

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

JOHN MORLEY AS A FREETHINKER.

MR. JOHN MORLEY is now the most distinguished statesman in the Liberal party after Mr. Gladstone, who continues to wield an incontestible ascendancy. Mr. Morley's rise has been rapid and secure. His position was a firm one before the recent election at Newcastle, and the result of that election has made it still firmer. If a man's enemies fail to overthrow him, they almost invariably heighten his power and reputation.

It is beyond our province in this journal to criticise Mr. Morley as a statesman. We only desire to write about him as a Freethinker. Our object is to give our readers some idea of his views on religion, and on other matters affected by it.

Mr. Morley resembles Charles Bradlaugh in one respect; he is to a great extent a disciple of John Stuart Mill, whom he has described as "the wisest man I ever knew, or am ever likely to know." He is also, but to a less extent, a disciple of Auguste Comte; and we believe he is not averse to being called a Positivist.

John Stuart Mill was a complete sceptic with regard to Christianity, nor had he any positive belief in Theism. He thought there *might be* a God of limited power and wisdom, but certainly not a deity who is all-wise and all-good. Auguste Comte went farther. While opposed to continued critical attacks on theology, he still set it resolutely aside as a mark of the childish stage of human development. He proposed to reorganise Society without God and without King by the systematic cultus of Humanity. "All theological tendencies," said Comte, "whether Catholic, Protestant, or Deist, really serve to prolong and aggravate our moral anarchy." He even denied sincerity to the more zealous theological partisans. "God to them," he said, "is but the nominal chief of a hypocritical conspiracy, a conspiracy which is even more contemptible than it is odious. Their object is to keep the people from all great social improvements by assuring them that they will find compensation for their miseries in an imaginary future life."

During Mr. Morley's editorship of the *Fortnightly Review*, it was the organ of the most advanced minds in England. Mill, Tyndall, Harrison, Huxley, and Clifford contributed to its pages. Clifford took to spelling God with a small g, and the *Spectator* retaliated by spelling Clifford with a small c.

A great deal of Mr. Morley's best writing appeared in the *Fortnightly*. Profoundly attracted by the great men who prepared the French mind for the Revolution, he composed admirable monographs on Turgot, Condorcet, Rousseau, Voltaire, and Diderot—besides minor studies of such moralists as Vauvenargues. Most of them, if not all, have been republished. Rousseau and Voltaire have a volume each, and two volumes are devoted to Diderot.

Mr. Morley's is the best book by an Englishman on Voltaire. Without glossing over Voltaire's fail-

ings, he sees in the Heresiarch of Ferney a brilliant liberator of the human spirit, and a resolute friend of the victims of injustice and oppression. He does honor to Voltaire's heroism in the vindication of Calas, and defends him from the charge of levity, brought against him by men without a tithe of his passion for humanity. He justifies Voltaire's attack on the superstition of his age, and points out that he never ridiculed men of sincerity, who lived good lives in spite of a barbarous faith. But it can hardly be said that Mr. Morley is quite successful in his purely literary criticism of Voltaire. Strange as it may appear to Mr. Morley's enemies, he is overweighted by his convictions; and thus he brings a too great seriousness to the treatment of Voltaire's lighter and more fantastic work. When the great wit deliberately skins an enemy alive, it spoils the sport to be too considerate of the loftier motives of philosophy. The performance is done with such exquisite skill, and in nearly every case the victim deserved skinning.

Mr. Morley's study of Diderot is more satisfactory. Diderot was more a thinker than a *litterateur*. His was a mind of extraordinary fecundity. Comte called him the greatest genius of the eighteenth century, and certainly his anticipations of the leading ideas of modern Evolution were simply marvellous. Diderot was an Atheist, and it is difficult to read Mr. Morley's book without feeling that he is in thorough sympathy with the great Frenchman's rejection of all forms of supernaturalism. In one sentence, at any rate, he speaks out clearly and decisively. Referring to the "licentiousness from which the philosophic party did not escape untainted," he perceives in it "one of those drawbacks that people seldom take into account when they are enumerating the blessings of superstition." "Durable morality," he remarks, "had been associated with a transitory religious faith. The faith fell into intellectual discredit, and sexual morality shared in its decline for a season. This must always be the natural consequence of building sound ethics on the shifting sands and rotten foundations of theology."

This is a sufficient reply to those who would make out Mr. Morley to be, in a certain sense, a friend of religion. If religion means supernaturalism, he is profoundly irreligious. Nothing could be more stern and sweeping than the close of that last sentence—the *shifting sands and rotten foundations of theology*.

Being so far gone himself on "the road to ruin"—as pious persons would call it—Mr. Morley does not lose his head for a moment in his long and fine chapter on Holbach's *System of Nature*. "It gathered up," he says, "all the scattered explosives of the criticisms of the century into one thundering engine of revolt and destruction." He perceives its defects, but he is also sensible of its merits. He especially praises "the inexorable logic with which the author presses the Free-Willer from one retreat to another, and from shift to shift," leaving him at last "naked and defenceless before Holbach's vigorous and thoroughly realised Naturalism." He also remarks that, in the chapter on the Immortality of the Soul,

Holbach "examines this memorable growth of human belief with great vigor, and a most destructive penetration." Above all he points out the great ideas of political progress that were an inseparable part of Holbach's Atheism. The denunciation of the social evil of superstition is "an incessant refrain that sounds with hoarse ground-tone under all the ethics and the metaphysics of the book."

Mr. Morley pays a very high tribute to Diderot's herculean labors on the Encyclopedia, for which he received—this mercenary Atheist!—the prodigal salary of about £130 a year. It was a project that "rallied all that was then best in France round the standard of light and social hope." Mr. Morley concludes his able, instructive, and beautiful chapter on the Encyclopedia with the following passage, which is a good specimen of his best style:—

"As I replace in my shelves this mountain of volumes, "dusky and huge, enlarging on the sight," I have a presentiment that their pages will seldom again be disturbed by me or by others. They served a great purpose a hundred years ago. They are now a monumental ruin, clothed with all the profuse associations of history. It is no Ozymandias of Egypt, king of kings, whose wrecked shape of stone and sterile memories we contemplate. We think rather of the gray and crumbling walls of an ancient stronghold, reared by the endeavor of stout hands and faithful, whence in its own day and generation a band once went forth against barbarous hordes, to strike a blow for humanity and truth."

The last chapter of Mr. Morley's book on Diderot closes with a translation of one of the great Frenchman's noblest pieces of writing. Diderot had been pleading for that fecund immortality which prolongs our personality in the grateful memories of those who come after us. His friend Falconet had replied in the spirit of another Frenchman who, on being told he should do something for posterity, inquired what posterity had ever done for him. Diderot "with redoubled eloquence, rising to his noblest height," replied as follows:

"The present is an indivisible point that cuts in two the length of an infinite line. It is impossible to rest on this point and to glide gently along with it, never looking on in front, and never turning the head to gaze behind. The more man ascends through the past, and the more he launches into the future—the greater he will be. . . . And all these philosophers, and ministers, and truth-telling men, who have fallen victims to the stupidity of nations, the atrocities of priests, the fury of tyrants, what consolation was left for them in death! This, that prejudice would pass, and that posterity would pour out the vial of ignominy upon their enemies. O posterity, holy and sacred! Stay of the unhappy and the oppressed, thou who art just, thou who art incorruptible, who avengest the good man, who unmaskest the hypocrite, who draggest down the tyrant, may thy sure faith, thy consoling faith, never, never abandon me! Posterity is for the philosopher what the other world is for the devout!"

It is reasonable to assume that Mr. Morley shares this noble sentiment with Diderot. He also looks for no supernatural immortality, but aspires to join "the choir invisible whose music is the gladness of the world." He labors for the future by serving the present; and doubtless the hope of brightening and elevating, however little, the life of unborn generations of his fellows, is to him an ample substitute for the more selfish inspirations of faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

There never has been a "Fall of Man" from which he could be saved by the suffering and death of God or man upon the cross, and the preaching of such a mode of salvation constitutes a miserable mockery. It is an utterly misleading aside from the real work of the world that remains to be done; and the money spent in sustaining the great delusion at home and propagating it abroad might suffice for the extinction of poverty if preventively applied.—Gerald Massey.

THE UNJUST STEWARD.

(LUKE XVI. 1-9.)

AMONG the parables ascribed to Jesus is one so Jesuitically Jewish in its character that, while it may with certainty be assigned to the race which extolled juggling Jacob for defrauding his brother, every enlightened Christian would like to see expunged from the Gospel. For the parable of the Unjust Steward, if it teaches anything, is a direct commendation of dishonesty.

The parable pictures the steward of a great man, who, being about to be dismissed, went to his master's debtors and fraudulently settled their accounts at a loss to the master, his object being to put the debtors under obligation to himself. He offers to reduce their debts forty and fifty per cent. for cash, allowing one, for example, who owed his lord one hundred measures of oil to make it fifty, and one who owed him fifty measures of wheat to put it down thirty. He thus thought to make sufficient friends among his master's debtors to support him when out of employment.

