

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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PRICE TWOPENCE.



PRECEPT AND PRACTICE.

“Labor not for the meat which perisheth.”

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.—II.

Charles Bradlaugh: A Record of his Life and Work. By his Daughter, Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner. With an Account of his Parliamentary Struggle, Politics, and Teachings, by John M. Robertson. (London: T. Fisher Unwin.) 2 vols.: 21s.

BRADLAUGH AT HOME.

Mrs. BONNER gives a very pleasant picture of her father's home-life, his considerateness for his wife, his tenderness to his children, his hospitality to his friends. Many refugees from France sought his counsel and assistance, and some of them taught his daughters French. Mrs. Bonner writes as follows of his treatment of herself and her sister:—

“Never during the whole of our childhood did my father once raise his hand against us, never once did he speak a harsh word. We were whipped, for my mother held the old-fashioned, mistaken notion that to ‘spare the rod’ was to ‘spoil the child;’ but when scolding or whipping failed to bring obedience, the culprit was taken to that little study; there a grave look and a grave word brought instant submission. But it seldom went beyond the threat of being taken there, for we loved him so that we could not bear him even to know when we were naughty.”

No. 703.]

TWO DEAD ONES.

Bradlaugh's elder daughter, Alice, whose portrait is given in this book, was a robust figure in the days of her young maidenhood. In later years her health seemed to fail, perhaps through over-study. An attack of typhoid fever carried her off, early in December, 1888. Her body, as she wished, would have been cremated, but the Woking Crematorium happened to be closed at the time, and she was buried at Brookwood. The sudden and fatal termination of her illness, Mrs. Bonner says, was “a great shock” to Bradlaugh. He went down to the House of Commons to attend to his duties, but he could not bear the condolences of his colleagues. Alice Bradlaugh, as Mr. Robertson says, was “her father's daughter in her high spirit, in her generosity, in her energy, and in the thoroughness of her work.” All who knew her will echo this encomium.

Bradlaugh's only son died at the early age of eleven. We recollect seeing him at the London Hall of Science. His father was obviously proud of him, as well he might be, for the lad was remarkably bright and intelligent. Mrs. Bonner relates the circumstances of his untimely death, and gives a terribly pathetic picture of the stricken father's mastery of his grief:—

“In June my brother was taken ill with a mild attack of scarlatina, of which we knew nothing until he came

home to us for his holidays on the 20th of the month. Due precautions had been neglected, and almost immediately after he reached us kidney disease began to manifest itself. From this he died on July 15, and he was buried exactly a month from the day on which he came home. The shock of his death was terrible to all of us, and not least so to my father. Although barely eleven years old at his death, Charlie was a lad full of promise, quick to learn and to comprehend, amiable, honorable, and generous; and of these traits I can recall many little instances. I have a photograph of him taken at the age of seven or eight, and as I look at it I see his eyes gaze out from under his square brow with a wonderfully clear and fearless look.

"He was buried on July 20 in Cocking Churchyard, my grandfather's cottage at Cocking Causeway (Midhurst) being in the parish of Cocking. Of course, we had to submit to the Church of England service, for it was before the Burials Act was passed; but the Rev. Drummond Ash was a kindly, courteous gentleman, and he made things as easy as the circumstances would allow. The burial would have taken place at the Brookwood Necropolis had my father been able to afford the expense. As he was not, Charlie was laid to rest in consecrated ground at the foot of the South Down Hills with Christian rites and ceremonies."

"The telegram bearing the totally unexpected summons to my father to hasten to see his son for the last time was handed to him on the platform at Bury just as he was about to deliver a lecture. I have been told that when he read the words he turned deathly pale; but, with that self-control which never failed him in adversity, he rose, and, with the least perceptible hesitation, commenced and went through with his lecture. On Tuesday night he received his summons; on Wednesday he was with us, though only to leave again by the early train on Thursday morning. On Friday the boy died, and on that same day and the next my father had to be in the law-courts as witness in a case relating to the Naples Color Company. His grief for the loss of his son was intense, but he shut it up in his heart, and rarely afterwards mentioned the name of his boy, of whom he had been so proud."

Bradlaugh's paternal feelings were stronger than most men's, but he did not wear his heart upon his sleeve. How many who knew him only after this first bereavement, as they looked at his stalwart figure and saw the splendid life in his face, ever imagined that the strong man's heart had a mausolean chamber, only unlocked, perhaps, in darkness and solitude, when—

midnight makes
Her giant heart of memory and tears
Drink the pale drug of silence.

FRENCH FRIENDS.

Bradlaugh had many French friends, and he frequently visited Paris. He met Gambetta, but there seemed to be a coldness between them, for what reason we could never discover. Madame de Brimont introduced herself to Bradlaugh during the war in 1870, her object being to solicit his aid in stirring up English feeling in favor of France. She brought funds for the agitation here. Of course Bradlaugh did not need much solicitation, as his sympathies were with France, and he hailed with delight the proclamation of the French Republic. Mrs. Bonner writes as follows about the Countess:—

"The acquaintance between Madame de Brimont and Mr. Bradlaugh, commencing in her visit to his lodgings on September 17, 1870, ripened into a friendship which lasted for the rest of my father's life. From that September day these two never ceased to be friends; through good report and ill report Madame de Brimont stood by him. While my father lay upon what proved to be his deathbed I received a letter from her in which, writing in French, she sent him a message from *sa meilleure amie*, 'and that,' she said, 'I think I may claim to be, for during the twenty years I have known him I have never once swerved in my friendship for him—no, not for a single moment.' My father, very weak and ill, was deeply moved when I read the letter to him. 'It is true,' he said brokenly, 'it is true.'"

MRS. BESANT.

Mrs. Bonner devotes a whole chapter to Mrs. Besant. Soon after the death of Austin Holyoake, to whom Bradlaugh's daughter pays a just tribute of praise, Mrs. Besant made her advent in the Freethought party. "Having enrolled herself a member of the National Secular Society, in August, 1874," Mrs. Bonner writes, "Mrs. Besant sought Mr. Bradlaugh's acquaintance. They were mutually attracted; and a friendship sprang up between them of

so close a nature that had both been free it would undoubtedly have ended in marriage." Mrs. Bradlaugh was still living, and Mrs. Besant was only separated (not divorced) from her husband. Mrs. Bonner speaks in the highest terms of Mrs. Besant's eloquence and industry. "Though not an original thinker," it is added, "she had a really wonderful power of absorbing the thoughts of others, of blending them, and of transmuting them into glowing language." This is substantially what Mr. W. P. Ball incurred so much odium for saying when he reviewed Mrs. Besant's earliest writings on Socialism. Using a very forcible, and as Mrs. Besant thought a very impolite expression, he declared that her mind was like a milk-jug; what was poured out of it was first poured into it. Mrs. Besant herself admits that, for some time before his death, Bradlaugh had lost all confidence in her judgment. The only wonder is that he ever had any. She drifted away from him as she had drifted towards him; and, despite all their old closeness of association, Bradlaugh "first learnt of Mrs. Besant's adhesion to the Theosophical Society through an article written by her in a weekly paper, and not from her own lips." He had counted upon her constant alliance, and he was bitterly disappointed. Mr. Robertson confesses that "the new and deep division of opinion undoubtedly pained and depressed him. He was to find, as so many have found, that when success comes something is sure to go which leaves success a different thing from what was dreamt of." Mrs. Besant's defection was clearly one of the burdens that weighed Bradlaugh down to the grave. Yet it was all so natural that it should not have caused surprise. Mrs. Besant is a born disciple, and when Bradlaugh became more and more absorbed in his parliamentary duties she fell under other influences, and the "thought" of thirteen years rapidly changed amidst a new personal environment.

BRADLAUGH'S ACTIVITY.

Mrs. Bonner's superabundance of detail has at least one advantage; it affords a clear idea of Bradlaugh's wonderful activity. Our difficulty is to know where to select an illustration. Here is one at a venture. Bradlaugh, who was then (1866) lecturing as "Iconoclast," rushed over to Bedlington to oppose David King, the champion "infidel-slayer" of that time; and this is what followed the encounter:—

"After the discussion came the return drive of twelve or fourteen miles in the cold and the rain to Newcastle, which was reached at two in the morning. While my father snatched a couple of hours' sleep, some of his friends sat and watched in order to rouse him for the Scotch express, which passed through Newcastle about five o'clock. Arrived at Edinburgh, my father found he had twenty minutes to wait, so he thought he would get some breakfast, but 'alas!' said he, 'it was Sunday morning, and starvation takes precedence of damnation in the *unco guid* city. Instead of drinking hot coffee, I had to shiver in the cold, admiring the backs of the tumble-down-looking houses in the high "toon" for want of better occupation. I arrived in Glasgow just one hour before the time fixed for the morning lecture—dirty, weary, hungry, thirsty, and sleepy."

"After the evening lecture Mr. Bradlaugh had to hurry from the platform of the Eclectic Hall to catch the train which steamed out of Glasgow at twenty minutes to nine, so that he might be in time for Monday morning's business in the city, having spent two nights out of bed, travelled about 900 miles, and spoken at Bedlington and three times in Glasgow in less than forty-eight hours."

No wonder that when Bradlaugh was near death he told the doctors that he had lived the lives of three men, having burnt the candle at both ends and also in the middle—though that, by the way, is an un-Bradlaugh-like Hibernicism.

FATHER IGNATIUS.

Freethinkers of the younger generation will probably be astonished to learn that Bradlaugh once debated at the London Hall of Science with Father Ignatius. This monk of the Church of England is honest according to his lights. He denounces the "Higher Critics" as sceptics who eat the Church's bread. On the other hand, he has no ill words for the sceptics who honestly avow their unbelief and occupy their proper position. Father Ignatius debated with Bradlaugh, and always respected his integrity:—

"In the summer of 1872 Father Ignatius wrote to Mr. Bradlaugh, asking that an opportunity might be given

him to address an audience of London Freethinkers. This request was readily acceded to; but, in consequence of other work and ill-health, Father Ignatius was obliged to delay the delivery of this address until the end of November. The Hall of Science, which was put at his disposal, was crowded right out to the street, and it was estimated that at least two thousand persons were unable to gain admittance. Mr. Austin Holyoake presided over what was really an informal debate. Father Ignatius elected to speak on 'Jesus Christ, the Central Point of Human History,' and when he had finished Mr. Bradlaugh spoke for an equal time in reply. The audience, densely crowded as it was, listened intently and earnestly, and the perfect stillness maintained during both speeches was broken only by applause. Not a sound of dissent was heard; each speaker was listened to with respect and attention. At the conclusion Father Ignatius was thanked by the Freethinkers for the fearlessness and the courtesy with which he had spoken, and the audience were thanked by the Rev. Father for the fairness with which they had listened to him. He said 'he would be happy if his Protestant fellow-Christians would receive him with equal fairness.'

