

The Freethinker

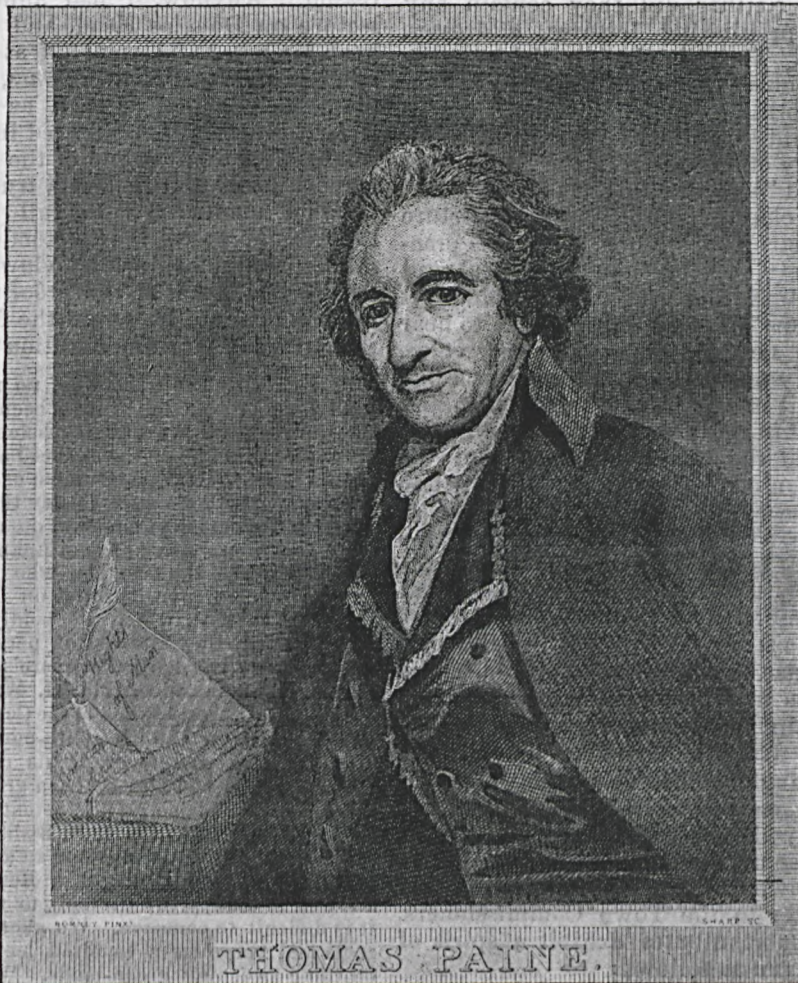
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. XIII.—No. 37.]

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1893.

[PRICE TWOPENCE.



THOMAS PAINE.

(See page 590.)

THE BATTLE OF DOUGLAS HEAD.

WHEN my friend, Mr. W. Westwell, of Manchester, invited me to spend a week or so with him at the Isle of Man, he expressed a wish that something might be done to make an impression on the superstition and bigotry of Douglas. Hiring a hall in such a place for a Freethought lecture was out of the question, and the only alternative was an outdoor meeting. Mr. Westwell mentioned that the Bishop of Sodor and Man preached open-air sermons during August on Douglas Head, a bold sweeping hill overlooking the harbor. It was natural, therefore, to fix upon this place as the scene of my own performance. Accordingly I announced in the *Freethinker* that I would appear there on Sunday afternoon, September 3, to deliver a Freethought address.

On arriving at Douglas, however, and looking about me, I discovered that I was in a rather difficult situation. I had imagined that Douglas Head was what we call common ground in England, but I found it was not so. The legal ownership, I learnt, was dubious, and not only disputable, but actually disputed. Ostensibly the rights of usage belonged by virtue of an Act

to the inhabitants and residents of Douglas, and the regulation of their exercise was vested in the Town Commissioners. Bye Laws existed somewhere, but the difficulty was to find them. Mr. Westwell and I wasted a lot of time in seeking for them. We called on lawyers, on the Town Clerk, at the Police Office, and at other places; but wherever we went the Bye Laws were always an immeasurable distance in front of us. We were told that they forbade lectures, addresses, sermons, or any kind of meetings on Douglas Head; but we were also told that the Town Commissioners were empowered to give permission to certain select persons to hold forth there. For my part, I was quite unable to understand this contradiction, except on the ground that the Bye Laws had been interpreted in a very free and easy fashion.

But where *were* the Bye Laws? The thing was to get them. At last a welcome gleam of light fell upon our path. It transpired that a copy of the Bye Laws was carried about in the pocket of Mr. Quirk, the elderly guardian, custodian, curator (or whatever they call him), of Douglas Head. Him, therefore, we went in quest of, calling at his residence so as not to look too obtrusive. He was out when we called, but two hours later we found him in, but he was minus the

Bye Laws. Would he have them if we called before bedtime? He said he would see, and we felt that we should see too. When we made our third call the old gentleman (as we guessed) would not show us the precious document. It contained the law, which we had to obey under penalties, but it was kept perfectly inaccessible to all but the persons who had to carry out its provisions; that is, the government had a law in its pocket, which it would not allow its subjects to read.

Finally, we caught Mr. Quirk at the Town Clerk's office, and under Mr. Nesbitt's superior orders he reluctantly and very slowly produced the mysterious document, upon which it almost seemed as though the very safety of the island depended. Hastily, but sufficiently, glancing over the Bye Laws, I saw that they contained no clause or sentence giving the Commissioners power to select the persons who should stand or the opinions that should be represented on Douglas Head. Neither did they contain any clause or sentence prohibiting lectures, addresses, sermons, or meetings. The only clause which gave the Commissioners a loophole to pounce upon any offender against their susceptibilities, was one which declared that no person should "wilfully obstruct, disturb, interrupt or annoy any other person in the proper use of the pleasure ground"—to wit, Douglas Head.

Clearly, under this clause, the delivery of a lecture could only be a "constructive" crime, for it was practically impossible to "obstruct" on such a broad expanse as Douglas Head, and as for "annoying" it was easy enough for any one who did not wish to hear me to remove himself far from the sound of my voice.

The extreme penalty under the Bye Laws was a fine of forty shillings; but it was hinted to me that any person who attempted to speak on Douglas Head, without the permission of the Commissioners, would be bundled off unceremoniously; and I was inclined to think that this policy would be adopted in my case, as it would stop my course (if it succeeded), and leave me to find a remedy; that is, I should be obliged to take the offensive at law against the Commissioners, instead of their prosecuting me.

My next step was to study the Town Bye Laws, and for this reason. Douglas has a fine front, and I observed a few small religious meetings held under the promenade. These again were held "by permission." According to Bye Law twenty-five—a delicious specimen of legal draughtsmanship—no person could speak, lecture, preach, or recite within twenty yards of the promenade, or anywhere behind that.

Not wishing to cause unnecessary friction, especially as Mr. Nesbitt, the Town Clerk, had been very polite, I decided to send a letter to the Town Commissioners, and give them an opportunity to exhibit a spirit of tolerance. My letter ran as follows:

"Shell Cottage, Douglas,

"August 29, 1893.

"To the Town Commissioners of Douglas.

"Gentlemen,—I beg to apply to you for permission to deliver an address on the Bible at Douglas Head on Sunday afternoon next, September 3. A collection could be taken up after the address, on behalf of the funds of the Hospital, and the amount thus realised would be paid over to the proper recipients, by my friend Mr. W. Westwell, of Manchester, with whom I am staying here, and who is well known to most of the leading inhabitants of Douglas.

"Failing permission to deliver my address on Douglas Head, I beg to apply for permission to deliver it on the shore in front of the town, where I observe other meetings are held at which addresses are delivered on religious subjects.

"Yours obediently,

"G. W. FOOTE."

Mr. Nesbitt promised that my letter should be laid before the Commissioners on Friday afternoon, but I gathered from various little indications that I might expect a refusal; and as I might have to deal with an awkward situation on Sunday afternoon, I wired to Mr. Robert Forder to come on Saturday. He is invaluable in such emergencies. I knew I could rely absolutely on his doing, with sound judgment and cool courage, anything I might require of him in the way of assistance.

Mr. Nesbitt's answer on behalf of the Town Commissioners reached me early on Friday evening. It was what I expected.

"Town Commission Office,

"Douglas, Isle of Man,

"Sept. 1, 1893.

"Dear Sir,—Permission has already been given to the Douglas clergy to occupy the Head on Sunday next for a religious service in aid of the Hospital, therefore the Commissioners have to decline to grant you permission. As regards the shore, I have to refer you to Bye Law 25, which provides that no person can hold a meeting within twenty yards of the promenade, but the Commissioners decline to give any permission.

"I am, yours faithfully,

"T. H. NESBITT, Clerk to the Comrs.

"To Mr. G. W. Foote."

My belief is, and it is founded on pretty good evidence, that this "permitted" religious service was hurriedly made up for the occasion, so that the Commissioners might have a plausible excuse for giving me a refusal, without assigning their real reason. Anyhow, I had announced that I would lecture on Douglas Head, and I meant if possible to keep my word. I went off at once, therefore, to the office of the *Isle of Man Times*, a paper of very liberal tendencies, edited as well as owned by Mr. J. A. Brown, whose father suffered imprisonment a generation ago for the freedom of the press. Mr. Brown is a man of great ability and a true reformer; he is also pleasant mannered and full of good nature. He laughed to scorn the pretended right of the Commissioners to decide what views should be ventilated on Douglas Head, and in proof that his scorn was not merely platonic he wrote the following paragraph for the Saturday morning's edition of his paper.

"'Give all sides a hearing, no matter whether we agree with them or not,' has always been a cardinal principle with this journal, and we have conscientiously endeavored to act up to that principle. Every creed and every shade of opinion should have the fullest freedom of discussion. In that alone is safety. But we regret to say that our 'City Fathers,' the Douglas Town Commissioners, do not take the same liberal view of things. Under some unknown law they arrogate to themselves the right to say who shall, and who shall not, preach, or lecture, or discourse on Douglas Head on Sundays. Under that right, which we boldly charge is assumed and unauthorised, they allow some persons to preach, or lecture, or discourse; but deny the exercise of a similar privilege to others. For instance, Mr. G. W. Foote, the well-known Secularist lecturer, applied to the Commissioners for permission to discourse on the Head to-morrow (Sunday) afternoon. They have declined to grant his request, giving as a reason that a minister had already been granted permission to preach there. A more lame and impotent excuse could not possibly be imagined. Even the Lord Bishop, with his eloquence and powers, cannot draw together an audience which could cover Douglas Head; and why the Rev. Mr. Madden should be allowed to occupy the ground, to the exclusion of all others, it is difficult to conceive. We should say that there is ample room and verge for a hundred lecturers and their audiences on those sweeping green-lands. Without wishing to advance one word in support of or against Mr. Foote's views, we contend that he is quite within his right in speaking on Douglas Head, if he desires to do so; and we would advise him to assert that right to-morrow afternoon, leaving the Commissioners to make themselves ridiculous by taking whatever steps they consider advisable for the purpose of stopping him. The Commissioners have very large powers indeed in regard to sanitary matters; but we have yet to learn that they have been empowered to decide what the public may and may not discuss and believe in matters social and theological."

