

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*Break, break it open ; let the knocker rust,
Consider no "shalt not," and no man's "must" ;
And, being entered, promptly take the lead,
Setting aside tradition, custom, creed ;
Nor watch the balance of the huckster's beam ;
Declare your hardest thought, your proudest dream ;
Await no summons, laugh at all rebuff ;
High hearts and youth are destiny enough.
The mystery and the power enshrined in you
Are old as time and as the moment new ;
And none but you can tell what part you play,
Nor can you tell until you make assay.
For this alone, this always will succeed—
The miracle and magic of the deed.*

—JOHN DAVIDSON.

Buddhism in Burma.

WE are a civilising people. So we continually tell ourselves and others—so continuously that the vast majority accept the doctrine as an unquestionable article of faith. It is true that other nations are not quite so certain of the justice of the claim, nor are those we civilise always as appreciative of our efforts as one might expect. But these dissentients are put down as either jealous or stupid, and we go on our way content to point to the growing volume of trade and to the fact that trousers—if not other articles of wearing apparel—are now worn where their presence was once unknown. Whether these once trouserless ones are, on the whole, better men for our civilising efforts, is a question hard to decide, and difficult questions have a knack of getting either shelved or ignored. And whether, once we leave uncivilised people and come amongst other races that may justly be called civilised—albeit their civilisation differs from ours—whether these are the better for our presence is yet another question and one still harder to decide.

Those who are doubtful on this last point are unlikely to have their doubts removed, if they do not have them strengthened, by Mr. Fielding Hall's *Soul of a People*, a sketch of the people of Burma before we annexed that country in the sacred interests of civilisation—and commerce. Mr. Hall was an English official and appears to have had peculiarly good opportunities of making himself acquainted with the people, of which he evidently made good use. What Mr. Hall's own opinions on religion are is not certain, but in his description of the Burmese and their beliefs he adopts a very simple and quite sane rule of guidance. Beliefs that do not influence actions, he says, are not real beliefs at all. He believes that "a man's belief can be known even to himself from his acts only." Anything that does not influence action is a make-belief, and may be dismissed. And so in sketching the character of the Burmese and their beliefs "I have accepted just so much as I could find the people have accepted, such as they have taken into their hearts to be with them for ever."

The rule of life of the people of Burma is Buddhism. I do not call this a religion, because unless we distort the meaning of the word "religion," or take up with some form of Buddhism that is over-

grown with superstition, Buddhism is not a religion at all. It has no personal God and no individual immortality, and no supernaturalism; and without these there is no religion. And as systems go, if Mr. Hall is at all reliable, Buddhism has less to be ashamed of in Burma than any religion has in any country in the world. At the beginning Mr. Hall brings out with quiet force a striking contrast between Buddhism and Christianity. Buddhist and Christian both talk much of righteousness. With the Christian, however, it is something given to man as an act of grace. He must believe in the one and only Savior to acquire it. With the Buddhist it is something to be earned; it is the "Great Peace," and can be gained by sheer personal value only. Each may attain it, and the way is the same for all, high and low, rich and poor. No one can grow either vile or virtuous at once. There are no miraculous conversions. Every man not only moulds himself, but cannot help doing so. He is always doing it for good or ill. Connected as this doctrine is with the law of incarnation, it is there; and it has sunk so deeply into the Burmese mind as to become a part of their very thinking.

And from this follows one important fact. The Burmese have not, and do not believe in, death-bed conversions. The Christian atones for an ill life by conversion at the eleventh hour, and by so doing concentrates attention on mere formal belief, and minimises the importance of a good life. The Burmese Buddhist has no faith in repentance, save as a recognition of the necessity for doing better. It is of no value in itself. The law of righteousness is the same for all, and works the same with all. A man can no more escape the consequences of his actions by repentance than he can divert an avalanche by an act of will. What do you do, asked Mr. Hall of the Buddhist monks, when a man is dying? And the monk replied, We can do nothing. His life in the future will depend absolutely upon what he has done in the past. But, said the monk, a friend will come to him and say, "Think of your good deeds, think of all you have done well in this life." And nothing is "so calming to a man's soul as to think of even one deed he had done well in his life." This was a new idea to him, says Mr. Hall, and its newness is Christianity's condemnation. For, without subscribing to the theory of reincarnation with which it is linked, it is simple, human, healthy, and obvious. It was a distortion of the human conscience by Christian teaching that made it a new idea to Mr. Hall.

Christianity calls itself a religion of peace, and has been the most fruitful cause of war the world has ever seen. Buddhism does not so continuously pay itself the same compliment, and nowhere can it be said to have caused bloodshed—certainly not in Burma. When the British troops overran Burma in 1885, Mandalay fell without a shot, and the resistance elsewhere—although it extended over four years—was feeble. And in all the fighting the "religion" of the people had no place. Christian priests blessed the English forces, and Christian priests accompanied and encouraged them in their fighting. Buddhist monks would have none of it. Their belief was unaccommodating, their law as invariable as gravitation. All killing, said they, is wrong; all war is hateful. The law of righteousness is—

"Thou shalt take no life," and there is exception for none. The Christian might believe he was earning heaven by killing his fellow-creature. The Buddhist patriot was taught that right is always right, wrong always wrong; and that however necessary the resistance might be, it was yet loading his soul with sin. Never has Buddhism made itself a tool for power and passion. What else has organised Christianity ever done?

Right through the history of Christianity intolerance has been its most characteristic feature. Even to-day there are no bodies of people that hate each other so persistently as rival Christian sects. The annals of Buddhism are unstained by a single act of persecution. "Even under the rule of the Burmese kings," says Mr. Hall, "there was the very widest tolerance. You never heard of a foreigner being molested in any way, being forbidden to live as he liked, being forbidden to erect his own places of worship..... The Burmese rule may not have been a good one in many ways, but it was never guilty of persecution, of any attempt at forcible conversion, of any desire to make such an attempt." This tolerance extends with the Burmese to all the affairs of life. A foreigner may go and live in a Burmese village in his own way, and follow out all his own customs and no one will interfere with him. If he adopts Burmese methods, so much the better, but it is quite his own affair. We, says Mr. Hall, kill animals within the sacred enclosures, openly laugh at their beliefs, and misbehave ourselves in their pagodas. In a Hindu Temple or a Mohammedan Mosque there would be a riot. But the Buddhist monks treat our bad manners with quiet tolerance. They say—and the people agree with their saying—that each is responsible for himself, each is the maker of himself. He can only hurt himself by his bad behavior. No one else suffers. Courtesy is due from all to all, and if it is not forthcoming it is yourself who is the greatest loser. If a foreigner has on respect for what is good the loss is his own. Buddhism does not suffer thereby. One need only contrast with this the conduct displayed towards non-Christian bodies in Christian countries, with the hysterical shrieking of Christians that their religion shall be treated with proper respect. As though a religion that cannot *command* instinctive respect after all these centuries, does not brand itself as being essentially unworthy of it.

Buddhism, as Mr. Hall found it in Burma, was a teaching of absolute equality and perfect freedom. Here we are accustomed to priests of all denominations striving after power, and seeking to dominate the State. In Burma the monks hold themselves aloof from all such tricks. "Our religious phraseology," says Mr. Hall, "is full of such terms as lord and king and ruler and servant. Buddhism knows nothing of any of them..... It is a religion of absolute freedom. No one can save you except yourself, no one can damn you except yourself. Governments cannot do it, and therefore it would be useless to try and capture the reins of government. Buddhism does not believe that you can save a man by force."

There is the same superiority shown in the character of the monks themselves. Our daily and weekly papers are plentifully besprinkled with the wrong-doings of preachers, and history exhibits the same feature. Mr. Hall had years of experience of criminal law in India and Burma. He tried, he says, hundreds of men for criminal offences, and knew of many hundreds more. And in all these cases he knew of but five Buddhist monks who were brought before a criminal court, and three out of these were concerned in rebellions. What Christian church can produce a similar record? And, above all, when a man joins the monks one of his vows is that he shall abstain from any assumption of supernatural powers or mystical illumination! Consider this, a priesthood that repudiates supernaturalism! And we, with our semi-demented ethically distorted evangelists and revivalists, send out missionaries to save these people!

There are plenty more good things in Mr. Hall's book, I must content myself with only one or two.

The Burmese are not drunken, they are kind to animals, they are charitable to each other and to strangers, they are not lazy, although they do not understand and have no wish to emulate our insane desire for work as an end in itself. The Burman believes in making his life a happy one, and subordinates work to that end. His Buddhism is, as has been said, a belief that all salvation depends upon a man's own efforts—all that others are able to do is to point the way. And this has apparently worked out well enough in regulating the status of women. Mr. Hall says a Burman would scarcely understand what we mean by a "Woman's Question." The Burmese woman has always had free play from her religion, from the laws, and from her fellows. She has been allowed to make the life that seems best for her. Her property remains her own after marriage as before. And this is derived from the basic principle of Buddhist ethics. Christianity has busied itself for generations with laws for *regulating* woman. It has denounced her as the origin of evil, a thing only half human whose very touch pollutes. It has denied her the right to come out fully and freely into the world of social life and play such a part as her tastes and capacities indicated. The Buddhist will have none of this. The Buddhist law is not concerned with man or woman, as such, but with human beings. It is not concerned with the relation of the sexes, but with the culture of the individual. And the law of right-doing is the same for each. For a woman or a man who would act rightly, Buddhism has but one rule; and for a man or a woman who does wrongly it holds out but one punishment. How far, morally, Christianity is from this conception all history testifies.

And yet —? We have annexed Burma. We have made the road clear and easy for our commerce, for our civilisation, and for Christianity to exert its influence. Are the Burmese likely to be better men and women under the new *régime* than they were under the old?

C. COHEN.

Thomson's Leopardi.—II.

WHILE challenging Pessimism, as a "partial truth" made to stand for the "whole truth," Mr. Dobell practically gives it the lordship of imaginative literature. Of optimistic verse, or "the poetry of hope and consolation," he rather coldly says that it is "of course to be welcomed and treasured," but "it is on the note of pessimism" that all, or nearly all, great writers "dwell most and produce their greatest effects." "We love and admire the comedies of Shakespeare," he says, "beyond those of any other author; but it is of his tragedies that we chiefly think when we are estimating his genius. The comedies might conceivably have been written by another author, but not the tragedies; for these, we feel, come from the profoundest depths of his spirit." Now there is truth in this, I conceive, but also error. I do not admit that we can imagine another authorship of Shakespeare's comedies, except by a use of the word "imagine" which robs it of all definite meaning. *As You Like It* is as divine a speciality as *Hamlet*. The only man who could ever have written either of them is the man who did. The summer-lightning smile around Shakespeare's mouth is as wonderful as the terror of his thunderous brows. No, it was not the comedy that was the expression of his inferior self, and the tragedy that was the expression of his higher self. Such a theory seems to me to overlook a very important fact. Comedy is necessarily a narrower thing than tragedy. There can be no tragedy in a comedy, but there may be comedy in a tragedy. The comic spirit is freely at work even amidst the heart-breaking calamities of *Othello*. Nor is this all. Tragedy affords scope for philosophy as well as poetry. It affords scope, indeed, for almost everything except genial sunshine and placid joy. Thus it is bound, in the hands of a

master, to be far more striking than comedy, by making a wider and deeper appeal to our intellect and imagination. Nor is *this* all. It is natural that the sweet and satisfying things of life should cause no great excitement. They make no appeal to our hopes and fears—which are, after all, the bright and the dark side of one and the same feeling. But tragedy does appeal to our hopes and fears; it does excite us, sometimes even to the point of intolerableness; and thus again it lends itself to the production of the “greatest effects.” In the same way, good characters in fiction are apt to be insipid, while bad characters are apt to be only too interesting. It takes a consummate artist to endow good characters with any fascination. And here again, I may observe, the immeasurable superiority of Shakespeare is easily apparent. We do not despise his good women, for instance; we do not look upon them with good-humored toleration; we adore them and fall at their feet.