"As he desired to reply to Mr. Bradlaugh's speech, Father Ignatius fixed to go again to the Hall of Science on December 12; but when the day arrived there was some doubt whether he could get there, as he had been subpoenaed to Worcester as a witness. In consequence of this the attendance was not quite so overwhelming as before. When Father Ignatius entered the Hall he was welcomed with much cheering, which was cordially renewed when he rose to speak. Before entering upon his subject, he said that he had received permission from Mr. Bradlaugh and the Chairman (Mr. Austin Holyoake) to ask God to aid him that night; but even with that permission he would not do so, for he had no wish to hurt anyone's susceptibilities, unless the meeting also gave its sanction. Those present having signified their assent by a show of hands, Father Ignatius, 'in an impassioned prayer, sought the assistance of God to render his address effectual.' Then proceeding to the business of the evening, he deftly—if not very convincingly—explained away the objections which had been urged by Mr. Bradlaugh to certain Biblical passages. As before, he was followed by Mr. Bradlaugh, and both apparently spoke with great force. In the spring of 1873 there was held a third of these informal controversies. On every occasion a charge was made for admission, and the proceeds given, by Father Ignatius' desire, to the Hall of Science building fund. His frankness, fearlessness, and courtesy made an indelible impression upon the minds of the frequenters of the Hall. To Mr. Bradlaugh he always wrote in terms of the greatest cordiality, and, although the differences between them were of the widest possible kind, I am quite sure that my father was sensible of this kindly feeling and reciprocated it."

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

A special chapter is devoted to the National Secular Society, which Bradlaugh founded, and the presidency of which he held, except for one slight interval, till within twelve months of his death. With regard to his resignation of this office, Mrs. Bonner writes:—

"To be a real President of the National Secular Society involved the performance of a vast amount of labor, the greater part of which was unrecognised and unseen. This he felt had become beyond his powers; it was not in him to bear the name and let others do the work; in giving up the duties of his position he must also give up the honors. Only those who knew the pride he always felt in holding this office of President of the associated Freethinkers of the nation knew the pain it cost him to lay that office down."

The present writer knows the truth of the first sentence, and he is profoundly convinced of the truth of the second part of the paragraph. Mrs. Bonner relates how her father first intimated his determination to resign the presidency. He was lying in his bed in his study, and, after being very quiet for some time, he startled her by suddenly saying that he would send in his resignation. She tried to argue the matter with him, but his mind was made up; however, he promised to make a statement that should leave no one in doubt as to his opinions. Those who heard that statement when he did resign, on his return from India, will remember it while life endures.

MRS. BONNER'S LAST CHAPTER.

Mrs. Bonner's last chapter of her father's biography is inexpressibly touching. It is written with beautiful

simplicity; a daughter's deathless love shines purely through every page. Some parts are too sacred for criticism; one feels in reading them that he is viewing the veiled things of life. The only proper attitude before them is silent reverence.

How well do we recollect that foggy November night when Bradlaugh delivered his last lecture. We took the chair on that occasion. Bradlaugh was obviously ill, and should have been in bed; but he would lecture, as the proceeds were to go to the testimonial which was being raised for Mr. Robert Forder, the secretary of the National Secular Society. He criticised "The Evidence for the Gospels," with special reference to Dr. Watkins's Bampton Lectures. His platform career began and ended with the advocacy of Freethought.

BRADLAUGH'S ATHEISM.

Many quotations are given by Mrs. Bonner from early and late speeches of her father, showing the consistency of his attitude as an Atheist. Over and over again he said that he would be a fool to make the unqualified assertion, "There is no god"—which involves the pretension of infinite knowledge. He asked for a definition of "god" before he would discuss; on hearing which he would not hesitate to say "Yes" or "No" as to the existence of such a being. Bradlaugh declared, to begin with, that he knew of no definition of God which was not self-contradictory. He called himself an Atheist and objected to "Agnostic," for reasons which Mr. Robertson sets forth with power and precision. And it was a distinction that Bradlaugh was honest to his fellow-men as he was to his own intelligence. Mr. Robertson does not (he could not) praise too highly the "energy and persistence with which he sought to bring his philosophy home to the popular mind." Mr. Robertson bravely vindicates Bradlaugh's followers from the charges of "vulgarity and illiteracy," and remarks that most of those who prefer this charge are not Atheists "for economical reasons." "Bradlaugh's artisan followers," he maintains, "have for the most part been the pick of their class for intelligence and energy." A further service to Bradlaugh's memory is done by Mr. Robertson in giving excellent passages from his writings and debates, showing that while his blows were heavy they were always delivered according to the exactest rules of combat. Bradlaugh always tried to answer what his opponent had really said, though the fairness was not often reciprocated. But then he understood his opponents, who were often incapable of understanding him.

SOCIAL HERESY.

Forcibly enough, though with prolixity, does Mr. Robertson defend Bradlaugh from the absurd charge of "Free Love." His Christian enemies dishonestly tried to make out that he endorsed all the opinions of the *Elements of Social Science*, although he had written that "it contains some points of ethics from which I expressly and strongly dissent." Mr. Robertson points out that "his own sad experience never made him deery marriage." The sexual freedom he wished to see was the freedom of legal divorce. No one, indeed, was less likely than Bradlaugh to subscribe to the doctrine that men and women should come together and part with the "freedom" of animals. He was too chivalrous to women, and too tender to children, to feel anything but horror at the thought of plunging them back into the old slough of degradation and misery. It may be that he never read Milton. We do not know. But we are sure that he was of a nature to feel the force of that terrible phrase, "Lust hard by Hate."

Bradlaugh was a convinced and earnest Malthusian, and Mr. Cotter Morison thought the fact a great distinction. "Mr. Bradlaugh," he wrote, in the Preface to *The Service of Man*, "with a courage which will no doubt be acknowledged after his death and when the fight is won, has borne the penalty of appearing as a champion of common sense and human well-being." Mr. John Morley may feel the same thing, but he has never spoken so bravely. It was not Bradlaugh's way to shirk danger or to hide the truth. He labored for his convictions, though he had to bear a tremendous penalty. There can be little doubt that his Malthusianism, perhaps more than his Atheism, brought upon him that long struggle with the House of Commons, from which he emerged victorious, but so broken in body that all that was left him was to die amidst a chorus of plaudits, including the voices of his murderers.

THE GREAT STRUGGLE.

Mr. Robertson's long history of "The Parliamentary Struggle," as we have already said, is a very valuable piece of work. Step by step he follows Bradlaugh in this great contest, and shows that he was the one man in the turmoil who knew his own mind and acted with unswerving consistency. There is a good description of the ejection of Bradlaugh from the House of Commons, though some dramatic points are missed. That was the acme of the excitement, but it seems to us that the psychological climax was when Bradlaugh made his third speech at the Bar of the House. "If I am not fit for my constituents," he ended, "they shall dismiss me, but you never shall. The grave alone shall make me yield." The language was characteristic of the man. Words so simple, direct, and pregnant had not been used in politics since the days of the great Rebellion. They remind us of Cromwell's "Cease your fooling, sir, and come down," and "Take away that bauble."

It was a difficult task to follow Bradlaugh through all the litigation of this struggle, but Mr. Robertson has achieved it with eminent success. Here and there a point is missed, which is natural on the part of one who was not an eyewitness of the proceedings. Mr. Robertson does not notice an important fact which we drew attention to in our account of the "blasphemy" prosecution. Bradlaugh could not induce Justices Field and Stephen to quash his indictment, but they agreed to strike out two counts, which covered numbers of the *Freethinker* that were to him the most serious, and for which he could not be proceeded against again in consequence of the six months' limitation. We might also take exception to stray sentences about the *Freethinker*, but it is hardly worth while, as "taste" is proverbially a barren theme for discussion.

Mr. Robertson compares Bradlaugh with Wilkes, to the advantage of the former. Both fought for English freedom, but Bradlaugh was stainless and Wilkes was corrupt, though he had, as Mr. Robertson says, the "merit of geniality."

"Closing years" is the title of Mr. Robertson's final chapter, giving a succinct account of Bradlaugh's parliamentary work and various debates, especially on Socialism. The "Conclusion" is an eloquent panegyric. Mr. Robertson remarks that, beside the common run of reformers, Bradlaugh "stands out as one of larger mould and greater fibre, a battling and conquering Titan, sure of the sympathetic retrospect of happier days." "His sagacity never ceased to be heroic, and his commanding powers rested on a character more commanding still." "The bronze bust on his tomb," he concludes, "recalling as it does the high front and the unflinching eye which his friends loved to associate with him, and seeming as it does to face fate with an immovable strength and firmness, will for many a year say to passers-by what has been sought to be told in these pages, 'This was a man.'"

G. W. FOOTE.

BRUTAL ATHEISTS.

"Not one man in a thousand has either strength of mind or goodness of heart to be an Atheist. I repeat it. Not one man in ten thousand has goodness of heart or strength of mind to be an Atheist.

"And, were I not a Christian, and that only in the sense in which I am a Christian, I should be an Atheist with Spinoza; rejecting all in which I found insuperable difficulties, and resting my only hope in the gradual, and certain because gradual, progression of the species."—*Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Letters, Conversations, and Recollections of S. T. Coleridge," by Thomas Allsop, p. 47.*

We all know the ideal Atheist of fiction. He is usually a low-browed, ugly wretch, devoid of sense, sensibility, conscience, or compunction, a sort of Iago and Caliban rolled into one. Gillespie said the Atheist was a monster created by nature in a moment of madness. The good and pious Dr. Hall declared Atheism a "base, bloody, and ferocious system"; and even the genial Professor Stuart Blackie calls it "an abnormal disease." To Atheists themselves such descriptions seem supremely ridiculous. It is not surprising that misconceptions of Atheists and of Atheism abound. In the past, religion was so bound up with the social order that anyone who questioned it was felt as an alien, possibly a dangerous traitor to the interests

of the commonweal. Ancient gods being tribal chiefs, their acceptance was a condition of tribal unity, their rejection a sign of antagonism to the tribe. Every Jew was bound to kill "the wife of thy bosom or thy friend which is as thy own soul," if they enticed to the worship of other gods (Deut. xiii.). Though, as Bacon notices, "Atheism did never perturb States," the denial of the gods of one's country was, in former times, considered equivalent to treason.

An interested class maintain the notion when without any shadow of justification. The enemies of their order and their beliefs, they easily persuade themselves, are enemies of God, and, of course, enemies of man. Nothing is too vile to say of an Atheist. Even those destitute of faith, but afraid of scepticism, draw the line at Atheism. You may safely call yourself Agnostic or Positivist; but, if you say you are an Atheist, you have made it clear you reject the core of supernaturalism upon which all superstitions depend, and you have thus committed the mysterious sin that hath never forgiveness, neither in this world nor in that which is to come. "Admit a God—all other mysteries cease," said the poet Young; and if you refuse to admit this primal mystery, you may well be considered hopeless for the reception of any other.

I have made it my business to study the lives of some Atheists, and I have never been able to discover the brutal Atheists of whom I have read in fictions and sermons. Courage and tenderness, I should say, were their prominent characteristics. Shelley, whose voice was ever raised against the privileged and in favor of the oppressed; who, when the British code of law was written in blood, protested against capital punishment, and who lived on bread and raisins that he might be no party to the butchering of animals, was a brutal Atheist. Bentham, the soul of benevolence, whose life-long efforts were directed to the amelioration of the law, and the promotion of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, was another. Clifford, whose every pulse throbbed with the enthusiasm of humanity, and who was beloved by the whole circle of his friends and pupils, another. Harriet Martineau, who, deprived of hearing, smell, and taste, used all her faculties in the pursuit of truth, and spent her life in enlightening and elevating her fellows, acting as a pioneer of woman's emancipation, became another. And even before she herself embraced Atheism, she gave this testimony that the best state of mind was to be found, however it might be accounted for, in those who were called philosophical Atheists. "I know several of that class," she wrote, "some avowed, and some not; and I had for several years felt that they were among my most honored acquaintances and friends; and now that I know them more deeply and thoroughly, I must say that, for conscientiousness, sincerity, integrity, seriousness, effective intellect, and the true religious spirit, I knew nothing like them."