This excellent paragraph I had printed at the bottom of a handbill announcing my lecture, many thousand copies of which were distributed on Saturday. A bold advertisement also appeared on the front page of the *Times*.

Early on Saturday a local magnate put Mr. Westwell and myself up to a wrinkle. We went up to Douglas Head again and viewed the premises of a photographer, named Woodcock. At the back of his house was a small yard, from which you could step right on to the Head itself. If I could speak from that yard the police could not touch me, as it was private property; and it would be an impossible task to keep a big crowd moving on, if they gathered on the slope to hear me. Now the yard was rented by a phrenologist, to whom Mr. Woodcock referred us. Would he let us have the use of it on Sunday afternoon? Well, he was open to treat, but he was afraid he would be prosecuted, and seriously injured, or perhaps ruined. Mr. Westwell offered him a legal indemnification for

any amount; but Mr. Quirk, the guardian of the Head, walked over and joined in the conversation, and the phrenologist's courage oozed out of him, as did the photographer's also at the hint that he might be boarded up. So we drove away smiling at the courage of our fellow countrymen.

Mr. Forder arrived on Saturday evening, and I learnt soon afterwards that a detachment of Christian Evidence men had been shipped from Liverpool. My informant added that they were "a very rough lot." And he was correct. They were a rough lot, as we saw on Sunday afternoon.

On Sunday morning Mr. Forder and I went on the Head, examined the ground and its surroundings, and arranged our plans of action. After a light luncheon we drove up to Douglas Head. There were five of us—Mr. Westwell and a lady friend, Mr. Forder, Mrs. Foote and myself. We alighted on the Marine Drive and walked slowly around the Head, passing the place where the "permitted" preacher, the Rev. T. J. Maddon, of Liverpool, was to hold forth. Nearly all the people gathered there followed me, and the "permitted" meeting, I was told, only lasted about ten minutes; in fact, it was an utter failure.

I fixed upon a spot a good distance from the "permitted" preacher, and stood there while the people assembled on the slope below me. When the Bishop preaches on Douglas Head the people stand above him. I preferred to have them below me. It would be harder for the Liverpool "rough lot" to push uphill.

Mr. Quirk, the custodian, in his uniform, came over to me. All he said was "Mr. Foote, you are too near the other meeting." I knew at once that the Town Commissioners had abandoned the idea of using force against me. Perhaps they thought the "rough lot" would do their business; but, as I looked round, and recognised the faces of some sturdy Freethinkers from various parts of England, I fancied we could deal with obstruction, and I trusted to my own tact with the rest of the meeting.

Choosing another spot, to oblige Mr. Quirk, I began my lecture punctually at three o'clock. Directly I opened my mouth the "rough lot" began interrupting. "Beware of infidelity!" shouted a white-faced, malignant-looking fellow. Others put in their little contributions to disorder. Presently the "rough lot" set up a meeting of their own close to mine, and began to sing "Stand up for Jesus." Then I felt, in my way, what Cromwell must have felt when he beheld his enemy's false move, and exclaimed, "The Lord hath delivered them into our hands." I simply moved higher up the slope and left the "rough lot" singing, remarking as I did so that if they followed me we should know that they were afraid of free speech, and that their faith could only be defended by howling down those who differed from them. "Mr. Foote," said the *Manx Sun* in its capital report, "then removed higher up the hill, and his congregation rapidly gathered in numbers until it assumed the dimensions of a great crowd."

That "great crowd" listened to me with attention, and apparently with interest, for an hour, standing patiently in the broiling sunshine. It was a great gratification to me to see the faces of many ladies in the meeting, who were not the least appreciative of my listeners. My address was a discursive one on Free-thought. At the close I remarked that some of them had no doubt seen an Atheist for the first time that afternoon, and I hoped they would go away feeling that an Atheist was very much like other men, without hooves, horns, tail, or a smell of brimstone. I also asked them to remember that it was an Atheist who had first challenged the arbitrary power of the Douglas Town Commissioners, and struck a fatal blow at the ridiculous superstition that they had a right to exercise an invidious control over public meetings.

When the applause subsided, Mr. Forder, acting as chairman, invited questions. A few were asked, chiefly by a clerical gentleman far gone on prophecy. After answering them, I begged the crowd to disperse in a quiet and orderly manner. As I walked down towards our carriage many persons shook hands with me; on the other hand, there were a few hisses, and one old lady uttered a peculiar yell, which she must have spent

a good deal of time in practising. On the whole I may fairly say that we drove off amidst marks of general goodwill. And thus ended the Battle of Douglas Head.

I am very sorry that the Commissioners did not accept my offer to have a collection taken up for the Hospital. It was not my fault that Mr. Madden, the "permitted" preacher, had a small congregation. As it was, his collectors got most of their donations from my meeting. A boy came up to our carriage with a box, and holding out a coin I asked, "Will it go into the minister's collection?" The boy grinned good-humoredly, and landed his fish.

As I am writing this at Douglas, I see that reports have appeared in the Liverpool evening papers. They are a little unfair, though perhaps not intentionally so, and in some respects inaccurate. But even as they are they show that we did a good stroke of work, and the interest it has excited must tend to the advantage of our cause. In conclusion, I thank Mr. Forder for leaving his business and coming to my side, and Mr. Westwell for standing by me so gallantly from the beginning to the end of the business; nor must I forget the handful of Douglas Freethinkers, and the greater number from various parts of England, who rallied around me on this important and critical occasion. To hold their trust and confidence is the greatest honor to which I aspire.

G. W. FOOTE.

OUR LADY OF LOURDES

In the East new faiths are constantly uprising, though, like bubbles on a stream, they are usually soon absorbed in the old religions out of which they sprang. The process is commonly something like this. One reputed for sanctity—a Hindu *yogi* or Mohammedan *fakir*—dies. His spirit is supposed to haunt his tomb, which becomes holy ground. Crowds visit it, leave their offerings, and cures are effected on the spot. As his reputation spreads pilgrimages are made to the holy shrine, and the holy man is on the fair road to being enrolled among saints or even with the gods, until a new cult starts, and the shrine becomes gradually deserted for a fresh one.

Something like this takes place in Catholic countries, only saint worship, since the spread of Protestantism, having receded before the worship of the mother of God, it is usually an apparition of the Virgin Mary, who gives instruction for the building of a church, and for pilgrimages to her shrine. The most noted of these in our time, and now, thanks to M. Zola, made more famous than ever, is Our Lady of Lourdes.

The Trinity has been regarded as a concession to Polytheism. In the same manner Madonna worship gathers up the devotion formerly rendered to many saints. The Virgin is one, yet many. She is like the firstborn of her family, a divine plurality in unity. Our Lady of Lourdes is as distinct from Our Lady of Loretto as St. Martin of Tours is from St. James of Campostella. One church sets up Our Lady of Grace, another outrivals it with Our Lady of all the Graces. One has Our Lady of Help, another Our Lady of Prompt Help, and yet a third Our Lady of Perpetual Help. And yet there are not many Ladies, but one Lady.

Our Lady of Lourdes, thanks to a combination of circumstances, to which I should assign the first place to its fine mountain air and the natural cures effected thereby, has out-distanced all her rivals. Although her origin dates only back to 1858, it is already involved in obscurity. People who fancy they can tell the exact amount of truth which underlies legends of thousands of years ago, should try their hand first on some wondrous tale of to-day as, for instance this apparition of the Virgin to Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes in 1858. All that is certainly known is, that this girl was a delicate impressionable child of fourteen at the time, and that when investigations began to be made she was shut up for the rest of her days in the Ursuline Convent at Nevers, where she died "in the odor of sanctity" at the age of thirty-four, in the year 1878. My own opinion is that once a legend of this kind has got a good start among a credulous people, it

may almost successfully defy unravelment. Exaggeration, bias, interest and imposture, may combine to give the events a color totally different to reality. Possibly, if Mary herself were to read the gospels, she would not recognise what they referred to.

The human heroine of Lourdes, Marie Bernarde, or Bernadette Soubirous, when wandering with her sisters by the wildrock cave saw, as she thought, a figure of a beautiful lady, to use her own words, "clothed in a long white robe like a cloud, a blue cincture around her waist, her feet, resting upon the ledge of the rock, adorned with two roses of the color of shining gold, and holding in her hands a chaplet of white beads." Bernadette fell upon her knees and began to say her chaplet. When she had ended, the beautiful lady was there no longer. Her sisters saw Bernadette kneeling, but nothing more. With a sickly frame and mind full of stories of apparitions, she was evidently the victim of hallucinations, one of those who see and hear what passes through their own mind, or is impressed upon it by others. She told her story to some pious women, who naively went with her to the spot armed with paper and ink for the vision to put down its behests. The beautiful lady appeared to Bernadette only, but would not oblige even with her autograph. Perhaps she had never learnt to write. She said, however, in words only audible as her presence was only visible to the child, "I want to see many people here." Later she said, "Go to the priests of the parish and tell them that they must raise a sanctuary here where people may come in procession." We cannot help suspecting that in these "inspirations" Bernadette was acting, perhaps unconsciously, under "suggestion." The revelations, like those to Mahommed concerning his marital relations, were exactly what was wanted. But a still more wonderful revelation was to be given by the Virgin when she showed herself for the last time. She said, "I am the Immaculate Conception" (*Je suis l'Immaculée Conception*)—a most astonishing phrase to come from the lips of any lady. The girl is said to have said that she did not understand this. Let us hope not. In 1854 the Council at Rome solemnly affirmed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, and throughout Christendom there were many who found it, as Peter found the epistles of Paul, hard to be understood. But here it was embodied in *propria persona*, "I am the Immaculate Conception." Who could doubt after this? It was as if Julia's spook had used Mr. Stead's hand to write "I am the Fourth Dimension." The dogma of the Church was authoritatively endorsed by divine revelation.