I fear I have taken a long-winded way of saying that pessimism has less to do with the power of Shakespeare's (or any other man's) tragedies than Mr. Dobell appears to think. I fancy he is more accurate, as well as pertinent, in his admirably expressed conclusion that: “Every author must be allowed to write in the style to which his genius and his temperament prompt him; for if he does not do this it is certain that he will produce nothing of real value.” For my part, I would go still further; I would deny that we have anything at all to do with an artist's choice of subject, while he keeps within the bounds of decency and sanity; that is his affair, not ours; we are to judge him by the powers of conception and execution he displays in his work. And thus, I conceive, no apology is needed for Leopardi's or Thomson's choice of topic; for the truth is that genius, no less than character, proceeds by “elective affinity.” A man of real genius and positive temperament will not require permission to follow their prompting; he will follow it in spite of the world—and in spite of himself.

II.

Thomson's “Memoir of Leopardi” is not a work of art. It is not so much a biography as materials for a biography. Yet it is intensely interesting. Strong connecting links are supplied by Thomson, but nearly all the rest is taken from Leopardi's letters. It is all very sad, perhaps sadder than is necessary, for a life of thirty-nine years must have had some cheerful or tolerable intervals. Nature gave Leopardi a great intellect, and denied him the vitality to sustain it. That was his first great trouble. It made his life a long sickness. But he also endured another curse. He suffered, as Thomson did, from constitutional melancholia. Even at the age of eighteen he refers to “the obstinate, black, terrible, savage melancholy which gnaws and devours me, and is fed by study and without study increases.” The strong brain would not be still. It used whatever force it found in the body. To the very end it did so. Only a few days before his death, after untold suffering, he dictated a composition. He breathed his last (as Keats did) with a smile “in the arms of a friend who loved and lamented him for ever.” The writer of these words was the friend himself—Ranieri. He had devoted seven years to the care of Leopardi; he knew him with the utmost intimacy; and he paid a most pathetic and eloquent tribute to his character. It was Ranieri who said that Leopardi's smile was “ineffable and as it were heavenly.” Gioberti, who was fundamentally opposed to Leopardi, praised him no less fervently. “I knew him,” he wrote, “and have lived in intimate communion with him. I do not believe that a purer, nobler, more magnanimous soul ever traversed this earth.” Baron Bunsen's widow remembered “the confiding benevolence expressed in Leopardi's countenance,” and “how devoid of bitterness was his consciousness of wrong endured, how pure from the taint of personal hatred his denunciations of the evil without.” She added that, however high the

merit of his writings, the man “was of more value than any of the traces of his existence which he left behind.”

Leopardi's sentiments were all high and noble. His body was weak, but there was no weakness in his mind. Nature had not fitted him for action, yet he would probably have died gladly in fighting for the freedom of Italy. He was of the antique Roman mould. The effeminacies of Christianity had never softened a sinew of his soul.

Notwithstanding all difficulties Leopardi made himself a wide and profound scholar. He was only twenty-five when the great Niebuhr hailed him as “the only Greek philologist in Italy” whose work “would have gained honor for the first philologist of Germany.” Sainte-Beuve called him “the most noble, the most sober, the most austere of poets.” Count Platen said that “the grand Italian poetry, born on the lips of Dante, died at length on those of Leopardi.” And his prose is as fine as his poetry. He had the inevitable instinct of perfection.

This noble being, who suffered so much, who staggered all his life under the blows of fate, and yet made himself one of the glories of Italian literature, was a profound Freethinker. Thomson says of him:—

“He is perhaps the one profound and subtle thinker of modern Christendom, the most absolutely unrelated to Christianity; all or nearly all others having been related to it, at least by dislike and scorn, if not by love and worship, wrestling with it as a foe if not embracing it as a friend, and thus having a great deal of their life and thought occupied with it. But he, so far as I can discover, simply ignored it in his philosophy, as if philosophically it were non-existent.”

Again, in the fine parallel between Pascal and Leopardi, which is Thomson at his best, he speaks of the great Italian as “the sublime infidel.” Pascal hated and tortured himself to become a perfect Christian. “Leopardi more masculine in soul, with an equally virile and lucid intellect, becomes a stoical pessimist; stedfastly gazing on the dreadful truth, recognising it in its nakedness, refusing all the fond consolations of religious and other dreams.” Elsewhere he speaks of Leopardi as “an Atheistic Pessimist.”

Leopardi's “conversion” was bruited abroad by Father Francesco Scarpa, after the poet's death, but the falsehood was promptly nailed down by Gioberti. Leopardi himself contradicted the rumor while he was living. A pious work by his father was attributed to him, and he publicly denied his own responsibility for it. He said that his honor demanded the declaration that he had not changed his opinions. People said he was converted, but “so was Monti, and so are all the men of worth.” Because the Christians cannot bear to think that men of mind really reject their “glorious faith.”

III.

Thomson wrote a magnificent passage on the tragedy of Leopardi's life. Here it is, almost complete:—

“There are few tragedies at once so sublime and so heartrending as this of an imperial intellect and imperious will agonising and starving to death through exhaustion of the subject body..... In this tragedy the ‘actor-victims’ are lofty and unsullied throughout; their weakness and anguish, their defeat and ruin, are due to the excessive predominance of the nobler over the ignobler faculties; and our sympathy is deepened by the perception that they are martyrs for our general cause, that their loss is our loss, their defeat our defeat, that they are worn and wasted by extreme striving for our good, that immense spiritual services to the race are baffled by the disease destroying them; and it galls us to think of the millions and myriads worthless or of slightest worth who enjoy in common with bull and drayhorse that robust physical health which is alone wanting to these most worthy. Fretful with a grievous disappointment, we are tempted to accuse great Nature (whose deference to our opinions is remarkably encouraging) of malign mockery or stupidity in elaborating those rare and supreme things, a mighty brain and a noble heart, and then stinting them in the cheap and common nutriment of flesh and blood. She grudges the wood of the

casket in bestowing a priceless jewel. She forges a blade of finest temper, then leaves it to rust in a broken sheath, while the world's brawl and battle must be fought out with flails and pitchforks. 'Even piety herself at so shameful a sight cannot refrain from all upbraidings against the permitting stars.'

Such tragedies are enough to stagger the firmest faith which has any association with reason. If we abnegate reason, and merely cry "I believe," the matter is simple enough—like the mind of the believer. But if we exercise our reason, as we must if we consider any theological argument, say the famous one from Design, we are soon brought face to face with the most absolute contradiction between the theory and the facts. The waste and the blundering in Nature are quite astonishing. But as she necessarily proceeds on the Rothschild plan of "dropping your losses and keeping on with your gains," and has infinite capital to work with and infinite time to remedy her mistakes, she escapes bankruptcy and destruction, and "worries along" through eternity.

Put a prize pig and a Leopardi together, and you have a comedy, a tragedy, or a tragi-comedy, of Nature, fit to tax the genius of an Aristophanes or a Shakespeare.

IV.

The Essays and Dialogues of Leopardi are of the very cream of literature. He is always a pessimist, but his intellect and imagination play with inexhaustible enchantment around the central theme. He is nearly always concerned with the mockery and woe of human existence. "On every page of his works," as Schopenhauer said, "he dwells upon it, yet with such multiplicity of forms and applications, with such wealth of imagery, that he is never tedious, but on the contrary is always interesting and affecting."

Humor, wit, and satire, full at once of strength and delicacy, may be found in abundance in these pages. They light up and give an inexpressible charm to the sombre philosophy. And every now and then you meet with a ravishing oasis of beauty. What could be finer than the conclusion of the wonderful "Story of the Human Race"? Jove, at last compassionating the extreme infelicity of mankind, sent Love down amongst them. Love descended only occasionally and for brief periods—"partly because of the general unworthiness of the human race, and partly because the gods could hardly endure his absence." But when he appeared he created a paradise.

"When he does visit the earth he takes up his abode in the amiable and tender hearts of generous and magnanimous persons, and diffuses therein, for the short period he remains, a strange and wonderful serenity, and fills them with affections so noble, and of such virtue and force, that they experience a sensation hitherto unknown to them, namely, a feeling of real beatitude, and not a mere illusive semblance of it."

Love sometimes unites two such hearts, and the thought of this blessing in the general curse of life turns the philosopher's stately prose into the poet's lyrical rhapsody:—

"But merely to experience in one's self the presence of this divinity is a happiness such as transcends all others that have ever been known to mankind. Where Love is, around him, although seen only by those whom he favors, are congregated those beautiful phantasms which Jove banished from earth, but which Love brings back again. For this he has Jove's permission; nor can Truth, though most hostile to these phantasms, and greatly resenting their reappearance, resist their influence, for the genii may not dispute the will of the gods. And inasmuch as the fates endowed Love with eternal youth, so in consonance with his nature he fulfils in some degree that first desire of men, which was that they might have their youth restored to them. For in the minds which he elects to inhabit he revives and makes green again, whilst he remains there, the infinite hope and dear imaginations of their tender years."

Few more beautiful things, if any, have ever been written than the last speech of Plotinus dissuading Porphyry from suicide. It is like lovely, sad music

by a sick couch that makes the poor patient smile amidst his very tears. The speech is a long one, filling three pages, yet is sustained with flawless perfection to the end, and this is how it closes:—

"Let us live, my Porphyry, and together comfort each other; let us not refuse to bear that part which destiny has assigned to us of the evils of our race. Let us continue in association; and proceed encouraging each other, and mutually giving help and support; in order to fulfil as best we may the task of life. Which without any doubt will be brief. And when death shall come, we will not lament; and likewise in our last hours friends and companions will comfort us, and we shall be cheered by the thought that when we are no more they will often remember us and love us still."

How exquisite! But I have already occupied too much space. I must conclude by hoping that many of my readers will possess themselves of this noble book which costs only a shilling; a book written by a great Italian poet who was also an Atheist, and translated by a great English poet who was also an Atheist, and edited by a most loyal friend of his who is also an Atheist.