Very similar was the testimony of the late Professor Tyndall, while himself disclaiming the appellation of Atheist. In the *Fortnightly Review* of November, 1877, he wrote:—

"If I wished to find men who are scrupulous in their adherence to engagements, whose words are their bond, and to whom moral shiftiness of any kind is subjectively unknown; if I wanted a loving father, a faithful husband, an honorable neighbor and a just citizen, I would seek him among the band of Atheists to which I refer. I have known some of the most pronounced amongst them, not only in life, but in death—seen them approaching with open eyes the inexorable goal, with no dread of a 'hangman's whip,' with no hope of a heavenly crown, and still as mindful of their duties, and as faithful in the discharge of them, as if their eternal future depended upon their latest deeds."

I have personally met Mr. H. G. Atkinson, who had so much influence over Miss Martineau, and I found him in the best sense of the term "a perfect gentleman"—a phrase always recalling another dead Atheist friend, the late Mr. W. J. Birch, author of *The Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*, who was saint-like in generosity and in gentleness.

It has been my good fortune to know a great many Atheists of several nationalities, a few famous ones, others well known, and many unknown outside their narrow circle. I have met Atheists of all kinds—the jolly Atheist, the pessimistic Atheist, the impulsive Atheist, the cool, calculating Atheist, the genial Atheist, the cynical Atheist;

but the brutal Atheist I have never met. Mr. Bradlaugh, who, finding every man's hand against him, was "ever a fighter," taking keen delight in the blows he gave his adversaries, was considered so by those who felt his lash. Yet he was as sensitive as a child, and melted in a moment at any story of suffering or wrong. He could so powerfully raise feeling because he deeply felt.

Another Atheist I had the honor of knowing, intimately in her later years, was the brave opponent to slavery, Ernestine Louise Rose. She was as large-hearted and as tender as she was brave, delighting in relieving want, and, above all, in ministering to the happiness of children. It was in no spirit of boast, but in absolute truth she said, in her *Defence of Atheism*: "Though I cannot believe in your God, whom you have failed to demonstrate, I believe in man. If I have no faith in your religion, I have faith, unbounded, unshaken faith, in the principles of right, of justice, and humanity. Whatever good you are willing to do for the sake of your God, I am full as willing to do for the sake of man."

I have known Atheists to whom their Atheism has been as the mainspring of their humanity. When they have given up the vain service of a God who cannot need their worship, they have first fully realised the need of serving man. The conviction that there was no supernatural eye to pity, no superhuman arm to save, has intensified their desire to be somewhat of a human providence to those around them. When they resigned the vain hope of personal immortality, they have the more clearly seen that what of good there is to be done must be done here and now; they have more strongly felt the call to work while it is day, for the night cometh wherein no man can work.

So generally have I found Atheists large-hearted, as well as clear-headed, that whenever I find a man or a woman bold enough to say "I am an Atheist" I feel pretty confident there is a character as tender as courageous. Such is my testimony. Let it be taken for what it is worth. If, at any time, an omnipotent deity were pleased to illumine me with a demonstration of his, her, or its existence, I should wish it to stand. Indeed, were I a Theist, I should be constrained to change the tactic of polemic against Atheism. I should then, perhaps, suggest that the Atheist, instead of being callous, rather suffered from over-sensitiveness, and that it was his too tender feeling which prevented him from seeing that God, acting by general laws, now using fire to warm the frozen and anon to burn the helpless, was nevertheless acting for the best. If creed be any test of callousness, surely the hard-hearted must be those who hold that in a world such as this, where misery abounds, where the welfare of the few is based on the destitution of the many, and where accident, sickness, and death may at any moment cast a blight on love, all is under the personal rule and supervision of an omnipotent Creator.

J. M. WHEELER.

WAS CHRIST A POLITICAL AND SOCIAL REFORMER?

ALTHOUGH Thomas Carlyle has said that "in these days it is professed that hero-worship has gone out and finally ceased," thousands of the professed followers of Christ idolise his memory to such an extent that they appear to be entirely oblivious of any defect either in his character or in his teachings. They regard their hero as having been the very embodiment of truth, virtue, and perfection; and those persons who are compelled to doubt the correctness of these assumptions are regarded by orthodox believers as most unreasonable and perverse members of society. Probably the principal cause why such erroneous and extravagant notions are entertained of one who, according to the New Testament, was very little, if at all, superior to other religious heroes can be accounted for by the fact that the worshippers of Christ were taught in their childhood to reverence him as an absolutely perfect character, and as being beyond criticism. Thus youthful impressions resulted in fancied creations which, in matured life, have been accepted as realities. The Rev. James Cranbrook recognised this truth, for in the preface to his work, *The Founders of Christianity* (page 5), he observes: "Our own idealisations have invested him (Jesus) with a halo of spiritual glory, that by the intensity of its brightness

conceals from us the real figure presented in the Gospels. We see him, not as he is described, but as the ideally perfect man our own fancies have conceived. But let any one sit down and critically analyse the sayings and doings ascribed to Jesus in the Gospels—let him divest his mind of the superstitious fear of irreverence, and then ask himself whether all those sayings and doings are in harmony with the highest wisdom speaking for all ages and races of mankind, and with the conceptions of an absolutely perfect human nature, and I am mistaken if he will not find a very great deal he will be forced to condemn."

Even the sons of Labor, the apostles of Democracy, and the advocates of Socialism appear disposed to adopt Jesus as their Patron Saint. Conjectures are being constantly made by professed modern reformers as to what the Carpenter of Nazareth would say upon the many political and social questions that agitate the public mind in this the latter half of the nineteenth century. These hero-worshippers seem to overlook the apathy of Jesus in respect to the evils of his own time. Of course, it is not difficult for an impartial observer to learn why the name of Christ is invoked to support the various schemes that are now put forward to aid the regeneration of society.

However little Christianity is practised among us, it is extensively professed, and it is thought by many a virtue to assume a belief, whether there are sufficient grounds for doing so or not. This slavish adherence to fashion is an undignified prostration of mental freedom and independence, and it is also a fruitful source of the perpetuation of error. My purpose in examining the claims set up for Jesus as a political and social reformer is to ascertain if the records of his life, doings, and teachings justify such claims. If Jesus were judged as an ordinary man, living nearly two thousand years ago, my present task would be unnecessary. If we assume that such a man once lived, and that what he said and did is accurately reported, he should, in my opinion, be considered as a youth possessing but limited education, surrounded by unfavorable influences for intellectual acquirements, belonging to a race not very remarkable for literary culture, retaining many of the failings of his progenitors, and having but little regard for the world or the things of the world. Viewed under these circumstances, I could, while excusing many of his errors, recognise and admire something that is praiseworthy in the life of "Jesus of Nazareth." But when he is raised upon a pinnacle of greatness, as an exemplar of virtue and wisdom, surpassing the production of any age or country, he is then exalted to a position which he does not merit, and which, to my mind, deprives him of that credit which otherwise he would, perhaps, be entitled to.

The contentions which it is my purpose to dispute are: that Jesus was a political and social reformer, and that his alleged teachings contain the remedies for the wrongs of modern society. Before directly dealing with these points it may be necessary to glance at the various aspects of reform that have, at different times in our national history, been presented to the community; also to briefly consider the nature of the required reforms, and some of the principal methods that have been adopted to secure them.

In quite primitive ages important struggles took place to establish greater equality in the conditions of life. In the time of Moses, according to the Bible, the land, for instance, was not merely the subject of "tracts for the times," but the laws and regulations relating to it were practically dealt with. It did not, however, cease to be property, and its inheritance was recognised as a rightful thing. The stock-in-trade of many modern reformers is the denunciation of those who "add house to house, field to field, and grind the faces of the poor." If this condemnation is one of the many features of Socialism, then Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel may, in this particular, be fairly termed Socialists—a name foreign to their language and to the ideas of their day.

The contention with some is, that Christ was a successor to all these prophets, that he took the same kind of objection as they did to the then existing state of things, and that he used the same form of speech in denouncing them. The general reply to this is, that Christ was, if anything, only a prophetic reformer, not a real one. In proof of this many facts in his alleged history may be cited. For instance, he did not rescue the land from the control of the Romans, who held it from the people very much in the same way as landholders do now; he did not

attempt to render any aid to the laborers of Rome, who in his day were resisting the injustice of the capitalists; he did not deliver his brethren of "the royal house" from their foreign rulers; he did not redeem the Jews from their social evils, or restore justice to their nation. In a word, he entirely failed to do the reforming work that was expected of him. About the year 1825 the "Christian Socialists of London" called special attention to the question of land as regulated by Moses, and the living in common by the early Christians; but no practical issue arose out of the discussion. From that period down to the present the same subject has been more or less agitated, and still the matter is very far from being settled. Now, if it is alleged that Christ sought to bring about a just settlement of the land problem, then the existence of the present oppressive land laws proves that he failed, and that his most devout followers have been equally unfortunate. If Christ had been a practical reformer, we should not have in our midst the deplorable injustice, the wrongs, and the inequalities that now afflict society. These evils and drawbacks—the growth of centuries during which Christianity was in power—will doubtless be lessened, if not altogether destroyed; but the work will be achieved by a moral revolution, inaugurated and conducted by men who will possess ability and experience that it is evident Jesus never had.

It must be borne in mind that there are two kinds of revolution—one that is gradual and intellectual, and therefore useful; the other that is sudden, born of passion, and therefore often useless as an important factor in securing permanent reforms. We know that every change of thought, or condition of things, involves a revolution which, if controlled by reason and regulated by the lessons of experience, must aid rational progress, and tend to build up a State, and secure its permanence. But there is another kind of revolution, which is sought to be produced by Nihilism and Anarchism, both of which aim at the destruction of the State. I am not in favor of either of these "isms," believing, as I do, that in our present condition of society some form of government is necessary. Law and order, based upon the national will, and the principle of justice, appear to me to be essential in any scheme that is accepted for the purpose of furthering the political and social progress of the world. Then we have Socialism, which concerns itself with economic, ethical, political, and industrial questions. The principal subject, however, dealt with by Socialists is the accumulation and distribution of wealth. State Socialism dates from time of the eminent French writer, Claude, H. Count de St. Simon, whose works were published in 1830. He tried to secure the amelioration of the condition of the poor, and aimed at the organisation of labor and the distribution of the fruits of industry, upon the principle of every man being rewarded according to his works. Socialism is, in fact, an attempt (whether it is the best that could be made is with some persons a debateable point) to regulate the social relations, making them more equal than they are at present, either by individual combination, by municipal or co-operative action, by a philanthropic policy of the Church, or by the control of the State. This last phase of the Socialistic scheme means the complete regulation by law of the equality of individuals, the State being the owner of the land, and of all the instruments of industry that are at present possessed by individuals, public companies, etc., who now regulate, in their own interest, production and distribution.