Jesus not only says the Lord praised the steward for his injustice because he had done cunningly (that is the real meaning of v. 8), but cites this pious example with approval, and advises his disciples to go and do likewise. "Make ye to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness that when ye fail they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

It is customary for Christian writers, like Archbishop Trench in his famous *Notes on the Parables of Our Lord*, to speak of "the difficulties of this parable," and the diversity of its possible interpretations. That is to say, the God-given Christian revelation is so obscure that most opposite constructions can be put upon it. But in truth, in this case, the most far-fetched interpretations are adopted because Christians dare not accept the natural and obvious meaning. Many of the theories by which interpreters have sought to defend the morality of the Gospel are dismissed by Trench, who says: "I am persuaded that we have here simply a parable of Christian prudence—Christ exhorting us to use the world and the world's goods, so to speak, *against* the world, and *for* God." Thus he glides over the most objectionable part of the parable, the commendation given to fraud. Christ commends instead of condemns the steward, who wastes his master's goods, and then provides against his just dismissal by still further treachery to his master's interests. The obvious teaching of the parable is praise of clever dishonesty—Jesuitism, as it has been well called. Yet this parable is appointed by the Church of England to be read on the ninth Sunday after Trinity. Jesuitism is often denounced by Protestants as everything that is vile; yet there is not an iniquity ever practised by the Company of Jesus but what they could find ample countenance for in the sayings ascribed to their master. They have rightly interpreted this parable as an instruction to the disciples meaning, "Make for yourselves friendships among the rich, so that should you get low in the world you may be sure of a retreat for the remainder of your days." Others, of course, put different glosses on the matter. The favorite allegation, since the time of Trench, is that it is only the prudence and not the dishonesty of the steward which is commended. This overlooks the point, which is that his "prudence" and his dishonesty were one and the same. One might as well extol a poisoner, and say it was not his poisoning but his scientific skill that was commended. Others resort to the favorite plea of metaphor. The parable must not be taken literally, it illustrates God's methods with his saints. By twisting and wriggling of texts the man of God well knows anything can be made of

anything. But still the question remains, Why does the narrative in its apparent and most evident meaning inculcate dishonesty? Why does the boasted divine morality of the gospel fall below the current standard of to-day? Is it not an instance sufficiently refuting the claim of the Gospel to be a divine revelation? For even when some fantastic meaning is imported into the parable in order to make its teachings accord with our modern notions of morality, this can only be done at the expense at least of the artistic power of the parable narrator, making him as stupid as the person who should point to Jack Shepherd or some other malefactor as a person to be commended, and then say he was of course to be commended on other grounds from those the narrator had pointed out. On the whole, it seems most probable that the parable meant what it seems to mean, and its author or authors considered their cause so good as to enjoin their disciples not only to use honest but even dishonest means to forward it; to enter into fraudulent compacts even with their opponents, so that if they should fail they should not be left without support under the adverse régime. The history of the Church shows that this, if not the acknowledged rule of guidance, has been at least the established rule of practice. The Jesuitical doctrine of being all things to all men, on the ground that the end justifies the means, is a natural outcome of Christian doctrines. Eternal salvation or everlasting punishment are issues so momentous that the ordinary rules of secular morality give way under their stress. Hypocrisy becomes a merit, pious fraud a virtue, and persecution a duty, if haply so souls may be saved from eternal torment. The merely just man, like the just steward in the parable, who returns his master exactly his due, is cast into outer darkness; while the unjust steward, who has made friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, is commended.

J. M. WHEELER.

THEOLOGY AN OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS.

(CONCLUDED.)

FROM the carefully-prepared address of Sir Archibald Geikie at the British Association, the student will no doubt have an increased desire to consult the best and most recent authorities upon the history and development of the human species, and also to examine modern works which contain reliable records of those many changes that have taken place in the growth of society and nations, culminating in the present advanced state of mankind. The thoughtful study of these important questions must enlarge men's views of human history and show them the narrowness of mind and littleness of intellect possessed by those persons who can still rely upon the history that was read and taught in the dame schools of their infancy. The marvellous changes that have occurred from time to time in the condition of the earth were forcibly indicated by the President when, referring to Edinburgh, he said: "The busy streets of to-day seem to fade away into the mingled copsewood and forest of prehistoric times. Lakes that have long since vanished gleam through the woodlands, and a rude canoe pushing from the shore startles the red deer that had come to drink. While we look, the picture changes to a polar scene, with bushes of stunted Arctic willow and birch, among which herds of reindeer browse and the huge mammoth makes his home. Thick sheets of snow are draped all over the hills around, and far to the north-west the distant gleam of glaciers and snow-fields marks the line of the Highland mountains. As we muse on this strange contrast to the living world of to-day the scene appears to grow more Arctic in aspect, until every hill is buried under one vast sheet of ice, 2,000 feet or more in thickness, which fills up the whole midland

valley of Scotland, and creeps slowly eastward into the basin of the North Sea."

It is necessary to remember that, although we cannot exactly date the natural history of the globe with its millions of years of existence, we can with the aid of science arrive at a definite conclusion that the popular theological history is false; that whatever may be the age of our planet, it is not determinable by an appeal to the Bible. All study that tends to raise mankind out of the narrow groove in which theologians are content to move, and to which they seek to limit the general human mind, must be beneficial. Besides relating the evidence furnished by his own geological studies, Sir Archibald Geikie alluded to the investigations of Lord Kelvin and others as to the diminution of temperature both in the sun and in the earth, which proved that the present could not be the original condition of things. This is not a question of mere opinion or speculation, but a matter of fact demonstrated by scientific investigation. The time required for the formation of the stratified masses that form the outer part of the earth's crust and the sedimentary deposits that attain a thickness of 100,000 feet has been calculated, and the result of the computation is as follows: If these deposits were all laid down at the most rapid recorded rate of denudation, they would require 73 million years; if at the slowest rate, not less than 680 million years. The reason given for the immense difference between these two estimates is that they are the result of actual tests of the time occupied by the changes now taking place, and of course, inferentially, they were the same in past times. "The rate of deposition of new sedimentary formations over an equivalent area of sea-floor may vary from one foot in 700 years to one foot in 6,800 years." There is another source of evidence, which has been specially obtained in various countries, and which has undergone the strictest tests, namely, the discoveries of the remains of extinct animal and plant life. "If," said the President, "the many thousands of years since the Ice age have produced no appreciable modification, how vast a period must have been required for that marvellous scheme of organic development which is chronicled in the rocks."

It has been suggested that in earlier ages the changes took place more rapidly; but Sir A. Geikie replies that if it were so some evidence of the fact would appear in the deposits, but there is none! Professor Tate mentions only ten million years, and Lord Kelvin only twenty million years for the changes referred to; but the President concludes, "After careful reflection, I affirm that the geological record furnishes a mass of evidence that no argument drawn from other departments of nature can explain away, and which, it seems to me, cannot be satisfactorily interpreted save with an observance of time much beyond the narrow limits which recent physical speculations would concede." The evidence of geology, it should be remembered, is not based on a guess, but on a record of observed events occurring independently of the thoughts of men. It is not, as some persons appear to suppose, simply a question of the exact date of the birth of the earth, but it is one of the time required to account for the results of the operations of causes which are manifest and undisputed. Man and all that surrounds him are believed by scientists to have been produced by gradual processes called natural laws, instead of having been the work of a moment performed by an omnipotent God.

As we anticipated the theologians would feel this scientific blow to their orthodox traditions, we were quite prepared to read of pulpit denunciations of the President's address. Let us see of what value these protests of theology are. On the Sunday following the meeting of the Association, Dr. McLeod preached in St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, and in the course of his sermon he said there was more

Christianity in Socrates than in modern science, the value attached to which was unduly exaggerated and exalted. "It might be questioned whether the well-being of nations was served by it." Certainly it might be questioned, and there can be no doubt as to the reply. The doctor spoke of "mere natural science." This reminds one of Dr. Chalmers preaching "mere morality," which Emerson said was as though one should say, "poor God, with no body to help him." The reverend gentleman will have to do without science if he cannot appreciate mere natural science. There is no supernatural or unnatural science, so we cannot give importance to its "educative value."

On the same day in St. Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, the Archbishop of York preached. He said, "That man had been evolved from the humblest beast was startling to Christian men." He "did not think that science had spoken its last word on the question." But, he continued, "Evolutionists could say nothing of the source to which the development owed its impulse." No doubt it is true that the last word has not been spoken by science, but the first has, and what is more, Darwin says that word can never be unspoken. As to the Archbishop's "impulse": Suppose twenty cannon balls were in a line on an inclined plane, and they of different diameters and of various colors, science could describe them and their mode and speed of motion. It is a fact that if the first ball should be moved, that that would account for the whole of them moving. But what gave the impulse to the first? Was it gravitation, a blow from a steam hammer, or an explosion of gunpowder? Or was it the result of some unknown cause? The scientist might not be able to give a definite answer to the first three queries, but there is one thing he would not do, he would not ascribe it to a cause *outside* nature.

Archdeacon Farrar was not silent, for in London on the same Sunday he asked, "What is our vaunted science but the soaring of an insect? Did it make the grass grow, create warmth and moisture to make the earth germinate?" No, but science does what theology cannot—namely, explain under what conditions the fruits of the earth can be most abundantly produced. Does not the Archdeacon recognise his illogical position? To point out what science cannot do in no way affects its facts, or its explanation of them. Suppose science discovers that lightning and a certain metal have some affinity; a rod of the metal is placed against a church steeple, and so conducts the lightning harmlessly to the earth, instead of allowing it to destroy the building. According to the archdeacon, this is only "the soaring of an insect," because science does not make the lightning or the copper ore! In ancient times it was written of certain people that their preaching was "foolishness." Can it be honestly said that it is otherwise at the present day?

CHARLES WATTS.

THE LAST DESIRE.

WHEN the time comes for me to die,
To-morrow or some other day,
If God should bid me make reply,
"What would'st thou?" I shall say:
"O God, thy world was great and fair,
Yet give me to forget it clean,
Nor vex me more with things that were,
And things that might have been!
I loved and toiled, throve ill or well—
Lived certain years and murmured not.
Now grant me in that land to dwell
Where all things are forgot!
For others, Lord, the purging fires,
The loves reknit, the crown, the palm;
For me, the death of all desires
In everlasting calm."

—Academy.

A HOLY POPE.

When in 1474, the death of Sixtus IV. was received in Rome with a pœan of joy, people commented not so much upon his selling benefices to the highest bidder and his other devices of extorting money, as upon the manner in which he rewarded the boys who served his unnatural lusts by granting to them rich bishoprics and archbishoprics.—*H. C. Lea, "History of the Inquisition,"* vol. iii., p. 639.

BIBLE MORALS.

How little good and bad conduct were associated in thought with the intrinsic natures of right and wrong, and how completely they were associated in thought with obedience and disobedience to Jahveh, we see in the facts that prosperity and increase of population were promised as rewards of allegiance; while there was punishment for such non-ethical disobediences as omitting circumcision or numbering the people.—*Herbert Spencer, "Principles of Ethics,"* § 112, p. 310; 1892.

MAN'S ORIGIN.

Modern science ranges among exploded fables that idea that used to be entertained on the strength of religious myths, according to which man came out of the Creator's hand as a ready-made product, endowed with all the qualities of his race. However obscure and incomprehensible the appearance of man on the earth's surface may have seemed in former times, and however necessary it may have been thought to explain or elucidate what an English scientist designated as the "secret of secrets" by the aid of a great miracle or of a supernatural act of creation, it has now become obvious to all men of science that the lofty form of man only owes its origin to a slow and gradual uprisal from the animals next below him, and that the beginnings of and tendencies to all his high physical and intellectual qualities and faculties are clearly present in the forms of life beneath him.—*Dr. L. Büchner.*

THE CHRISTIAN SCHEME.