G. W. FOOTE.

Stray Thoughts.

It is wonderful what an amount of sheer nonsense a man can utter in defence of an outworn creed. Let us consider a few examples. It is a cardinal doctrine of theology that the Church is a divine institution, and that all the powers of hell cannot prevail against it. The risen Savior is said to be its only Head and King. At other times He is represented as dwelling in the midst of it, and as expressing his mind and will by means of its decisions, which, of course, are infallible. And yet there are ministers of the Gospel who have the hardihood to declare that the Christian Church, thus divinely instituted, divinely filled, and divinely filled, has often been "in league with the Devil." What a preposterous idea for a clergyman to uphold. To be sure, the Devil is described in the Bible as a supernatural person, whose tempting and misleading power is inconceivably great; but Christ is invariably referred to as his conqueror, or as infinitely more powerful than "the strong man armed." How ineffably absurd it must therefore be to admit that in the Church Satan has proved stronger than God, and ruled it according to his own unholy will. Is it not much more reasonable to regard the Church as a purely human institution, which has always been an exact reflection of the character of the people at the head of it? The claim that the God of truth and love is in the midst of it is unfathomably ridiculous in itself, and still more so when it is borne in mind how the Church has frequently been a partisan of oppression and tyranny, and a deadly enemy to progress, science, and art. An institution governed conjointly by God and the Devil may be supernaturally conceivable, but it is a natural impossibility.

What is the supernatural? A bishop has recently told us that it is "to be found everywhere"; but unfortunately he omitted the definition of it. We hold, on the contrary, that so far as we know, the supernatural is nowhere. At any rate, the bishop signally failed to show it to us. A supernatural that does not transcend the natural is an etymological contradiction. Where is the man who can violate a natural law? Who is he that can interrupt the course of Nature? If there were a God, He could clearly perform miracles; and well-attested miracles would be accepted as a satisfactory evidence of his objective existence. But of such miracles there are none. To Sir Oliver Lodge the miracles of history are purely natural events, that is, in the ecclesiastical sense no miracles at all; and consequently they possess no evidential value whatever. What, then, is the supernatural? A term utterly devoid of intelligible meaning. No wonder that the more advanced divines are in favor of eliminating it as far as possible from their theological vocabulary.

A little while ago I criticised in these columns the contention, made by the *Christian Commonwealth*, that there are no representative evangelical preachers to-day who teach that the millions upon millions who die without having heard of Christ are doomed to everlasting perdition. I ventured to give that statement a flat denial. Since then my attention has been called to a leaflet which contains a diagram prepared by the London Missionary Society. According to this diagram there are in the world at the present time some 856,000,000 people who are totally heathen. In spite of the much-vaunted triumphs of the Christian religion nearly two-thirds of mankind are still non-Christians! It is something to get so damaging an admission from a Christian source. But what about the supernatural prospects of these heathen hordes? Where will they all go if they die before hearing the gladsome sound of the Gospel of Christ? We have the high authority of the London Missionary Society for asserting that their inevitable destination is the place of torments. The thought is cheek-blanching and heart-breaking in the extreme! Listen to this from the authority just mentioned: "There are one thousand million souls who are dying in Christless despair at the rate of 100,000 a day." The phraseology is extremely unfortunate. One would infer that in the estimation of the London Missionary Society there are people who die in Christly despair, and there naturally arises a desire to know what the exact difference is between the two kinds of despair. But the point I wish to emphasise is that according to the teaching of this great Society, which represents most of the evangelical Churches of this country, all non-Christians die without hope, which means that they will be forever lost. This belief is the motive behind all missionary enterprises both at home and abroad.

The other day I heard a preacher exclaim with great fervor, "There are no Atheists now. Everybody believes in a Something which underlies all phenomena." It was an excessively silly remark, and as false as it was foolish. The Christian God is a self-conscious and infinite person, the Maker and Ruler of heaven and earth, and the Savior of the fallen and sinful human race. He who does not believe in such a person is of necessity an Atheist. The fact that we believe in some unknown Substance of which matter and force are but attributes or manifestations, does not make us Theists. Herbert Spencer's inscrutable and unknowable Force could not be called a deity and recommended as an object of love and worship. As a matter of fact Atheism was never so deep-rooted and wide-spread as it is just now. Indeed, many of our present-day defenders of the Faith would have been denounced as Atheists had they lived three generations ago. What, then, are the members of our numerous Secular Societies? Do they bow down before any supernatural power and offer it their hearty homage? If they are not Atheists why are they so persistently persecuted? When a Secular Society is about to be established in a certain community, why do all the local Churches hold prayer-meetings to implore the Lord to prevent such wickedness?

The chief difficulty which meets living theologians who are not Romanists is that of fixing the seat of authority in religion. All are agreed that Christians must be taught to acknowledge some final authority somewhere. But where is it to be found? To genuine Catholics this difficulty does not exist. They can confidently lean upon the Church and accept her verdict as decisive on every subject. When he speaks from his Chair the Pope utters God's voice. But Protestants, having repudiated the authority of the Church, adopted the Bible as the only possible substitute. Soon the Sacred Volume came to be regarded as the infallible and inspired Word of God. It was to its law and testimony that every problem was referred. Then Literary Criticism seized upon the Bible, weighed it in its balances, and found it wanting. As a seat of authority Holy Writ was utterly discredited. It was once the habit to assert that no event in history was so well attested by documentary

evidence as the Resurrection of Christ. I have repeatedly heard that wild assertion made. When Professor Schmiedel contradicted it, in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, he was called a rash, reckless, unreliable critic. But Principal Forsyth, speaking from the Chair of the Congregational Union at the Leeds meeting, frankly admitted that the evidence for the resurrection of Christ is at best but of a secondary character. According to him the man who relies upon the accounts in the four Gospels "has no idea of what strict historical evidence means." The documentary proof of the resurrection is wholly insufficient, and no one has a right, on the mere authority of the four Gospels, to affirm that Christ is risen. The Bible has thus clearly ceased to be the seat of authority in religion. And yet we are assured that Christianity is a religion that rests on absolute authority. But where is that authority to be found? Not in the Church, not in the Bible, but in the message of Christ as Redeemer. He himself as the God-man is the supreme authority, and to him all should bow. In exceedingly clever articles in the *Hibbert Journal* and the *Contemporary Review*, as well as in his Address at the annual meeting of the Congregational Union, Dr. Forsyth reiterates again and again that the Gospel is the Christian's touch-stone: "That is over the Bible which is over the Church—it is the Gospel." He does not believe in a humanist Christ, but in "one whose main and crowning function was to die for our sins according to the Scriptures." I have read with great care the Principal's various deliverances on this subject, but his meaning is still a sealed book to me. Where does Dr. Forsyth find the Gospel, if not in the Bible? Did he not get it from the Epistles which bear the name of Paul? It is not the Gospel which Christ himself is reported to have preached, nor is it the Gospel contained in the Epistle of James. It is the Pauline Gospel as interpreted by Dr. Forsyth; and it is a well known fact that Paul's Gospel was by no means the only one that flourished during the apostolic age. After admitting that the four Gospels can no longer be defended as historically trustworthy, the Principal nevertheless makes Paul's interpretation of the death of Christ the supreme authority for all.

Dr. Forsyth pretends to attach but a secondary importance to orthodoxy; but, pray, what is theology but a doctrine of God and his relations to the world framed by the intellect? That Christ died for our sins is a pure dogma. It is by no means a simple fact, but a theory concerning a simple fact, or a specific way of regarding a fact. As the Doctor himself says, "Orthodoxy means intellectualism." That God is gracious is not a simple fact, but an intellectual hypothesis. The Atonement is a dogma formulated by the theologian. In this respect, there is really no difference between Catholicism and Protestantism. The one is guided by the intellect as much as the other. And yet this is what Principal Forsyth says:—

"For the Protestant authority exists not in the theological form of dogma or statement, but in the evangelical form of historical grace, which is the soul and power of revelation. It is an authority truly religious. Our supreme good is not knowledge, not correct doctrine (which is a pagan perversion of Christianity caused by Greece, and loaded with intellectual pride). It is a moral thing, and essentially holy. It means more than a mystic union with the divine. It is the practical obedience and penitent response of faith in the historic grace of Christ to the conscience. The Christian Gospel is an authority for the will, in the will's sphere of history; it is not for the intellect—except in so far as the intellect depends on the will. It is an authority which is felt primarily as authority, not as truth—as Christ was felt, not as the Scribes."

That is a fair specimen of the Principal's style of reasoning. It is superficially plausible, but in reality fallacious and misleading. Dr. Forsyth does not know that there is a Gospel apart from the Bible. He believes the statement of the New Testament, takes the mere word of others as true, or, in other words, by an act of the mind receives what he regards as a truth, and then puts his trust in it. But what proof is there that the Gospel is worthy of credence? No

one knows even that there is a God, much less that He is loving, gracious, and merciful. No one knows that Jesus was a Divine Being. The highest and noblest being known to us is man, all super-human beings and forces being wholly imaginary. Theology deals alone with its own creations. God is a product of the mind. The God-man is an invention of the divines, and his Gospel an after-thought of theology. What Dr. Forsyth gives us, therefore, is a philosophy of the unknown and unknowable

J. T. LLOYD.

The House of God.

How is it to be accounted for that religious people never seem to exercise their reasoning faculty in religious matters? In ordinary secular affairs, as a rule, they are keen and searching. They give full play to their reasoning powers. But the moment they approach theological questions they sacrifice their intelligence. In business and social things they will inquire, investigate, and demand evidence, proof, and security; but in Biblical topics they will accept the most astounding and most improbable doctrines and teaching without any inquiry, investigation, or a shadow of evidence, and without asking a single question, and hold and defend them as if they were demonstrable truths. The only way to explain this curious fact, as far as I can see, is to attribute it to the force of heredity, environment, and education, and possibly a secret fear of Mrs. Grundy.

The unreasoning credulity manifests itself in various ways. What can be more ridiculous than the tomfoolery of pretending to consecrate a piece of earth to bury the dead in? If the crafty performers of the silly ceremony made the least use of their reason, could they do it without choking themselves with suppressed laughter? If the supporters and spectators used their reason, could they countenance the absurdity? Can anyone believe that the priestly rite has any effect on the ground? According to the Creed, the earth was made by God, and an impudent priest pretends to make the soil more sacred than God made it. To consecrate a portion of ground to make it sacred implies that it was profane and unholy as God made it, which is an insult to God and a libel on reason.

Another manifestation of the unreasoning credulity is the division of music into sacred and profane. What is sung in churches and chapels is sacred, holy, heavenly, divine. The drawing, hoarse, and jarring notes of the Bethel hymn-singers, as well as the boisterous howling of the Salvationists, is sacred; but the thrilling music of the theatre and concert-hall is profane. The division is absurd. Secular music is quite as sacred as any church music, and often more so. If Christians used their reason they would be ashamed to claim sacredness to hymn-singing and deny equal sacredness to secular melody.