In 1862 the Bishop of Tarbes, "pronouncing judgment on the apparition which has shown itself in the grotto at Lourdes," declared that "the Immaculate Mary, Mother of God, has really appeared to Bernadette Soubirous, on the 11th of February and following days, eighteen times in all; that this apparition assumes all the characteristics of truth; and that the faithful are authorised to believe it certain." He further authorises in his diocese the worship (*culte*) of Notre Dame de Lourdes, and—last, not least—appeals for cash to erect a sanctuary over the grotto—which was speedily forthcoming. The tale spread, and people flocked to see the rock and the fountain, where miraculous cures soon followed. The heroine, as I have said, was soon spirited away to a convent, to remove her from excitement. The town of Lourdes rose from obscurity and squalor to fame and wealth. Between six and seven thousand inhabitants now mainly derive their living from the legend and the pilgrims which it brings to the shrine. Hotels and shops for the sale of objects of piety connected with Our Lady of Lourdes abound. Bernadette's sister has a shop, and puts up a notice board "present at the first apparition." Though she can tell nothing about it, she does good business. So an hotel advertises it is kept by "the son of the sister of Bernadette" and another by her cousin germane. A handsome church has been erected as a permanent monument of the miracle, and you may be quite sure that scrutiny and scepticism are not encouraged at Lourdes.

Matthew Arnold said the fatal objection to miracles is that they do not occur. At Lourdes they are of

weekly occurrence. Thousands of pilgrims with all kinds of ailments go to the shrine for a cure, and there is abundant testimony that a number are cured. Prof. Huxley is said to have remarked that if he could accept at all the class of events which go under the generic name of "miracles," he should certainly cite as having the best external evidence, not the miracles of the New Testament, but the miracles of Lourdes. But in truth, there is nothing, properly speaking, miraculous in the cures reported from Lourdes, though enough crutches are left there to supply a hospital. Many maladies do yield to pure mountain air, charming gardens, and change of surrounding. No one who has investigated faith cures will deny the stimulus given to nervous power by faith, hope, and suggestion. But the cures are not always permanent, and have in no way reduced the number of patients treated in French hospitals. Even if the pilgrims die at Lourdes they are supposed to be extremely fortunate to be able to terminate their existence in so holy a spot. That the worship of Our Lady of Lourdes should be taking place in France at the close of the nineteenth century is a phenomenon which shows how deep-seated is human superstition, and what a task still lies before those engaged in the work of education and emancipation.

J. M. WHEELER.

CHRIST A FAILURE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the extravagant encomiums that have been frequently bestowed upon Christ, the dispassionate student of his four biographies cannot but be impressed with the fact that much of what he is there represented as having said has come to nothing, that many things he promised to do were never accomplished, and that his avowed mission was an entire failure. His history, as contained in the New Testament, is supposed to have been written by his own friends, and it may, therefore, be fairly assumed that what is therein recorded is as favorable towards him as it could possibly be. There is no evidence in the gospels that he wrote any portions of them himself, or that he authorised others to pen a reliable account of who he was, what he said, and what he did; and there is also no proof that he endorsed what was written. It is stated that he applied to himself portions of scripture that were in existence before his time; but it is singular that so many events should have happened "in order" that these "scriptures might be fulfilled" as the prophets had foretold.

There is a difficulty in dealing with Christ's character and sayings, inasmuch as many things we may say other persons may contradict by referring to another gospel than the one alluded to by us, or else by putting their own construction upon our quotations, so vague and indefinite is much of the language of the New Testament. But whatever advantage a theologian may think he can gain from adopting this course, it will be only so much evidence against all the testimony concerned. There is one notable thing about the gospels deserving of attention. They all refer to events of the past, to persons and things of other days, and this renders consistency hardly to be expected, and accuracy next to impossible. Luke undertakes to set forth a declaration "of all things from the very first." It is to be regretted, however, that he did not name one of the "eye-witnesses" to whom he refers. We might then have been able to judge of the value of his own remarkable "declaration." In this respect he seems to resemble some modern writers, who relate what they did not see, under the impression that such information will be of value. In setting forth his "declaration," Luke must have relied upon the words of his master that "everything is possible to him who believeth." The man who tells of people walking about after their heads were cut off is laughed at, but the story that the whale swallowed a man, and after retaining him for three days in his stomach sent him to land again, is credited because it is scripture. Cowper says of an old lady:

Enough for her she knew her Bible true,
A truth the brilliant Frenchman never knew.

A person may listen to Bible stories on Sunday with faithful attention, but if he were met in the week "on change" it would be very difficult to persuade him that the value of shares is less than he asks. A man on Sunday may even say "Amen" to the declaration that we are all children of one Father, but meet him at the bank next day, and he will declare the relationship off. He may, like the Quaker, allow a man to smite him on both cheeks, but probably, also like the Quaker, he will find enough of "the old Adam" left in him to knock the man down afterwards. This proves that if Jesus taught that all men were or should be "brothers," and that they should not "resist evil" or resent wrong, his teaching was an irredeemable failure. Wise or unwise, all that remains of it is the precept, the practice is not to be found among sane people.

Christ not only failed to secure for the world an intelligent and a harmonious history of his life, but he taught that which was thoroughly impossible to be acted upon in daily life. If a person were to lend to everyone that would borrow, without expecting any return, he would have numerous applicants, but it is not likely that anyone would be willing to commence such a business, although recommended by Christ. Jesus is credited with being the proclaimer of peace and good-will to all mankind, yet there have been war and ill-will ever since his advent. Among Christians themselves there has been a continual manifestation of hatred and persecution. The Rev. T. Finch says: "Though such horrible brutalities as the Smithfield burnings are now no longer allowed to terrify us, yet the different religious sects, with but few exceptions, manifest an ample portion of the savage spirit, and as far as the bitterest calumnies and anathemas can have effect, endeavor to vilify and destroy one another." Dr. George Campbell remarks that "nothing can equal the dogmatism and arrogance with which one sect pronounces sentence against another, except, perhaps, the dogmatism with which the other retaliates upon them." Dr. Cave, in his *Primitive Christianity*, observes: "If a modest and an honest heathen were to estimate Christianity by the lives of its professors, he would certainly proscribe it as the vilest religion in the world"; and Dr. Dicks, in his *Philosophy of Religion*, states: "There is nothing which so strikingly marks the character of the Christian world in general as the want of candor (and the existence of) the spirit of jealousy. . . . Slander, dishonesty, falsehood, and cheating are far from being uncommon among those who profess to be united in the bonds of a common Christianity." History teems with the records of wars produced and carried on by the followers of Christ. Buckle observes: "During almost a hundred and fifty years, Europe was afflicted by religious wars, religious massacres, and religious persecutions." He then alleges that "not one" of the wars would have arisen if the Church had recognised the principle of individual right and mental freedom. But this is just what orthodox Christians have not done. They have striven to emulate their master in destroying the possibility of peace and good-will, by seeking to enforce their creeds and doctrines upon those who could not accept either. Christ taught his disciples to manifest a spirit of hatred towards those who did not receive their doctrines, while he condemned those to hell who did not believe in him. If he is claimed as the exemplar of love and freedom, he, in the carrying out of these principles, has been a most lamentable and deplorable failure. When we hear Christians talk about Jesus and liberty, we are inclined to think they have not read the New Testament, for its teachings prescribe all liberty outside of the Christian fold. That Jesus came to set one member of a family against another, and "not to send peace but a sword," he admits; therefore no one would have had cause for regret if his mission in this particular had been a failure, as it was in many other instances.

Nothing is alleged more clearly in the New Testament than the statement that Christ taught men to rely on the bounties of heaven. As God clothed "the grass of the field" and fed "the fowls of the air," so it is said that he would supply the material wants of man. If faith was placed on such a promise, beggary

and starvation would be the result. The absurdity of adopting such a plan is so obvious that only a few fanatics have ever been induced to try the experiment. Laying on of hands as a curative process, and saving by the prayer of faith as practised and taught by Christ, meet to-day with only condemnation by Christian coroners. Jesus held the notion that a state of perfection was that of destitution, that poverty was even a virtue, and that the poor were blessed. Such ideas are rejected by all sensible persons, and poverty is regarded as being a great calamity, and one of the objectionable concomitants of "Christian civilisation." Riches are not believed by orthodox professors to be a disadvantage in this world, or an impediment to the entrance into any other. Christ has as totally failed to impress his followers with the wisdom of such teaching, as he has to induce them to look upon this life as only of secondary importance. He may counsel them to "take no thought" for their lives, to "swear not at all," but they do take thought and swear notwithstanding, and thus prove that the advice of their master has failed to impress them as being of any value in practical every-day life.

According to Luke, Jesus was to sit on the throne of David, to rule over the house of Jacob for ever, and his kingdom was to have no end. Unfortunately for the "inspired word," he never occupied David's throne, the house of Jacob has disappeared, and Christ failed to secure any kingdom at any time. He also promised twelve thrones to his twelve followers, a promise he failed to keep, and it is an interesting question, what has become of those theories? Jesus also intimated that he would re-appear after his crucifixion, and that the re-appearance would take place before some of those then standing before him had "tasted death." We presume all of those persons to whom he was speaking have "tasted death" without witnessing the fulfilment of the promise. Besides, we are told that "with a great sound of the trumpet" the angels "shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost parts of the earth." This evidently is not yet an accomplished fact, and to become so now would be rather difficult, as those bodies have long since mouldered into dust. But what could have been Christ's ideas of the "uttermost parts of the earth"? The largest continent of the globe was unknown until 1500 years after his time. How the elect got to that part is a mystery, and how the proposal to "gather them" could be carried out before the discoveries of the geographers appears to us extremely puzzling.

Christ was sent to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel," but he failed to win their confidence, for we read that "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." He then undertook to "show light to the Gentiles," and to be "the light of the world," but after eighteen hundred years of the teaching of his faith it has failed to reach two-thirds of the world; and among the one-third, where it has been preached, the majority of the people have rejected its claims. However his name may be professed, Christ himself, not being in touch with the genius of our time, has failed to become a living factor in modern life.

CHARLES WATTS.

HOW TO HELP US.

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

THOMAS PAINE.

THE portrait on our front page was originally engraved by William Sharp about a century ago, and was published by him in February, 1794. It was used by Paine's friend, Thomas Clio Rickman, as a frontispiece to his *Life of Thomas Paine*, and he declares it "the only true likeness of him." "It is," he continues, "from his portrait by Romney, and is perhaps the greatest likeness ever taken by any painter. To that eminent artist I introduced him in 1792, and it was by my earnest persuasion that he sat to him."