Having thus briefly stated the general conceptions and aims of political and social reformers, the next step is to inquire in what relation Jesus stands to any or all of them. Of course there is only one source of information upon the subject at our command—that of the four Gospels. From these it will not be difficult to demonstrate that Jesus was no mundane reformer. Although he was surrounded by poverty, slavery, oppression, and mental degradation, he made no effort to rid society of these curses to humanity. As John Stuart Mill observes, in his work upon *Liberty* (pp. 28, 29), in referring to Christian morality: "I do not scruple to say of it that it is, in many important points, incomplete and one-sided, and that, unless ideas and feelings, not sanctioned by it, had contributed to the formation of European life and character, human affairs would have been in a worse condition than they now are."

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be continued.)

THE WORLD AND THE WORLD.

If all the world must see the world
As the world the world hath seen,
Then it were better for the world
That the world had never been.

Yet if the world could see the world
As the world the world might see,
Then a happier world than this old world
Perhaps could never be.

Oh, world that lives upon the world!
You travel far too slow!
Oh, world! green grave of the worlds,
How wondrous swift you go.

CHARLES GODFREY LELAND.

ACID DROPS.

PREBENDARY EYTON says that the most intellectually alive of all forms of Socialistic thought is Christian Socialism—which is a very poor compliment to the Fabians and Social Democrats. Christian Socialism, it appears, is drawing together the heart and intellect of the day, and the glory of the Lord is being revealed. But we have heard of all that before. The glory of the Lord is always being revealed, and many gentlemen like Prebendary Eyton earn a good income by revealing it. The only solid thing in the business is the income.

"Nil Desperandum" writes to the *Weekly Times*, complaining of a North Wilts parson, who has an income of £600 a year, and is eloquent in his exhortations to the poor to be charitable. When the squire gave some books to the Reading Room, the parson collared the lot for himself, on the ground that they were too good for the villagers. Evidently they were not sermons.

James Bishop, of New Swindon, couldn't stand the Salvation Army band. Financial worries had made him sleepless, and he wanted rest and quiet; so he went out and asked the band to stop. Stop! Perish the thought! They were playing for the good of his immortal soul. Which was all very well, but James Bishop's mortal body could stand the row no longer. He therefore cut his throat with a penknife. Where he is now is a matter of conjecture. It is to be hoped, however, that the poor fellow is not in heaven; for the Salvation band plays there for ever and ever, and you can't escape it by means of penknives or prussic acid.

Dr. Danford Thomas, the Islington coroner, held an inquest on the body of Francis Eleanor Ottignon, who committed suicide by taking laudanum. In a letter to a friend she wrote, "I hope God will forgive me," and ended with the ejaculation, "May God help me." He didn't.

Just as service was being commenced last Sunday, the parish Church of St. Columb, Cornwall, was struck by lightning. The congregation had little faith in God's preservation of his own house, and rushed panic stricken from the church, the service being brought abruptly to a close.

In the *Expositor* for January, Archdeacon Farrar has a very unsatisfactory paper on "The Sinai Palimpsest of the Syriac Gospels." He admits this exhibits "the oldest Syriac text hitherto known," but tries to argue for the orthodoxy of the statement that Joseph begat Jesus, because it says he was "the husband of the Virgin Mary." Now, we want to know, if the word "virgin" was part of the primitive text how it got left out of all the Greek copies? To our mind, this suggests forcibly that the word "virgin" is a later insertion, for the virginity of Mary was no more known to Paul than recognised by the Ebionites.

The *Tablet* (January 5) has a more scholarly article on the same Gospels. It considers it certain that "the hypotheses of an heretical corruption must be excluded," but points to the fact that Philo believed, "wrongly, of course," that Sarah, Rebecca, Leah, and Sepporah conceived by divine operation, without the intervention of a man; though declared in Scripture to have born children, not to God, but to their husbands. Altogether, the Syriac vindication of the honor of Mary and the paternity of Joseph is causing a pretty fluttering in the theological dovecoats.

The Report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Commission on the Voluntary Schools suggests that it will be better

policy to apply for aid to the imperial than to the local expenditure. This is, of course, to obviate the possibility of local control. With the immense amount already given to voluntary schools from imperial taxation, there ought to be increased public control. The Committee fail to observe that the trend of modern legislation is towards decentralisation and the investing of municipalities and other local authorities with increased powers of dealing with their own affairs.

It appears that the Education Department has already, in some cases, held that the teaching of the Apostles' Creed in Board schools is not an infraction of Section 14, directed against distinctive catechisms and formularies. The question is, however, more distinctly raised than before by the appeal of the Rochford School Board, and an authoritative judgment will have to be given.

Our jovial exchange, the *Western Figaro*, is responsible for the following: "At the morning service in the prison chapel, on a recent Sunday, the first hymn given out was the one beginning:—

This is the house of prayer
Where we, Thy servants, meet,
And Thou, O Lord, are here,
Thy chosen band to greet.

The congregation consisted of a particularly fine and large collection of thieves, burglars, and scoundrels of every description."

This reminds us of a text chosen by the chaplain of Colney Hatch Asylum, on the Sunday when the female inmates first appeared in the splendor of new bonnets with pink ribbons and Rob Roy tartan shawls. The words he chose were: "Even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these."

A. A. Isaacs, a perverted Hebrew, writes in the *English Churchman* against the gratuitous circulation—except in special cases—of the New Testament Scriptures in Hebrew. He mentions that an Israelite in New York confessed that he had been in the habit of collecting the Hebrew New Testaments of Salkinson, gratuitously circulated, and committing them to the flames.

A person calling himself Father Benedict Elliott, O.S.B., and representing himself as a son of Lord Minto, has been sent to prison at Rome for frauds on ecclesiastics.

A coroner's inquest was held on the body of Anne Knight, who died in the Salvation Army shelter at Spitalfields. She paid twopence for a bunk, but no covering was provided, and her own rags were not enough to keep her from freezing. One of the jurymen said it was "a disgrace." Such shelters ought not to be allowed, in his opinion; what was the use of a bunk without a covering? And echo answers, "What?"

L. Nabokoff, a Mohammedan Russian, is conducting a Society for the Study of Islam at New York. He is reported, in the *New York Herald*, as saying that "his reason for embracing Islam was that he could see no reason for a man who keeps his eyes open accepting the religion of Christianity. Its followers are like a lot of sheep who jump over a log which may be in their path, but when the log is removed continue to jump over the place where it had been, simply because it had been their custom to do so, and because they did not use intelligence, if they possessed any. In former days ministers used to jump over dogmas, such as the Immaculate Conception, although such dogmas were kicked out of the way by Mohammed 1,250 years ago. Ministers are still jumping."

M. Nabokoff then referred to the priestcraft in Christianity as the common trick "by which a few unscrupulous men have fastened themselves on you, and are living off your sustenance, doing work only one day in the week."

According to Professor Kapteyn, of Groningen, our sun is but a member of an immense cluster of stars, and outside this cluster, at a much greater distance from us than the stars of the solar cluster, lies a considerably richer ring-shaped cluster, the light of which, reduced to nebulosity by immensity of distance, produces the Milky Way gleam of our midnight skies. Yet we are to suppose that the author of this got born in a corner of Palestine, and put the support of the boy's maintenance on a Jewish carpenter.

Referring to the agitation against atrocities in Armenia, the *Crescent* notices the lynching and other outrages by Christian whites on Christian negroes in the Southern States, and asks why don't the goody-goody Christians get up an agitation over this matter.

The *Crescent* reports that, as has been the custom since 1888, "the Liverpool Muslims celebrated the reputed

birthday of the prophet Christ by feeding several hundred of his followers, whom their brother Christians permitted to starve on the day when, according to their superstitious notions, their Man-God was born!" A little fact like this should make Christians ashamed of condemning the followers of Islam, and open their eyes to the truth that the only religion worth having is one which dictates the service of humanity.

In the *Open Court* Aziz-ud-din Ahmad, writing on "The Future of Islam," says: "The future of Islam is ensured by the humanity or kindness of its followers towards one another. Colleges are open to all. No caste; no distinction of race. One god, one people. There is more self-sacrifice and less paper boast with the propagation of Islam than of Christianity."

Mr. Samuel Legier, of Newton Abbot, has had a cheap shillingsworth. Mr. Legier is a son-in-law of a Mrs. Hellier, who is buried in the parish churchyard of Hennock. He has made repeated appeals to the Rev. F. J. L. Gillman, the vicar of Hennock, to permit the grave to be re-turfed and the tombstone replaced. But the man of God refused to allow any graves of Dissenters to be turfed over. Mr. Legier made a last appeal to him on Sunday, and, on being refused, thrashed the vicar with a stick. He was summoned for assault, and fined one shilling and costs.

Nellie Laws, late a preacher of the Salvation Army, is now imprisoned for three months with hard labor. Sergeant Nurse said she lived by religious imposture for years. She pretended to be the daughter of a clergyman.

The Rev. Henry J. Dodwell, who has been confined in Broadmoor Lunatic Asylum for nearly seventeen years for shooting at the then Master of the Rolls, has, through his solicitor, made an appeal to the Home Secretary for the restoration of his liberty. The Home Secretary has sent a reply, stating that he has made inquiries, but regrets that he cannot authorise the patient's discharge from the asylum, as he is still insane, and could not be released without risk.

One of the Episcopal clergy at the Edinburgh English Cathedral has much roused theological ire by declaring that the Presbyterian organisations around are not branches of the Church of Jesus Christ. An angry correspondence ensued, and the Bishop has been asked to reprimand the clergyman, which he has declined to do. They are a happy family.

Mr. Thomas Williams, sub-inspector of schools, sends to the *Spectator* some answers received from a village school in Radnorshire. Asked who was the greatest man of the present time, they answered, "The rector, sir." Asked in what respect they considered the rector greater than Mr. Gladstone, they answered, "Please, sir, the rector is M.A., and Mr. Gladstone is only M.P." Inspector—"But how is an M.A. greater than an M.P.?" Children—"An M.A. is A1, sir." Inspector—"Yes?" Children—"Please, sir, nobody can be higher than A1." Evidently the rector is a little god almighty in his own district.

A story told of the late C. Baring, Bishop of Durham, who lived in great state and died leaving £120,000, comes in *apropos* of our cartoon. It is said that when he was asked for his favorite text he said it was, "Jesus Christ for our sakes became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich."

About two hundred lives have been lost from the Humber alone during the recent gales. At Heligoland part of the town has been washed away; while in Hungary and Silesia snowfalls have stopped railway communication, and there are reports of persons being caught in the storm and frozen to death. Providence is sleeping, or, peradventure, on a journey.

The cold weather has not eradicated cholera from Russia, for the Odessa correspondent of the *Daily News* says: "According to the latest official weekly cholera bulletin, there were 655 cases and 279 deaths in the twenty governments of European Russia. In the government of Podolia alone there were 473 cases and 173 deaths."

How faith will cling to a shadow is illustrated in a poem by the Rev. Newman Hall, in his just-published *Lyrics of a Long Life*. It is entitled "Prayer Answered in Disappointment":—

"One jewel more," I cried, "to make me glad;
He took the one I had.
"Come quickly, Lord, and heal this wounded heart;"
Still more He made it smart.
"At length from trouble bid my soul repose;"
Yet thicker came the blows.

He asks, "Why in my portion mix such bitter leaven?" and gives the answer, "To fit thee more for heaven." So we are

to suppose it is all for the best if a man loses all his beloved ones, "cut off in the midst of their sins" mayhap, so long as he is thereby fitted for heaven. A good deal of selfish vanity seems to underlie this faith and resignation.