Another manifestation of the want of reasoning is the calling of church and chapel services divine. Preaching, reading, praying, singing, turning, twisting, and genuflecting in the churches, according to the inscriptions and announcements, is divine service. Can anything be more unreasonable and arrogant than calling the imperfect, and often insincere, exercises of men divine? Nothing can be divine but what God does. Anything a man can do, however noble, is human, not divine. And any service man can do is for himself and his fellows. Man cannot serve God, for God wants no service. Nothing a man can do can be of any benefit to God. The service of humanity is the only good service a man can do.

Perhaps the greatest show of unreasoning arrogance is to call a church or a chapel a house of God. What awful warnings some priests utter against the desecration of the house of God! The sacredness of the building, inside and outside, is so awful that for a woman to enter without a head covering is a profanation of the sanctuary and an insult to the

Ghost who hides there behind the veil. It is difficult to understand why the Ghost or his deputy, the priest, should object to women being uncovered more than men. Women must cover their head and men must uncover their head when they go before the Ghost in his holy house, and no doubt the principal and his deputy have some solemn reason for the difference, if we only knew it. The deputy might explain the reason for the enlightenment of men, as we cannot expect his Majesty behind the veil to do it.

When you go to the house of God you must not talk or even whisper, you must not laugh or even smile; rather, you must look sad and solemn, walk slow and noiseless, and bow before the altar—not to the altar, but to God, who is there in the shade. The light is kept out by painted windows, and you cannot see the Divinity; but he is there all the same, and can see you and hear you, and woe be to you if you misbehave in his presence and in his holy house.

Really it is difficult to think and write on the subject with a sober mind. The priestly pretensions are so absurd, so laughable and comic, that a tendency to mock the whole affair becomes irresistible. The church—that is, the building—has been erected by men, with similar materials as a theatre, a hall, a house, or a factory. Why should the church be called sacred and the others profane? As a matter of fact a theatre is as holy as a church and as much a house of God as a church.

If God is infinite he is everywhere at the same time, and always. He is in the cottage as truly as in the cathedral. The hut of the laborer is as much a house of God as St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey. You cannot divide an infinite God into millions of parts, nor confine him to a building any more than to a box. On the other hand, if God is a person, he is an organised being like a man, or, say, like an archbishop or a pope, and cannot be in more places than one at the same time more than they. A personal God, though almighty, cannot be in all his sacred houses at the same time unless he splits himself into parts—and in that case his saints would have only a part of a God, and not a whole one—or else he multiplies himself into tens of thousands, which would give a different God to each house, and turn the one God into thousands of Gods. But there is one more alternative: the one personal God, by a miracle, may fly from church to church, staying a moment in each, and visit them all during the service. Whether that would satisfy the saints it is not easy to say. But it is easy enough to see the difficulty of localising an infinite God, or having a personal one in more than one house at the same time.

Where have these fictions of Christians about God and his house come from? They come from Paganism and Judaism; of that there is no room for doubt. But Christians are loth to own their relationship to the Pagan, and prefer to trace their pedigree to the Jew. But that will avail them very little; for we must ask, Where did the Jews get their myths from? and answer, From the Pagans of Babylon. Before their captivity there is not a trace of the myths to be found among the Hebrew tribes.

R. J. DERFEL.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

The Bishop of London has been displaying his wisdom again. Talking on St. Andrew's Day in St. Paul's Cathedral he said that they were about to plead with "the only One who knows" for help in "the awful problems that confront us." Now the only way in which God could help the Bishop of London to solve hard problems is to put some more, or better, brains in his head. Will the Almighty do that? We doubt it.

What times we are living in. The Government appoints a Royal Commission, and the Church enquires of the Lord. And in the meantime the unemployed are empty.

A great English painter was once asked how he mixed his colors. He replied: "With brains, sir." It is brains that is wanted for our "awful problems." Brains—and a good heart. And both are rarer than Bishops imagine.

The Queen earmarked the £2,000 with which she started her Unemployed Fund. £1,000 was to go to the Salvation Army, and £1,000 to the Church Army. These are two pious agencies for dodging real radical reform. People say the Queen has a good heart. No doubt. But there appears to be someone behind her with a good head. Or is it instinct that teaches the high and mighty ones of the earth the art of self-preservation?

The Duke of Westminster has also earmarked the £5,000 he has subscribed to the Queen's Fund. It is to be handed over to the Church Army for the relief of special distress. At this rate the Fund committee will be little but a body of cyphers. Why don't these "swells" send their cheques to the pious "Armies" direct?

The London *Star* is terribly virtuous now and then. It almost went into convulsions of anger over "Jack" Williams's plain words to the unemployed about the disposition of the Queen's £2,000. He dared to say that the Salvation Army and the Church Army simply "exploited" the poor out-of-works. Well, isn't this true? Has the *Star* the courage to deny it—and to print the plain evidence that can be adduced on the other side? What "Jack" added about the royal family is off our beat.

W. Carlile, the head of the Church Army, is a capital understudy of W. Booth, the head of the Salvation Army. He almost beats "the General" in the game of advertisement. His catch-penny titles for his Sunday evening addresses are worthy of a circus. Last Sunday evening he preached on the "All Blacks," and he had secured the attendance of the New Zealand football players who gave the English team such a bad licking on the Saturday. Of course there was a big crowd of people, and W. Carlile did a roaring business. Some day or other he will bag a couple of bruisers as an attraction. There would be a great attendance of East-Enders.

W. Carlile had several special telephonic communications with the Lord. The first thing he prayed for, apparently, was Rugby and Association Football. Then he prayed for peace in Moscow. Then he prayed for Mr. Balfour—who would probably have smiled at the performance. Then he prayed for Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman—perhaps that he may be delivered from the fear of Lord Rosebery. Finally, he prayed for the new Cabinet. What a pity he didn't pray for himself. He wants it. Or is he past praying for?

M. Yves Guyot made a bit of a fool of himself by coming over to London and hobnobbing with the Nonconformists. He addressed a meeting of the Liberation Society, which is a purely Nonconformist body, and afterwards dined with several leading Nonconformists, including the famous Mr. Perks, who is regarded as the premier Wesleyan layman. M. Guyot ought really to know better. He can hardly imagine that the English Nonconformists have any other point of sympathy with his own party in France except hatred of the Catholic Church. Now the Catholic Church is the great danger in France, but it is not the great danger in England. Secular Education, which now obtains all over France, and is what M. Guyot and his friends have fought for, has to meet the Church of England in this country, it is true, but it has also to meet the bitter opposition of the Nonconformist Churches too. Nothing could be more ridiculous than Dr. Clifford's patting M. Guyot on the back and posing as an inheritor of the French Republican tradition. Where national education is concerned, Dr. Clifford is as much a priest as an Anglican Bishop or a Catholic Cardinal. Freethinkers, at any rate, cannot recognise a distinction, for all of them have a common vice; they all want to control public education in the interest of their own Churches. Dr. Clifford denies this, but in doing so he merely adds hypocrisy to his nefariousness. And English Freethinkers do not mean to be bamboozled—in spite of M. Yves Guyot.

The Bishop of Southwell went to Nottingham Gaol and confirmed twenty of the prisoners. One warder also joined in the performance. It was witnessed by all the prisoners in the place, numbering over two hundred, who sang the hymn, "God made me for himself, to serve him here." If the prison doors had been open they would all have ceased serving him "here" in two minutes. But, as it was, the

service was "a most impressive one." And the twenty confirmed ones will now be able to go to the Lord's table once a month and sip communion port.

Before the Bishop of Southwell paid his confirmation visit to Nottingham Gaol his way had been prepared by the Church Army, which held a mission service in the prison and reported sixty converts. This sort of thing seems to be going on pretty extensively in our penal establishments. Religion is growing more and more daring and usurping—and the Freethinkers who talk about its day being over are basking in a fool's paradise.

The *Daily News* rejoices over the fact that the Rev. Dr. Warschauer and the Rev. Hugh Wallace have become joint-editors of the young men's column in the *Examiner*. They have courage, it says, which is "the least of common virtues." True, and the *Daily News* is an illustration. Behind the scenes it recognised that Dr. Torrey was a libellous liar; in front of the footlights it wouldn't say a word against him. Dr. Warschauer and Mr. Wallace spoke out. They and Mr. W. T. Stead were the only Christians that we know of who had the courage to do so. Yes, it is the least common of virtues.

They wanted a motto to go over the New Session House in the Old Bailey. Some wanted "Domine dirige nos" (God direct us)—which might apply to the lawyers and officials, or to the prisoners. Others wanted "Defend the children of the poor and punish the wrongdoer," from the Psalms. Others proposed that "Central Criminal Court" should be over the building. This was common sense, but the Psalm party carried the day. They would in the City of London.

Canon Knox-Little blows his ecclesiastical tin trumpet against the Higher Criticism. Just hear him:—

"Higher Criticism then is really the effort to bring the Unsanctified Reason of fallen men to play upon the Word of God, without any guidance from the Church, to enable it to make any assumptions it pleases, and to build upon them any speculations which commend themselves to the likings of the average fallen man."

Everything will go right when "the Church" is allowed to settle all questions as it pleases. Of course!

Now that the "Powers" are bullying the Sultan again, although they haven't a word to say against misgovernment (or massacre) in Russia, it is interesting to read what the Constantinople correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* says. "An Englishman who has returned from a tour in Macedonia," he writes, "declares that the Christian population show no hatred for the Turks, but only a keen desire to cut each others' throats."

Much religious enthusiasm is wasted over the evils of the Turkish Government in persecuting the poor, unoffending Christians of Macedonia. The special correspondent of the *Times* writes from Constantinople in a way that will be far from pleasing to those preachers that have been busy making capital over the respective merits of Christians and Mohammedans in that part of the world. He asserts that no possible scheme of financial reform can affect much improvement. He says: "The real cause of the distracted state of Macedonia is not the misgovernment of the Turks.....but the rival ambitions and the mutual hostilities of the Christian races and the intrigues of the neighboring States." Concurrently with the publication of this letter comes a Parliamentary Blue Book on the subject, which contains whole pages of details of outrages by Christians upon Christians, including the torturing of their fellow-believers. The Turk is certainly not worse than these Christian gentry, and it is just possible he may be a trifle better. It is curious, too, one never hears this side of the case stated from Christian platforms.

Walter John Watson, alias Bock, was an evangelist preacher at Glasgow, where he married a lady, and afterwards deserted her. Subsequently he went to Edinburgh as an evangelist and slum-worker, where he once more gratified his taste for matrimony by marrying the organist at his meetings. He is now doing four months' imprisonment for bigamy. How the godly are persecuted! And just think of the souls that will lose salvation while this servant of the Lord is under lock and key!