Paine was born at Thetford, Norfolk, on June 29, 1737, and was consequently over fifty-five at the time of this portrait. He had gone through much in these years, and was to go through much more. Indeed, he may be said to have been one of the men who make history. His incisive words in *The Crisis* and *Common Sense*, had animated the American colonies to the resolve to throw off the yoke of the mother country, and to establish a republic. If he did not draw up the famous Declaration of Independence, he at least inspired its leading ideas, and had it followed them fully, America would have been spared the shame of slavery and the cost of civil war. When his adopted country was financially stranded, he raised a large loan for it from France. For this service Paine received no pay, and for his services during the war of Independence as author, soldier and secretary for foreign affairs, he only received a forfeited estate and a grant of £500 from the State of Pennsylvania. This money Paine devoted to his experiments in building iron bridges. This brought him to England again, and to France just before the Revolution. Paine's mechanical genius was recognised in England, and a bridge—the first of its kind—made under his direction, spanned the Wear at Sunderland. This was not his only invention. A planing machine, a smokeless candle, and a scheme for using gunpowder as a motor, were among the fruits of his active ingenuity.

But Paine found a greater cause than that of mechanical invention awaiting his attention. He paid two visits to France before the Revolution, and became acquainted with Brissot, Danton, and other leading revolutionists; a third in 1790, and a fourth in 1791, when four Frenchmen joined with him in constituting themselves a "Republican Society." Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* appeared in Nov. 1790. With splendid amplitude of rhetoric he voiced the sentiments of the upper and middle class Conservatives, and became their idol. Paine set to work to reply, which he did effectively in his vigorous *Rights of Man*. Like all his works, it was published cheaply for the million, and had a wide circulation. Its translation into French excited much enthusiasm among the revolutionists. Paine was made a French citizen, and elected to the French Convention for three different departments. Meantime the *Rights of Man* was prosecuted and Paine outlawed, being hurried off to France by William Blake, the poet-artist. On the flight of Louis XVI. to Varennes, Paine drew up a Republican manifesto, which Achille Duchâtelet translated, signed, and placarded on the doors of the Assembly. Still clinging to monarchy, that body was much scandalised, and threatened prosecution. Paine was thus not only the first to proclaim the American Republic, but also the first to advocate one for France. In the Convention he was appointed one of the committee to draft a constitution. When the Republic was proclaimed, he addressed a letter to the Convention, congratulating them on "the abolition of a phantom." When the king's trial came on Paine voted for his banishment to America, where he would find friends ready to requite the support he had given to the United States. He 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." He contrasted the English Revolution of 1688 with that of 1649, pointing to the ill results of making Charles I. esteemed a martyr; excused Louis as the victim of bad training, and warned France of the impolicy of losing the sympathies of America, her sole ally. Mr. Conway says "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 to risk it several times on behalf of the proscribed men in Paris.

With the fall of the moderate party Paine's influence in the Convention declined. Robespierre found a cause of offence in that in the Declaration of Rights, drawn up by Paine and Condorcet, there was not mention of a Deity. Robespierre took the Supreme Being under his protection, and inserted God into the French Constitution. Paine's name was inserted in Robespierre's note-book as one to be indicted. On Christmas Day, 1793, he and Cloutz were expelled from the Convention as foreigners, and on New Year's Eve they were arrested. In the meantime he hurriedly finished the first part of the *Age of Reason*, which he committed to the care of Joel Barlow. When in prison, where he remained ten months, until the fall of Robespierre, in daily expectation of being brought to the guillotine, he proceeded with his work. At this time the English aristocracy were gratified by a report of his execution, and a libellous leaflet of *The Last Dying Words of Thomas Paine* was hawked in London. Paine, indeed believing his last hour was near, had given his dying testimony. It appears in the *Age of Reason*, a work unrivalled for bringing plain common sense to bear on the pretensions set up for the Bible and what is called revealed religion. The barbarous character of the old Jew books, and the absurdities of popular theology, are laid bare with a convincing force, which keeps the work a pioneer one in the cause of Freethought.

Mr. Conway, in his recent *Life of Paine*, says:

"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 women; 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 is Paine's greatest title to remembrance. He attacked oppression in its stronghold of superstition. His blows told with such force that to-day the positions he attacked are being gradually abandoned. His services to mankind embittered against him all the ministers of superstition and the forces of privilege. Lying stories were told of his declining years and death-bed. These have been happily dissipated by Mr. Conway, his latest and most painstaking biographer, and the name of Paine is being gradually recognised all over the English-speaking world as that of one of the most valiant liberators of humanity.

Clio Rickman's account of his personal appearance and characteristics is worth recording. He says: "Mr. Paine in his person was about five feet ten inches high, and rather athletic; he was broad shouldered, and latterly stooped a little. His eye, of which the painter could not convey the exquisite meaning, was full, brilliant, and singularly piercing; it had in it the muse of fire. . . . His manners were easy and gracious; his knowledge was universal and boundless; in private company and among friends his conversation had every fascination that anecdote, novelty, and truth could give it." J. M. W.

Secular Thought, of Toronto (Aug. 19), reprints Mr. Wheeler's article on "The Dates of the Gospels," and in a leaderette calls its readers' attention to Prof. Johnson's views.

Captain Robert C. Adams has been carrying the banner of Freethought into British Columbia. He has been lecturing at Nelson, where the novelty of hearing the Bible attacked and evolution expounded has occasioned considerable stir.

Atheism deals with this life and world. The Atheist holds that there is no superior being. He endeavors to make man the superior being, considering this world his only theatre of action. Up to this time there has appeared no evidence to disturb this conclusion. This rational conclusion firmly established, the mind sees clearly the duties of the present time. Human sympathies are enlarged,—human pity, and human hope. Pity for the misfortunes that mankind bring upon themselves, and hope that universal knowledge may finally supersede general ignorance.—*Ironclad Age*.

ACID DROPS.

Professor St. George Mivart having submitted to the censure of Holy Mother Church, who has condemned his articles on "Happiness in Hell," there is naturally rejoicing among the faithful. The *Tablet* praises his "prompt and full submission," and his showing "the humble Christian in the person of the man of science." We should imagine that the "humble" Professor will wince at this eulogy, and sigh for a little of the robust individuality of a Huxley. Rushing into print with confidence, and then caving in without being refuted, is a course of action which brands a man with intellectual inferiority or with contemptible cowardice.

It was our opinion at the very first, and indeed we expressed it, that Professor St. George Mivart was being used as a catspaw by the Jesuits, who probably wanted to feel the public pulse in regard to this burning question of Hell. They found what they wanted, they learnt that Hell could still be kept going, even if a slightly reduced temperature, and so they signed for a fresh lease, leaving their catspaw in the lurch. It is an abject position for a Professor to be placed in. One can only hope that he will yet revolt against being made to swallow his own opinions in this public and ignominious manner.

The Jesuit Father Clarke writes in the *Nineteenth Century* on "The Verdict of Rome on 'Happiness in Hell.'" The object of his article apparently is to show that the decree of the Congregation of the Index, putting Mr. St. George Mivart's articles on the Index of prohibited books, is not infallible. Since it was not personally pronounced by the Pope *ex cathedra*, no one ever supposed it was. It is sufficient that it can reduce Mr. Mivart to obedience and make him unsay what he said a few months ago.

Father Clarke ends his article with the words "*Roma locuta est: causa finita est.*" Rome has spoken, the case is finished. There is, however, a far more powerful voice than that of Rome, and that is the voice of humanity. It also has spoken, and hell must go. If Rome will hold on to hell, and St. George Mivart will hold on to Rome, they too must go with it.

In 1746 the Rev. Matthias Towgood put forward "Remarks on the Profane and Absurd use of of the Monosyllable Damn." He forgot to point out that this, and the polysyllable damnation, owe their origin to the Bible and ecclesiastical theology.

On Sunday last a Catholic mob at Banbridge, County Down, attacked the Orange population, and destroyed some of their dwellings. These defenders of the faith of good old Mother Church had a band which played "God Save Ireland." It was a very poor compliment to "the Almighty."

Mr. George Wilson died suddenly last Sunday morning in a Wesleyan chapel at Altrincham. It is reported that the incident created a "painful sensation," though dying in a place of worship would seem a good way of reaching heaven. It is difficult to understand the world-without-end inconsistency of Christians.

Truth says of the Parson, in an article on "The Great Unpaid":—"He is usually, I think, the most detestable figure on the Bench. Ask any rustic for his opinion, and nine times out of ten he will tell you that of all justices the most intolerable tyrant is the cleric."

According to the proverb, we should give the Devil his due, and it is to be presumed that a parson is entitled to the same consideration. We therefore note the explanation of the Rev. H. C. Guyon, in a letter to the *Standard*. This man of God was fined at the Wincanton Petty Sessions for assaulting a lad, but his offence was (on his own showing) a very slight one. He only gave the boy two cuts with the thong of his whip, for trying to frighten a pony, and secondly for being impudent. For this innocent recreation the magistrates have fined him, and their tyrannous conduct is to be severely reprehended. Life is hardly worth living if a parson is not free to horsewhip a boy.

The Rev. I. Hillier, vicar of St. Luke's, Solly-street, Sheffield, has had a meeting of his creditors, and offered to pay £50 per annum until his liabilities are cleared off. This will take about ten years. He was formerly a Nonconformist minister, and borrowed £200 while preparing for the Church.

The call for the Congress of Universal Religion at the World's Fair was sent "to all those who believe in a divine order in the government of the world and who work and wait for the kingdom of God on earth." Evidently it was not intended that Secularists should participate.

There has been an amusing dispute at the church of Point au Pic in the province of Quebec. Some wealthy New Yorkers were staying in the village, and out of deference to them a Toronto clergyman, the Rev. G. M. Wrong, twice gave precedence in the Litany to a prayer for the President of the United States over that for the Prince of Wales and the Royal Family. This excited much indignation among the English residents, and at a meeting of the congregation this important matter of precedence led to an interchange of Christian civilities.

The Lucerne palavers about Christian Reunion result in "much cry and little wool." Those who fancy there is anything in it should buy the Christian papers and note the virulence of High Church against Low Church and sect against sect all the Christian world over.

Archdeacon Farrar's papers in the *Contemporary Review* on "The Principles of the Reformation," are riling the Ritualists very much. They say he is only concerned to defend the Deformation of Christianity.