All who do not embrace Christianity are said to be doomed; "for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). "He that hath the Son hath life; but he that hath not the Son hath not life" (1 John v. 12). The knowledge of Christianity, however, is presented to the heathen only through the preaching of the missionary. Well, the missionary will not preach unless he is paid: and even when funds are forthcoming he may not always adhere to the district assigned to him, but avoid a whole tract of country from some such circumstance as a difficulty in procuring milk for his children. The salvation of the pagan, then, is dependent upon a series of accidental circumstances, which must all occur before he becomes even acquainted with Christianity, and the safety of his soul neglected or imperilled even by so trivial an incident as the absence of the proper ingredients for the missionary's tea. Can anything be imagined more preposterous, more insulting to the goodness of Almighty God?—*Christianity and Common Sense,* p. 43.

RELIGION AND INSANITY.

We frequently see persons in insane hospitals sent there in consequence of what are called *religious* mental disturbances. I confess that I think better of them than of many who hold the same notions, and keep their wits and appear to enjoy life very well, outside of the asylums. Any decent person ought to go mad if he really holds such and such opinions. It is very much to his discredit, in every point of view if he does not. . . . Anything that is brutal, cruel, heathenish, that makes life hopeless for the most of mankind, and perhaps for entire races—anything that assumes the necessity of the extermination of instincts which were given to be regulated—no matter by what name you call it—no matter whether a fakir, or a monk, or a deacon believes it—if received, ought to produce insanity in every well-regulated mind. I am very much ashamed of some people for retaining their reason, when they know perfectly well that if they were not the most stupid or the most selfish of human beings, they would become *non-compos* at once.—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

Said a High Church and athletic curate to Low Church ditto—"Wonderful things Grace does!" "Ah," replied the latter, surprised at the serious observation from his volatile friend, "terue, my friend, terue." "Only fancy, y' know, ninety-two and not out."

IT FETCHED HIM.

"I am pained to the heart," said the Nebraska clergyman, "to know that several members of my congregation paid their money the other evening to witness a dog fight. I cannot understand why men who claim to be Christians, who are husbands and fathers, should care to be present where brute ferocity and bloodshed are the only attractions. My anguish is deepened by the knowledge that one of the contending beasts was owned by Brother Whiteside, whose labors in behalf of the benighted heathen have hitherto endeared him to me. I must call upon the brother for explanation."

"Your reverence," said Mr. Whiteside, "while I know that my conduct has not been exemplary, I feel that I am not entirely to blame. Being certain that my dog could whip anything in the county —"

"Your dog," interrupted the good man, "can do nothing of the kind. My brindled pup, which is not a year old, can chew the tar out of any four-legged beast you have on your ranch. If you don't believe it, I will arrange a match after the final doxology for either money, marbles, or chalk. The services will now be resumed, and I will endeavor, in my weak way, to show that the merciful man is merciful to his beast, and that cruelty to animals is one of the crying evils of the day and generation."—*Nebraska Journal.*

AN INQUIRING MIND.

"Papa," suddenly piped up the youngest, bracing his sturdy little legs for the assault, "don't it hurt the walls to have all the old skin scraped off 'em when you puts paper on? I bunked the skin off my knee an' I bellowed like forty. Why don't the wall bellow?" There was no reply. "Papa, is the holes in bakers' bread good for little boys to live on? An' where does the baker-man get 'em?" Papa said nothing, but dived into his paper. "Papa," came that still, small voice, with a feeling ring in it, "how does little boys know when deir toes hurts 'em? They don't fink wis deir feet, does they?" Papa fled to the cricket column with an audible gasp. "Papa, where does God live?" "In heaven, son." "Did old Mrs. Brown go to heaven when she died?" "Yes, dear." "Ain't it orful lonely up there wif only old Mrs. Brown an' God?" Papa prayed steadily through the brief lull. "Papa," once more came the question from the puzzled little brain, "where did Adam and Eve buy a cradle to put Cain in?" Papa glared across the table at the nurse, and hoarsely gasped, "For mercy's sake, Mary, take that kid to bed before I get congestion of the brain!" "Papa," came a wild shout echoing down the hall; "papa, why did God make all the strawberries in the summer when ov'rything's ripe, instead of makin' 'em in the winter time when there ain't nothin' else good for little boys to eat?" After a brilliant flash of silence, papa straightened up his wilted form, and sighed, "Maria, I wish you would remind me in the morning to buy that little fiend an *Encyclopædia Britannica* and a muzzle!"—*Funny Cuts.*

A minister's conversation with a female resident in the mountainous district of West Virginia is thus recorded:—"Is your husband at home?" "No; he's 'coon hunting. He killed two whopping big 'coons last Sunday!" "Does he fear the Lord?" "I guess he does, 'cause he always takes his gun with him." "Have you any Presbyterians around here?" "I don't know if has killed any or not. You can go behind the house and look at the pile of hides to see if you can find any of their skins!" "I see that you are living in the dark." "Yes, but my husband is going to cut out a winder soon!"

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- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
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- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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

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

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

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

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The minimum subscription for individual members is one shilling per year; all beyond that amount is optional, every member being left to fix his subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Members are classed as *active* or *passive*. *Passive* members are those who cannot allow their names to be published. *Active* members are those who do not object to the publication of their names, and are ready to co-operate openly in the Society's work.

Fill up the above form and forward it, with subscription (as much, or as little, as you think just to yourself and the cause), to Mr. Robert Forder, sec., 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.; or to a local Branch Secretary.

D A W N.

Lift, believer, lift thine eyes

To the bright'ning hills afar;

Truth has harnessed Phœbus' car,

Cloudy faith before her flies.

Look, believer, and be wise.

Cease, believer, cease thy prayers;

From the mists of night-time haste,

Precious time no longer waste,

Be not taken unawares;

Gods can lighten not thy cares.

Work, believer, work for man,

Things sublunar contemplate.

There's a Hell this side Death's gate;

Some from that, save if you can.

Useless is the Christian plan.

ERNEST ANDEBSON.

The Rev. F. S. Stooke Vaughan, has put out a pamphlet in which he contends that marriage with a deceased wife's sister is directly prohibited in Deut. xxvii. 23, which, in our version, reads "Cursed be he that lieth with his mother-in-law." If Mr. Vaughan is correct, it is strange the Jews have never adopted his interpretation. No one can deny that according to Deut. xxv. 5, a brother was compelled to marry his deceased brother's wife, if childless. This both emphasises the contradiction to Mr. Vaughan's version, and the absurdity of founding our marriage laws on those of a people in a state of semi-barbarism.

ACID DROPS.

John Bradford, writing in a Christian paper, sketches the plan of a Socialistic Church. The first requisite, he says, is this:—"It must be wide and tolerant enough to include every type of intellect." By way of illustration, he remarks that "a Church is poorly versed in economy which cannot make use of its Bradlaughs, as well as its Wesleys and Hebers." Of course this looks very nice. We feel inclined to fall on John Bradford's shoulder and weep. But, on second thoughts, it occurs to us that he hasn't told us *how* the Church is to make use of "its Bradlaughs." It might flatter them or bribe them. But would it answer? Your Bradlaughs have a fatal habit of thinking for themselves; and men who do that are certain, sooner or later, to break through the meshes of theology. Bradlaugh in the Church would be worse than a bull in a china-shop.

Rev. Dr. Reuben Thomas says that ministers, being studious men, are apt to take too little exercise, and to suffer therefore from sluggish liver; and in such a condition men should avoid composing sermons or formulating creeds. Some of our old creed-makers must have had "the liver" badly. Read the creed of John Calvin, then look at his portrait, and you will see what Eno's Fruit Salt, or two days a week cricket, might have done for him—and the Protestant world after him.

John Calvin's nose, by the way, was a caution. Long, thin, pointed, and painful. There never was such a nose for poking into other people's business. It must have been more pointed and painful than ever when he ran down Servetus, and left him to the dogs of persecution.

Dr. Parker told an Edinburgh interviewer that Mr. Gladstone is "a downright Pope." Oh dear! Has it come to this? Mr. Gladstone was all right when he went to Parker's Temple, and gave him a good advertisement. He is all wrong now he has other fish to fry.

"Lord Beaconsfield," Parker thinks, "was no doubt a man of prayer, a man of profound moral consecration, a man of infinite conscience." O ye gods! This is Dizzy in a new light. The wily old statesman would hardly recognise himself in Parker's picture. If he did, he would smile that deep smile of his, and coin a new epigram at the artist's expense.

Long ago Dr. Parker declined to have anything to do with Liberationism in the society of men like Bradlaugh and Morley. He still declares he will not work with non-religious people to obtain Disestablishment. On the whole he thinks Disestablishment will "probably never come in England." Probably it will, though; and when it comes it may find Dr. Parker a Bishop.

Mr. Froude says that the last time he called on Carlyle the old man feebly whispered to him, "Ah, isn't it strange that those people (meaning the Powers above) should have sent so much trouble on the oldest man in Europe?" Mr. Froude struck in piously, "Well, we don't know their reasons," and Carlyle replied, "Ah, well, it would be rash to say they have no reason." The "they" is good. It shows how hard it is to think of *one* personal God. It is easier when you take a quantity.

A band of Osage Indians, near Guthrie, Oklahoma, got into a terrible state through a barrel of Government whiskey and a strong dose of their own religion. The two spirits, working vigorously together, produced a shocking result. The Indians took to ghost-dancing; and getting hold of a prospector, named Oliver White, they bound him to a stake and built a fire in front of him. After cutting off his hair with knives, they hurled all sorts of missiles at him, though without inflicting a fatal wound. The fire burnt off his canvas trousers and thick boots, and raised big blisters on his thighs and shins. But the Indians seemed afraid to burn him to death, badly as they wanted to; so they at last kicked the brands in all directions, tore off his burning clothes, took him out of the camp, and left him there naked and exhausted.

At the opening of this religious drama, the medicine-man of the tribe, dressed in paint and feathers, indulged in shrieks and cries and incantations, which worked up the Indians into

the due pitch of murderous frenzy. Evidently the services of this gentleman were needed to bring about the ghost-dance and the roasting business.

Essentially in the same way, though more formally, did the Christian priests work up the populace into the due pitch of murderous frenzy, when they wanted to roast an unbeliever for the glory and honor of God. Christian priest or Indian medicine-man—what does it matter? What's in a name? Both belong to the same profession. Both minister to lunacy, and lunacy is very apt to take a homicidal turn.

The grass around Spurgeon's tomb is well-trodden by pilgrim feet. On a temporary large slab are placed the words, "I have kept the faith." It might be added, "And it kept me."

By the way, is not "I have kept the faith" a little cheeky in Spurgeon's case? The words are supposed to have been written by Paul, after much peril and suffering, and when he was within the shadow of martyrdom. Keeping the faith in such circumstances might have been something to be proud of. But what special reason for pride is there in keeping the faith on great popularity and a couple of thousand a year?