The *Schoolmaster* comments on "the futile efforts made to make children realise spiritual longings," and reports the following outburst of an East End girl of twelve: "I ain't a goin' to the Army no more, for they press you so to be cou-

verted. They come round you till you got to say you are converted to get away. Rosie, she's been converted twice, and Nellie, she's been converted five times, but she says she won't be converted no more."

The Bishop of Carlisle has been telling a Conference at Keswick that "the end of all education was the knowledge of God in Christ." He says that this is a quotation from Milton. Very likely. But a lot of water has flowed under London Bridge since Milton wrote. We venture to say that the knowledge of God in Christ is not the education which the British government is going to pay for. Those who want that sort of education will soon have to pay for it themselves.

Excavating the site for a fire-station in Cannon-street, the London County Council unearthed a colossal Roman bath weighing seven tons. Of course it belonged to the pre-Christian era. Romans believed in cleanliness. Christians preferred godliness.

Jacob Popp, tobacconist and confectioner, of High Wycombe, is what the Yankees call a pertinacious cuss. They keep fining him under the Lord's Day Observance Act of Charles II., and he keeps on selling baccy and sweets. He has been fined 208 weeks in succession, and is still going strong. Being a bit of a humorist, he calls himself a Passive Resister. But the Nonconformists pull a long face and disown the connection.

We referred last week to an opposition meeting to General Booth held at Berlin. The *Daily News* correspondent, who is a "pal" of Booth's, professes to tell "the truth" about that meeting. We like the use of the word "truth" in this connection. Of course the meeting was small, and of no importance, and all the rest of it. Why say so much about it, then?

The Bishop of London says that if a man belongs to a Christian Church he is just as holy as a clergyman. Judging from the police news, we should say that this is about true. The Bishop might even have gone a little further.

"Science," Dr. Dallinger says, "deals only with phenomena; with the realities that lie behind phenomena science is incapable of dealing." Quite so. The only people capable of dealing with things in the absence of knowledge are the clergy.

Rev. D. M'Nicol has been talking at Hawick on "How we got our Bible." The report of his address, in the local paper, throws no light on that question. The lecturer seems to have dealt with other matters altogether. In the course of his random remarks he said that Voltaire prophesied that in a hundred years Christianity would be extinct. We wish the reverend gentleman would be a little more precise. Where in Voltaire's writings shall we find that prophecy?

We suppose the Rev. D. M'Nicol believes that Christianity is not extinct. But the Christianity of Voltaire's day is extinct. What passes as Christianity now is quite a different article.

Rev. James Dudman, of Upperton, Eastbourne, and his wife, have been sentenced to one month's imprisonment for gross cruelty to their servant girl, Agnes Kate Telling. According to the evidence the girl was knocked about with anything that was handy—including a walking-stick, a toasting-fork, and a hairbrush. The doctor testified that the girl's condition bore out her complaints. The defence was that the girl's story was "exaggerated."

Old Dowie has recovered from his paralytic stroke, and is once more bent on paralyzing the world. His latest enterprise is called Zion Paradise Plantations, in Mexico. His followers all over the world are expected to flock there and cultivate his two million acres. Of course the place—that is, the ground rent—will belong to him. Dowie's faculties have not been seriously impaired.

Admiral Sir Henry Keppel, whose "Memoir" has just been written by Sir Algernon West, related that his sister, Lady Leicester, in his younger days, always insisted on having family prayers at Holkham. He recollected that "the men-servants used to go round the room afterwards, helping those whose copious libations at dinner prevented them from rising when they had once knelt down."

Our esteemed contemporary, the *New York Truthseeker*, prints a photograph of the Monument to Satan erected by Herman Menz at Detroit, which is causing such a rumpus in "the States." Herman Menz was born in Germany, but has lived twenty-one years in Detroit. His parents were "infidels" before him; his wife and two daughters are also "infidels." The monument he has put up to Old Nick represents his infernal Highness as standing in a pulpit. The local clergy say that the effigy should be removed and its owner punished for shocking Christian sentiment. On the pedestal is a Latin inscription, to the effect that, "Man is not created, but evolved. God did not make man, but man made the Gods."

We are sorry to see that our old opponent, the Rev. Dr. McCann, has got into trouble at Jersey. His offence is described as "celebrating a marriage in an unauthorised place, making false entries in the church registers, and issuing false certificates." This sounds very dreadful, but it seems to have been rather a technical offence, after all; and he seems to have been very heavily punished for it, being suspended for ten years, and allowed only one-fourth of his living (about £50) during that period. At the end of the ten years he can apply for reinstatement. But as he is some seventy-six years of age at present, that proviso sounds a little facetious.

Newspapers have been giving a lot of space to "Ghosts at Ardoyne." Some Irish priests (they are seldom teetotallers) have been seeing apparitions at a monastery, and the "great and glorious free press" hastens to print the details. Any common sense knocking about at Ardoyne would have received no attention.

Evan Roberts will not visit Llanelly on account of its "hardness." He is getting so much like his Master. Jesus Christ kept away from people who couldn't take his medicine easily; also he could do no miracles in some localities "because of their unbelief."

A meeting being held at the Rechabite Hall, Gowerton, and addressed by Mr. David Davies, with a view to forming a Branch of the N. S. S., the *Herald of Wales* reports that "As a counteraction to this gathering, prayer meetings were held in several places of worship in the village." Oh!

"A God's Overcoat" is the profane title of a picture in the *Penny Illustrated*. It refers to the overcoat worn by the Holy White Elephant of Burmah. A holy elephant is an odd sort of thing to a European, but it is cleaner and better conducted, besides being less expensive, than many holy men in this part of the world.

Rev. Edward Allen, of Oswestry House, Eastbourne, left estate valued at £131,507. "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven."

Dr. Moulton has been telling a Young Men's Christian Association meeting at Manchester that the question of Sunday closing is ready for immediate solution. Sunday closing of *what*. We suppose he means public-houses. But it would be better news if he meant churches.

JAPANESE ATHEISM.

Ask a modern Japanese of ordinary education in the broad daylight of life, if he believes in a God in the Christian sense; or in Buddha as the Creator; or in the Shinto deities; or else in any other personal agency or agencies, as originating and presiding over the universe; and you would immediately get an answer in the negative in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred.—*Prof. Okakura, "The Japanese Spirit,"* p. 93.

THE "INFIDEL" MINORITY.

Strictly speaking there never has been but one Christian—the man Christ Jesus. But I would give the title to those who thoroughly believe the Bible after having investigated it to the best of their power, who find its doctrines completely satisfy them, and who sincerely endeavor to act up to those doctrines. How many of such are there? I have known perhaps half-a-dozen. Has any reader known many more? Will any one dare assert that they are more numerous in England than the equally sincere Secularists or Atheists? I scarcely think any honest and thoughtful person will.—*James Thomson ("B. V.")*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, December 10, Stanley Hall, Junction-road, London, N. ; at 7.30, "The Gospel of Sir Oliver Lodge."

December 17, Stanley Hall ; 31, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton, Essex.—December 17, Forest Gate.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—December 10, Coventry ; 17, Manchester.

A. GRIMSHAW.—Sorry to hear that the Spiritualists at Warrington are still bigoted towards the Secularists. Of course we hope the proposed debate will be successful. Your two questions as to Sunday Schools and Temperance require fuller answers than can be given in this column. Both subjects shall be dealt with as soon as possible. Meanwhile you will do well to obtain our pamphlet, *Bible and Beer*, price fourpence. It goes fully into the relation of the Bible to Temperance, and incidentally refers to the former attitude of the Churches.

TYNESIDE FREETHINKER.—In one way, of course, it is gratifying to hear of Mr. J. M. Robertson's popularity as a politician in your district, and of his good prospect of carrying the seat in the division he is to contest at the next election. But we are unable to share your view that this involves any great advantage to Freethought. No doubt almost any leading Freethinker, by throwing himself into politics, might win success. By becoming a member of parliament, though, he is invariably lost as an apostle. There are several Freethinkers in the House of Commons now, but we never knew one of them to do anything for Freethought. We have known them, however, to help the other side. We do not believe that Mr. Robertson would ever do that. But if he had twenty times his own strength, or twenty times the strength of a Bradlaugh, he could not alter the nature of things. And the nature of things seems dead against your expectation. People simply do not read a man's Freethought writings because of his political success. It is an instructive fact that just as Bradlaugh made his way in the House of Commons his *National Reformer* fell in circulation. He was at the top of his political popularity just before his fatal illness, yet his paper was then at the lowest ebb of its fortunes. And look at John Morley! You see we are going by facts, not by fancies.

ELUCIDATION.—Why trouble about Franklin's, or any other person's, opinion of Paine's *Age of Reason*, when a personal opinion of it can be formed by simply reading it for oneself? The statement that Paine regretted writing that work is an absolute falsehood, which does not become a truth by being printed in Chalmers's Biographical Dictionary. That Paine said it to an "an infidel admirer"—without a name or an address—is a statement worthy of the intelligence and character of the average Christian bigot.

R. J. HOWELLS.—Pleased to hear from you. Your orthodox friend is all at sea. John the Baptist did not invent baptism. It was a Jewish ceremony before his time—if he ever existed. See the article on "Baptism" in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, edited by Canon Cheyne and Dr. Black. Ceremonial washings, essentially similar to baptism, were common in Egypt, Babylon, and Greece, and indeed almost everywhere. See the article on "Washings" in the same work.

HYMN.—We prefer to answer you here. A Freethinker, called as a witness or as a juror, can claim to affirm under the Oaths Act, carried by the late Charles Bradlaugh. All you have to do is, "I wish to affirm, if you please." Say nothing at all about the oath. If the court asks you "On what ground?" you should reply "On the ground that I have no religious belief." Say no more. Say it twenty times if necessary, but don't add to it. The court is bound to let you affirm. That is the law.

W. W. DAVIES.—Pleased to learn that the note in the *Freethinker* brought you into touch with a dozen other "saints" at Swansea. Thanks for the cuttings. It is something, you know, if the press notices you at all.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

W. CARMICHAEL.—Glad to hear you thank the day when you first picked up a *Freethinker*. Thanks for cutting. See paragraph.

ANTI-TORREY MISSION FUND.—J. Whitehead 5s.

E. GWINNELL.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

C. W. STYRING.—See "Acid Drops."

GERALD GREY.—Pleased to have your good wishes and high appreciation. The boycotters of this journal pretend to think it low and illiterate. Good judges like yourself know better. You warmly praise the articles. Setting our own aside, we don't see better anywhere.

METHODISM.—Delighted to read your letter. It encourages us in our work. Still more delighted to know that your wife has become a good Freethinker as well as yourself. You can order a sixpenny edition of some of Clifford's writings from our publishing office ; postage 2d. extra.

GEORGE HULL.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

A. P. LAUDER.—Probably lowness of funds is the explanation, as you suggest. See "Acid Drops."

T. FISHER.—Thanks for information. We hope to see the Paine portrait idea through.

E. SMEDLEY.—We will look through it. Meanwhile, as to your letter, you must recollect that the pain that comes through memory and imagination is, of course, not much experienced by the lower animals. But that they do not really feel, and are not really conscious, is a ridiculous heresy.

