freethinkers are taking steps to prepare for the International Congress to be held at Madrid this year. They state their ability to offer proof of the immense progress made by Freethought in Spain. "Yesterday," says their manifesto in *Las Dominicales del Libre Pensamiento*, "ours was the country of intolerance and theocracy; we are to-day the land of tolerance and democracy." They invite Freethinkers of all nations, with a special invitation to Americans. Communications relative to the Congress should be addressed to M. Lozano, office of *Las Dominicales*, Madrid.

## THE ENDOWMENT OF INQUIRY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The resolution of the Executive of the National Secular Society, appearing in the *Freethinker* of January 10, shows that something is not understood. That resolution says the Bill which I have proposed for the Legalisation of Bequests for the sustentation of Inquiry and Discussion "does not in any way provide for the requirements of the National Secular Society." Is that so? Every National Secular Society that I address puts on its placards "We seek for Truth." Does not that mean inquiry? If so is it not useful to have money to build, or sustain, free inquiry halls, support lecturers who expound the conditions and results of inquiry, and to provide the cost of issuing literature advocating and vindicating inquiry? Would not endowment for these purposes cover nine-tenths of the work of the National Secular Society. It is hard to imagine that Mr. J. M. Wheeler, the Biographer of Inquirers (who moved the resolution referred to), telling us that a Bill to endow those friendless, unaided, honest inquirers (who constitute the great majority of all its members) "would not in any way provide" for the requirements of the movement to which they belong.

If Bequests for Inquiry are already legal, why did not the resolution declare it? Is there any authority for so declaring? Lord Coleridge told Mr. Foote that free inquiry was legal. Mr. Justice Erskine told me the same thing forty years earlier, on my trial; but neither of them ever said that a Bequest to sustain it was legal. That is a very different matter. According to Mr. Justice Erskine and Lord Justice Coleridge—and probably, as Mr. Bradlaugh said, one or two other judges—it is lawful to inquire into the fundamentals of Christianity, to hold opinions hostile to them, to speak against them, and publish books vindicating them, but it is not lawful for a man to leave money at his death to maintain the heretical opinions it was lawful for him to propagate while alive. Such Bequests would be declared void in common law, and the repeal of all the Blasphemy Laws would not help the testator. I am as ready as Mr. Wheeler or the National Secular Society to work for the repeal of the heretical Blasphemy Laws (as Christian blasphemy has long been legal), although their repeal would confer no power of Bequest. There are only two instances of an attempt to endow inquiry. One is the Hibbert Trust, which is a religious trust, and Lord Gifford's Trust, which keeps inquiry in the hands of gentlemen; and if that was disputed by relatives of Lord Gifford, it would probably be set aside. It is true that under that bequest they might appoint an Atheist to vindicate his opinions; but the administration of the bequest is put into hands never likely to do it. It is of the same character as the guinea blasphemy, which is always tolerated though not legal; but penny blasphemy has often been committed. I have not the slightest objection to add to the Bill a clause endowing blasphemy, if that is what is wanted—if the member who takes charge of the Bill thinks it would not wreck the important part which we might carry alone.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

[We regret to differ from Mr. Holyoake, but we must tell him that his Bill as it stands will never, in our opinion, be supported by the Freethought party. Certainly the N. S. S. motto is "We seek for Truth." But the motto is only an aspiration. We are organised on the basis of the truth we have discovered, and we want a law to enable us to maintain and promulgate that truth, so long as we conform to the conditions that are binding on other denominations. Our inquiry cannot be separated from our heresy; it is one and the same Society which carries on both. Nor is it true that the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws "would not help the testator" who left money for Freethought. The truth is exactly opposite. It is only the Blasphemy Laws that render such Bequests illegal. If they were swept away such Bequests could not be defeated. Of course Mr. Holyoake is free to



think otherwise, but his opinion conflicts with that of Mr. Bradlaugh, whom we must be pardoned for thinking the better lawyer. Mr. Holyoake is also free to believe that the Gifford trust could be set aside. But we are free to believe that it could not. Surely Lord Gifford, who was himself a judge, knew what he was about when he drew up his will. As to the concluding sentence about "endowing blasphemy," we can only say that while we appreciate the joke it seems a little misplaced. The Freethought party is suffering under an abominable grievance, and it is the only party which is practically affected by the Blasphemy Laws. If Mr. Holyoake can get a Bill introduced in Parliament to abolish that grievance so far as our property is concerned, he will earn our gratitude; if he cannot, he will only injure us by persisting with a useless Bill, which will be pernicious if carried, because it will block the way of a really useful Bill in the near future.—EDITOR, *Freethinker*.]