The Rev. Walter Walsh writes in the *Contemporary* on the Labor Church, under the title of "The New Secularism." He affects to consider the old Secularism as dead, and says: "Higher Criticism and the New Theology have taken the wind out of the sails of Ingersoll and Foote." If this is, so it is not because we have changed our course, but because they have come upon our tack. Secularism stands where it did, but the Churches are bound to come in its direction under pain of being deserted by the secular spirit of the age. Mr. Walsh himself bears testimony to this when he complains that even the Labor Church "breaks with the past, belittles the future, and casts its vote for the present."

It appears from *Willick's Tithe Commutation Tables* that £160 of tithe rent-charge will be worth in 1895 but £73 13s. 0½d., or a reduction of over 26 per cent. The average value during the fifty-nine years which have elapsed since the passing of the Tithe Commutation Act is £98 17s. 10½d.; so the clergy have not done so badly on the whole, though they are grumbling, as usual.

The late Rev. G. W. Herbert, vicar of St. Peter's, Vauxhall, left personal estate amounting to upwards of £122,000. A nice little sum to begin the next world with; but how hardly shall they that have riches enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Rev. C. Garrett states that a rich Wesleyan has offered a good round sum to the Ministers' Retirement Fund, on condition that preachers consent to burn their old sermons. Probably he fancies they are often resurrected, and cremation is the best preventive of resurrection.

The recent American Church Congress was chiefly notable by the attempt to urge a boycott on the Sunday papers. The attempt is manifestly only dictated by trade rivalry, for the Sunday paper is prepared during the week, and only the Monday paper occasions Sunday work. As the Monday issue occasionally reports the ministerial sermons, there is never any mention of boycotting that.

Here is a rustic idyll from East Anglia. A London tripper encountered a venerable individual working among the graves in the churchyard, and, giving him good-day, said, "I suppose you are one of the Church officials?" "Officials, sir," he answered; "why, lawk, I don't know what I deu be. When Parson Brown came he say I were the sextant. Then Parson Smith, he come and he call me the beetle. Now Mr. Jones be our parson, and he say I be the wargin."

A good story is told of a number of boys who were playing on Saturday in front of a city church. The rector suddenly came out of his parsonage and told the boys to be quiet in front of the Lord's house. "That is all right, mister," said the boys. "The Lord is not here to-day. He is down the street at the Jewish synagogue."

A Chinaman offers tinsel and gold to his god, and burns "mock money," or bits of colored paper, in idolatrous worship. The Chinese is artful. He knows that, if he made his offerings in the real metal, they would never go further than the pockets of the priests. It must be imported Chinamen who put the bad coins into the collection bags and plates about which a parson complains in a contemporary. "The offertory," says this indignant cleric, "has now become a recognised convenience for passing bad money." Alas and alack! The filthy lucre!—*Reynolds's Newspaper*.

R. H. Charles argues at length in the *Academy* that the Syriac version of Matthew i. 16, which states that Joseph, the husband of the Virgin Mary, begat Jesus, represents the original text. He says this view is steadily gaining acceptance among English and German critics.

This is the season for chestnuts, and in the Surrey pantomime an old *Freethinker* chestnut is introduced: "Don't you know, my good man, that drink is your worst enemy?" Inebriate—"Yes, mum; but the Bible says we are to love our enemies."

The *Western Mail* attributes to a Breckonshire vicar the following story: "The incumbent of a seaside parish on the west coast of Pembrokeshire held weekly a Welsh prayer meeting, which was occasionally attended by some coast-guardsmen who understood not one single word of Welsh. For the benefit of these visitors the vicar asked one of the parishioners to pray in English. After not a little persuasion the man was induced to attempt the task, and, though he had never before prayed in English, all were

agreeably surprised to find that he could do so with ease and fluency. He had prayed for a considerable time, and it was very evident to all that the poor man's great difficulty was how, and in what manner, to wind up or finish decently. He made two or three attempts, and at last, to the astonishment of all, he made a desperate effort to come to a close, saying, 'O Lord, hear our prayer; forgive us our sins, and believe me yours truly, John Jones.'

While we are giving stories, we cannot resist offering the following one told by *Truth* of "a well-known Bishop": "The Bishop was one day examining a batch of deacons for priest's orders. After the theoretical part of the examination, he said to them: 'Gentlemen, you have passed a most excellent examination in theory; I should now like to see you do something practical. I shall go into the next room and personate a sick man. You will come in one by one, address me as a sick parishioner, and say something comforting.' When his lordship had retired, the candidates were in some confusion, and nobody cared to begin; but at last a mad Irishman volunteered to be the first. He entered the study, and, approaching the Bishop, who was lying with a woe-begone air on the sofa, he thus addressed him: 'Oh Anthony, Anthony! the dhrink again! Shure it will be the death of ye! Turn from your evil ways before it's too late, and be a man!' This is said to have been the last time that the Bishop held a practical examination."

Protestant open-air preaching is not an easy matter in the city of Cork. The Catholics don't like it, and they express their dislike in a tempestuous manner, by throwing mud and stones at the preachers. Of course, the *Methodist Times* is very angry at this state of things; but the Catholics can reply that they are served in the same way by Protestants in Belfast. Two blacks, it is true, do not make a white; and, in this case, both blacks are to the discredit of Christianity.

"Any nation," the *Methodist Times* says, "which prevents freedom of speech to religious teachers in the open-air is not only anti-Christian, but uncivilised, and must be ranked below the degraded Roman empire itself. Jesus Christ and his apostles were permitted to preach the Gospel in the open air all over the Roman Empire." Precisely so; and this very fact shows how much Christianity has done for freedom in nearly two thousand years.

Newcastle-on-Tyne is a fairly pious city. It hasn't as many public-houses to the square acre as some cities—for instance, Liverpool; but they are splendidly patronised, and 22 per thousand of the inhabitants get convicted every year for drunkenness.

In the early days of the Temperance movement it had no more bitter opponents than the ministers of religion. When it grew powerful they began to patronise it, and they have so nobbled it at last that a religious passport (we believe) is required by every Temperance society in the kingdom. But, somehow or other, the Temperance movement does not progress as it should under the fostering power of the Gospel. Mr. Caine boasts that there are seven million total abstainers in Great Britain and Ireland, and that the forces of Temperance were never so active as at present. Yet the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who calculated on getting £1,340,000 during the year from the additional tax on beer and spirits, has actually got £1,123,000 during nine months. And it will not do to put the increased consumption down to the "influenza," as was done when Mr. Goschen got such a handsome return from rum.

Miss Lucy Garnett, in the *Nineteenth Century*, has been dispelling some of the prevalent nonsense in Christian countries about the inferiority of the position of women among the Mohammedans. On the whole, their legal rights exceed those of the women in most Christian lands. Even with respect to the slaves, Miss Garnett says their lot is "preferable in many respects to that of the majority of free domestic drudges in the West."

How to Help Us.

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

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 6, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, London, E.C. : 11.15, "Bradlaugh's Social and Political Teaching"; 7, "God's in His Heaven."

Wednesday, January 16, Hall of Science : 8.30, "A Night with George Meredith."

January 27, Liverpool.

February 3, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—January 13, Leicester ; 20, Nottingham ; 27, Hall of Science, London. February 3, Hall of Science ; 10, Camberwell ; 17, Plymouth. March 3, Manchester. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S. W.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 28 Stonecutter-street by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

E. TIMEWELL.—You will find articles on Spiritism in the *Freethinker* of March 19 and July 30, 1893.

J. C. MACK (Teneriffe).—Thanks for your good wishes, which we reciprocate.

W. H. MORRISH.—See paragraph. Thanks. Always glad to hear from you.

POTTERIES.—Mr. Foote offered the Hanley Branch a Sunday in January, or a later one if that was inconvenient, but he has received no reply. It is difficult to see what he can do more.

MR. FOOTE'S FIGHTING FUND.—R. Seago (S. Africa), £1 1s. ; Mr. Horton (Kokstad, S. Africa), per R. Forder, 10s. ; J. J. Crabtree, 2s. 6d. ; Le Diable, 2s. 6d.

WATTS ELECTION FUND.—Mr. G. Ward, treasurer, acknowledges : C. J. Pottage, 10s. ; A. Tripp, 5s.

DARIUS.—Pleased to know that you think our New Year's number "a splendid twopennyworth." Subscription handed to the secretary.

E. H.—The texts are open to public judgment. Mr. Watts gave his opinion of them, and of course you are free to entertain yours. It seems to us that Jesus did teach that poverty was a blessing, and wealth a curse. Lazarus went to heaven simply because he was poor ; he had no other virtue ; and Dives went to hell simply because he was rich.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges :—J. Mosenthal (Germany), 5s. ; A. F., 2s. 6d. ; A. Tripp, 5s.

E. D. H. DALY.—Thanks for cuttings.

J. ROBINSON.—If you send them on to Mr. Forder, he will pay carriage, and they will be used judiciously.

V. PAGE.—See paragraph. Will you communicate with us about the matter that was left standing over ?

J. J. CRABTREE.—We return the compliment.

E. G. BILLINGTON.—A parcel of our "Atheist Shoemaker" pamphlet shall be sent for distribution at Mr. Hughes's meeting.

T. STUBBS.—Thanks for the paper. The public is getting tired of Mrs. Besant and her Mahatmas.

WILLIAM CORSWORTH.—Professor Harnack, the leading German theologian, holds that the Apostles' Creed was the composition of the Church of Southern Gaul. His article was introduced to English readers by Mrs. Humphry Ward in the *Nineteenth Century*, about eighteen months ago. Other information will be found in the chapter on "Pious Frauds" in *Crimes of Christianity*. Mr. Wheeler will shortly write on the Apostles' Creed.

J. FITCH.—Mrs. Watts would have been with her husband at the Federation Dinner, but she is engaged every evening at a London theatre.

J. BRODIE.—Addressed as desired.

A YOUNG ONE.—Bradlaugh's "Speeches" price 5s. Order of Mr. Forder. The libel case may be tried any time between three and six weeks hence.

WE have received for the Watts Election Fund : R. Seago (S. Africa), 10s. ; Le Diable, 2s. 6d.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The Rad—The Post—Twentieth Century—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Western Figaro—Liberty—Isle of Man Times—Truthseeker—Open Court—Middlesex Express—Crescent—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Blue Grass Blade—Liberator—Freidenker—Fur Unsere Jugend—Rochdale Times—Torquay Times—Brighton Examiner—Daily News—Birmingham Daily Post—New Zealand Graphic—Bristol Evening News—Weekly Bulletin—Western Daily Mercury.

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid :—One Year, 10s. 6d. ; Half Year, 5s. 3d. ; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

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.

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

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

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d. ; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements* :—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s. ; half column, 15s. ; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d. ; half column, £1 2s. 6d. ; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

THE N.S.S. MEETING.