S. McCOWAN.—You should never wonder at the superstition of the mob. Look at their training.

R. IRVING.—For the brothers and sisters of Jesus see Matthew XIII, 55, 56. Thanks for your efforts to extend our circulation.

W. P. PEARSON.—Thanks to yourself and the ten other members of the Liverpool Branch who distributed all those copies of our pamphlet at the Torrey farewell meeting—especially on such a wet night.

J. BROUGH.—Keep sending cuttings.

J. W. E. BENNETT.—Thanks.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Balfour is now free to prepare a new edition of his old book on Philosophic Doubt. Of course there will be a general election soon, and we have long been minded to address Freethinkers directly on that subject. This we intend to do in our next issue. In the meanwhile nobody need be alarmed. We are not going to splash about in party politics. What we are concerned with is the attitude of Freethinkers as Freethinkers.

Mr. Foote had excellent meetings at South Shields on Sunday. The afternoon audience was not quite as good as the one he addressed during his previous visit, but the evening audience made ample amends. It was pleasant to see so many veteran Freethinkers, and so many Freethinkers of the younger generation, all applauding the N. S. S. president together ; and the presence of a considerable number of ladies lent both color and homeliness to the gathering. We understand that both Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd will follow Mr. Foote at South Shields in the new year.

Mr. Foote lectures at Stanley Hall this evening (Dec. 10) on "The Gospel of Sir Oliver Lodge." Sir Oliver Lodge, although not at all an orthodox person, is at present the darling of the Churches, who use him to bolster up their fundamental superstitions. Being the Principal of Birmingham University, his name is expected to impose upon the British public, as to some extent it does. Mr. Foote will deal particularly with Sir Oliver Lodge's brand-new book on *Matter and Mind*.

Mr. F. A. Davies delivered a capital lecture at Stanley Hall on Sunday evening on "Jesus Christ and the Labor Party." It was highly appreciated by the audience, which ought to have been much larger than it was. North-London "saints" should make a stronger effort to advertise these meetings amongst their friends and acquaintances. There are free seats for those who cannot or will not pay.

A rumor has got abroad that the Secular Society, Limited, pays a number of lecturers (including Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd) a regular retaining fee. This is not true. The Society is not in a position to do so, even if it wished. No lecturer is paid by the Society except for the lectures he delivers under special engagement.

Mr. John T. Lloyd lectures at Coventry to-day for the first time. We hope the local "saints" will give him the heartiest of welcomes.

The Leicester Secular Society, through Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, its president, is appealing for financial aid, and thoroughly deserves to obtain it. Persons willing to assist should write to Mr. Gimson, at the Secular Hall, Humberston-gate, Leicester, for copies of the circulars which are now being issued. The Society has to raise over £500 a year, and most of its members are working people. A few better able to subscribe are heavily taxed—particularly Mr. Gimson himself, we believe, although he is modestly reticent on the subject. No doubt there are Secularists here and there in other parts of the country who may be able to render a little help without neglecting the claims of their own districts.

Mr. Gimson suggests that Shares in the Leicester Secular Hall Company, which command a dividend of 5 per cent., should be bought up and vested in trustees, so that the Secular Society may eventually use the premises without cost, and only have to meet the other expenses. The idea is essentially a good one, and we wish it all success. But the trusteeship is an antiquated policy now that the model of the Secular Society, Limited, can be followed. This secures all the advantages of a trust, without the obvious disadvantages. We have looked through the proposed Trust Deed, and it appears to us to be not only unsatisfactory but even dangerous; quite apart from the introduction of "rationalism," which does not seem the right distinctive word to indicate the principles and objects of a fifty-year old Secular Society, which we always thought was proud of its name.

The *Christian World*, reviewing Mr. William Mottram's new book on George Eliot, writes as follows on the great novelist's relations with George Henry Lewes: "Mr. Mottram states the actual facts as to the marriage of George H. Lewes with Mary Ann Evans. For much too prolonged a period misunderstanding has existed as to the irregular relationship between the great novelist and George Henry Lewes. George Eliot preached a stern, unrelenting morality, but a dark shadow rested on her own moral character, and the inexplicable inconsistency has perplexed thousands of her admirers. Dr. W. L. Watkinson in his Fernley lecture pointed to this as 'the disgrace of George Eliot's life and the condemnation of her philosophy,' and the example of this great woman has been pleaded by evil-doers in extenuation of their 'lawless fancies.' Mr. Mottram, freed by the recent death of Mrs. Lewes, breaks the long silence, and states what has been known to a few but has never been fully stated before. It has been assumed—*The Christian World* assumed it when Mr. Cross's life of George Eliot was published—that Mrs. Lewes was an incurable maniac. That judgment was only too charitable. Mrs. Lewes, Mr. Mottram shows, actually forsook her husband, home and children to live under the protection of her husband's chosen friend. George Henry Lewes forgave her and took her back. But a second time she abandoned all for the company of her paramour, and this time made it clear that her marital treason was desperate and the separation final. The Divorce Court was not then in existence, and to get relief Mr. Lewes would have had to secure an Act of Parliament costing several thousands of pounds, and for that he had not the money. At this juncture George Eliot met Lewes and they were mutually attracted. A lawful marriage was impossible, but they faced the consequences, and intimated to their friends that they were henceforth to be known as husband and wife. So they lived happily and loyally together. George Eliot, Mr. Mottram states, told an intimate friend that though she and Lewes were not legally married in England a marriage ceremony had actually been performed in Germany. As to Mrs. Lewes—the 'wronged wife in the background,' as Dr. Watkinson and many others called her—she never entertained any grievance, and, as a matter of fact, was in after years amply provided for by the persons who are supposed to have injured her. Her son, the late Mr. Charles Lewes, said: 'My mother had left my father before he and George Eliot had ever met each other. George Eliot found a ruined life and she made it into a beautiful one. She found us poor little motherless boys, and what she did for us no one on earth will ever know.' This from the son of the woman whom people say was wronged by George Eliot disposes of the 'wronged wife' idea. Mr. Mottram takes a sane line when he says that while 'one can never cease to deplore it (the irregular union), both for George Eliot's own sake and in the interests of society at large, a considerable share of the blame must attach to the defective state of the laws.' Many years ago we urged that it was fair neither to the present nor to succeeding generations that an unsolved problem should be left to become insoluble, and we welcome Mr. Mottram's book with its weighty evidence in the direction of clearing up the mystery and vindicating George Eliot's character."

We are glad to see the *Christian World* breaking through, if not completely, the orthodox policy of defaming George Eliot. Dr. W. L. Watkinson, whose insults we replied to many years ago, when he first published them, simply played the part of a controversial hooligan. It may be said, of course, that he knew no better; that the real facts of the case were not generally known. But this is much too charitable. The real facts were known to many people; they were a kind of open secret; and, if Dr. Watkinson was not aware of them, he could easily have discovered them by taking the trouble to enquire. George Eliot's "irregular union" with George Henry Lewes was only irregular according to the vicious laws which then obtained in England. She broke no moral law: quite the contrary. Those who blame her can only mean that any State law is higher than any law of conscience. Which is a theory that the Passive Resisters take pride in flouting.

The Book of the Acts.—II.

ITS ALLEGED AUTHENTICITY AND CREDIBILITY.

(Continued from p. 779.)

CONTINUING his historical evidence for the early date of the Acts of the Apostles, Dr. Hervey submits two passages from the Epistle of Clement, which he claims as quotations from the first-named book. The first of these is the following:—

<p>ACTS XX. 35. "and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."</p>	<p>EPISTLE OF CLEMENT. "And ye were all lowly in mind and free from arrogance, yielding rather than claiming submission, more ready to give than to receive, and content with the provisions which God supplieth" (par. 2).</p>
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Here it must be evident to anyone save a Christian apologist that Clement has not quoted "the words of the Lord Jesus" recorded in the Acts of the Apostles—which words are not found in any of the canonical Gospels. The only New Testament book which Clement directly refers to is Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians (par. 47). The second passage adduced to prove Clement's acquaintance with the Acts is the following:—

<p>ACTS XIII. 22. "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after my heart, who shall do all my will."</p>	<p>EPISTLE OF CLEMENT. "I have found a man after my own heart, David, the son of Jesse: in everlasting mercy I have anointed him."</p>
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The question here to be determined is: Did Clement quote from the Acts of the Apostles or from the following passages in the Greek version of the Old Testament, in use in his day?

Psalm lxxxix. 20.—"I have found David my servant; in holy mercy I have anointed him."
1 Sam. xiii. 14.—"A man after his own heart."

It must first be observed that both Clement and the writer of the Acts profess to quote from the Old Testament. Next, it will be noticed that in both quotations the words "David, the son of Jesse" are given instead of "David my servant." We may take it then that the former was the reading in most copies of the Septuagint in the days of the writer of the Acts—and likewise in the time of Clement. Now, had Clement quoted from the Acts, he would naturally have copied the passage verbatim—which he has not done. He has also combined the two Old Testament passages in a different manner to the compiler of the Acts. Furthermore, Clement's epistle contains no less than ninety quotations from the Old Testament, of which twenty-five are from the Psalms. Clement therefore had the last-named book open before him when composing his epistle. But all doubt as to the source of Clement's quotation is dispelled when we look at the last sentence—"in everlasting mercy I have anointed him." Where did the writer of the Epistle get these words? Not from the Acts, for the compiler of that book has omitted them. We thus arrive at the fact that Clement quoted from the Septuagint—which in his copy read "everlasting" instead of "holy."

This completes the external evidence advanced by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who sums up the result of his demonstration, so far, as follows: "We have seen a continuous stream of witnesses from all parts of the world, from A.D. 300 to A.D. 96, all acquainted with the book called the Acts of the Apostles, ascribing it without the smallest doubt to St. Luke as its author, and treating it as Holy Scripture.....The evidence in itself is conclusive, absolutely conclusive." What are we to say to this misleading statement? As a simple matter of fact, the "continuous stream of witnesses" only go as far back as Irenæus (A.D. 185). No earlier writer has so much as named the Acts, much less "ascribed it without the smallest doubt to St. Luke as its author." And this entire absence of evidence is

what our great Christian advocate calls "conclusive, absolutely conclusive."

Having achieved such gratifying results in his presentment of historical evidence for the early date of the Acts, Dr. Hervey next invites his readers to consider the internal evidence derived from the book itself. And here his arguments are far more plausible. The first point which our Bishop advances is "the historical accuracy" of the narratives. Mention is made in the Acts of a considerable number of historical persons. "There are the high priests, Annas and Caiaphas; there is Gamaliel the famous Rabbi, and Judas of Galilee the turbulent patriot; there is Candace, queen of the Ethiopians; there is the emperor Claudius; there is Herod Agrippa, the king of Judæa; there is Sergius Paulus, the pro-consul of Cyprus; there is Annæus Gallio, the pro-consul of Achaia; Felix and Festus, the Roman procurators of Judæa; king Agrippa and Bernice; Drusilla the Jewess, the wife of Felix; and the emperor Nero."