### THE SONG OF THE PRIEST.

(A SATIRICAL PARODY.)

With prayer more precious than gold,  
With sermon too *blue* to be read,  
A parson stood in his castle bold  
Preaching for butter and bread.

Come, come, come!

Ye sinners, North, South, West and East!  
And still, with a voice of dolorous pitch  
He sang the song of the priest.

Pay, pay, pay!

On the Lord's day at eleven!

And pay, pray, prey!

In the evening, too, at seven!

The man's a sorry knave,

(And worse than the barbarous Turk)

Who never attempts his soul to save

Or lets *me* do the work!

Hear, hear, hear!

Tho' the brain begins to swim!

And fear, hear, leer!

Till the eyes are heavy and dim!

Sin, salvation and God,

God, salvation and sin,

(As I finish my "fifthly" they fall asleep

And slumber thro' thick and thin.)

Have, save, *shave*!

My labor never flags.

And what are its wages? To see the pews

Renouncing their "filthy rags."

Their lucre as well, no less unclean,

To the Holy God must appear,

While their dollars swell my bank ac — well,

I'll do my saving here!

Preach, preach, preach!

It keeps the poor from crime,

*Leech*, preach, screech!

And saves them every time.

God, salvation and sin—

Sin, salvation and God,

Tho' the heart gets sick and the brain benumbed

This pulpit will preach the "Blood."

Rant, rant, rant!

In the dull December light,

And cant, rant, pant!

When the weather is warm and bright.

And if I see a girl

In finery and fuss

Arrayed, I straight proceed to hurl

Damnation on her thus.

"We close with a word on hell"

(A phantom and myth I own,

And never did fear its terrible flame,

But mustn't make it known,

I mustn't make it known

If I this living would keep,

A heresy would perhaps be *dear*,

While faith is safe and cheap.)

Young girl, you'll feel the breath

Of the hot and flaming pit,

While the saints' abode across the gulf

And—what's the best of it—

I'll hear you groan: "For one short hour

To feel as I used to feel,

When I heard my faithful pastor preach

And warn me of the de'il!"

Oh but for one short hour!

A respite however brief,

No blessed leisure for love or hope

But plenty of time for grief:

It's little weeping helps the soul

When in this brimstone bed;

No tears need flow, for now I know

God doesn't care a *red*!

With bigotry centuries old,

With cunning by cruelty led,

This shepherd stood at the door of the fold

Where sheep are more frightened than fed.

Come, come, come!

To the church and get all of you fleeced.

And still with a voice of *dollarous* pitch,

He chanted—oh isn't it always rich?

This song of the pious priest.

*Secular Thought.*

ANDREW W. HERDMAN.

### THE BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL.

WHEN the votes were counted at the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company's annual meeting, with the result of 53 for my amendment (exclusive of 10 proxies that came too late) and 36 for the adoption of the directors' report, the chairman on behalf of the board demanded what was called "a poll." I asked what authority they had for going outside the meeting, and was referred to a clause of the Companies' Act, which in my judgment did not justify their action. On consulting my solicitor I find I was right. The only "poll" in the Act is the counting of proxies, and votes according to the number of shares, after a show of hands. The recorded voting, therefore, is final, so far as the general meeting is concerned. By a majority of 53 to 36 the clauses in the directors' report as to the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund are deleted.

My solicitor also advises me—and I am sorry I must agree with him—that the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company cannot, without amending its Articles of Association, invest its paid-up share capital in the National Secular Hall Society. In these circumstances, therefore, the Company may be left alone until the directors discover the advisability of winding it up. I doubt their possession of influence enough to raise thousands of pounds, or their ability to maintain a large hall if it were given to them, seeing that the principal working strength of our party, including the lecturers who are able to draw audiences, is pledged to another enterprise. After all the Hall of Science, re-managed and largely rebuilt, is likely to be the *real* Bradlaugh Memorial.

The only duty that immediately devolves upon me is to deal with the Memorial Fund. I have a policy with respect to it, which I shall keep to myself until the time is ripe for action.