THE meeting of members of the N.S.S. at the Hall of Science, on Wednesday evening, January 2, was well attended. Mr. Foote was in the chair, and many of the vice-presidents sat on the platform. Of these there were present, Messrs. Watts, Forder, Parris, Wheeler, Truelove, Heaford, Hartmann, and Samson. Mr. Cohen, who was spending a few days in London, was also present. Mr. Foote stated why the Executive had suspended the N.S.S. affiliation to the Hall of Science Club. The hall had been let for a Boxing Contest, the program of which included professionals ; and the advertisement of the performance, which was to have been followed by three others, while not illegal, was of a nature which the Executive felt bound to object to in connection with the Society's headquarters. As the Club committee could not cancel the letting, or give satisfactory assurances against a repetition, the Executive had no alternative but to clear the Society from all moral responsibility. The affiliation had therefore been suspended until a satisfactory arrangement could be arrived at. Mr. Charles Watts spoke strongly in support of the Executive's action, and moved a resolution accordingly ; this was seconded by Mr. Heaford ; and, after discussion, and explanations by Mr. G. Standing, the Club president, and Mr. J. Anderson, the Club secretary, was carried by an overwhelming majority. No one questioned the motives of the Club committee. It was a difference of judgment, but a difference which necessitated prompt action on the part of the Executive, in order to dissociate itself from what it disapproved. Happily we have good reason to believe that the difference will be amicably adjusted—that is, with respect to the future ; and we shall doubtless be able to make a definite announcement in our next issue. We hope, also, to be then in a position to make another announcement that will, to most Freethinkers, be still more gratifying.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE London Secular Federation's seventh Annual Dinner took place on Monday evening at the Holborn Restaurant. There was a large muster of friends, the repast was excellent, and everybody had a good time. Mr. Foote, who presided, made the usual appeal for funds, with a gratifying result. A full list of donations will appear in our next issue. The toast-list included speeches by Messrs. Charles Watts, J. M. Wheeler, Touzeau Parris, H. Snell, A. B. Moss, J. Rowney, W. Heaford, and Robert Forder. All were in good form ; indeed, the speeches were first-rate—witty, vivacious, and manly. They were varied with capital songs by Madame Burgwitz and Messrs. Walters and Vine. The final item was not on the program. Mr. Samson got up and proposed the toast of "The President," which "caught on" and elicited much enthusiasm. Mr. Roger seconded in an earnest speech, and the toast was drunk with honors, the whole assembly rising and singing "For he's a jolly good fellow." Mr. Foote, who was affected by this spontaneous compliment, made a suitable response ; and the gathering then broke up with "Auld Lang Syne."

Mr. Foote lectured at the London Hall of Science on Sunday, and had good meetings, in spite of the dismal fog. He occupies the platform again to-day (January 13). The morning lecture will be on "Bradlaugh's Social and Political Teaching." The evening subject will be "God's in His Heaven."

Having been obliged to leave town, Mr. Foote could not give his "Night with George Meredith" on Wednesday last. He will deliver the lecture next Wednesday evening (Jan. 16). It should attract a good audience.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures to-day (Sunday, January 13), afternoon and evening, at Leicester, where he is sure to have good audiences.

Justice, noticing Messrs. Wheeler and Foote's little book on Voltaire, says: "Any one who wishes to obtain a brief but trustworthy account of this remarkable man cannot do better than purchase this book, for it bears every evidence of being a painstaking endeavor to put the great French satirist's career before the reader in as impartial a manner as possible."

The Universities are open to women in Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Italy, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland. Austria, Hungary, Spain, and Russia deny them. "If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home" (1 Cor. xiv. 35).

The *Truthseeker*, in its last issue for the Old Year, gives a cartoon on "The Graveyard of the Gods." Tombstones are erected to Odin, Baal, Ormuzd, Osiris, Thor, Jove, Apollo, etc., and Father Time is digging a grave which a board announces is "reserved for Jehovah, the last and most brutal of all gods"—Christians and Jews the only mourners; Science and Education, undertakers.

In Mrs. Ireland's "Recollections of James Anthony Froude," in the January *Contemporary Review*, there is an anecdote of the first time Froude met Swinburne at a dinner, at which Arnold, Ruskin, and Houghton were present. "After dinner a little figure appeared, a 'boy man,' and, bounding past the guests, stood upon an ottoman so that he could well be seen. 'The lad began spouting some of his most outrageous poems,' said Froude, 'some of his very worst!' And the narrator smiled bitterly, continuing: 'We all sat in amazement till he finished, when Ruskin, making his way through the company, hurried up, and took Swinburne fairly in his arms, saying: 'How beautiful! how divinely beautiful!'" Swinburne was at this time little more than a boy."

In *Secular Thought* Captain R. C. Adams well remarks, in reply to those who point to progress in the Churches: "The work of enlightenment must go on outside the Church, in order that a little light may get inside. The Church will never be a pioneer in progress, but will continue to adopt reforms, only in tardy response to the demands of its supporters, and only in the small degree that is necessary to save its life."

Secular Thought reprints, with acknowledgments, Mr. Wheeler's recent article on "Voltaire." It says itself of him: "There is no single man who ever lived who has done so much to enlighten and instruct his fellow men as Voltaire. There are none who cleared away so many cobwebs, dissipated so many illusions, or enunciated so many original truths as he. He was the greatest individual civilising force of all time, and he was bitterly persecuted by the Christian Church."

Mr. D. Bedford, a member of the Walthamstow Branch of the N.S.S., was returned at the head of the poll for the Northern Ward, Walthamstow District Council, at the recent election. At Hanworth, Mr. Williamson, a working man and Secularist, was elected chairman of the Parish Council.

The annual Christmas *soirée* and New Year's social, in connection with the South Shields Branch of the National Secular Society, were held in the Baring-street School-room. Both were highly satisfactory in every respect, and a good balance will remain to the credit of the Branch Fund. This successful result is chiefly due to the praiseworthy efforts of Messrs. G. White and D. Bow. The speakers were Messrs. Thos. Thompson and S. M. Peacock (President).

The Hull Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday. Seven new members have been enrolled during the year. The balance-sheet was encouraging. Mr. A. Adams, the present secretary, dates from 83 Spring-street.

Mr. J. Keast, 32 Morgan-street, St. Paul's, has resumed the secretaryship of the Bristol Branch. He will be pleased to hear from Freethinkers who wish to assist. It is intended to have some lectures in St. James's Hall, and some open-air meetings during the summer.

Mr. Ernest Johnson, of the Nelson School Board, lectures to-day (January 13) in the Labor Hall, Railway-street, for the local N.S.S. Branch. His subject at 3 is "Thoreau's *Walden*," and at 7 "The Philosophy of Secularism." Mr. Johnson, though a young man, is well read and an able speaker. We hope he will have good meetings.

James Lick, who was a Freethinker, left several millions of dollars to be expended in various public improvements and institutions. Everybody has heard of the great Observatory, on Mount Hamilton, which bears his name. A hundred thousand dollars was set aside for a California monument to be erected in front of the city hall in San Francisco. This was unveiled on November 29. Speeches

were delivered by leading public men, and the children of the public schools sang patriotic songs. We believe it was James Lick who paid the whole cost of building the Paine Memorial Hall at Boston.

We see from New York papers that the "Rev." Citizen George Francis Train is announced to preach every Sunday at No. 8 Union Square Hall, on the subject of "Hell Be Damned."

In Devonport the clericals are making strenuous efforts to get the control of the School Boards in their hands. All Freethinking electors should work and vote for Mr. R. S. Smith, who has contended against the bigots in this matter.

WHO WAS THE MOTHER OF JESUS?

THERE has been no end of bother of late over that unfortunate question, overheard by Mr. Coxhead, as to who was the father of Jesus, and which our editor seems likely to settle in the series of articles now appearing in this journal. But little attention has been given to Jesus's mother. Many great men have attributed to their mothers some of the best traits in their characters; and, if it is true that the education of the child begins with the education of its mother, it may be of some little interest to Freethinkers to know what is said and known of the supposed wife of Joseph, the mother of Jesus.

It goes without saying that by what is "known" I mean what is said of her in the four Gospels; for it is self-evident, from the writings in the New Testament—some of which, according to expositors, were written before those Gospels—no mention whatever is made relating to Mary, except in Acts i., where she is represented as being present in that "upper room" with some of the Apostles and the brothers of Jesus, who, of course, were her sons. It is rather singular that John never mentions her name, and only refers to her as at the marriage feast, where Jesus says, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" and at the crucifixion. This last reference is more than curious: "When Jesus, therefore, saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! and from that hour that disciple took her to his own home" (John xix. 20).

Does it not seem somewhat singular that Mary should have been given over to John's care—for this was the disciple that "Jesus loved"—if she had her husband living (and there is no mention of his death), besides the wonder that must be excited when we know that Jesus had brothers, who certainly could not have been ignorant that Jesus was, or pretended to be, God, unless it be, as we are reminded elsewhere, that his brethren did not believe on him?

In the matter of converting his family, Jesus does not appear to have been nearly so successful as Joseph Smith was, the latter's family being soon convinced of his divine mission, and of the inspiration of the Book of Mormon. Singular, too, it is that this John should have written the life of her son, but not have mentioned her miraculous conception, or even the visits of the angel to Joseph or herself to announce it. His gospel is pretended to have been written as late as A.D. 78; but he gives us no account of her latter days or of her death. Therefore, if Christians made a harmony of what is known of Mary in the Bible, it would amount to really nothing at all, and, if it is not a bull to say it, of Joseph even less.

When we come to what is "said" of her, we have an embarrassment of riches, an abundance of details. It would require volumes to give a mere outline, not only of her earthly life, but of actions, appearances, discourses, and miracles, since she was taken bodily up to heaven. It will, however, be better to begin with her birth. This is supposed to have taken place on September 8, but in what year will depend on when Jesus was born—and who knows that? In a celebrated Catholic work, *The Glories of Mary*, we have a description of the flight into Egypt, in these words: "Any one can imagine what Mary must have suffered on this journey. To Egypt the distance was great. Most authors agree that it was three hundred miles; so that it was a journey of upwards of thirty days. The road was, according to St. Bona-

venture's description of it, 'rough, unknown, and little frequented.' It was in the winter season; so that they had to travel in snow, rain, and wind, through rough and dirty roads. Mary was then fifteen years of age; a delicate young woman unaccustomed to such journeys."

In Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* it is assumed that Jesus was born B.C. 4 (before Christ, four—is this not rather funny?); so that Mary was only fourteen when her husband had doubts of her chastity, and meditated obtaining a divorce. When one remembers how long it took the Jews to get from Egypt to Palestine—forty years—Mary's journey of thirty days seems to indicate that their donkey was an excellent specimen of the genus Jerusalem to do his ten miles a day. Unfortunately for the accuracy of the saintly Bonaventure, the road from Egypt to Palestine was neither "unknown" nor "little frequented," but was one of the principal highways of the ancient world, over which had marched and countermarched the vast armies of Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon for a thousand years.

We have, on the authority of the Infallible Church, some of Mary's milk preserved to this day in the Church of St. Mark, at Rome, which of itself ought to be sufficient to satisfy the most sceptical person. St. Ildephonsus apostrophises her milk in these words; "Suckle, O Mary, thy Creator; give milk to him who made thee, and made thee such that he could be made of thee" (*Glories*, p. 258). This means, if it means anything at all, that Mary was made of God, and God of Mary, and the father of Jesus was Jesus himself, and the mother was all three rolled into one.

Alban Butler, in writing on Mary's birthday, seems to forget altogether poor Joseph's doubts and perplexities, and approvingly quotes St. Jerome: "That Joseph, knowing her chastity, and admiring what had happened, suppresses, in silence, all which he could not understand." Also another ancient writer, who "rather believed her virtue than her womb" (*Lives of the Saints*, vol. ix.).