After reading this formidable array of first century notabilities, what Rationalist will venture to deny that the Book of the Acts is a historical record? Moreover, we are to bear in mind that "The least mistake in chronology, or in general statement concerning any of these passages would be detected at once in the light of profane history." And, our Bishop confidently asserts, no such mistakes can be discovered; consequently the book is to be regarded as a genuine history of apostolic times. Now, it is quite true that Annas and Caiaphas are not described as Roman procurators, nor Felix and Festus as emperors of Rome; neither are Claudius and Agrippa (Nero is not mentioned) represented as Jewish high priests. There are, however, some historical errors, which I shall have to notice when I come to the other side of the question—Against the authenticity of the book.

But besides the foregoing list of historic persons, there are, Dr. Hervey reminds us, many other historical circumstances involved; viz.—"The political condition of the Jewish nation; the relation of their kings to the Roman government; the peculiar circumstances of the different town, as Cæsarea, the principal seaport of Syria and headquarters of the Roman military government; Philippi, a Roman colony; Thessalonica, a free Greek city; Athens and its Areopagite court; Ephesus and the fanatical worship of Diana," etc. Respecting these matters our Bishop says: "How difficult for anyone to be accurate in all these things, if writing sixty or seventy years afterwards, though comparatively easy if writing of things in the midst of which he is actually living, and which he knows by his own senses of seeing and hearing." And the writer of this accurate and circumstantial "history," Dr. Hervey affirms, was Luke, a companion of Paul, who is alleged to have accompanied that apostle on his missionary journeys, and to have been an eye-witness and ear-witness of what he records. The date of the Acts, we are further told, is fixed by "that of the last event recorded in the book"—namely, Paul being for two years a prisoner at Rome—which date our Bishop places at A.D. 63.

Now, as regards the apologetic contention that the writer of the Acts was a witness of what he relates, we have but to turn to the Preamble to Luke's Gospel to find that the compiler of that book (and of the Acts) was not a contemporary of the apostles, and could not therefore have been either a companion of Paul or a witness of anything he records. He says:—

"Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fully believed among us, even as they, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, delivered them unto us, it seemeth good to me also" to draw up a similar narrative (Luke I. 1-3).

This statement simply means that the scraps of anecdotes and legends respecting Jesus, which are now contained in the three Synoptical Gospels, had been handed down from the time of the apostles to that of Luke (or were believed to have been so handed down), and that in that evangelist's days "many"

educated Christians had set to work to arrange the narratives in some kind of chronological order. It is also clearly implied that the apostles or "eye-witnesses and ministers of the word" had long passed away. Luke did not live in the period which he calls "the beginning"—that is to say, in apostolic times—but in a subsequent age some generations later.

Coming now to the names of well known persons mentioned in the Acts, there can be little doubt as to the source of Luke's inspiration. That second century editor had read some historical works, including the writings of Josephus, and possessed therefore some elementary knowledge of persons and events in Palestine prior to the Jewish war of A.D. 66-70. This he utilised in revising three anonymous apocryphal "histories," now lost, and formed them into one book—the canonical Acts of the Apostles. From Josephus, whose works were well known to the Jews and Christians of the second century, he probably derived his information respecting the following personages whom he has introduced in his veracious history:—Judas of Galilee, Theudas, Simon Magus, the emperor Claudius, "Herod the king," an Egyptian false prophet, "the high priest Ananias," the Roman governor Felix and Drusilla his wife, the procurator Porcius Festus, "Agrippa the king and Bernice." Furthermore, all the other circumstances mentioned by Dr. Hervey would either be well known to people of the second century—*e.g.* the Areopagus at Athens, the worship of Diana at Ephesus, etc.—or could have been obtained from Josephus or some other historian.

Luke's method of revising older documents can easily be seen by a comparison of the Gospel accounts respecting the time when Jesus first appeared as a teacher. In the first two Gospels this period is stated as follows:—

Matt. III. 1, 13.—"And in those days cometh John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judæa.....Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to the Jordan unto John to be baptized of him."

Mark I. 4, 9.—"John came, who baptized in the wilderness.....And it came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in the Jordan."

From the foregoing passages it will be perceived that no date is specified; whence we may infer that the authors of the legends in the primitive Gospel from which Matthew, Mark and Luke drew their accounts had no idea when Jesus lived. Like all fairy tales, the marvellous events related happened "once upon a time." Coming now to Luke's revised version, we find the exact period stated with the most praiseworthy precision.

Luke III. 1-3, 21.—"Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituræa and Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the region round about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance.....Now it came to pass, when all the people were baptized that Jesus also having been baptized," etc.

Here it may be asked where Luke obtained the information contained in this paragraph? We may safely say that it had no place in the primitive Gospel from which Matthew and Mark took their accounts; for it is quite certain that neither of those evangelists would have intentionally omitted such an important passage, had it formed part of the earlier narratives. Luke, there can be no doubt, took the names from some Jewish history in circulation in his time, and, on his own authority, inserted them in his revised Gospel. Josephus has given accounts, more or less lengthy, of all the personages named in the paragraph, and to this historian the compiler of the Third Gospel was doubtless indebted. Luke has, however, fallen into error even in the few names he has added. Lysanias was not "tetrarch of Abilene," nor was Annas high priest, in "the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar;" neither were Annas and Caiaphas ever associated in the high priesthood.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Guns Boom for Thomas Paine.

UNCLE SAM HELPS TO CELEBRATE TRANSFER OF MONUMENT.

[In the Name of the City of New Rochelle, with the Applause of a Multitude Followed by the Roar of Artillery, the Mayor and Common Council Assume Charge Forever of the Historical Memorial Erected by Freethinkers Sixty-six Years ago—General Grant Sends Soldiers and a Band, While the National Guard, the Grand Army Men, the Spanish War Veterans, and Sons of the American Revolution Turn Out—Women's Auxiliary of the Grand Army of Republic Participates.]

THE date was Saturday, October 14, 1905, and the occasion the rededication and assignment to the custody and care of New Rochelle of the Thomas Paine Monument on North-street, erected in 1839 by Gilbert Vale and other Freethinkers and since that date kept in repair and supplied with a bronze bust of Paine by the Liberals of New York and the country at large. The first man on the scene was Capt. George W. Lloyd, who by reason of strength is four score and over, and who appended to convenient trees the old familiar banners bearing the legends, "Thomas Paine, Author-Hero of the Revolution," and "Spare the Man, but Kill Monarchy." Captain Lloyd had his piccolo with him.

As representative of the Paine Historical Society, the Paine Memorial Association, and the Bronze Bust Committee, Dr. E. B. Foote, Jr., was Chairman of the meeting. Dr. Foote was also the creator of the event. For weeks he has devoted time and labor to the arrangements; he organized the demonstration, prepared the program, and carried things ahead to a great and glittering success. The mayor and city council of New Rochelle did their part with honor and fidelity, and Gen. Frederick D. Grant, commander of the Department of the East, contributed in the name of Uncle Sam. The National Guard represented the state of New York. The sons of the American Revolution were present by their officers, Edward Hagaman Hall, vice-president; Walter Seth Logan, ex-president, and Chas. A. Du Bois and Frank E. Caldwell, M.D., all members of the Board of Management. To represent the Minutemen came Major E. T. Paull, Capt. Louis H. Cornish, Capt. De Witt L. Pelton, Ph.D., Surgeon Smith, Lieut. Albert J. Squier, L. Hal Cornish, and Geo. H. Cornish. On behalf of the Washington Continental Guards were present Capt. Walter Tufts, Lieutenant Chenoweth, Whittington Robinson, and Privates Wayne, Comfort, Tyler, Hall, and Schuyler.

Captain W. H. Sage, 23rd Infantry, commanding the U. S. Army Post at Ft. Slocum, detailed for the occasion the Ft. Slocum Band and a Battalion consisting of Companies "A" and "B" 8th U. S. Infantry, under command of Captain F. H. Sargent, 8th U. S. Infantry; 1st Lieut. J. B. Wilson, 8th U. S. Infantry, Adjutant; Captain F. L. Knudsen, 8th U. S. Infantry, commanding Company "A," 1st Lieut. F. H. Kalde, 8th U. S. Infantry, 2nd Lieut. W. C. Russell, 8th U. S. Infantry; 1st Lieut. T. S. Moorman, 8th U. S. Infantry, commanding Company "B." The second Battery N. G., N. Y., sent a detail of five guns, Brevet-Major David Wilson commanding; Lieut., Frank B. Barrett.

Joseph Ferguson commanded a delegation from Flandreau Post, G. A. R., and the delegation from the Norman Crosby Post, Spanish War Veterans, came with W. T. Bartinett commanding.

The parade through New Rochelle started at 2.15 or a little later from Huguenot-street near the railroad station, headed by a squad of police (for form's sake), and Mayor Henry S. Clark and the common council under the recently adopted city flag, then used for the first time. Passing down Huguenot-street, around the Soldiers' Monument and up Main to Rose-street, the procession swung into North-street and along that thoroughfare to the Paine Monument. The military and National Guard grounded arms facing the monument, the Continentals and Minutemen marched around the inclosure, the Civil and Spanish War Veterans were provided with seats facing the orators of the day, while the Battery of five guns, four horses to the gun, rumbled down the lane that is to be officially known as Paine-avenue, and unlimbered in the adjacent field.

A swarm of New Rochelle school children under Musical Director Geo. H. Foss, were assembled between the monument and North-street, and accompanied by the Fort Slocum Band, sang the hymn "America." The singing was soft but sweet.

This opened the ceremonies. The scene was a pretty one. The day was the loveliest of the season, sunny and just cool enough not to be too warm. Across North-street the rising ground was occupied by hundreds of women and children, with a sprinkling of men. In the road were the soldiers standing at ease in their trim uniforms. South of the monument in Paine-avenue were the veterans and back of them

rows of seats occupied by visitors, while a crowd who found standing room only surrounded the inclosure about the memorial. In the back ground was the battery of guns. The monument itself is much better situated than formerly. In the middle of Paine-avenue beside North-street, it is on more elevated ground, has a raised, tiled, and curbed walk about it, and is immediately surrounded by a yet more elevated base and an iron fence. Inside the fence were seated the speakers, the mayor and council, and distinguished visitors. It was arranged that the speakers should face the south and the audience the north, so that all might avoid looking at the western sun, but the great crowd on the North-street side drew the talk in that direction.