G. W. FOOTE.

### OBITUARY.

Died on Feb. 5 at 60 Cambridge-street, Edgware-road, William Jameson, aged 68. Deceased was a friend of D. G. and W. M. Rossetti, and Ford Maddox Brown. He was an ardent politician, and a member of the Land Restoration League and Fabian Society.—J. M. W.

Among the recent deaths that of Dr. Gustav George Zerffi deserves some record. Born about 1820 in Hungary, Dr. Zerffi took part with Kossuth in the revolution of 1848, and after its failure settled in this country. For a quarter of a century he was lecturer at the Science and Art Department, South Kensington, and his many lectures before the Sunday Society were characterised by much boldness and freedom of thought. His lectures on "Pre-Adamites," "Spontaneous Dissolution of Ancient Creeds," "Dogma and Science," etc., have been published, also larger works on *Evolution and History*, and *Spiritualism and Animal Magnetism*.—J. M. W.

The funeral of the late Mr. John Greenshields is fixed for Saturday, Feb. 13, at Finchley, leaving 20, Dibdin street, Essex-road, between 1.30 and 2. His age was 58. He was on his way to the Hall, to hear Fleming Williams lecture, when he was run over by a hansom cab in Clerkenwell-road, and taken to St. Bartholomew's Hospital, where he died on Thursday last. He had been connected with the party for 22 years.—R. FORDER.



## LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL meeting held at Hall of Science, on Wednesday, Feb. 3, the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. Present: Messrs. Forder, G. Standing (Vice-Presidents), R. O. Smith (Treasurer), Miss E. Vance, Messrs. Baker, Bartlett, Brown, Courtney, Enderby, Leekey, Lyons, Maers, Renn, Reynolds, Stace, S. Standing, Steinberg, Smuin, Turner and Williams. —The minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed. Mr. Enderby reported unfavorably as to the prospect of reopening the station at Columbia-road, and the matter was allowed to drop.—The Secretary reported the affiliation of the Deptford Branch, which was accepted by the Council.—At the suggestion of Mr. R. O. Smith, the Secretary was instructed to make a return of open-air lecture stations and the available lecturers, for consideration at next meeting.—An application from the East London Branch was agreed to. Mr. Baker spoke in reference to the Camberwell *soirée* in aid of the funds of the Federation, the gathering being fixed for March 6. Some business details were then discussed, and the President appealed to the London Branches to support the Social Gatherings held monthly at the Hall of Science.—A vote for the printing of the monthly program closed the proceedings.

EDMD. POWNCEBY, Secretary.

## BOOK CHAT.

André Lefèvre's *La Religion* is the seventeenth volume of the "Bibliothèque des Sciences Contemporaines"—Library of Contemporary Science. We scarcely think it will be translated into English, like some other volumes of this Series. It is too outspoken, too thorough-going, too frankly Atheistic. M. Lefèvre is a professor in the Anthropological School at Paris. Were he a professor of any Institute in London he would be obliged to hide his Atheism, or dare the religious world and face destitution. They lack some of our English freedom in Paris, but they enjoy what Milton regarded as the most precious of all liberties—the liberty to think and argue freely according to conscience.

M. Lefèvre is an evolutionist. He treats religion as a branch of anthropology. His indebtedness to Spencer and other English inquirers is admitted, especially to Tylor, whose splendid work on *Primitive Culture* is praised as "the greatest and most sustained effort that has yet been made to bind together with a continuous thread all the manifestations of religiosity." M. Lefèvre goes over the whole field of religion in the most systematic fashion, working in all the best information extant, and producing a volume which for method, lucidity, and completeness, may challenge comparison.

In the Introduction our author speaks in his own person, not as an anthropologist merely, but as an independent thinker. Fear and curiosity gave birth to all religions. A hasty curiosity is the mother of superstition; a persevering curiosity is the mother of science; and there is a constant war between these different progenies. On which side M. Lefèvre ranges himself is not left doubtful. "No one," he says, "shall accuse us of neutrality in the supreme battle between the past and the future, between aberration and science."