ROBERT FORDER.

CIVILISATION AND CHRISTIANITY.

CIVILISATION deals with this world only. It is a condition and a consequence resulting from the development and activity of the mental and physical faculties of men, and their application to the materials of a natural environment. It is the product of human ingenuity directed to material ends. The man who aids in the development of civilisation assists in the improvement of the human habitation, and the worldly comfort and happiness of the race. His thoughts dwell on this world, and he seeks to make it better, and to add to the comforts of the race here and now, not hereafter or in heaven. In doing this he violates the commandment of Christ, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink, nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on," "Take therefore no thought for the morrow" (Matthew vi. 25, 34).

If this absurd command were to be obeyed, no Christian could hope to assist in the civilisation of mankind and go to heaven. He would abandon his relatives, give no thought to the world or its improvement, waste no time on education, or art, or music, or thought, or even on food, but roam through the world a naked, starving, ignorant savage—an ideal Christian. There is no escape from this dilemma. The words of Christ are clear and positive, and, as civilisation involves the cultivation of all he condemns, no Christian can consistently be civilised.

Again, Christ taught the doctrine of non-resistance, and commanded, "If a man smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." If this command were obeyed, when the barbarian smote the civilised man, the latter would not resist, and the barbarous races would rule the world. Not by submission to evil, but by resistance stern and long-continued, have the higher races held their own and laid the foundations of freedom.

Many have striven to obey these unnatural and non-sensical commandments. Hermits have retired from the world to live like beasts in caves, and fanatics have humbly surrendered to slavery. If these true Christians controlled the world, would it ever be civilised? No. It is the men who have deliberately disobeyed the commands of Christ and the doctrines of Christianity who have civilised the world, not by deserting it, but by improving it; not by submitting, but by resisting oppression.

Again, if men had obeyed the commands of Christ, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," "Servants, obey your masters," and kindred despotic monarchical

maxims, there would be no republic, no liberty, no equality, no democracy.

It may be well to note that not only have great civilisations existed long before Christianity was ever heard of, but they have also existed contemporaneously with it, though beyond its control. Thus, in Mexico and Peru, the Aztecs and the Incas reached a high state of intellectual development at a time when Europe, under the beneficent Christian creed, was plunged into comparative barbarism. The Incas of Peru in particular had reached a higher stage of social development than has been attained, even at the present time by any nation in Europe. These two great civilisations would probably still be flourishing, for the edification and instruction of mankind, had not the emissaries of Christian Spain, Cortez, and Pizzaro found their way to the happy lands, and, having repaid the hospitality of the kindly natives by bloodshed, plunder, and wholesale slaughter, handed them over to the tender mercies of the Catholic priesthood to undergo the experience of conversion to Christianity. In the course of this conversion, which was conducted in the good old Christian way, the majority of the people were rapidly starved, enslaved, tortured, and burned to death, and the races soon became extinct. Thus does Christianity encourage civilisation.

It is not necessary, however, to revert to ancient times or distant lands for illustrations of the opposition of the Church to progressive ideas. It is not very long ago that the clergy of the United States held meetings all over the Union to protest against the abolition of slavery, and to assert the divine right of the slaveowner to chain and whip, and buy and sell, and with bloodhounds hunt and slay his fellow men. This was quite in harmony with Christian doctrine, for Christ, living in the midst of slavery, and daily seeing the tortured captives of the Romans scourged by their masters, said not a single word against it in all his lengthy harangues, and had no more consoling advice for the poor bleeding victims than this: "Servants, obey your masters," or "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." Where would civilisation be, and where would democracy be, if men obeyed these fatal and foolish words? Give unto the king your body, and unto the priest your soul. Long and wearily men obeyed these words, and lived in barbarism. Now they obey them no longer, and are crowned with civilisation. "If a man be ignorant, let him be ignorant," says the blessed book which is called the fountain of civilisation; and how much freedom or wisdom would we have to-day if Christianity had been permitted to continue enforcing this sacred maxim by the soft persuasion of flame and sword, of rack and dungeon?

—*Secular Thought.*

LUCIFER.

BLASPHEMY IN SWEDEN.

WE learn from Captain Thomson that a Swedish paper, the *Söderköpings Posten*, has been sequestered by the Minister of Justice for blasphemy in an article on the Public School System in its issue for December 20. The paper, it appears, had the audacity to suggest that children would do better to learn the geography of their own land than that of Palestine, and their own history than the stories of the patriarchs and prophets. It seems that a prosecution ought to follow the sequestration, and this is looked forward to with the liveliest interest by the press, and especially by the Freethinkers in Sweden. The present Government is reactionary, and the repressive policy of the sky-pilots is to the fore; but in thus imitating the methods of Czar and Kaiser the Swedish Minister of Justice will only render himself contemptible in the eyes of Liberal Europe.

Obituary.

DIED, Sunday, Dec. 30, Mr. James Burns, editor of the *Medium and Daybreak*. Mr. Burns was one of the pioneers of modern Spiritism in England, and about twenty years ago debated the question with Mr. Bradlaugh. It is doubtful if his paper will be maintained.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN.—Distasteful though to many, criticism must pronounce a fair estimate. Ingenuity may try to lessen the force of the internal evidence against John's authorship, but reason refuses to be satisfied. The gospel is still a theological more than a biographical composition, and reflects an Alexandrian atmosphere foreign to Galilee. It over passes the Ebionism of the synoptists, and mars the human portraiture.—*Dr. Samuel Davidson*, "Introduction to the New Testament," vol. ii., p. 417.

BOOK CHAT.

THE author of *The Oracles Ascribed to Matthew by Papias of Hierapolis* (Longmans) holds the view that the books attributed to Matthew and Mark by Papias, apud Eusebius, were not the gospels which the Church subsequently canonised, but merely the materials out of which the gospels were in part constructed.

One of the most interesting papers in the January number of the *English Illustrated Magazine* is an interview with Mr. J. N. Maskelyne, the Egyptian Hall conjuror. Mr. Maskelyne expresses his contempt for Spiritism, Theosophy, etc., and takes delight in exposing the fraud and credulity passing under a pretentious appearance. The versatile Mr. Grant Allen continues his "Moorland Idylls."

In *To-Day's Bible* Dr. Joseph Parker has sought to bring the old book up to date by extracting some of its morality, and putting other aphorisms into scriptural language. Needless to say *To-Day's Bible* omits the legendary and barbarous part, retaining only the fountain head of superstition. A smaller, it is in some respects a better book than the old Bible, but entirely without the interest attaching to that famous undateable collection of old documents.

The *Truthseeker Annual* for 1895 is full of interest. There is an admirable account of Freethought in the United States; a brief but pithy paper on "The Old and the New," by Colonel Ingersoll; "What the Church has Not Done for Women," by Mrs. Gage; "What are Women Here For?" by Miss Helen Gardener; "A Queer God and His Queer Book," by John Peck; "The Education of Children," by Susan Wixon; "Secular Sunday Schools," by Katie Kelim Smith, and other articles, together with much useful information to American Freethinkers. Nor must we forget the amusing sketch of "The One-Horned Ox" of George E. Macdonald, who has an original fund of bright American humor. Who hope the *Truthseeker Annual* will have a wide circulation, for it should be enjoyed wherever it goes.

In G. Macdonald's story of "The One-horned Ox," in the *Truthseeker Annual*, there is an instance of cuteness. One Spattle made money out on an Indian settlement, by growing hops. Asked how he thought of hop-raising in that out-of-the-way place, he explained that it was the missionaries. When he saw these signs of civilisation he knew intoxicants would follow.

Dr. Carolus, Physician (Cardiff: Chapple and Kemp, Neville-street; 1895; 2s. 6d.; 116 pp.; boards), is a novel with a purpose. The author is a Spiritist, and an advocate of Free-love. The story tells of a Dr. Carolus, who is supposed to be a Mahatma. He mysteriously disappears, taking with him a Catholic priest, an Unitarian minister, a journalist, and others. They turn up at a psychic settlement, supposed to be in wild Wales, where they have a religion and a social code of their own. The religion is something of a parody of the Catholic Church without its dogmas, and includes the invocation of spirits, *séances*, and a liturgy, in which the priest says, "Let us remember that life here is short," to which the people respond, "Aye; and that death will soon overtake us." Priest—"May you never forget this." People—"We never can, nor will."

Among the sculptured heads and busts which adorned the Psychic church, the author says, "I recognised Moses, Homer, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Shakespeare, Comte the Positivist, Allan Kardec the Spiritualist, and a number of other great teachers." Altogether, the psychic settlement seems a curious mixture of the Positivists with the Shakers and the Free-love community at Oneida Creek. They have divorce, but no marriage, and "Dr. Carolus" argues at length against that institution as "selfish and undesirable." We must say his arguments appear to us superficial. The drawbacks to marriage upon which he chiefly dilates are mainly jealousy and the pain of separation by death; but we have yet to learn that jealousy would be eliminated by such a free-love institution as that at Oneida, while the pain of separation from loved ones, whether one or many, can only be minimised by lessening the love—a project which, like the Buddhist and Stoic schemes of eradicating desire, is equivalent to cutting off one's feet for fear of corns. We distrust the love which is all circumference and has no centre. In its plenitude there is a void. The home and the family have been the sources of altruism, and are likely long to remain so. "Dr. Carolus" should know that the mass of the world have not reached monogamy yet. The book is rather an argument than a novel, and we have treated it as such. It certainly shows thought, though not, we think,

deep thought, and it is one of the signs how all questions, social and religious, are now being thrown in the crucible, whence, let us hope, the purer gold will emerge.

Another novel with a purpose is *Six Thousand Tons of Gold*—a good title to ask for at a book shop (A. D. Innes). The owner of this vast treasure, discovered in Patagonia, tries to see what good he can do with it, and, finding he makes everything worse, determines at length to sink it in the sea. The moral, if any, is—demonetise gold.

In S. R. Crockett's last book there is given a discussion by some Galloway shepherds on the death of the Devil. "The minister was sayin'," remarked one, "that the new moderates threep that there's nae deil at a'. He dee'd some time since!" "They say," said John Scott, pulling meditatively at his cutty, "that the poer is vested noo in a kind o' comy-tee!" "I dinna haud wi' comy-tees myself," replied Meg; "it's juist haein' mony maisters, ilka yin maist cankersome and thrawn than anither!" "Weel, gin this cegs be true, an' the auld deil's deed at last, there's a heap o' fowk in this parish should be mentioned in his wull," said Jock Gordon, significantly. But the herd was a staunch Marrow man. He was not led away by any human criticism, nor yet by the new theology. "New licht here, new licht there," he said. "I canna' pairt wi' ma deil. Na na, that's ower muckle to expect o' a man o' ma age!"

IN MEMORIAM—1894.

A WEARY nineteen hundred years
Speeds onward through its last decade;
The woe the brute in man has made
Fills human hearts with anxious fears.

In vain the boasted Christian plan
To lift the race to high ideals,
The nation's groan beneath the heels
Of tyrannising Christian man.

And ranged are seen the priest and purse,
Akin in deadly enmity
To Reason's struggle to be free,
Unstayed by God's imagined curse.

Can one prophetic vision dare
Premise the future's chequered scroll,
And guess a single nation's goal,
Or voice the griefs our land shall bear?