"Thoughts for Sceptics" is the title of an essay appearing in the *Christian Commonwealth*. The writer is [Rev. ?] J. Buchanan Brown. He has a certain command of language, but his logic is puerile. "Let the Atheist," he exclaims, "give examples of effects which have no causes." This, he says, is "in complete harmony with atheistical reasoning." Is it, indeed? Why, the exact contrary is the truth. The Atheist says that effect and cause are only two *aspects*, not two different *entities*. Both are phenomenal, not noumenal. Cause is antecedent, effect is consequent. They cannot be separated in thought. We cannot conceive in the past of effect without cause, nor in the future of cause without effect. Whoever asserts a beginning or an end, affirms cause without effect, or effect without cause; and this is a radical vice of every form of Theism.

Mr. Brown twits the Atheist with being as foolish as "Topsy" in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, who said "Nobody made me as I knows on. I spec I growed." Well now, that was not a bad "spec" after all. "Topsy" guessed it in once. She *did* grow. So did Mr. Brown, though he seems to think he was "made." "Making" is a term of art; "growth" is the universal law of nature. And Mr. Brown will find it so if he studies biology.

The *Christian Commonwealth* rather approves the idea of prayer-meetings at election time; but says it is very "singular" that Christians should be praying for the success of Mr. John Morley, when it is well known that Mr. Morley is practically an infidel. "Practically an infidel" is good. Is not Mr. Morley *theoretically* an infidel too? Surely that is clear enough to anyone who has read his writings.

Mr. J. O. Halliday, who got up the political prayer meetings for the success of Mr. Morley at Newcastle, is so convinced that these were the occasion of success, that he now proposes the formation of a great League of Prayer for the interests of the Home Rule cause of Ireland, and the great Liberal cause of Great Britain.

Our worthy contemporary, the *Christian World*, denounces the Chinese for placarding the walls with "filthily obscene" libels against the missionaries and the Christian religion. Is not "filthily" a superfluous adverb before "obscene"? And why be so hard on the Chinese? They hate Christianity, which comes to them with lies, impudence, and opium. Shocking, no doubt. But do not the Christians in England hate Freethinkers, though they are respectable and useful citizens; and maintain laws against them, robbing them of their social rights, preventing them from owning corporate property, and making them liable to imprisonment? Is a placard on the wall so much worse an act of persecution than twelve months in Holloway Gaol?

Says the *Boston Herald* (Aug. 10): "Edward de Cobain, who was expelled from the last Parliament for nameless crimes, and who is now in this country conducting revival meetings, seems to have gone a long distance from home to seek a vindication. If he is such an innocent person as he is

now trying to prove himself to be, the place for him to establish his innocence is among his own people. He has never yet had the courage to meet his accusers, but has accepted his punishment as if he thought he deserved it. He is a pretty poor specimen of a missionary for this country."

The people of Scotland did not love their Bible—or perhaps rather the price of it—when first published. The sale of the famous "Bassandyn Bible," the first printed in Scotland, had to be forced by the Privy Council, who enacted that each householder worth 300 merks of yearly rent, and all yeomen and burghesses worth £500 in land and goods, should possess a Bible and psalm-book in the vulgar tongue, under a penalty of £10.

Thomas Lake Harris, one of the American Messiahs who lately created some attention by claiming that he has been rejuvenated—he is really over sixty—is author of many poems which he says were given by Inspiration. One of the liveliest is a "Song of Satan," which he claims to have heard in hell. This hellish song seems to have derived its first line from the book of Job. It runs thus:—

Satan came to the Lord one day,
Ha, ho, with a merry go down,
Hunting for souls as a hawk for prey,
And the Lord said "Satan, why don't you pray?"
And Satan replied, "It's out of my way—
'Tis an obsolete custom,—'tis past away.
Among the best circles the fashion who sway
In Gehenna's metropolis town,
And they always observed that the empire of fashion
Bears rule both in politics, preaching and passion;
So being the Prince of *bon-ton* I must say
Excuse me—but really I'd rather not pray.

Some sense seems to exist in hell, according to T. L. Harris. We thoroughly agree with the choice of Bal as narrated in some ancient Hindu scriptures thus translated—

Vishnu asked Bal to take his choice
With five wise men to go to hell,
Or with five ignorant stay in heaven.
Then quick did Bal in heart rejoice,
And chose in hell with the wise to dwell,
For heaven is hell with folly's bell,
And hell is heaven with wisdom's leaven.

Queensland had a prosperous time a few years ago. Reckless speculation went on, houses were built everywhere, and "churches regardless of cost and debt." So says a Christian journal. But now the reaction has set in; pulpit salaries are reduced, and ministers are leaving the Lord's vineyard for other employments. The Young Men's Christian Association has dispensed with its paid secretary, and the Brisbane City Mission has reduced its staff by one half.

The pilgrimages to Lourdes are in full swing, and M. Zola an observant daily witness of the fervid devotion, excitement, and alleged faith-healing at the shrine of the Virgin. Miracles still abound wherever they are expected to abound. The readiness with which they are credited, and the stories circulated and improved, may throw some light on the miracles related in the gospels, especially when we remember that Mark vi. 5 says that in his own country Jesus could do no mighty works; and Matt. xiii. 58 says, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." Miracles never happen for the sceptics who need them most, but always for the believers, who need them not.

M. Zola's method of dealing with religion is characteristic. He studies it as he would the cholera or insanity, noting its symptoms, and not without sympathy with the patients. By this method all the faiths will at length find themselves classified and arranged like the Hindu gods in M. Guimet's *Musée des Religions*.

Even the Hindus are accommodating their old religion to modern ideas. It used to be held that all who travelled outside India broke caste, and in order to return had to take the "five products of the cow." Pundit Mohesh Chunder Nyaratna, however, now declares that this has no real Vedic authority, and that a good Hindu may travel anywhere he likes so long as he adheres to Hindu usages.

"An incongruous and incredible fiction" is what the Rev. S. D. Brownjohn calls the Bible story of the fall of man in Adam. Mr. Brownjohn was once rector of East Lydford, and chaplain to the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Had he uttered this blasphemous heresy three hundred years ago he would have been Brownjohn with a vengeance. They would have *browned* him nicely before a good big fire.

The Rev. W. Beaven, Wesleyan minister of Scotland-road Chapel, Liverpool, is responsible for a story to the effect that a nameless individual in an unmentioned public-house, said twice to his companions, "May God strike me blind." To the astonishment of his companions "he reeled round three times [in proof of the Trinity] and it was found he had become blind." Will Mr. Beaven kindly furnish names, dates, and other exact particulars that this striking illustration of divine providence and mercy may be investigated.

We heard the other day of a young minister who was "taken down" very handsomely by a bright little girl. He had been called upon quite unexpectedly to address a Sunday-school, and to give himself time to collect his thought he asked a question. "Children," said he, "what shall I speak about?" A little girl on the front seat who had herself committed to memory several declamations, held up her hand, and in a shrill voice asked, "What do you know?"

The New York *Independent* says that the chair Mr. Moody sat in during the Philadelphia meeting was put up to auction and fetched a hundred dollars.

You may sit in this chair as oft as you will,
But the perfume of Moody will cling to it still.

"Four towels upon which the evangelists had wiped their heated brows fetched five dollars apiece." It would be a pity to wash those towels. Perhaps they will be kept in glass cases till Moody and Sankey are canonised. They could then be exhibited to the faithful as authentic relics. Admission sixpence.

There has been a controversy in the *Times* about the Catholic archiepiscopal oath. It seems in other countries the archbishop swears to hunt down, *persequar*, heretics. Here this clause is omitted to avoid the charge of persecution. Such modifications do not affect the essential tenets of the Church. What she did in the past she is prepared to do to-day should the opportunity occur. The old spirit survives, though it is kept in check and under curb by secular progress. While the Church continues to teach that eternal torment is the lot of all outside its pale, it is idle to pretend that the severest punishment of heretics, who on this theory are leading souls to hell, can be anything but a mercy.

Mr. Robert C. Jenkins, author of *Laws Relating to Religion*, quotes in the *Times* from Cardinal Petra, Sanctarelli, and Farinacci, that heretics are to be burnt to death. The motto of the Church is *semper eadem*, "always the same," even while it seeks to repudiate these authorities.

The vicar of Barking says the Thirty-nine Articles are "Cracked and strained by three centuries of evasive ingenuity." Yes, and the Articles have cracked and strained the heads of a good many people who have honestly tried to believe them.

It is rather singular, however, that clergymen who have signed the Thirty-nine Articles, and sworn that they did so by the order of the Holy Ghost, should talk in this way about them. It only shows that men go into the Church for a living. Most of them are like the young man who, when required to sign the Thirty-nine Articles, said, "Oh yes, forty if you like."

In North Borneo they have a curious superstition known as "Maling cote," which is explained as a sort of notion of a forthcoming general jubilee, when everything would go well, paddy would spring up of its own accord, people would get wings, and other curious things happen. So strong, says Mr. Pryer, was the faith in this craze, that one or two people were seriously hurt trying to fly out of the cocoanut trees, and in several districts the paddy planting season was allowed to pass. Christians have a similar superstition, but are not quite so fervent in their faith.

At Penycraig, Rhondda Valley, the chancel of a new church dedicated to St. Illvyd, fell and seriously injured three persons. A saint with such a name as Illvyd could not be expected to turn out much of a guardian angel.

Providence doesn't take proper care of the gospel-shops. At Ipswich, for instance, the heavy rains flooded St. Clement's Church, and the morning service had to be abandoned. If this sort of thing continues the congregation will have to learn Peter's trick of walking on water.

The recent thunderstorms have resulted in much loss of life as well as damage from lightning. At Purfield, near Wolverhampton, St. Philip's Church was struck, the cross and other masonry being dislodged.

There has just been placed in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons, in Lincoln's Inn-fields, a series of twelve mummified skeletons discovered in Egypt by Mr. Flinders Petrie. The date of these mummies is certainly not later than the fourth Egyptian dynasty, and probably extend earlier than 4000 B.C., the biblical date of Adam.

Christians now try to repudiate this date, but it is derived legitimately from the ages assigned to Adam's descendants, including the long-lived patriarchs. If in their case we took "years" to mean "months" as some rationalists have suggested, the date would be still less extensive.

The Rev. S. Hadden Parkes, rector of Wittersham and rural dean of South Lympne, has been fined 10s. and 10s. costs by the Ashford magistrates for employing a boy under thirteen years of age without the necessary certificate of efficiency from the school authorities.