"Looking Backward and Forward," M. Lefèvre's final chapter, is profoundly interesting. He points out how the Deists, who once were hotly opposed by the advocates of Revelation, are now laid under tribute for weapons of Natural Religion wherewith to oppose the more dangerous Atheists. But the monotheism of Natural Theology only gives us a deity who is "neither free nor all-powerful, since he is bound by his own creation, subject to his own laws, inaccessible to prayers under penalty of inconsistency and partiality: a God who explains nothing, and does not explain himself"—a mere bundle of qualities without substance. M. Lefèvre contends that Deism is not the principle of mythologies, but their residuum. Deism has purified superstition; it has extracted the quintessence, and called it the God of the universe—a mere name surviving the dead reality.

M. Lefèvre concludes his long and eloquent peroration as follows:—"The dream-phantoms vanish. The gods go. Man, armed with experience, finds himself alone, but

awake, before a nature which is impassible, before a reality which is without a veil. Long he imagined the universe; now he sees, he studies, he penetrates it day by day, and his bold march routs and drives back the *unknown*—the cloud which conceals inherited ignorance and terror. The empire of religion diminishes in proportion. The past belongs to it, the present resists it, the future challenges it. The future belongs to science."

Major-General J. R. Forlong, the author of two large quarto volumes on early religion entitled *Rivers of Life*, is at present engaged on a *Dictionary of Comparative Religion*.

Mr. James A. Farrer has followed up his book on *Paganism in Christianity*, in which he wipes away much of the foul mud thrown at earlier faiths in order to make them serve as a foil to the one divine religion, by another important work to be entitled *Books Condemned to be Burnt*, which will form one of the series of the "Book-lover's Library." In 1806 M. Etienne Gabriel Peignot, the French bibliographer, put out in two volumes his *Dictionnaire Critique, Littéraire et Bibliographique des Principaux Livres Condamnes au feu, Supprimés ou Censurés*; and we know of no good work on the subject since, though the Roman Congregation of the Index continues to issue its *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. Of course, among *Books Condemned to be Burnt* many Freethought works will be included.

Dr. Arnold Dodel Port's book, *Moses oder Darwin: Eine Schulfrage*—Moses or Darwin: A School Question—has, we are happy to say, reached a new and fourth edition. It is doing good work in Germany and Austria as well as in Switzerland. Dr. Dodel Port is a professor at Zurich, and one of the most renowned botanists living.

The *Monist* for January (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co.—London: Watts and Co.) is a very interesting number. Prof. C. Lloyd Morgan opens with a thoughtful paper on "Mental Evolution," one of his views being that "all modes of energy of whatever kind, whether organic or inorganic, have their conscious or infra-conscious aspect." Mr. Moncure D. Conway writes upon "Religion and Progress" *apropos* of Mr. W. M. W. Call and his book on *Final Causes*, which was noticed some time ago in the *Freethinker*. Mr. Call died on August 20, 1890, after a quiet yet chequered life. From a clergyman in the Church of England he grew into a Positivist, and one of the penalties he paid for his heresy was his being deprived of the guardianship of his sister's children—a terrible blow to his sensitive nature. His very able work on *Final Causes* is none too highly praised by Mr. Conway, who shares his anti-theology. "It appears to me," Mr. Conway says, "certain that the heart and enthusiasm which once went out to a personal God are again turning to a crucified humanity. . . . The omnipotent creator of nature is following the biblical Jehovah into extinction." Dr. Paul Carus, the editor of the *Monist*, deals with the question, "Are there Things in Themselves?" There are two other abstract metaphysical papers, capable of satisfying a robust appetite for such diet.

*Looking Inwards* (London: William Reeves) is a little volume by an anonymous writer, who is either a little strange in his intellect or at great pains to disguise his meaning. He appears to be aiming blows at the current theology, and he promises another volume. If he keeps his promise we hope he will, if possible, say what he has to say in a more straightforward and intelligible manner.

Superstition dies hard. Bible belief forms a nursery ground for all kinds of nonsense and credulity, and while the central stem of supernaturalism remains the Freethinker's task will be unfinished, even when he has lopped off the spreading branches of Christian theology. An instance of this may be found in the recent theosophic boom, which has given rise to a deal of nonsensical literature. Here is Mr. A. E. Waite, for instance, in a work on *The Occult Sciences*, taking us back fully three hundred years into the region of magic, alchemy, the philosopher's stone, the evocation of the dead, and all the other rubbish which occupied the minds of men in the pre-scientific era. We feel inclined to ask—

Do we sleep, do we dream?  
Or are visions about?  
Is the Orient going to triumph?  
And is the Caucasian played out?