Invocation of saints appears to be spreading among the Ritualists, and the *Church Times* devotes an article to the subject with a view of restraining the too forward brethren.

The call for harvest thanksgivings with next to no harvest recalls the story told by Dr. Jessopp, of the Norfolk farmer who said: "Somehow that there old Providence seems to have been agin me all along, he hev. What last year he spoilt my taters, and this year he did for my turnips and my hay, and now he's been and took my missus. But I reckon there's one abev as'll put a stopper on old Providence if a goes too far."

Old Providence has made his wind and water supply to get terribly out of order this year. Western Europe has been wanting rain, while India is having floods, completely destroying the paddy crops, and rendering thousands without houses to live in and in imminent danger of famine.

The Lord's tender mercies are over all his works, especially in America, where storms and natural convulsions are extremely common. The recent cyclone in South Carolina wrought terrible destruction, and no doubt the inhabitants—that is, those who are left alive—will go in for cordial thanksgiving services.

Over a thousand lives are believed to have been lost by the recent cyclone in Beaufort county alone. The town of Port Royal was almost entirely destroyed. Charleston was as badly ruined, as in the earthquake over seventy churches have sustained damage, several of them being in ruins. The darkies again thought the great and dreadful day of the Lord was at hand. Great numbers of them are homeless and reduced to penury, while property to the value of many millions of dollars has been destroyed.

Cholera is still rampant in Hungary and Italy. In Russia deaths have risen from 350 last week to 1,209 this week. Some few cases have also occurred in France.

Renewed troubles between the missionaries and the populace are reported from China. The Roman Catholic mission at Lichuen has been attacked by a mob. The priests escaped into a neighboring province. Of course much indignation is expressed by Christians, but after all the action of the Chinese is not to be wondered at. They have seen that in other countries the missionary is but the advance-guard of annexation, and they have palpable evidence that they do not bring with them that improved morality of which Christians boast.

The Pope looks forward to the possibility of the English being driven from India, for in a letter on Indian missions he states that the dread condition in which the natives would be left on the withdrawal of other Christian ministers, should urge Catholics to increased exertions. The larger portion of Christians in India are Romanists, but the Christians altogether form a very insignificant number alongside the 211,000,000 of adherents of Brahminism and 57,000,000 followers of Mohammed.

The greatest bulk of Protestant converts have been recruited, not from the Hindus proper, but from the aboriginal Shanars of Tinnevely. A missionary of fifteen years' experience honestly admits, in the *Guardian*, that if "the Christianity of Tinnevely ceased to be watered by English contributions, and if caste were cut out at the roots, it would die in a decade." In some native churches the people are seated according to their caste, and at holy communion two or more chalices are used, that converts of inferior caste may not drink out of the same cup as the brethren of higher degree. So much for the liberty and equality of the gospel.

Sir William Wedderburn has a paper in the *New Review* on "The Bombay Riots: Who is to Blame?" He admits that there is increasing enmity between the Hindus and Mohammedans, but considers the former are not to blame. Those concerned in getting up the Indress congresses have, he says, tried their utmost to produce unity and get rid of the old antagonism of class and creed. We fear this is only to be done by getting rid of belief in the old religions.

Preaching at Stoke, in connection with the P.S.A. Society, the Rev. S. C. Alderidge said a terrible question suggested itself as to whether Christianity was effete or not. "In our civilised centres and cultured communities this religion commands neither popular interest nor popular affection." Rather a curious result after eighteen centuries of a divine religion with God for its author, and truth without any admixture of error for its contents.

The present Pope has created one new patriarchate, twenty-seven new archbishoprics, and seventy-seven new bishoprics. These facts warrant us in regarding the old Church as the real foe of the future. Russia is the only country in which Catholicism has lost any ground.

The oldest fragment of the Babylonian Talmud is believed to be now in the Bodleian Library. It is said that the MS. was written 1123 A. D. The earliest manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible are not much older, being only assigned to the tenth century.

The novelists are taking to that good old romance the Bible, and Mr. Rider Haggard is going to retell the story of Esther and Ahasuerus, a little more decently we hope than in the original; while Marie Corelli, whose books we are told are the favorite reading of English royalty, is engaged on "The Dream of Barabba." We wonder if Miss Corelli is aware that the real name of her hero was Jesus.

This appears in some early manuscripts of Matt. xvii. 17, and as Bar-abbas itself may mean Son of the Father, there seems to have been a nice little myth involved in the story of the gentleman chosen for salvation instead of Jesus Christ.

Origen, in his Commentaries on Matthew, says: "In many MSS. it is not contained that Barabbas was also called Jesus, and perhaps rightly, so that the name Jesus would not belong to any sinner." This, of course, implies that in Origen's time "Jesus Barabbas" was the reading of most MSS. Evidently there was no reason for inserting the name Jesus, but a very decided one for omitting it.

Mrs. E. Caillard writes in the *Contemporary Review* on "Evolution a Note of Christianity." It would have astonished the old divines to have heard that its power of constantly changing, was the chief characteristic of a revelation sent by an unchanging God. That Christianity has changed is easy to show, and Mrs. Caillard is doubtless right in saying it is still going through transition. But she overlooks that its permanence depends on its establishment and endowment. There are many ready to change their

Christianity into just what you please so long as it has a respectable air, and permits them to hold on to their stipends.

A good story is going the rounds concerning the Prince of Wales's recent sojourn at Cowes. One afternoon on the "Osborne" he found that a curious set of books, all theological, had been addressed to him. Among them was Mr. St. George Mivart's *Happiness in Hell*. His Royal Highness was at a loss to understand, but next day he received a letter of apology, and an intimation of the fact that he had received by mistake a Bishop's parcel, and that the Bishop had got his. What we should like to learn is what the Bishop thought of the books intended for the Prince of Wales.

The Bishop of Chester has been moving in the House of Lords, praying that her Majesty will withhold her assent to certain Welsh Intermediate and Technical Education Schemes. In the course of the discussion the Marquis of Salisbury insisted that it was impossible to have religious teaching which was not denominational. This is a most excellent reason for having none at all in schools paid for by the whole of the community.

The Sabbatarians of Yarmouth have incited the police to prosecute Sunday oyster-sellers, tobacconists and fruiterers, for following their own calling on the Lord's Day, under the old Act of Charles II. They will next have to compel the automatic machines to close on Sunday. It is time the regulation of modern life by acts of two hundred years was stopped. A spirited letter on the subject from Mr. W. Hook, appears in the *Yarmouth Mercury*.

Father Chiniquy warns the Americans that there are numerous secret military organisations in the States who are prepared to force Catholicism into a dominant position. These societies go under the name of Hibernians, Irish Americans, St. Patrick's Cadets, and Knights of St. Peter. They are, says the ex-Catholic priest, both drilled and armed. Already the Catholics are in power in New York, Washington, St. Paul's, St. Louis, Cincinnati, New Orleans, and San Francisco, and everywhere go for excluding Protestants from posts of honor, power, trust, and money. With the negroes and Romanists the native Americans have yet many breakers ahead.

The right rev. fathers in God were in the House of Lords and voted against the London County Council Betterment Bill. Just so. If any Churchman wishes to find out why all bishops and nearly all the clergy are thought to be Tories, they would find their answer in the voting lists of the House of Lords. Some few weeks since there were two, if not three, Licensing Bills before the Upper House. Most of the Episcopal Vice-Presidents of the C.E.T.S. were conspicuous by their absence. Further, the Bills backed by some bishops were so badly drawn that their authors were afraid to go to a division. Why don't the bishops give better attendance and more intelligent attention to their political duties.—*Echo*.

The colored Rev. Geo. Le Count was arrested at Camden, New Jersey, for petty theft, and was sent to prison for thirty days. A brudder in the Lord, the Rev. George Washington, appeared in court with a plea for Le Count's release. He represented that the prisoner was in great demand as a preacher at the East Camden camp-meeting of colored people. "Why should I release him?" queried the police justice. "Kase de good ob de public mind 'mand it, yo honah," replied Washington. "De Rebring Le Count am looked fo' ter preach at de camp-meetin', an' it may cause a heap o' damage ef he ain't dar." "You want me to let this bad man out to preach, do you?" demanded the judge. "Yessir; make it a fine, 'stead of gaol, sah." "He has no money with which to pay a fine." "But yo honah, I'll g'arantee de fine; I'll see dat a c'lection is taking up, and dat de fine am paid outer de fust money, sah." The justice, anxious for the cause of religion, acceded, and the contributions of the faithful will pay for the delinquencies of the man of God.

A sentiment very common in the Pale was expressed by those martial monks who taught that it was no more sin to kill an Irishman than to kill a dog, and that whenever, as often happened, they killed an Irishman, they would not on that account refrain from celebrating Mass even for a single day.—*W. E. H. Lecky, "Ireland in the Eighteenth Century," vol. i., p. 4.*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, Sept. 10, Glasgow Branch N.S.S. Hall, 110 Brunswick-street, Glasgow; at 11.30, "Christ and Democracy"; 2.30, "The Trinity Puzzle"; 6.30, "A Search for the Soul."

Monday, Sept. 11, City Assembly Rooms, Dundee; at 8, "Christ and the Democracy." *Tuesday*, Sept. 12, at 8, "A Search for the Soul."

September 17 and 24, Hall of Science, London.

October 1 and 8, Hall of Science; 15, Camberwell; 22, Manchester.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC., should be written on postcards or the envelopes marked outside. Otherwise they are sent on to Mr. Foote.

F. BIBBY.—We do not supply goods advertised by traders in the *Freethinker*. You must apply direct to the advertisers.

PORTSMOUTH BRANCH.—Your communication, not being marked "Lecture Notice" on the envelope, was forwarded to Mr. Foote, and thus too late for last week's issue.

W. JANAWAY, late corresponding secretary of the Portsmouth Branch, has removed to Woolwich. He will be much missed at Portsmouth, but it is hoped that Woolwich will have the benefit of his able services.

SHILLING MONTH.—A. Marsh, £1.

O. T. QUINN.—We cannot insert letters merely because they have been refused insertion by Christian editors, and the paper you refer to is not one we care to advertise gratuitously.

CHICAGO DELEGATION FUND.—W. Clarkson, 10s.

N.S.S. FUND.—A. Shaw, 2s.