They are determined to pray in peace at Bradford, Indiana. On July 3, while the minister at Chapel Hill was praying, a drunken man named Faubian made some disturbance at the church door. He was ordered off by James Murphy, and was moving away, but, as he did not go fast enough, Murphy shot him in the back and killed him.

At Ayacucho, Peru, Agent Penzotti of the American Bible Society was allowed to display six boxes of Bibles for sale several hours, but presently resentment appeared, and in a few days his house was burnt and his stock of Bibles burnt, he fleeing and narrowly escaping with his life. Catholic disfavor of the lay use of Bibles was the cause.

A colliery explosion resulting in the loss of over a hundred lives, immense loss of life from typhoon floods and earthquakes in Japan, many fatal cases of sunstroke on the continent, influenza in Peru, and alarming spread of the cholera epidemic in Europe (2,743 dying on one day in Russia) are among last week's records of God's mercy.

George Jacobs, of Greenville, Mich., said he had been instructed by the Lord to kill his family, and he started in to do it on Aug. 5. He said his baby was the first one to be slaughtered, and he rushed at the infant. Florence Grant, who boards with Jacobs' family, rushed between the child and its father, and snatching up the little one prevented its death. The means of slaughter was to be an axe. Religious enthusiasm has landed Jacobs in gaol, which he reached before he had done any injury.

Is the Pope going off his head? It looks like it. He has sent for show at the Columbus Exhibition, Madrid, and afterwards at the World's Fair, Chicago, a large map with the line traced by Pope Alexander VI., allotting one half of the possible discoveries of the globe to Portugal and the other half to Spain. Now this map shows two things; first, that the Pope, who knew so much about the next world, didn't know what was on this one; secondly, that he wasn't able to make good his allotments. Spain and Portugal are scarcely in the globe-scramble now. Heretical England has almost "collared the blooming lot." Yes, the Pope should have kept that map in the Vatican.

Another deficit, amounting to 4,000,000 lire, has, it is said, been discovered in connection with the administration of the Peter's Pence Fund. The credulity which contributes encourages the roguery which embezzles.

Church property in the United States is estimated at 646 millions of dollars—a large amount to be untaxed, and its share of the taxes laid on other property.

"Are you prepared to die? Have you made any preparations as to how you will pass away into the future eternal life?" "Oh, yes, that's all fixed," replied the old man. "Good," said the preacher. "May I inquire what your intentions are?" "Certainly. I am going to have a minister on each side of the bed as I pass away." "But why two ministers?" asked our perplexed, pious friend. "So I can die between two thieves, like Jesus Christ."

Monday's *Daily Chronicle* headed its calendar with the following: "St. John the Baptist beheaded, A.D. 30." How did our contemporary discover the precise date? We should very much like to know—not out of mere idle curiosity, but in order to settle, if possible, the precise dates of many other Bible events. Will the *Chronicle* kindly enlighten us as to its chronological methods?

The Sabbatarians of Sunderland have been loudly beating the drum ecclesiastic. A deputation of Nonconformist ministers, headed by the Rev. B. Harrison and Pastor F. E. Marsh, waited on the Mayor and Town Council to ask them to rescind their resolution to open the Art Gallery, Museum, and Library on Sunday. A petition from the Sunday-schools was also presented, the children having been urged to express their minds on this topic. They were, of course, supported by the Sabbatarians in the council, but the majority declined to rescind their resolution. Bravo, Sunderland!

We have frequently called attention to the fact that Christians do not know even the site of the alleged crucifixion. The place shown for hundreds of years at Jerusalem is now admitted to be a bogus one, being in the heart of the city. Two or three other sites have been suggested, one by Mr. Conder of the Palestine Exploration Fund, one by the Rev. Hesketh Smith, endorsed in *Murray's Guide*, and another known as Gordon's tomb because suggested by General Gordon in his curious collection of religious rhapsodies, entitled *Reflections in Palestine*.

A fierce controversy has been the result of these rival claims. During the height of the dispute an English lady arrived at Jerusalem, and promptly decided in favor of the Gordon tomb as the true one. She then cleaned it out and passed a whole night in prayer and meditation there. Whether the result was rapture or rheumatism we are not told. It is, however, unfortunate for this lady and the other pious enthusiasts that it is proved that the tomb is certainly not a Jewish one. At the time of discovery it was full of bones. The crosses and other marks found in it are those of the twelfth century, and the claim made for the tomb is absolutely without foundation. Probably, however, this is equally true of the other alleged sites.

The Rev. C. M. Sharpe, vicar of Elsecar, has entertained the Hoyland Rechabite Temperance Band in the vicarage grounds. The Elsecar Band was not invited because it plays on Sundays. Parson Sharpe is a hot Sabbatarian. He is even opposed to Hospital Sunday. Evidently the reverend gentleman wants the whole of the first day in the week for gospel business. When his shutters are down, other tradesmen's shutters must be up.

Says the *Church Times*, writing on the cholera scare: "Cleanliness in conjunction with godliness is the best safeguard." But is godliness without cleanliness any safeguard at all? Cleanliness without godliness is equally efficacious, if not more so; for the more reliance is placed on divine providence the less inducement is there to take natural sanitary precautions.

Professor Huxley, like John Morley, is now a Privy Councillor. These two Freethinkers are advisers of the Queen, who is the head of the Established Church. How funny! What are we coming to?

By the way, Professor Huxley is holidaying in North Wales. It is reported that he has been "set upon by tract distributors and asked about his soul." If he talks as vigorously as he writes the tract distributors must have been somewhat astonished.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Sept. 4, Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street, Glasgow: at 11.30, "Holy Absurdities"; 2.30, "Clinging to Christ"; 6.30, "The Doom of the Gods."

Sept. 11, Aberdeen; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, Bristol. October 2, Liverpool; 9 and 16, Hall of Science, London; 23, Newcastle; 30, South Shields.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—September 3 and 4, Rushden; 11, Town Hall, Birmingham; 18, Birmingham; 25, Hall of Science, London. October 2, Hall of Science, London; 9 and 16, Birmingham; 19, 20 and 21, Aberdeen; 23, Glasgow; 25 and 26, Belfast; 30, Edinburgh. Nov. 1, Chester; 6 and 13, Birmingham; 20, Sheffield; 27, Hall of Science, London. Dec. 4, Hall of Science; 11, Manchester; 18 and 25, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

J. LUCE.—Your order handed to Mr. Forder. Sorry to hear that your local bookseller's London agent refuses to supply our publications. This sort of bigotry is a great hindrance to our business.

N. CHADNEY.—Your suggestions will be considered. Pleased to hear you say "The success of your paper is of moment to all of us." Thanks for the cuttings.

A. ALLEBONE.—Please send your *Freethinker* notices direct to the editor, not to Mr. Forder.

E. H. B. STEPHENSON.—Shall appear.

RON MAHON.—We thought "Lucifer" had appeared. It shall be seen to. Sorry for the printer's blunder in last insertion. Always pleased to hear from you.

R. CHAPMAN, secretary of the South Shields Branch, hopes local Freethinkers will attend a lecture this evening (Sept. 4) by E. W. Fenwick in the National Seamen's Hall, Coronation-street. It is to be a humorous discourse on "Ribs."

W. T. LEEKEY.—Thanks for cuttings.

CAMBERWELL.—We have had several complaints about the sale of Freethought literature at Camberwell. For the last two or three weeks, we are informed, no Freethought papers have been obtainable at the Secular Hall. We hope the Branch committee will see to the matter. The literature of a movement is perhaps even more important than its lectures.

JOSEPH BROWN.—Thanks. We took it to be a mere inadvertence. We know you are not only hard-worked but over-worked.

W. E. BLACKBURN.—The Christian who told you that there are disinterred pillars in the British Museum, bearing records of Christ's crucifixion, resurrection, etc., has a flowery imagination, or is a victim of somebody else who has one.

J. W. WITTERING.—Very large audiences can hardly be expected in this weather. See paragraph.

W. H.—See paragraph.

BOMBAST.—Mr. Morley took the oath precisely as Mr. Bradlaugh did. There was no legal right to do otherwise. He has affirmed in the new parliament—thanks to Mr. Bradlaugh's Oaths Act.

J. BENT.—We think you misunderstand Mr. Shaw. It was in reference to a real fact.

CARDIFF FREETHINKER.—It is a purely private matter, on which we have no right to comment. No doubt you will agree with us on second thoughts.

J. PATTISON.—Mr. Foote will visit Hull as soon as possible. We note your opinion that the *Freethinker* is "too cheap at a penny for the information it contains."

T. GELL.—Pleased to hear of a revival at Bingley. Mr. John Grange appears to win golden opinions wherever he goes.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) The subject is too big for an answer in this column. We may say this, however—All the heat and light that ever was on this planet, worth speaking about, came from the sun, or from the earth itself, which was originally a part of the sun. (2) Of course there is some good in Christianity. "Blessed are the merciful," for instance, is a pleasant text. But go to the police-courts and see how Christians act upon it. What we object to is, first the false and bad parts of the Bible, and secondly, the nonsense of calling its good parts a "revelation."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Liberty—Liberator—Progressive Thinker—Flaming Sword—Secular Thought—Modern Thought—Twentieth Century—Freidenker—Sunderland Echo—Manchester Guardian—Fur Unsere Jugend—Clarion—Morning Leader—Johannesburg Star—Kokstad Advertiser—Newcastle Daily Leader.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clorkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

A capital audience assembled at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "John Morley: Statesman, Writer, and Freethinker." Many strangers were present and a good sprinkling of ladies. The lecture was listened to with profound attention, and very heartily applauded. On the invitation of the chairman (Mr. R. O. Smith), a lady and two gentlemen asked the lecturer questions, and Mr. Kelf offered some opposition. The meeting lasted two hours, and was hot enough, before the end, for the most tropical taste.

Mr. Foote lectures three times to-day (Sept. 4) at Glasgow. The following Sunday he delivers three lectures at Aberdeen. During the interval he hopes to invigorate his blood with good Scotch air. He must claim the indulgence of correspondents while he is absent from home.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—P. H. Echlin, £2 2s.; Henry Mills, 5s.; J. Pattison, 4s.; W. Grant, 5s.; W. Littlejohn, 2s. 6d.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures at Rushden on Saturday and Sunday (Sept. 3 and 4). We hope the district Freethinkers will give him good audiences and a hearty reception.

Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, reopens to-day (Sept. 4). Mr. Touzeau Parris lectures three times. We hope to hear that he has had good audiences.