Will man's asserting spirit mould
The circumstance to better things,
Nor dream a power Almighty flings
O'er all predestination cold?

Begone the lie that speaks the thought;
The human brain, in searchings deep
For truth, to woe alone must leap,
And knowledge is with evil fraught.

Our best endeavors now to grasp
The underlying facts of things
Will give our minds far fuller wings
To soar, and higher life to clasp.

May man in future years be found
Evolving out to sweeter light,
And, banished superstition's night,
Let mutual love shed joy around.

The wave of time that now succeeds,
In ties of trust and love to bind,
The creature sink to raise the mind,
And bury harsh, unrighteous creeds.

The thoughts of man unfettered rise,
And all his energies be spent
On schemes to lift his race intent—
United happiness the prize.

If this the great result shall be,
With universal peace and love,
We may our present state above,
Forget the buried century.

G. R.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake supports a petition of the Brighton co-operators, praying for the diminution of public-houses, by a letter to the magistrates, in which he mentions that in many streets in Brighton there is a licensed inn to every six of the inhabited houses. The letter, which shows the veteran's usual pith, is printed in the *Brighton Examiner*.

JEWISH COATS OF ARMS.

FROM the description of the symbols of the twelve tribes in the account of Jacob's dying blessing (Gen. xlix.), it has been surmised that the patriarchs had crests and coats of arms. The descriptions have, however, been applied by Kircher, Sir William Drummond, and Henry Melville, to the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Others think that the animals referred to were the totems of the tribes, and that the prohibition of various animals as food was originally part of totemism. In an article on "The Humors of Heraldry," in the *Cornhill Magazine*, the writer refers to the early heraldry ascribed to the Jews. He says: "Although heraldic authorities have made no direct attempt to solve the vexed question,

When Adam delved and Eve span,
Who was then the gentleman?

yet they have assigned to Adam two coats of arms. The first, which was borne in Eden before the Fall—when he needed neither coat for covering nor arms for defence—consisted of a shield gules, upon which the arms of Eve (a shield argent) were quartered as an escutcheon of pretence, she being an heiress. The second coat, borne after the expulsion from the Garden, was *paly tranche*, divided every way and tintured of every color. The use of furs in blazonry is, it has been solemnly asserted, a relic of the garments of skins worn by our first parents. The second man who lived upon the earth, Abel, was, we are told, a true gentleman—a proof that it does not necessarily take three generations to manufacture the article. Cain was 'no gentleman' by behavior, but he was the first man who desired to have his arms changed, 'so God set his mark upon him.' Nearly all the principal characters in the Old Testament have been accredited with coats of arms. These are, as a rule, highly appropriate, except in the case of Joseph's heraldic coat, which was merely black tintured with white—'chequy sable and argent'—whereas something after the pattern of Adam's second coat would surely have been more in keeping with the youthful Joseph's favorite attire. Gideon bore arms, sable, a fleece argent, a chief azure *gullé d'eau*; David, a harp, or in a field argent; and Samson, gules, a lion couchant or, within an orle argent, semée of bees sable. Armorial ensigns are supposed to have received divine sanction, for God, when prescribing unto Moses the form of conducting the Israelites in their journey through the wilderness, expressly commanded the use of armorial signs, saying, 'The children of Israel shall pitch their tents every man by his own camp, and every man by his own standard.'

Pious Wants.

Here is a curious advertisement, copied by the *Sporting Magazine* from an old English country paper: "Wanted.—For a sober family, a man of light weight, who fears the Lord, and can drive a pair of horses. He must occasionally wait at table, join in household prayer, look after the horses, and read a chapter in the Bible. He must, God willing, rise at 7 in the morning, and obey his master and mistress in all lawful commands; if he can dress hair, sing psalms, and play at cribbage, the more agreeable. N.B.—He must not be familiar with the maid-servants, lest the flesh should rebel against the spirit, and he should be induced to walk in the thorny paths of the wicked. Wages, 15 guineas a year."

And here is another from the *Daily Advertiser* of December 8, 1797: "Wanted.—For a wine merchant's house in the City, as porter, an athletic man, of a serious countenance, a good character, and the Lady Huntington's persuasion. Must attend prayers twice a day, and divine service four times on Sunday; be able to bear confinement; have the fear of God before his eyes; and be able to carry two hundredweight. Wages fourteen shillings a week and find himself. N.B.—A Yorkshireman will not be objected to, but no Irishman will be accepted. Apply to-morrow, at 1 o'clock, to T. F., at No. 14 Philpot-lane."

Scene: A field adjoining the Gas Works. Operations being carried on for a balloon ascent.

A Justice of the Peace, Town Councillor, and Director of the Gas Company contemplating scientific man preparing apparatus for taking observations during voyage.

J. P.—"I would not go up were it ever so."

S. M. (eyeing portly J. P.)—"I don't think you ever could."

J. P.—"I would not go up for all B—."

S. M.—"I would a dozen times for half B—, and less than that."

J. P.—"I call it tempting Providence."

S. M.—"That does not affect me at all. I am under the care of the Devil, and he takes care of his own. Providence is not to be depended on." (Exit J. P. with palms up.)

Happiness by the Way.

Those only are happy who have their minds fixed on some object other than their own happiness; on the happiness of others, on the improvement of mankind, even on some art or pursuit, followed not as a means, but as itself an ideal end. Aiming thus at something else, they find happiness by the way. The enjoyments of life are sufficient to make it a pleasant thing, when they are taken *en passant*, without being made a principal object. Once make them so, and they are immediately felt to be insufficient. They will not bear a scrutinising examination. Ask yourself whether you are happy, and you cease to be so. The only chance is to treat, not happiness, but some end external to it, as the purpose of life.—*J. S. Mill, "Autobiography," p. 142.*

Lies Against Infidels.

Calumny is the homage which dogmatism has ever paid to conscience. Even in the periods when the guilt of heresy was universally believed, the spirit of intolerance was only sustained by the diffusion of countless libels against the misbeliever, and by the systematic concealment of his virtues. How sedulously theologians at that time labored in this task, how unscrupulously they maligned and blackened every leading opponent of their views, how eagerly they fanned the flame of sectarian animosity, how uniformly they prohibited those whom they could influence from studying the writings or frequenting the society of men of different opinions from their own, is well known to all who are acquainted with ecclesiastical history.—*W. E. H. Lecky, "History of the Rise and Influence of the Spirit of Rationalism in Europe," vol. ii., p. 298.*

Inspiration and Revelation.

The sacred records of the Israelites and the Christians attribute to each of these religions a supernatural origin. They hold it in common with the adherents of many, nay, of most other forms of religion. Zarathustra, Sakya-Muni, and Mohammed pass among their followers for *envoys* of the godhead, and, in the estimation of the Brahmans, the Vedas, and the laws of Manu, are holy, divine books. At the same time, it does not follow from this that the description of these forms of religion must start from that belief. No one expects or requires this for Buddhism or Islam; with what right, then, can it be demanded with respect to Judaism or Christianity? If we look upon those other religions as so many manifestations of the religious spirit of mankind, are we not bound to examine the Israelitish and the Christian religions also from the same point of view?—*Professor Kuenen, "Religion of Israel," p. 6.*

PROFANE JOKES.

Adam fell for an apple. We, his descendants, not unfortunately come to grief on a piece of orange peel.

The serpent left his trail in the Garden of Eden, but the general belief is that Eve's dress-pattern was too scanty to enable her to do likewise.

"Ah, my dear," said a loving wife to her husband, "I believe mine will be the fate of Abel." "How so, my love?" "Abel was killed with a club, and a club will kill me if you continue to go out every night."

It is related of a certain clergyman, who was noted for his long sermons with many divisions, that one day, when he was advancing among the teens, he reached at length a kind of resting-place in his discourse, when, pausing to take breath, and asking the question, "And what shall I say more?" a voice from the congregation earnestly responded: "Say Amen."

"Say, deacon, we've bin playing poker, but when we found it was two o'clock on Sunday morning we felt guilty and stopped, and now we're trying to square our conscience by turning it over to the church." "Good boys, good boys; you may have sinned, but you ain't lost. How much is there?" "Fifteen dollars and sixty cents." "Um, um, don't ye think ye'd better play a little longer?"

A Stirlingshire farmer had his household gathered around him one Sunday evening for family worship, and selected for reading Revelation xii. It fell to the turn of Tam, the elder son, to read the third verse, "And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and, behold, a great red dragon—" "Hout, tout!" cried the farmer; "Tam, that'll no dae. Wha ever heard o' a dragon in heaven?" "Ay; but, father," said Tam, "ye maun mind it's ane o' the wonders."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, G. W. Foote, "Bradlaugh's Social and Political Teaching." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, "God's in His Heaven." (Admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Wednesday, at 8.30, G. W. Foote, "A Night with George Meredith."
BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, J. McKillop (Fabian), "The Distribution of Wealth." (Free.) Monday, at 8, special entertainment and dance. (Tickets 3d. and 6d.) Tuesday and Friday, at 8, social gatherings. Thursday, Jan. 10, at 8, adjourned members' meeting.
CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, G. Bernard Shaw, "The Religion of the Twentieth Century." (Preceded by vocal and instrumental music.) Thursday, at 7.30, science classes. (Free.)
EAST LONDON (Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile-end-road): 8, F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Bible."
WEST LONDON BRANCH ("Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street, Notting-hill-gate): Monday, at 8.30, business meeting.
WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, W. J. Jupp, "The Love that Saves."
WESTMINSTER BRANCH (Mr. Stace's, 42 Vincent-street): 8, members' meeting—all should attend.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.
CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, concert and dramatic entertainment—"Boots at the Swan."
DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 1, choir meets; 2.30, J. P. Gilmour, "Man's Place in Nature"; 6.30, "The Races of Mankind" (with lime-light illustrations).
GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion class—P. Shaughnessy, "The Fallacies of Materialism"; 6.30, W. G. Unkles, "The Beginnings of Language."
HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Ixley, "Common Sense."
LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate): 2.30, Charles Watts, "The French Revolution"; 6.30, "Why Should We Lead Moral Lives?"
LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Tontine Society; 3, philosophy class—Ernest Newman, "Kant"; 7, John Walter, B.A., "Darwin Up to Date."
MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 11, E. Marx Aveling, "The Religion of Socialism"; 3, "Political Independence"; 6.30, "The Education of Children." (Admission 3d. and 6d.)
NELSON (Labor Hall, Railway-street): 3, Ernest Johnson, "Thoreau's Walden"; 6.30, "The Philosophy of Secularism."
PLYMOUTH (Co-operative Hall): 11, Stanley Jones, "The Origin of the Bible"; 3, "Christianity and Social Life"; 7, "The Church and Science."
PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 7, a meeting. Wednesday, at 8, dancing.
ROCHDALE (Working Men's College, 4 Acker-street): 11, Sam Standring, "Should we Hang Murderers?" 3, "Jesus the Dead-Raiser"; 6.30, "Our English Counties." Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday, debate with Mr. Smith (of Milnrow), "Is there a God?"
SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 3, A. B. Wakefield, "Secularism: Is it a Success?" 7, John Morley: A Study—with special reference to Dr. Charles Berry's recent article respecting him.
SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, O. Cohen, "Voltaire"; 7, "The Bible and Board Schools."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

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