T. DANBY.—See "Sugar Plums."

G. JACOB congratulates us upon the remarkably clever pictures now appearing in the *Freethinker*.

W. R. HIGHAM.—Thanks for cuttings. Glad to hear you think this journal well worth the twopence. We are obliged to you for getting your newsagent to display a contents-sheet. A periodical for young people is certainly a desideratum, but we are not in a position to undertake it at present.

J. PRITCHARD.—Your imagination misled you. Nothing of the sort was intended.

E. YEAXLEE.—Your letter is sent on to Mr. Foote.

DEMETRIUS.—Your verses needed fire. They have it now.

C. L.—Cuttings are always welcome.

M. W.—The eulogistic passage on J. C. is from an essay in Mill's posthumous volume, which Miss Helen Taylor, his editress, allowed was never prepared for publication by the author.

BENVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance begs to acknowledge: T. S. Naylor, 2s. 6d.; W. Wood, 2s. 6d.; Finsbury Park Branch, 11s. 2d.

J. S. ANDERSON, assistant librarian at the Hall of Science, acknowledges receipt of Mr. C. Edward's *Witness of Assyria*, presented by W. Dickenson.

R. DEAKIN.—Of course the able and striking articles of Professor Johnson are open to criticism, but the criticism, to be of any use, would have to be done by someone as well-informed as himself. Few persons have the necessary knowledge to give a real value to their opinion on such a subject.

GO AHEAD.—We have already announced that the doors of the London Hall of Science are to be thrown open free to the public on Sunday, September 17, and at least for the three succeeding Sundays. We are as alive as you can be to the necessity of getting at the masses of the people, and we are doing, and shall continue to do, our best in this direction.

W. L. DAVIES.—Shall appear.

READING.—Will fill a corner.

W. FERRIER.—You cannot do better than read Mr. Foote's *Darwin on God*. It contains all the important references to Charles Darwin's religious opinions that are to be found in his books and in his *Life and Letters*, edited by his son. Accurate references are given, and you could follow them up for yourself.

CORRESPONDENCE is short again this week, partly through Mr. Foote's absence from London, and partly in consequence of the extensive theft of letters from our office—a matter which is in the hands of detectives, and is certainly puzzling.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Echo—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—La Raison—Lucifer—Secular Thought—Independent Pulpit—Tablet—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—La Vérite Philosophique—Ironclad Age—Boston Herald—Faithful Words—Excellent Things—Christian Life—Church

Reformer—Ulster Echo—Yarmouth Mercury—Manx Times—South Wales Echo—Natal Mercury—Newcastle Daily Leader—Commonweal.

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

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

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.

SPECIAL.

SOME weeks ago I stated that burglars had paid my office a visit. During my absence from London I am sorry to say that thieves have been meddling with my letters. Many of my readers, I dare say, wondered why my last week's article was so short and unsatisfactory; the reason was that the greater part of it, and the middle part too, never reached the printer. Several paragraphs shared the same fate, particularly one on my Liverpool lectures, which were, I am happy to say, attended by large audiences—only a very slight per centage smaller than the bumping audiences I had there in April. Christian Evidence opposition had rather a beneficial effect than otherwise, considering the time of the year, and the Liverpool N.S.S. Branch was highly pleased with the day's proceedings. I mention this because, as no paragraph appeared in last week's *Freethinker*, it was charitably rumored that I said nothing in consequence of my lectures being a fiasco.

I have made arrangements to prevent my letters from being stolen, and if those arrangements fail I must have my letters sent to another address. Meanwhile my correspondents whose letters have been stolen will understand the reason if they receive no reply.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote opens the lecturing season for the Glasgow Branch to-day (Sept. 10) in the Lecture Hall, Brunswick-street. His subjects are fresh and interesting, and it is to be hoped there will be some good discussions at all three meetings. Glaswegians have a reputation, like other Scotsmen, for being fond of an argument, and we trust the reputation will be sustained on this occasion. On Monday and Tuesday evenings Mr. Foote lectures at Dundee, where he hopes to have good meetings, and to leave the newly formed Branch in good spirits for an active winter propaganda.

Our veteran friend, Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, takes the platform at the Hall of Science this evening, his subject being "Christianity, declined with thanks." We expect a humorous as well as an intellectual treat will be in store for attendants. The lectures now begin at 7 p.m.

Our London readers should bear in mind that the new experiment at the London Hall of Science will begin on Sunday evening next (Sept. 17). The galleries will be free to the public, and the seats to be occupied by payment will be confined to the body of the hall. Mr. Foote gives the first course of four lectures without any remuneration, so that the National Secular Society may try the experiment without a serious risk. Freethinkers, on their side, will be expected to pay for their seats unless they really cannot afford to do so. Let the "heathen" come in and fill the free seats, and have the Gospel of Freethought preached to them without money and without price. We hope to see the hall packed on Sept. 17, and it will be so if Freethinkers only let it be known that the doors are open free to the general public.

Some improvements are to be made at the London Hall of Science Club. On Wednesday and Sunday evenings the minor hall will be set apart for members of the N.S.S. and their friends. Reading, chess, draughts, and conversation will be provided for, and to that end music will not be allowed. The library is also to be shifted into the minor hall, and a catalogue is to be printed. We may remark that the library contains a good many valuable works, and it will doubtless be better patronised when it is made more accessible.

Mrs. Havellock Ellis occupies the platform of the Manchester Branch this Sunday morning and evening, her subjects being "Woman as Wife, Mother, and Wage-Earner," and "Latter-Day Puritanism." As this is her first appearance on the Secular platform we hope she will receive encouragement by the presence of as many friends as possible.

At Mr. Moss's lecture on "The Religion of Cant" at Camberwell Hall last Sunday he was opposed by Dr. Bate, who left a written challenge for discussion, which Mr. Moss has signified his willingness to accept.

On Monday evening, Sept. 11, there will be a musical and dramatic entertainment at the Battersea Secular Hall for the benefit of the N.S.S. Benevolent Fund. Dancing will commence at 10 o'clock. Tickets (3d., 6d., 1s.) can be had at the hall or at outdoor meeting. Every Freethinker in the neighborhood should purchase a ticket for so worthy an object.

We stated recently that we did not know of any temperance society that admitted Freethinkers. A correspondent, who is a member of the National Secular Society, informs us that he belongs to the Phoenix Order, which does not ask any questions with regard to religion. We are glad to hear this, which is certainly new to us, as we dare say it is to many of our readers.

We notice that when Mr. Morley recently visited his constituency, our friend, Mr. Joseph Brown, took the presidency of the vast meeting in front of the New Liberal Club.

While the French elections have relegated MM. Clemenceau and Floquet, for a time, to private life, they have quite upset the monarchists and clerical reactionaries. Even the Catholics who rallied to the Republic made but a poor show. Next year will probably see a fight for the complete separation of Church and State and the suppression of Budget worship. M. René Goblet, one of the strongest of the Socialists returned, going heartily for these measures.

The example of the boatman Casimo Latrona in defying the Arran sky-pilots has soon found imitators, and we hear from Arran that, despite ecclesiastical wrath, Sunday boating is largely on the increase. Stands Scotland where it did?

Mr. Grant Allen speaks out on the subject of Immortality and Resurrection in this month's *Fortnightly*, in a manner that will shock the old-fashioned Christians. He endorses the view suggested by Mr. J. G. Frazer in his *Golden Bough*, that Christianity was the old religion of Adonis and Altis, emblematical of the renewing power of vegetation, the old creed being "dressed up afresh and applied with minor differences to a certain historical or mythical personage, said to have lived in Galilee about the beginning of the Christian era." "Of this personage himself," he continues, "we know really nothing but the name or names; every supposed fact or incident related of him is merely one of the common and universal incidents related of all the other gods, each of whom is represented as being a man as he was; each of whom is slain by a violent death; each of whom undergoes resurrection, as a rule on the third day; each of whom is identified with corn and the vine; each of whom is sacramentally eaten under the guise of bread and wine by his worshippers. It is now abundantly clear that the Christian religion was one among a number of competing religions of the East, which became popular among the slaves and lower classes of the Mediterranean world towards the decline of the Roman Empire; and Christianity was the winner in the race for the mastery of the world, just because it embraced and synthesised in itself so many separate elements of many other popular creeds and superstitions."

Mr. Allen goes on, "But in displacing the civilised religions of Greece and Rome, it brought with it into Europe various ideas properly belonging to a lower and Asiatic stage of culture. It brought with it the ugly practice of burial, in place of the sane and wholesome practice of cremation. It brought with it the vulgar Jewish conception of Resurrection, in place of the elevated though erroneous Platonic idea of Immortality. It brought with it the hateful Oriental notions of asceticism and repression, in place of the graceful and artistic Greek ideals of happiness, beauty, and equal development. By means of these false notions it has retarded the progress of the world for at least half-a-dozen centuries; and it is still doing its best to retard the progress of the world in future. But the forces which tend towards civilisation are growing at last too strong for it, and reason and common sense are beginning to overthrow the domination of the ascetic Oriental creed of unwholesome restraint and unnatural repression."

Grant Allen makes it clear that cremation is incompatible with orthodox Christianity. He says, "When people take to burning their dead it is clear they will no longer be able to believe in the resurrection of the body."

The delay in publishing Mr. Foote's new pamphlet, *Will Christ Save Us?*, is unfortunate, but the matter cannot well be set right until his (Mr. Foote's, not Christ's) return to London. The publication can hardly be promised before the third week in September.

Both the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Manchester Evening News* have paragraphs on the Sunday meeting at the Isle of Man. The latter gives a fair report which it heads "The Right of Free Speech on Douglas Head."

EUSEBIUS' CHURCH HISTORY.

V.

I HAVE been dealing with a book of no great bulk, in fact with a slender and flimsy composition, which, whether in point of form or of substance, has no worthy place in literature at all; and which would long ago have been treated with contempt by every reader of information and good taste, had it not been a Church book, had it not contained the alleged title-deeds of all the ecclesiastical corporations. I must now point out that the destruction of the credit of this book means the destruction of the credit of the whole Church literature. For this History comes from the same false mint with the List of Illustrious Men, and the Collection of writings designated by the monks the New Testament or New Law of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The reader who has not given the matter his close consideration will assume, as a matter of course, that the *Eusebian* monk must in some sort have followed the Gospels and Acts of the Apostles in framing his narrative, however he may have completed it by additions of his own. The reader says, "Why we all know that the Gospels have been set down to the "First Century," and "Eusebius" to the "Third Century." And supposing as you say, these Centuries are chronological fictions, surely the monks have not put the cart before the horse in this fashion, so as to make the earlier books appear the later, and *vice versa* the later appear the earlier." Precisely that is what has been done; and it is that condition of things which makes Church History as the monks have written it, quite absurd and impossible.