Mr. W. Heaford reports good audiences at Belfast, where the Freethinkers "seem to have grit in them." Mr. Heaford lectures to-day (Sept. 4) at Hull, and we hope the local "saints" will give him a hearty reception.

Mr. Stanley Jones has set out from London on a long lecturing tour in the North. He is at Newcastle to-day (Sept. 4), and on the three following Sundays at Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Glasgow. Arrangements are being made for a debate at the last city. There is also some talk of week night lectures at Dundee. A Branch was formed there on the occasion of Mr. Foote's visit in the spring, but we have heard no news of it lately. We hope the members intend to carry on an active propaganda during the winter.

Mr. Sam Standing ceases to be at the service of the Manchester Committee, which appears to find difficulty in raising the guarantee fund. He proposes to lecture and organise for the Lancashire and Yorkshire Secular Federation, and we hope he will carry out this idea instead of planting himself in any particular town. Mr. Standing is zealous and active, and only wants a very moderate living; and this should be secured to him by the Federation Branches. Last Sunday he lectured to good open-air audiences at Rochdale, where an annual meeting is to be held in the Secular Hall on Sept. 15, when Mr. Standing has promised to attend and assist in a thorough reorganisation of the Branch.

Mr. Standing has brought out the first number of a monthly sheet devoted to the work of the Federation. Its title is *The Freethought Messenger*.

The Bradford Branch, after long exclusion from public halls, has secured the use for six months of the Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road, where Sunday evening lectures will be delivered during the winter. Mr. John Grange opens to-day (Sept. 4). Admission is free. The room will seat 250 persons.

Members of the Grimsby Branch are requested to attend a special meeting this evening (Sept. 4) at 7. Overdue subscriptions will be received and important business transacted.

The Edmonton Branch is making progress, partly through its own gallant efforts, and partly through the reckless opposition of Christian apologists. Middlesex Hall, Fore-street, has been taken for indoor meetings during the winter, and an attractive program is being prepared.

A social gathering will take place at the London Hall of Science on Wednesday, Sep. 28, in commemoration of the birthday of Charles Bradlaugh, which falls on the Monday when the hall is permanently engaged for other purposes. Speeches will be delivered by Messrs. Foote, Watts, Holyoake, Parris, and G. Standring. The evening's program also includes a concert and dance. Tickets (1s.) can be obtained at the Hall of Science, or at 28 Stonecutter-street, or of any of the Branch secretaries.

The Battersea Branch commences its indoor Sunday evening lectures to-day (Sept. 4), when Mrs. Thornton Smith discourses on "Secularism and Every-day Life." As this Branch is not endowed, and has to pay rent and lecturers, a charge of 2d. and 4d. will be made for admission. A social gathering or entertainment will follow each lecture. It is hoped that Freethinkers in Battersea and surrounding districts will give their support.

We have no special place for marriage announcements; but we are asked to announce that Mr. R. G. Lees, the zealous secretary of the Camberwell Branch, was married on Aug. 27 to Annie, daughter of the late Edward Chadney, of Croydon and Camberwell. We wish the bride and bridegroom prosperity and happiness.

The New York Museum of Art is opened on Sundays, and says the *Truthseeker* "more visitors pass the turnstiles on that day than in all the other days of the week added together."

M. Léon Furnemont sends us the new circular of the International Freethought Congress, to be held at Madrid on October 12. We are writing before the August meeting of the N.S.S. Executive, and are unable to say if England will be represented at the Congress. Madrid is very distant, and a delegation will be expensive. We shall have more to say upon the subject in our next issue.

Last Friday, Aug. 26, it was exactly a century since the National Assembly of France, on the proposal of M. Guadet, a Freethinker, conferred the title of French citizen on men of light and leading of various nationalities. Almost all those so distinguished were Freethinkers, among them being Thomas Paine, Joseph Priestley, Jeremy Bentham, David Williams, Anacharsis Clotz, Gorani and Washington. Schiller, Thomas Cooper and Joel Barlow were afterwards added.

Last week Manchester Crematorium was used for the first time. The operation was most successful, the body being reduced to a small portion of calcined dust in the course of an hour.

We are pleased to note from *The Kokstad Advertiser and East Griqualand Gazette* that there are Secularists in that part of South Africa ready to debate their principles with the men of God.

We have had lying by us for some time *The Story of the Resurrection of Jesus*, by "A Bristol Artisan"—price 3d., published by Taylor Bros., Broad Weir, Bristol. The writing of this pamphlet was suggested by the Logan-Foote debate. The author discusses the New Testament story with considerable acumen. We hope his spirited production is having a good sale.

Comic Sermons and other Fantasias is the title of a little volume by Mr. Foote, which will be on sale next week. Some of the contents have appeared in old special numbers of the *Freethinker*. Others appear now for the first time. The collection is unique in the history of English Freethought literature. We shall be prepared for all sorts of orthodox outcries, such as "wicked infidel," "devilish scoffer," and "blasphemous wretch."

ON A FUTURE STATE.

BY THE POET SHELLEY.

IT has been the persuasion of an immense majority of human beings in all ages and nations that we continue to live after death—that apparent termination of all the functions of sensitive and intellectual existence. Nor has mankind been contented with supposing that species of existence which some philosophers have asserted; namely, the resolution of the component parts of the mechanism of a living being into its elements, and the impossibility of the minutest particle of these sustaining the smallest diminution. They have clung to the idea that sensibility and thought, which they have distinguished from the objects of it, under the several names of spirit and matter, is, in its own nature, less susceptible of division and decay, and that, when the body is resolved into its elements, the principle which animates it will remain perpetual and unchanged. Some philosophers—and those to whom we are indebted for the most stupendous discoveries in physical science, suppose, on the other hand, that intelligence is the mere result of certain combinations among the particles of its objects; and those among them who believe that we live after death, recur to the interposition of a supernatural power, which shall overcome the tendency inherent in all material combinations to dissipate and be absorbed into other forms.

Let us trace the reasonings which in one and the other have conducted to these two opinions, and endeavor to discover what we ought to think on a question of such momentous interest. Let us analyse the ideas and feelings which constitute the contending beliefs, and watchfully establish a discrimination between words and thoughts. Let us bring the question to the test of experience and fact; and ask ourselves, considering our nature in its entire extent, what light we derive from a sustained and comprehensive view of its component parts, which may enable us to assert, with certainty, that we do or do not live after death.

The examination of this subject requires that it should be stripped of all those accessory topics which adhere to it in the common opinion of men. The existence of a God, and a future state of rewards and punishments, are totally foreign to the subject. If it be proved that the world is ruled by a Divine Power, no inference necessarily can be drawn from that circumstance in favor of a future state. It has been asserted, indeed, that as goodness and justice are to be numbered among the attributes of the Deity, he will undoubtedly compensate the virtuous who suffer during life, and that he will make every sensitive being, who does not deserve punishment, happy for ever. But this view of the subject, which it would be tedious as well as superfluous to develop and expose, satisfies no person, and cuts the knot which we now seek to untie. Moreover, should it be proved, on the other hand, that the mysterious principle which regulates the proceedings of the universe, is neither intelligent nor sensitive, yet it is not an inconsistency to suppose at the same time, that the animating power survives the body which it has animated, by laws as independent of any supernatural agent as those through which it first became united with it. Nor, if a future state be clearly proved, does it follow that it will be a state of punishment or reward.

By the word death, we express that condition in which natures resembling ourselves apparently cease to be that which they were. We no longer hear them speak, nor see them move. If they have sensations and apprehensions, we no longer participate in them. We know no more than that those external organs, and all that fine texture of material frame, without which we have no experience that life or thought can subsist, are dissolved and scattered abroad. The body is placed under the earth, and after a certain period there remains no vestige even of its form. This is that contemplation of inexhaustible melancholy, whose shadow eclipses the brightness of the world. The common observer is struck with dejection at the spectacle. He contends in vain against the persuasion of the grave, that the dead indeed cease to be. The corpse at his feet is prophetic of his own destiny. Those who have preceded him, and whose voice was delightful to his ear; whose touch met his like sweet and subtle fire; whose aspect spread a visionary light upon his path—these he cannot meet again. The organs of sense are destroyed, and the intellectual operations dependent on them have perished with their sources. How can a corpse see or feel? its

eyes are eaten out, and its heart is black and without motion. What intercourse can two heaps of putrid clay and crumbling bones hold together? When you can discover where the fresh colors of the faded flower abide, or the music of the broken lyre, seek life among the dead. Such are the anxious and fearful contemplations of the common observer, though the popular religion often prevents him from confessing them even to himself.

The natural philosopher, in addition to the sensations common to all men inspired by the event of death, believes that he sees with more certainty that it is attended with the annihilation of sentiment and thought. He observes the mental powers increase and fade with those of the body, and even accommodate themselves to the most transitory changes of our physical nature. Sleep suspends many of the faculties of the vital and intellectual principle; drunkenness and disease will either temporarily or permanently derange them. Madness or idiocy may utterly extinguish the most excellent and delicate of those powers. In old age the mind gradually withers; and as it grew and was strengthened with the body, so does it together with the body sink into decrepitude. Assuredly these are convincing evidences that so soon as the organs of the body are subjected to the laws of inanimate matter, sensation, and perception, and apprehension, are at an end. It is probable that what we call thought is not an actual being, but no more than the relation between certain parts of that infinitely varied mass, of which the rest of the universe is composed, and which ceases to exist as soon as those parts change their position with regard to each other. Thus color, and sound, and taste, and odor exist only relatively. But let thought be considered as some peculiar substance, which permeates, and is the cause of, the animation of living beings. Why should that substance be assumed to be something essentially distinct from all others, and exempt from subjection to those laws from which no other substance is exempt? It differs, indeed, from all other substances, as electricity, and light, and magnetism, and the constituent parts of air and earth, severally differ from all others. Each of these is subject to change and to decay and to conversion into other forms. Yet the difference between light and earth is scarcely greater than that which exists between life, or thought, and fire. The difference between the two former was never alleged as an argument for the eternal permanence of either, in that form under which they first might offer themselves to our notice. Why should the difference between the two latter substances be an argument for the prolongation of the existence of one and not the other, when the existence of both has arrived at their apparent termination? To say that fire exists without manifesting any of the properties of fire, such as light, heat, etc., or that the principle of life exists without consciousness, or memory, or desire, or motive, is to resign, by an awkward distortion of language, the affirmative of the dispute. To say that the principle of life *may* exist in distribution among various forms, is to assert what cannot be proved to be either true or false, but which, were it true, annihilates all hope of existence after death, in any sense in which that event can belong to the hopes and fears of men. Suppose, however, that the intellectual and vital principle differs in the most marked and essential manner from all other known substances; that they have all some resemblance between themselves which it in no degree participates. In what manner can this concession be made an argument for its imperishability? All that we see or know perishes and is changed. Life and thought differ indeed from anything else. But that it survives that period, beyond which we have no experience of its existence, such distinction and dissimilarity affords no shadow of proof, and nothing but our own desires could have led us to conjecture or imagine.