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President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

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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 will lecture. Thursday, at 8, C. Cohen, "The Evolution of the Devil."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, C. Cohen, "The Evolution of the Devil" (2d. and 4d.). Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7, musical entertainment; 7.30, a lecture.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 11.30, debating class, R. G. L., "The Object of Secularism"; 7.30, J. B. Coppock, "Comets: what are they; the Origin of the Universe" (with magic lantern).

Deptford—Lecture Hall, High-street: 7.30, A. B. Moss, "The Fear of Hell."

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road: 8, Stanley Jones, "Man and his Relations."

Finsbury Park—Rock-street Hall, 1 Rock-street, Blackstock-road: J. Rowney, 11.30, "What Benefit have we derived from the Bible"; 7, "Holy Moses and Company." Admission free.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.O.: 11.15, Touzeau Parris, "Politics Cursed by Religion" (free); 6.45, music; 7.15, Touzeau Parris, "Occultism: is it Wisdom or Folly" (3d., 6d., and 1s.). Thursday, at 8, free lecture.

Lambeth—New Nelson Hall, 24 Lower Marsh: 7.30, W. Heaford, "Confucianism and Christianity."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, John M. Robertson, "The Dishonesty of the Church."

Tottenham—Lecture Hall (corner of Seven Sisters'-road): 3.30, Lucretius Keen, "Conservation of Evil." Admission free.

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, F. Haslam, "What was Jesus—God, Man, or Myth?" 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, F. H. Oakeshott (Fabian), "The General Election."

Wood Green—Star Coffee Rooms, High-street: 7, entertainment by members and friends.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead-road (entrance, Maxey-road): 7.30, C. J. Steinberg, "Religion in Relation to Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, W. Heaford, "The Ten Commandments."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 7, C. C. Cattell, "Reminiscences of Fifty Years of Birmingham Life."

Chatham Secular Society, Old George Inn: 6.30, S. H. Allison, "Soul, Spirit, Ghost."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: Charles Watts, 11.30, "Science: its Conflict with the Church"; 2.30, "Atheism and the French Revolution"; 6.30, "The Difficulties of Theism." Feb. 16, 17, 18, 19, public debate between Charles Watts and H. A. Long: 16, 17, "Is Christianity Superior to Secularism?"; 18, 19, "Is Secularism Superior to Christianity?"

Hamilton—Lesser Victoria Hall: Monday, Charles Watts, "Modern Thought and Unbelief."

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden-street: 3, philosophy class, Mr. Small, B.Sc., "The Brain and Thinking"; 7, Mr. Doeg, "The Humor of Theology."

Luton—Rudd's Rooms, 57 Bute-street: Saturday, Feb. 13, at 8, C. J. Hunt, "Life and Death." Admission free.

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: G. J. Holyoake, 11, "The Origin and Nature of Secularism"; 6.30, "Proposal for the Reformation of the Upper Classes."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, fortnightly financial meeting; 7, A. T. Dipper, "Is Christianity Socialistic?"

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting.

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

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 3, mutual improvement class, W. Dawson, "Death"; 7, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Derby: Mr. Barclay, 11, "The Creation Story"; 3, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; 7, "The Salvation of Man."

Luton—Corn Exchange: 10.45, C. J. Hunt, "Christ: God, Man, or Myth?"

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Quayside (near big crane): 11, a meeting re the Loader case, various speakers.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Feb. 14, Hall of Science; 25, Ball's Pond.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Feb. 14, Deptford; 21, Reading; 28, Manchester. March 6, 13, 20, 27, Deptford.

O. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Feb. 13, Luton; 14, morning, Luton; 14, Leicester; 21, Westminster. March 6, Southampton; 13, Woolwich; 20, Westminster; 27, Camberwell. April 3, Hyde Park; 10, Kilburn; April 17 to May 1, Annual Tour. May to Sept., all mornings booked.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Feb. 14, evening, Ball's Pond; 21, evening, Camberwell. March 6, evening, Westminster; 20, evening, Camberwell; 27, evening, Newing on Reform Club. April 3, Southampton; 10, morning, Bethnal Green; evening, Battersea; 24, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Camberwell. May 1, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Battersea.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—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.

O. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—Feb. 14, Woolwich.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Feb. 14, East London; 21, Portsmouth; 28, Lambeth. March 6, morning, Battersea. May 1, morning, Clerkenwell Green.

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