About the year 1886-7 I threw aside modern compilations; and reading in the sources, found that the alleged Christians of the "Second Century" knew nothing of the awful tragedy alleged to have been enacted in Syria in the "First Century." I found the same to be true of the alleged Christians of the "Third and Fourth Centuries." They were not simple, unlettered folk, but men of letters of a low, sophistical class, who were ransacking the Jewish writings to make out that mystical theory of Christ, which we have recently discussed; and they were eking out mysticism by a variety of clumsy coinages and inventions, genealogies, acts of Pilate, and what not. When I had ascertained that the *motive* of all this was to establish the proposition, "Christianity began with

the old Roman empire," I saw my way to the gradual exposure of the whole fraud.

Let me now show that the modern critics have gone some way in the same direction: and that, had they been men of sufficient independence and decision of character, they would either have crossed the rubicon and have marched to the fortress of fraud, or they would at least have abandoned the task of defence. Actually, they have tried to patch up Eusebius, and defend him with a certain half-hearted courage.

The question is: Did "Eusebius" (whatever the time of his writing) own and follow the canonical Gospels, Acts, and Epistles? If he did not, they were not authoritative for him, nor can they be for us. Now what are the facts? Will my readers follow me in this investigation by referring to the pages of "Eusebius," which has been in some sort "translated" into English, though not literally. A literal translation would be so uncouth a performance that it would go far to expose the whole miserable frauds. Well, let me quote one or two of the critics on the question proposed.

One of the Germans, Jachmann, says: "It may be observed above all, that Eusebius in respect of the original history of Christendom, presupposes a close acquaintance with the Old and New Testaments." And Heinichen complacently adds, "This easily explains why Eusebius does not often quote the very passages of the sacred writers." And a third, Rienstira, says: "If this is not the explanation, I know not why he should make no mention of the Sacred Writers, except when he could fill up their narratives from other writers, especially from *Josephus*, or when the connection of things absolutely required the brief mention of them. Therefore Eusebius assumes the Sacred History to be spontaneously known to his readers."

You observe how hopelessly the critical ship goes to pieces with all on board for want of pilotage. Our critics have never discovered that the author was a monk, that he was a mere infant, a babbler and a stammerer in Hebrew and Greek; that he did not know the real meaning of the Hebrew writings, and was committed to a garbled version of them; that the scheme of the New Testament books so-called in its barest outline only was before him; and that the "works of Josephus" were from his own mint and forge. I may be the first to say so, but it is none the less true, that these flatulent and absurd compositions are monkish from first to last, bear the marks of the monkish fist in every page; are quite inconceivable as the compositions of a true-bred Jew in any place or any age of the world.

And then to talk of Eusebius' Readers! If the critics would only take the trouble to sketch the history of the Rise of a Reading Class in Europe! How absurd to go on writing histories of books without looking for the audience addressed! Let me lay down a canon, as the monks say, but one, unlike theirs, quite true and inflexible. It is this: Never assume that you understand the place of a book in history until you have at least endeavored to find a quotation of it by a disinterested person in the literary market. Do not assume the existence of a book to be proved before at least you find it in the hands of the secular clergy. As for the laity, what have they had to do with the reading of books till our own time? A more hopeless misunderstanding could not occur, than when the critics suppose this writer to assume an unheard-of learning amongst his readers. It is contrary to the whole tenor of his own pages.

In the very beginning of Hebrew knowledge as he is, he serves up the names of the Hebrew books in Greek characters, which yield some clue to the pronunciation of Hebrew by Gentile lips at the time. *Breschith* becomes *Bresit h*. He does not give the name *Testament* to the Books. He speaks of the "books of the old Covenant," and he has a new-coined Greek phrase, clumsy and barbarous, "the in-covenanted books" for the Scriptures in general, or "the divine writings." He is but rocking the cradle of monkish literary theories; yet gives hints enough for any truly detective critic to act upon.

For example, he quotes "Irenæus," one of his

"Illustrious," in other words, as I have explained, one of the knot of secret fabricators in disguise. Recall that Irenæus points to Lyons and the old Benedictine monastery there, whence came Codex Bezae of the New Testament, a little more than 300 years ago; recall the numerous facts which point to the French monasteries as early, perhaps earliest, seats of Christian letters; and you have one of many clues in your hands which will carry you to the world's end of the subject.

He quotes also "Clement of Alexandria," another of the disgraced faction, for "the in-covenanted Writings," and in such a way as to show that they had not made up their mind as yet about Mark and his Gospel. And then "Origen" is called in to depose on the same question. The whole thing is a practical joke upon the credulity of such "critics" as I have referred to. The monk tries to bewilder you with his pretended "witnesses," and their variations; and his success proves that he caught the learned world napping, and continued to stupefy it into yet deeper slumber. It is perfectly ridiculous to see the way in which our professors continue to fumble over "Papias" and "Clement" in the East, and "Irenæus" in the West. It would be a miracle if books were written on such a system. Unfortunately, to believe in miracles is to be blind ourselves to the most vulgar and commonplace human facts. The monks are abetted in their enormously successful confidence trick by the consent of nearly the whole of the existing learned world.

It is entirely untrue to say that this writer quotes the New Testament as books known and read universally; indeed, nothing can be more remote from the truth than such a statement. He has not got it to quote from. And when he does mention Matthew, Luke, or Paul, it is simply as members of the same "Illustrious" fraternity to which he assigns Irenæus or Clement. One mock-author is put up to support the statements of another mock-author, and no image but that of the secret Round Table can I think of which will better convey the mode of this deceptive literary activity to the minds of my readers.

Things are inserted in this History—notably the adventures of the apostle Thomas, and the story of the interchange of Letters between Jesus and Abgarus—which are completely ignored in the New Testament. On the other hand, matters of the first importance in the New Testament are in the History thrust into the background, or implicitly denied. Most notable are statements about the apostle Paul, in the two sources. The comparison is sufficient to show beyond question the absurdity of maintaining that this alleged more-than-200-years-later composition than the New Testament is the earlier book of the two.

My readers are of course well aware of the place of Paul both in the *Acts* and the *Epistles*. But I know of no work which will tell him the truth, viz., that this Paul or these Pauls are the result of a gradual development of the barest, baldest hints in this *Church History*. Here is the sketch-plot of the whole romance: "Paul, who had been a persecutor of the Church, was converted and became an apostle; he preached the Gospel from Jerusalem as far as Illyrium; he founded the churches of Corinth and of Rome, also that at Ephesus; made sundry journeys to Jerusalem; was taken bound to Rome, and there beheaded under Nero. He had a wife, and makes mention of her in an epistle."

But what of the wonderful epistles of this wonderful Paul? It is expressly said of him that, though he had "many unspeakable things to say," he did not say them in his epistles, which were "very brief." And again, as if we might perchance forget this, the statement is quoted from one of the Round Table, "Origen," *i.e.*, is put into the mouth of a mock author, in very bad Greek, that "Paul, who was enabled to become a minister of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the spirit . . . did not write to all the churches which he taught, and even to those to whom he did write, *he sent a few lines*." Yet it is arranged and agreed that there were fourteen Pauline epistles. Then suspicion is cast upon all of them by bringing to our notice certain sects who repudiated them, and who called Paul an "apostate of the law."

There is no explanation of these riddles, except a deliberate shiftiness and prevarication on the part of

the monks who studied the state of conflicting opinions in their world, and resolved to have a many-sided ideal Apostle, who should "be all things to all men," except a straightforward truth-teller. In other writings quite as authoritative as the Testament itself, he is glorified as an example of splendid mendacity, as one who adopted the Yea-Nay principle, never committed himself to an absolute statement, freely made promises and broke them, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

The monks, having got ready their bewildering theory about Paul, proceeded to write his epistles and to put into his mouth the statements that they had made members of the Round Table utter about him, and much else that might be convenient to put under his name, and then, if necessary, withdraw from his name. The reason why the New Testament prevaricates, looks both the Catholic and the Rationalist way, blows hot and cold upon the same object, is to be found in the fact that it was written by prevaricators in a time of prevarication, in the throes, as it seems to me, of that schism which we link with the name of Luther, whom I believe to have been a real person, and a monk, while Paul is the ideal, self-inconsistent, of certain monkish factions.

My object has been to extricate my readers from the rut of false conceptions into which they have been led by blind leaders of the blind, I mean the professional teachers of a literature which they do not understand, and do not go the right way to understand. My object is also to make the blunders and ignorance of such false guides inexcusable, and to insist that the truth as it stands plainly in letters and science shall not be suppressed or suffocated in the interest of any college or corporation whatever.

I have pointed you to a book or two which will save your time to master; and which if thoroughly mastered will lead you into the heart of the secret of Christian literature and art. I have brought you to the water of truth, bitter it may be, but tonical and salutary; it is for you to drink, or turn again to the pools of muddy confusion of error. I do but pronounce the judgment in public which my conscience as a man of letters has long decisively pronounced, that the Christian literature was in its origin an absolute fraud, and an engine of priestcraft. I do not presume to condemn those who maintain silence on this momentous question. But I do condemn the deliberate suppression of the true and suggestion of the false, which is at present, as it has been so long the practice in our places of education. Some of us at least are bound to speak out, and in the clearest and most certain tones we can command. Otherwise, it will be long before the noble calling of the teacher and the man of letters shall recover from these deep disgraces, and the educated conscience of the community shall be stirred to attempt a new reformation in the morals of our intelligence, and in the aims of our social life.

EDWIN JOHNSON.

THE FORCE OF IDEAS.

THE French novelist, Emile Zola, having recently given out his intention, on the completion of his literary labors, of standing as a parliamentary candidate, a Parisian newspaper (the *Echo de Paris*) was led to address a letter to some of the leading French authors asking—1. Are you in favor of literary men becoming politicians? 2. If you were offered a candidature at the next election, would you accept it? Some to whom the questions were addressed discreetly declined to be drawn. But the best and most pregnant reply was sent by M. Jules Claretie: "I think it is every man's duty to serve his country as best he may. That being premised, it appears to me that a writer who puts forth general ideas, and who *fait les mœurs*, is at least as useful as a politician who makes laws."

Jules Claretie was certainly modest when he only claimed that the thinker was "at least as useful" as the mere lawmaker. As a matter of opinion, it seems to us that the man who impresses his ideals on his generation is the useful person *par eminence*. For it is by ideas that actions are directed. You may not see actually, in a moment, the change wrought by a great and lofty propaganda, but the change is there, and will

show itself inevitably in the course of time. You cannot raise men's conceptions of duty and love and morality without making them better citizens and actors in the great drama of life.