Have we existed before birth? It is difficult to conceive the possibility of this. There is, in the generative principle of each animal and plant, a power which converts the substances by which it is surrounded into a substance homogeneous with itself. That is, the relations between certain elementary particles of matter undergo a change, and submit to new combinations. For when we use the words *principle, power, cause, etc.* we mean to express no real being, but only to class under those terms a certain series of co-existing phenomena; but let it be supposed that this principle is a certain substance which escapes the observation of the chemist and anatomist. It certainly *may be*; though it is sufficiently unphilosophical to allege

the possibility of an opinion as a proof of its truth. Does it see, hear, feel, before its combination with those organs on which sensation depends? Does it reason, imagine, apprehend, without those ideas which sensation alone can communicate? If we have not existed before birth; if at the period when the parts of our nature on which thought and life depend, seem to be woven together, they are woven together; if there are no reasons to suppose that we have existed before that period at which our existence apparently commences, then there are no grounds for supposition that we shall continue to exist after our existence has apparently ceased. So far as thought and life is concerned, the same will take place with regard to us, individually considered, after death, as had taken place before our birth.

It is said that it is possible that we should continue to exist in some mode totally inconceivable to us at present. This is a most unreasonable presumption. It casts on the adherents of annihilation the burthen of proving the negative of a question, the affirmative of which is not supported by a single argument, and which, by its very nature, lies beyond the experience of the human understanding. It is sufficiently easy, indeed, to form any proposition, concerning which we are ignorant, just not so absurd as not to be contradictory in itself and defy refutation. The possibility of whatever enters into the wildest imagination to conceive is thus triumphantly vindicated. But it is enough that such assertions should be either contradictory to the known laws of nature, or exceed the limits of our experience, that their fallacy or irrelevancy to our consideration should be demonstrated. They persuade, indeed, only those who desire to be persuaded.

The desire to be for ever as we are; the reluctance to a violent and unexperienced change, which is common to all the animated and inanimate combinations of the universe, is, indeed, the secret persuasion which has given birth to the opinions of a future state.

PAINE THE PIONEER.*

[CONCLUDED.]

MR. CONWAY'S first volume takes us down to the period now just on a century ago, when Paine's *Rights of Man* was proscribed in England and its author tried for sedition, while unanimously elected to the French Convention by three different departments—Oise, Puy-de-Dôme, and Pas-de-Calais. Paine elected to sit for Calais, and was hurried to France by William Blake. The first chapter of the second volume, entitled "Kill the King, but not the Man," tells of Paine's efforts to save the life of Louis XVI. Paine had been the first to tell the French, as he had told the Americans, that they must dispense with monarchy and become an independent republic. But he was averse to bloodshed, and pleaded "As France has been the first of European nations to abolish royalty, let her also be the first to abolish the punishment of death, and to find out a milder and more effectual substitute." Marat, on the final occasion, sought to stay Paine from being heard, on the ground that "being a Quaker, his religious principles are opposed to the death-penalty." Paine persisted in his plea, and asked in the name of America that the execution should be delayed. Mr. Conway thinks "Had the vote been taken that day perhaps Louis might have escaped."

Admirers of Marat, like Mr. Belfort Bax, may sneer at Paine's attitude on this matter as playing into the hands of reaction, but they must at least allow he had the courage of his opinions. The head of Louis Capet was no more to Thomas Paine than that of any other man; but his object was the establishment of a universal international republic, and he felt that the execution of a king, who was rather foolish and feeble than criminal, would be a heavy blow to his cause. He had pointed to the ill results of making Charles I. esteemed a martyr. Mr. Conway does not scruple to say that "while Thomas Paine was toiling night and day to save the life of Louis, that life lay in the hand of the British Ministry." Paine's own life was endangered by his advocacy of mercy to the king. Nor did he hesitate

* *The Life of Thomas Paine.* With a history of his literary, political, and religious career in America, France, and England. By Moncure Daniel Conway. To which is added a Sketch of Paine by William Cobbett (hitherto unpublished). G. P. Putnam and Sons, New York; London: 24 Bedford-street, Strand. 1892. 2 vols.

to risk it several times on behalf of proscribed men in Paris.

Another cause of offence to Robespierre was that in the Declaration of Rights drawn up by Paine and Condorcet there was no mention of a Deity. Here, as Mr. Conway remarks, was "the immemorial and infallible recipe for discord, of which Robespierre made the most." He took the Supreme Being under his protection and inserted God into the French Constitution. Mr. Conway's words on the effect of this should be well weighed by those who are for imitating Robespierre by bringing God into the Constitution of the United States. Mr. Conway says:

"Since the nature-god punishes hereditarily, kills every man at last, and so tortures millions, that the suggestion of hell seems only too probable to those sufferers, a political system formed under the legitimacy of such a superstition must subordinate crimes to sins, regard Atheism as worse than theft, acknowledge the arbitrary principle, and confuse retaliation with justice. From the time that the shekinah of the nature-god settled on the Mountain offences were measured, not by their injury to man, but as insult to the Mountain-god, or to his anointed."

So far, then, from the crimes of the Revolution being the effect of Atheism, they were the result of the Deism of such men as Robespierre. Thomas Paine's most intimate friends, Brissot, Condorcet, Vergniaud and Gensonné, were all proscribed by the Mountain. His own name was found in Robespierre's note-book as one to be indicted, and he was in prison for ten months. Mr. Conway brings to light the facts in connection with this somewhat mysterious affair, and they are by no means creditable to Gouverneur Morris, the American Minister in Paris, for, as soon as James Monroe took his place, Paine, against whom there was no charge save that of being a foreigner, was at once released.

While Paine was in prison the English aristocracy were gratified by a report of his execution and a libellous leaflet of "The Last Dying Words of Thomas Paine" appeared in London. Paine, too, believed his last hour was near; indeed, it was only by an accident he escaped, and did, indeed, utter what may be regarded as his dying testimony, the *Age of Reason*. Paine had found there was something else from which men needed to be delivered besides political oppression, and that was from their own ignorance, credulity, and superstition. Had he withheld his religious opinions, the majority of those who have since reviled him would have been among his admirers. The *Age of Reason*, as Ingersoll remarks, was his crime. In consequence of this work his name has been subject to every calumny. His best defence is the work itself, to an account of which Mr. Conway devotes one of his longest and best chapters, in which he shows that the logic of time has completely vindicated the *Age of Reason*. Early in his work (vol. i., p. 47), Mr. Conway remarks of his hero:

"The first to urge extension of the principles of independence to the enslaved negro; the first to arraign monarchy, and to point out the danger of its survival in presidency; the first to propose articles of a more thorough nationality to the new-born States; the first to advocate international arbitration; the first to expose the absurdity and criminality of duelling; the first to suggest more rational ideas of marriage and divorce; the first to advocate national and international copyright; the first to plead for the animals; the first to demand justice for woman; what brilliants would our modern reformers have contributed to a coronet for that man's brow, had he not presently worshipped the God of his fathers after the way that theologians call heresy."

This, in our estimation, is his greatest title to remembrance. He attacked the forces of oppression in their stronghold—that of religion. Orthodox Christianity never recovered the blow, but bit by bit is resigning all the dogmatic positions attacked in the *Age of Reason*.

Paine, says our author, helped to form the first theistic and ethical society, that of the Theophilanthropists at Paris. On his return to America he assisted blind Elihu Palmer in his deistic propaganda, writing in his journal, *The Prospect*, which succeeded a paper called *The Temple of Reason*. He found calumny awaiting him. Mr. Conway enters fully into the question of Paine's alleged intemperance. A sufficient reply might be to point to the work he did. But the testimony of Col. Fellows and Judge Hertell, as given by Judge Tabor, deserves citing.

"These men assured me of their own knowledge, derived from constant personal intercourse during the last seven years of Paine's life, that he never kept any company but what was entirely respectable, and that all accusations of drunkenness were grossly untrue. They saw him under all circumstances, and knew that he was never intoxicated. Nay more, they said for that day he was even abstemious."

Paine's death-bed has been frequently lied about. Here is Mr. Conway's account:

"Paine died at eight o'clock on the morning of June 8, 1809. Shortly before, two clergymen had invaded his room, and so soon as they spoke about his opinions, Paine said: 'Let me alone; good morning!' Madame Bonneville asked if he was satisfied with the treatment he had received in her house, and he said 'Oh yes.' Those were the last words of Thomas Paine."

In an appendix, Mr. Conway gives a sketch of Paine's life by William Cobbett, never before published, probably because many letters referred to are missing. There is also an appendix on the portraits of Paine, and another giving a list of his works. The volumes are excellently got up. As frontispiece to the first appears a photographic reproduction of a painting of Paine at the age of 67 by Jarvis; and as frontispiece to the second, the seal at Lewes with a portrait at about the age of 35.

I must not conclude without thanking Mr. Conway for taking such conscientious pains, as he has evidently done, to make this a thorough trustworthy and complete biography, which must take its place as the standard *Life of Paine*, and which will leave his Christian calumniators without excuse.

J. M. W.

DEATH OF THOMAS PAINE.

THOMAS PAINE had passed the legendary limit of life. One by one most of his old friends and acquaintances had deserted him. Maligned on every side, execrated, shunned, and abhorred—his virtues denounced as vices, his services forgotten, his character blackened—he preserved the poise and balance of his soul. He was a victim of the people, but his convictions remained unshaken. He was still a soldier in the army of freedom, and still tried to enlighten and civilise those who were impatiently waiting for his death. Even those who loved their enemies hated him, their friend—the friend of the whole world—with all their hearts.

On June 8, 1809, death came—Death, almost his only friend.

At his funeral no pomp, no pageantry, no civic procession, no military display. In a carriage, a woman and her son who had lived on the bounty of the dead—on horseback, a Quaker, the humanity of whose heart dominated the creed of his head—and, following on foot, two negroes, filled with gratitude—constituted the funeral cortege of Thomas Paine.

He who had received the gratitude of many millions, the thanks of generals and statesmen—he who had been the friend and companion of the wisest and best—he who had taught a people to be free, and whose words had inspired armies and enlightened nations—was thus given back to nature, the mother of us all.