There were Liberals present from out of town, but not so many as would have come if they had foreseen the magnitude of the event. James B. Elliott came from Philadelphia; John Maddock from Minneapolis. Mrs. Carrie B. Chapman and Mrs. Sarah H. Sawyer brought credentials as delegates from the Washington, D. C., Secular League. Dr. E. A. Wood represented Syracuse. Mr. Festus Bailey came from Danbury, Conn. On the grounds was met Gen. Samuel B. Jones of Yonkers, N. Y., whose grandfather knew Paine. The Brooklyn Philosophical Association and the Manhattan Liberal Club furnished representative delegations. Trolley lines from adjacent towns, loaded to the guards, drew up at the monument and the cry was "All out." They were extra cars and went no farther.

As before stated, the New Rochelle school children opened the ceremonies with a song, and as their childish voices rose above the accompanying music of the band, Captain Lloyd, whom the preceding events had long since rendered too happy for speech, sat upon the coping about the monument, laid his cheek lovingly against his piccolo and blew softly.

The voice of the younger Dr. Foote, appropriately stenographer, called the assemblage to order. Dr. Foote said:

CHAIRMAN FOOTE'S ADDRESS.

Ladies and Gentlemen.—Others will tell you to-day of the life and works of Thomas Paine. I am here to give you the last chapter in his story. Paine died in New York city in 1809, and the funeral was held a few days later. His body was brought up from New York and buried somewhere within fifty feet of this monument. There it lay for several years and there was nothing to indicate its presence but a headstone inscribed "Thomas Paine" and the dates of his birth and death. William Cobbett, an Englishman, raised the bones of Paine and took them back to England with him. At that time Cobbett thought he could effect a revolution in the government of England with the bones of Paine, and that men would get together and erect a great monument to Paine, but from Mr. Cobbett's large idea only small results came. The fact is that nothing was accomplished by the project and the bones knocked about England for many years, until now, no one, Mr. Conway says, knows where they are.

In 1833 a man named Tilley, who was the tailor of Mr. Cobbett, took opportunity of seeing the bones of Paine in London and secured a small portion of his hair and brain. That piece of brain was handed down until Mr. Conway got hold of it in London. This relic of Paine is here in this small box. Now, this portion of the remains of Paine is all that we have left and some time it will be placed within this monument; then we can say the remains of Paine, all that we have, are to be found here. You have all heard the song "John Brown's body lies mouldering in the grave, but his soul goes marching on"; and so with Paine; his bones may be scattered about the earth, but his soul goes marching on.

President Andrew Jackson said, "Thomas Paine needs no monument made by hands; he has erected a monument in the hearts of all men who love liberty." But they got together a subscription of about one thousand dollars and erected this stone in 1839, a few feet south of where it now stands. When they brought this monument from Tuckahoe they were not able to place it right over the grave on account of the grave being located on private property, and so the monument was placed at the entrance to this lane which leads up to the house on the hill where Paine at one time lived. The ownership of the land on which the monument stood was in dispute for forty years and no particular attention was given to it except by Captain Lloyd and occasional straggling visitors.

In 1881, New York friends of Paine repaired and polished it up, and in 1899 the handsome bronze bust made by Wilson McDonald was unveiled. Within a year or two a spirit of improvement has come across the people of New Rochelle and they have improved North-street, as you see, all the way to this spot. They have taken the monument in and put it up here as a thing of beauty and a joy for ever (applause). New Rochelle has carried out a noble piece of work, after it was neglected for many years. But so were

the bones of Paul Jones neglected for many years. The bones of Paul Jones have been brought to this country and buried with due ceremony, and now we can say also that the memory of Thomas Paine has received the best attention that the city of New Rochelle can bestow, and the monument has been placed so it will stand for many a year.

This is a great day for New Rochelle, for Thomas Paine, for the country, and for us. As a result of this celebration, the history of Paine will be looked up by those unfamiliar with it, and his services to the country will be more and more appreciated.

It may be that the committee who has had this affair in charge will think best to offer some prizes for the children of New Rochelle to write essays on "The Paine Monument; Why it should be Cherished and Preserved."

The next speaker will be Mr. Theodore Schroeder of the Brooklyn Philosophical Association, who will tell you something of Paine as the Author-Hero:

MR. SCHROEDER'S ADDRESS.

Almost a century ago Thomas Paine died, and was buried near this spot. He is beyond the reach of either calumny or praise. We cannot honor him now, we can only honor ourselves by showing our understanding and appreciation of him.

Paine was the first American publicly to suggest that the war of the colonists should be one for independence instead of merely for redress and reconciliation. He anticipated the Declaration of Independence, by writing of the "Free and Independent States of America," and was the first to pen the words "United States of America."

During the days of the revolution, it was the opinion of many that the pen of Paine had contributed more to its success than the generalship of Washington. Paine's *Common Sense* first demonstrated the necessity of separation and independence. And the fire of this independence he now kept alive with the fuel of his mighty brain. Before the battle of Trenton, the half-clad and half-starved soldiers were called together to hear read Paine's *Crisis*, which burst upon them thus: "These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis shrink from the service of his country."

The pamphlet was read by every corporal's guard and in and out of the army produced more than the intended effect. The enthusiasm that it inspired was the chief element in the success at the battle of Trenton.

The convention of New York, reduced by fear and desertion to nine members, was recalled and reanimated. Militiamen, tired of war and straggling from the army, returned.

Subsequently, as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Assembly, he started a subscription with his entire salary, which resulted in the raising of a relief fund of half a million dollars, and thus again he saved the revolution from disaster. Though himself penniless, he gave to America the copyright of all his books at a time when they were selling by the thousands. Later, he again saved the revolution from failure, securing the timely aid of France.

Later, we find him an adviser in the French Revolution, which he so vigorously defended in his *Rights of Man*. This defence of liberty made him so popular that, though not a citizen of France, by unanimous vote of three communes, he was elected as a member of the French assembly.

Here he performed the grandest act of his noble life when, at the risk of his own life, he protested against the execution of the dethroned monarch. For this he was imprisoned, and almost miraculously escaped death.

It was in hourly expectation of arrest and death that he wrote his *Age of Reason*, which was an attack upon the then prevalent superstition. This was the book which destroyed his popularity among people who still believed, even in America, in boring holes in the tongues of persons who denied the Trinity.

Paine defended the liberties of man against the usurped power of crowned ruffians. For this, he was denounced as "brutal." He defended the rights of conscience against the bloody bigotry of his time. This made him "vulgar and low."

When royalty could not answer Paine's arguments in the *Rights of Man*, he was threatened with death, and outlawed from the country he was offering freedom. Paine's sympathy for mankind had made kings his foes, his mercy cost him his liberty, his generosity kept him in poverty, his charity made him enemies, and by intellectual honesty he lost his friends. Denied the right to vote, because he was a citizen of France, by Federalist judges of election, for whose liberty he had fought; imprisoned in France because he was not a citizen of France; maligned because he was brave; shunned because he was honest; hated by those to whom he had devoted his whole existence; denied a burial place in the soil he helped make free by the church which first taught

him the lesson of humanity; thus ended the life of Thomas Paine.

The world is growing better, more just and more hospitable. The narrow intolerance which once threatened to erase Paine's name from the pages of history is passed away. Gradually we are coming to know that a kingly crown or priest's robe never rested upon a nobler man than the one who had the greatness and the goodness to say: "The world is my country; to do good my religion."

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

(To be concluded.)

Correspondence.

THE HUNDRED BEST BOOKS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Judging from letters which appear in this paper time after time, from recent converts, Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* has been a veritable "God-send" to Freethought. In Mr. Mann's admirable list this volume is not included; yet he gives Moncure Conway's *Life of Paine*. Mr. Mann has not limited his list to one hundred and I cannot but think the *Age of Reason* has been inadvertently omitted by him. Two biographies of Voltaire are included, a third might have been added, by Espinasse Renan's *Life of Jesus* should be in every Freethinker's Library. There is no cause for complaint in Mr. Mann's wonderful list; it proves a clear head has been at work with a deep power of thought, but I think Mr. Mann might have made room for Mr. Blatchford's *God and my Neighbor* and Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* also.

JOHN S. CLARKE.

Bible Facts.

[A company was formed under the guidance of the Holy Ghost to compare the Bible with the "Codex Sinaiticus" (one of the originals), which was found in 1844, on Mount Sinai, in the waste-paper basket.]—*Vide* "Helps to Study the Bible."

'Twas in the year One Eight Four Four, upon
Mount Sinai,
In a basket with the waste, a document did lie.
But how the devil it got there?
The Christians asked in fervent prayer.
Now, when this document was found, the priest
with cunning eye
Looked piously upon the book and said, "it's
from the sky."
The Atheist was not perturbed,
Because a God had lost his Word.
A company was duly formed. A ghost was the
promoter.
He floated it, directed it, inspiring every voter
To always do just as he spoke,
Whether in earnest, or in joke.
In pouring too much spirit out, he got a little
mixed.
The company was glorious, and thus mistakes
were fixed.
And there they left them till this day,
For priests to teach the fools who pay.

A. SKITTE.

D' You Know Him?

Did he in pomp go down the aisle
With the collection-plate?
And take the dubs with bow and smile,
Obsequious and sedate?
Into the vestry did he walk?
And did his dial expand?
And did he talk small Sabbath-talk?
And squeeze "The Reverend's" hand?
Sigh like a saint at all such sins
As "worldly talk" on Sunday?
And hush the rusty yarns he spins
So glibly on the Monday?
And did he sing about "The Lamb,"
His unctuous voice in blend?
And is it—"Right, sir!"—"Just so, ma'am!"—
All for some selfish end?

ROTHENJURN.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

STANLEY HALL (near the "Boston," Junction-road, N.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Gospel of Sir Oliver Lodge."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 3, E. Short, "Theism."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "The Jews' March."

COUNTRY.

CARDIFF BRANCH N. S. S. (Maskell's Café, St. Mary-street): Monday, Dec. 11, at 8, Business Meeting.

COVENTRY BRANCH N. S. S. (Assembly Rooms, Union-street): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Why I Gave Up the Christian Religion"; 7, "Should Freethinkers be Miserable?"

FALLSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, W. C. Schweizer, "Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Jesus Christ: a Contrast."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (110 Brunswick-street): Harry Snell, 12 noon, "The Other Side of Darwinism"; 6.30, "The Higher Criticism and Christianity: What is Left to Believe?" Committee meets at 1.

GLASGOW RATIONALIST AND ETHICAL ASSOCIATION (319 Sauchiehall-street): Monday, Dec. 11, at 8, Ignatius McNulty, "Christianity: What is it?"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, "A Study in Hells."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Harold Eliot, 3, "Evolutionary Socialism"; 7, "The Apostles." Monday, 8, Social. *Special Notice:* A General Meeting of Members after the evening lecture to consider the future of the Branch.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. M. Robertson, "The Future of Peace and War."

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Cafe): Thursday, Dec. 14, at 8, T. H. Elstob, "W. S. Gilbert's Social Philosophy."

POROTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Room, Town Hall, Porth): 2, Mutual Improvement Class: Discussion, "The Unemployed"; 6.30, Noah Ablett, "The Religion of the Hour."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7.30, Business meeting.

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