Ideas are mental food, and, as the brain of man is one of the greatest and most imperious of his organs, it follows that the food it consumes is of the utmost importance. Hence it is that we should be careful that the ideas we propound and the opinions we advocate are high ideas and lofty opinions, and that, in following their impulse, the race will advance to higher states of mental development than those in which it now rests. And for this purpose we claim that the essential condition of progress is that the thinker should think sincerely and propound his thoughts truly. It matters not how reactionary his thoughts may be, if they are uttered wholly and sincerely we believe the result will be good. For we have sufficient confidence in Truth to believe that it will never be worsted, as Milton said, in a free and open encounter, and sufficient confidence in true sincerity to believe it will follow where Truth leads. It is only the coward and the charlatan who is afraid to face the ordeal of debate. A sincere man, confident in the strength of his convictions will gladly face discussion; if he feels that his opponent's case is more than he can answer, he will be led to think further, and perhaps reconsider his position. If he be a sincere man he will not hide or stifle the doubt or the opinion he cannot refute; for, if he did so, he would cease to be sincere. It is a true man's duty to pursue a doubt, grapple with it, and conquer it—or let it conquer him. To shut your ears, however, to the arguments you are unable to meet, is the resort of a coward. And the very worst kind of deception is deception of self. Hence nothing but good results can flow from the calm, dispassionate comparison of different opinions, or the sincere testing and discussing of different views.

Subtly and slowly ideas do their work; the end may not be accomplished so brilliantly or with so much display as is the case in war, but it will be accomplished more surely and more lastingly. For the victories of the cannon and the sword are transitory and trivial compared with the triumph of a great idea. Even Mr. Gladstone—with his Home Rule, small though it be—pursuing the idea through opposition and calumny, in defeat and disaster, never losing sight of it, and always impressing it until at last he has won his point, and got a majority behind him—that to us seems a nobler and grander picture than the sight of a Napoleon at an Austerlitz or a Wellington at Waterloo. For the hero of the sword is soon forgotten, and a new generation, as Walt Whitman says, wipes the slate and begins afresh. The victories are reversed, and what was purchased at so terrible a price of blood to-day is given up in blood again to-morrow. Not so the triumphs of the mind. The thoughts of the great thinkers of the past—of Socrates, of Plato, of Aristotle—live on and influence the lives of men to-day, long after the bodies that gave them birth have gone to dust. And herein lies the true immortality—the immortality of thought, of work. Every true thought, every thorough act, in one way or another, seen or unseen, lives on, moulds the lives of those who come after us, fashions for them, by little or by great, the world in which they shall live. In so far as you have lived truly, in so far shall the heritage you leave behind be rich and noble and great, and in so far will you have helped to build higher the edifice of which in life you form a part. You have reaped where your ancestors have sown; you are the heir to all the literature and science and art, all the beauty and music and poetry of those who have gone; aye, and the heir also to the failings and weaknesses, the littlenesses and vices, of the dead yesterday. But you in your turn can help to lessen the evil heritage and augment the good, and so leave to the future a larger and freer and purer legacy than the past left to you. Surely here is an ideal to place before you; here something far more worthy of attainment than the empty heavens and hells of the creeds. Here is an ideal of beauty and of joy; here the inspiration of love. There you have the inspiration of the creeds—the incentive of selfishness, of salvation, and of hate.

FREDERICK RYAN.

OBITUARY.

On August 28, at St. Paul's Church, Staley, we laid to rest Sarah Hypatia, aged 16 months, the beloved daughter of Alfred and Sarah Helena Smith, of Staleybridge (late of Marple). Colonel R. G. Ingersoll's "Address at a Child's Grave" was read by myself and listened to by a great number of people, who seemed very much interested by the unusual proceedings. Mr. Smith, though only a working man, has shown that he has the courage of his convictions. This is the second child he has buried with Secular rites.—
ALF. SHAW.

By the death at Margate on September 3, of Francis Adams, author of *Songs of the Army of the Night*, a journalist of originality and a poet of promise has been cut off. He has left behind him a book on Egypt, where he sojourned last winter.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. J. Holyoake, "Christianity Declined with Thanks" (3d., 6d., and 1s.)
Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, H. Snell, "The Genesis of Religion"; preceded by a dramatic recital (free). Monday at 8, entertainment and dance in aid of Benevolent Fund (tickets 3d., 6d., and 1s.)
Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, A. Liddle, "Is the Christ of the Gospels an Historical Character?"
East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road: 8, W. H. Smith, "Man and the Ice Age."
Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street: Monday at 8.30, West London Branch business meeting.
South Essex Secular Society, 33 Salway-road, Stratford: 7.15, W. J. Woodward, "Hypnotism" (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, C. James, "Bruno: his Life and Philosophy."
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, St. John will lecture.
Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, S. H. Alison will lecture.
Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, F. Haslam will lecture.
Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.
Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, J. Rowney, "Christ's Teaching Defective"; 3.30, C. J. Hunt, "Gods, Ancient and Modern."
Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, Sept. 14, at 8.30, St. John, "Curiosities of Superstition."
Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, St. John will lecture.
Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, H. Snell, "Story of the Atheists of the French Revolution"; 3.30, a lecture. Wednesday at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.
Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, W. Heaford, "The Vanishing of the Gods."
Kingsland—Ridley-road (near Dalston Junction): 11.30, J. Fagan, "What is Sin?"
Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, C. James, "Heresy: a Plea for Mental Freedom."
Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, R. Rosetti, "Is Christianity of Divine Origin?"
Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, W. Heaford will lecture.
Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Belief and Prayer."
Newington Green: 3.15, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Medicine."
Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Inquisition."
Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, W. Heaford, "Secularism and Christianity Contrasted."
Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Medicine"; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture; 6.15, Stanley Jones, "The Teachings of Christ."
Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, T. Thurlow will lecture.
Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Is Christianity Played Out?"

COUNTRY.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, Mr. Pollard, "The Fertilisation of Plants."
Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 7, W. B. Thompson, "The Coming School Board for New Brompton: is it for good or for ill?"
Dundee—City Assembly Rooms: Monday at 8, G. W. Foote, "Christ and Democracy." Tuesday at 8, "A Search for the Soul."
Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: G. W. Foote, 11, "Christ and Democracy"; 2.30, "The Trinity Puzzle"; 6.30, "A Search for the Soul."
Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, J. Badlay, "Maltheusianism."
Jarrow—Co-operative Hall (small room), Market-square: 7, business meeting; 7.30, W. Carter, "Practical Socialism, and how to Obtain it."
Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Conflict between Science and Religion"; committee meeting after the lecture.

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: Mrs Havelock Ellis, 11, "Woman as Wife, Mother, and Wage Earner"; 6.30, "Latter-day Puritanism." Tuesday at 8, debating circle, W. Payne, "Smiles' Self Help" (with readings).
Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, members' fortnightly meeting.
Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, chess club; 7, a meeting.
Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: A late Jewish Rabbi, "My Reasons for Renouncing the Hebrew Faith."
South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: 7, C. H. Reynolds, "Why I Oppose Christianity."
Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, G. Selkirk, "Christianity and Civilisation."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Blackburn—Market-square: John Grange, 3, "Why I Cannot be a Christian"; 6.30, "Unbelief, the Mainspring of Progress."
Brighton (on the Level): 3, W. J. Ramsey, "Behold I bring you tidings of great joy."
Chatham—New Brompton-road (High-street end): 11, J. J. Taylor, "Is it True that God has Made Mistakes?"
Nottingham—Sneinton Market: 11, J. Hooper, "Is the Bible True?"
Sunderland—On the Green, at Ryhope: 11, G. Selkirk, "Secularism: Destructive and Constructive." At 6, opposite: he "Wheat Sheaf," Monkwearmouth, an address

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Democratic Club, Essex-street, Strand, W.C.—Sept. 10, m., Camberwell; 17, m., Midland Arches; a., Finsbury Park.
C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Sept. 10, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 13, Hyde Park; 17, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; e., Kilburn; 24, Barnsley. Sept. 25 to Oct. 31, on tour. Nov. 4, South Shields; 5, Blythe.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Sept. 10, m., Wood Green; a., Hyde Park; 17, m., Bethnal Green; a., Hyde Park; 24, m., Victoria Park; a., Hyde Park.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E. Sept. 17, e., Edmonton; 24, m., Westminster; e., Kilburn.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Sept. 17, Sheffield. Oct. 1, Camberwell. Nov. 26, Camberwell.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Sept. 10, m., Hyde Park; e., Battersea; 17, m., Camberwell; 24, m., Battersea; a., Regent's Park.

SAM STANDING, 16 Gray's Inn-road, E.C.—Oct. 14 and 15, Sal-ford; 16, Rochdale.

St. JOHN, 8 Norland-road North, Notting Hill, W.—Sept. 10, m., Bethnal Green; e., Hammersmith; 17, m., Battersea; 24, m., Finsbury Park.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE meeting, held at the Hall of Science on Aug. 24; the President in the chair. Present: Messrs. S. Hartmann, R. O. Smith, G. Standing, J. M. Wheeler, J. E. Brumage, Touzeau Parris, A. B. Moss, G. J. Warren, C. J. Hunt, T. Gorniot, G. Ward, C. W. Martin, E. Bater, F. Davies, C. Steel, C. Cohen, G. H. Baker, and E. M. Vance, asst. sec.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed, also minutes of Organisation Committee.

Proposed by Mr. Warren, seconded by Mr. Bater, "That Mr. Hunt audit the receipts for Shilling Month"; carried.

After due consideration it was decided that the whole of the gallery at the Hall of Science be thrown open to the public on Sunday evenings, commencing on Sept. 17.

The President reported that the Society had received the value of the shares held by Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant in the Rochdale Secular Hall Company.

Mr. C. J. Hunt asked permission to lay before the meeting a communication he had received from the Sunderland Branch, and stated that he was *not* in sympathy with the resolution, and desired that his statement should be entered in the minutes. Mr. Roger moved, and Mr. Wheeler seconded, "That the secretary write to the Sunderland Branch, informing it that its communications to the Executive must be addressed to the secretary, and must not be published before being sent to the Executive, or before the Executive's answer has been received by the Branch"; carried.

A motion from the Battersea Branch was not discussed in consequence of the non-attendance of the delegate.

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J. W. GOTT, CLOTH WAREHOUSE, BRADFORD.