If the people of the great Republic knew the life of this generous, this chivalric man, the real story of his services, his sufferings and his triumphs; of what he did to compel the robed and crowned, the priests and kings, to give back to the people liberty, the jewel of the soul; if they knew that he was the first to write *The Religion of Humanity*; if they knew that he, above all others, planted and watered the seeds of independence, of union, of nationality, in the hearts of our forefathers; that his words were gladly repeated by the best and bravest in many lands; if they knew that he attempted, by the purest means, to attain the noblest and loftiest ends; that he was original, sincere, intrepid, and that he could truthfully say, "The world is my country, to do good is my religion"; if the people only knew all this—the truth—they would repeat the words of Andrew Jackson, "Thomas Paine needs no monument made with hands; he has erected a monument in the hearts of all lovers of liberty."—From "*Paine the Pioneer*," by Col. Ingersoll.

A purblind mole bored underneath a stone,
A castle's corner-stone. Then came a storm
And swept the stronghold to the ground, and men
Wondered a wind should have such power to smite.
—H. L. Koopman.

A READY-WITTED PRIEST.
(A CHILIAN STORY.)

PADRE DON DOMINGO, of —, in Chili, was one of those jovial mortals who are so often found amongst the Catholic clergy in that country. Every evening he was regularly to be found at the café, which was frequented by the leading inhabitants of the place, and his society was much appreciated by the *habitués*. He was the jolliest of boon companions, and his hearty laugh was louder than all the others when some racy joke excited the risibility of the gathering. By general consent his customary seat was always reserved for him, and there he would sit, with glass in front of him and cigarette in mouth, surrounded by a group of eager listeners when he recounted the latest news and gossip, not unmixed with scandal, from the surrounding country. He would vary his amusements by taking part in a game of dominoes, and could play a good game of billiards; but his favorite pastime and passionate occupation was gambling at the card-table. One Saturday night the good padre sat down with three other congenial spirits to take a hand at "poker." There is probably no other card game which is so entrancing and at which the luck is so fluctuating. At first the padre was very fortunate, and soon had a large pile of money and "checks" in front of him; but soon after midnight his fortune changed, and his "pile" rapidly melted away. Of course, under such circumstances, he could not think of leaving off without making efforts to retrieve his losses. The others, nothing loth, let him have his opportunity, and so the play was kept up until daybreak, when the sacristan came to call his reverence to early mass. But Padre Domingo was by that time so absorbed in the game that he could hardly be induced to pay attention to his beadle's summons. "Let me have just a few minutes more," he pleaded; "run, Juan, to the vestry and bring my surplice and biretta; I will robe here." The padre got into his vestments whilst the deal, which was agreed to be the last, was being laid out. Just as it was finished the sacristan appeared, saying that the congregation would not wait a minute longer. Snatching up his cards, the priest saw by a hasty glance that his luck had at last turned, and that he held a hand upon which he would be certain to make a grand coup. "Friends," he cried, with ready wit, "we will each keep our cards and play out this hand after service." So saying, he thrust the cards into the pocket of his surplice.

The Mass was performed with the usual solemnities, and then Don Domingo mounted the pulpit to deliver his sermon. In spite of his worldly ways, he was really a preacher of considerable power. He waxed eloquent, and his rapid gesticulations soon made him heated. Thoughtlessly he pulled out his handkerchief to wipe his forehead, when, to his consternation, the cards (which were in the same pocket) flew out and scattered themselves amongst his attentive hearers.

Here was a *contretemps*; but the good priest did not lose his presence of mind. "You are perhaps surprised, my friends, to see these things here; but I have brought them with a purpose. Here, Juancito!"—calling to the nearest boy in the chapel—"pick up these cards and bring them up here."

"Now, Hijito" (little son), said he, when the boy had performed his commission, "what do you call this card?" "The knave of clubs!" promptly replied the boy. "This one?" "The ace of diamonds!" and so he went through the hand, the boy answering correctly each time.

"Very good, my boy," said the priest, and then pointing to the altar, "now tell me the name of that saint." "Don't know, father," promptly replied the youth. "Well, what is that other one?" Again the boy was unable to tell, and so throughout the whole series of images he displayed equal ignorance.

"So my brethren," fiercely exclaimed the priest, "this is how you educate your children! You teach them the names of the cards, but not that of the saints! Shame on you!" And taking up this theme, he administered such a rebuke to his flock as they did not forget for long after.

JOHN SAMSON

When Dublin Cathedral was re-opened after restoration at the expense of a Mr. Wise, the archbishop took for his text "Go thou, and do like Wise." Not to be outdone, a clergyman in his diocese, when opening a church built by a brewer, said that his text was to be found He brews xxx. There would be more truth in this story if there were thirty chapters in Hebrews.

PROFANE JOKES.

Briggs—"How is your cousin getting on as a missionary?"
Griggs—"Latest advices report that he has got himself into a stew."

Holy Joe—"God, you know, is without beginning or end."
Scoffer—"I understand, just like the inner circle of the Underground Railway."

Rev. Mr. Whangle: "My boy, I'm sorry to see you flying your kite on the Sabbath day." Boy: "Why, it's made out of the *Christian Herald*, an' got a tail of tracts."

Weary Husband (Sunday morning)—"How long has that confounded bell been ringing?" Wife—"Since six, dear."
"Well, I guess I'll go to church this morning, and see if I can't get a little sleep."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]
Secretaries may send in a month's list of lectures in advance.

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.30, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Secularism and Every-day Life" (2d. and 4d.); social gathering after the lecture. Tuesday at 8, social gatherings. Wednesday at 8, dramatic class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, T. Crisfield, "The Difference between Hypnotism and Mesmerism." Monday at 8.45, C. Cohen's science class (physical geography). Saturday at 7.30, dancing.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, B. Hyatt, "External Evidence of Jesus Christ as a Man Examined"; preceded by a recital from Shelley's *Queen Mab*.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 6.30, musical selections; 7, R. Forder, "Signs of the Zodiac."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Hell: do Christians Believe in it?"

West Ham—350 Barking-road: Monday at 8, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, F. Haslam, "What did Jesus Teach?"

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Fruits of Christianity."

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, A. Guest, "Prayer: what and why?"; meeting of members after the lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, E. Calvert, "Is Matter able of itself to Produce its Phenomena?"; 3.30, A. Guest, "Heavens and Hells, Various."

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday at 8, a lecture. Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Mr. St. John will lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed."

Kilburn—Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station) 6.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Fast."

Lambeth—New Cut (corner of Short-street): 11.30, Mr. St. John, "Christianity and Freethought."

Leyton (open space near Vicarage-road, High-road): 11.30, J. C., "Immortality: does Man Survive Death?"

Midland Arches (near Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, a lecture.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, H. Saell, "Is Civilisation Due to the Cross?"

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, J. Rowney will lecture. Collection in aid of the Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund.

Plaistow Green: 6.30, C. J. Steinberg will lecture.

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Bible God."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, C. J. Steinberg will lecture; 3.15, H. Snell will lecture.

Walthamstow—Markhouse Common: 6.30, T. Thurlow, "Jesus not Historical."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers-hill: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Great Fast."

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall, Crooked-lane: 11, monthly concert.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street; Touzeau Parris, 11, "Religion and Science: why Antagonistic?"; 3, "Man: whence he comes, and how"; 7, "Jesus Christ: neither Man nor God."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: John Grange, 3, "Unbelief: the Main-spring of Progress"; 6.30, "The Labor Church: its Basis and Objects Considered."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street; Miss Ada Campbell, 11, "Sunday in the Light of Reason"; 3, "Labor and Poverty"; 7, "Hereditv."

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 7, L. Keen, "Is Hell Justified?"

Derby—20 Newland-street: 7, social gathering.

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: G. W. Foote, 11.30, "Holy Absurdities"; 2.30, "Clinging to Christ"; 6.30, "The Doom of the Gods."

Hull—St. George's Hall, 6 Story-street 7, W. Heaford, "A Better Creed than Christianity."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, Mr. Smith, "The people imagine a vain thing" (Ps. ii. 1).

Newcastle-on-Tyne — Grainger Theatre (above old Lecture Room), Nelson-street: Stanley Jones, 11, "Jesus Christ"; 3, "The Clergy and Progress"; 7, "Is there Evidence for the Existence of God?"

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

Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, Mr. Googe, "Liberals and Home Rule."

Sheffield — Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: Robert Law, F.G.S., 3, "Common Salt: its Nature and Origin"; 7, "Tides and Rivers of the Sea: how Produced"; tea at 5.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street; 7, business meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Aberdeen—Castle-street: 7, John Harkis, "The Road to Salvation."

Chatham—New Brompton-road (High-street end): 11, L. Keen, "What has Christianity Done?"

Hull—Corporation Field: W. Heaford, 11, "Is Christianity True"; 3, "The Consolation of Religion"; if wet weather, to be delivered in St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Sept. 4, Birmingham; 11, Hall of Science; 18, Liverpool. Oct. 2, Leicester; 23, Hall of Science.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Sept. 4, m., Mile End Waste; a., Victoria Park; 11, m., Bethnal Green; a., Regent's Park; 18, m., Wood Green; 25, m. and e., Camberwell.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Creden-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 4, Camberwell; 11, Olerkenwell; 18, Westminster; 25, Manchester. Oct. 2, Camberwell; 9, Westminster.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Sept. 4, m., Bethnal Green; e., Edmonton; 11, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith; 18, m., Mile End; a., Regent's Park; e., Edmonton; 25, m., Battersea; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow. Oct. 2, m., Bethnal Green; e., Edmonton; 6, Walthamstow; 7, Battersea; 9, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 13, Walthamstow; 14, Battersea; 16, m., Mile End; e., Edmonton; 20, Walthamstow; 21, Battersea; 23, m., Hyde Park; a., Victoria Park; e., Libra Hall; 27, Walthamstow; 28, Battersea; 30, m., Camberwell; e., Libra Hall.

SAM STANDING, 108 Oxford-road, All Saints' Manchester.—Sept. 4, Barnsley; 11, Grimsby; 18, Leicester; 25, Rochdale.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—Sept. 4, m., Victoria Park; e., Plaistow; 11, a., Victoria Park; 18, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; 25, m. and a., Victoria Park.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Chant-street, Stratford, E.—11, m., Lambeth; e., Swaby's; 18, m., Battersea; a., Finsbury Park; 25, m., Bethnal Green. October, all mornings booked.

T. THURLOW, 34 Wetherell-road, South Hackney.—Sept. 11, m., Kingsland Green.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon-street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—Sept. 4, Nottingham.

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