

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXIX.—No. 20

SUNDAY, MAY 16, 1909

PRICE TWOPENCE

Nothing needs a Trick but a TRICK; Sincerity
LOATHES one.—WILLIAM PENN.

Pious Murderers.

WHEN I left Aberdare, early on Monday morning, to travel up to London and get to work on the *Freethinker*, I bought a copy of the *South Wales Daily News*, and found three long columns of small type devoted to the last hours of a murderer who was executed in Swansea Gaol the previous Saturday morning. I saw the three columns, but I did not read them until I got into the Great Western express at Cardiff. I had something better to do with my time while travelling through the Taaf Valley. My eyes took their fill of the beautiful scenery, which all man's desperate efforts have not been able to destroy. The great hills rose in their majesty over his ugly scratchings of the earth at their base, and the lusty life of nature was bursting forth once more in the springtide, adorning the landscape with the delightful green of young leaves, and all the glorious-colored blooms of May. The train crawled along so leisurely, but I was quite happy—and all the murderers in the world could wait.

When I settled down in the London express, and read my Welsh paper, I found that William Joseph Foy, the executed murderer, had made the usual edifying end. He was in such excellent fettle during his last brief morning on earth that he thoroughly enjoyed a beefsteak and onions for breakfast; after which he thoroughly relished some cigarettes; whence we may see the sustaining effect of true religion even on the criminal mind. To commit a most brutal and sordid murder, to be condemned to die for it, to prepare for the hangman with a generous meal, and walk steadily before the chaplain to the gallows,—surely this is a magnificent triumph of Christianity. No other religion in the world could make such a scoundrel feel so comfortable in the presence of death.

Foy was an ex-soldier. He was only twenty-five, but he appears to have touched the bottom of infamy. He was consorting with a married woman, and living on the wages of her prostitution. They used to go together to sleep in one of the kilns of some abandoned works at Merthyr. Two nights before Christmas, either after a quarrel or to amuse himself—it is really doubtful which—he threw Mary Ann Rees down an old disused furnace forty feet deep. To a man named Bassett, shortly afterwards, he said, with a laugh, kneeling down by the opening, "As sure as my mother is in the clay I shot her down the hole." Subsequently he took a police officer to show him the spot. The officer had difficulty in finding the body, and Foy said, "I'll throw a bucket of fire in, and then you will see her." These incidents show the kind of man he was. If he has gone to heaven, there is no need for anybody to go to hell. Christianity offers a paradise to the most detestable blackguards. And if some of us do go to hell, it will only be to avoid the worst company. The usual pious letters were written by Foy from the condemned cell. To a male friend he wrote: "I am glad to hear that they are praying for me in the

churches and chapels." It tickled his vanity, besides adding to his cheerfulness. After telling his sister "I am guilty," he wrote: "I am quite happy and resigned. I have confessed my sin to God, and have had His forgiveness." He was sure of it. Writing again to his sister, on the eve of his execution, he said: "I am perfectly happy, having taken Holy Communion, and made my peace with God." "I shall be in heaven above," he added, "waiting for you." He was more sure of it than ever. But not a word did he utter about the poor woman who was found dead, with a frightfully battered face, at the bottom of that furnace. What had become of her does not appear to have crossed his mind. Whether she were in heaven or hell made no difference to him. The only thing he troubled about was his own fate. Where was *he* going? That was the question. Yet we are told that the chaplain "administered the last consolations of religion to a repentant man." Surely this is a gross abuse of language. A man who really feels remorse thinks more of his crime than of his fate, more of his victim than of himself. Royal-hearted Othello (if we may mention him in this miserable connection), standing over the dead body of Desdemona, cries:—

"Whip me, ye devils,
From the possession of this heavenly sight!
Blow me about in winds! roast me in sulphur!
Wash me in steep-down gulfs of liquid fire."

He imprecates the damnation of his deed. But these paltry murderers, prepared by the chaplain for the hangman, have no other thought than to escape the fire and slip into glory. And when their selfishness is blown up into a full assurance of heaven, they nearly always strut about and administer moral exhortations to the inferior world of decent men and women.

We admit that the chaplain did his wretched duty. The Rev. Watkin Jones labored hard to prepare this murderer for kingdom-come. He walked after him from the prison cell to the gallows, reading the Burial Service from a big Prayer Book. It is a ghastly joke—officiating at a living man's funeral! We suppose the idea is that he may enjoy his own Burial Service. But oh the farce of it all! The murderer is buried alive, so to speak, in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection. Christian society says he is not fit to live, but quite fit to die. Christian society must strangle him, and call him "brother" when the white cap is over his face, and beg God to save his soul. Christian society says he is too bad to live on earth, but it hopes to meet him in heaven. And it feels quite proud when he intimates that the hope is reciprocated.

Were we to follow some of the old Puritan preachers, who argued that the happiness of the saved in heaven would be heightened by witnessing the tortures of the damned in hell—which seems quite consistent with the story of Dives and Lazarus—we might picture William Joseph Foy looking down on the everlasting tortures of Mary Ann Rees, and saying to himself "What a time we're having! I threw her into the furnace, and God keeps her there for ever. Bless his holy name!"

Could there be a more horrible thought? Is not this Christianity a religion for devils?

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and Psychology.—I.

The Psychological Phenomena of Christianity. By G. B. Cutten, Ph.D.

DR. CUTTEN has just missed writing a first-class book. He has provided his readers with a full and lengthy description of nearly all the phenomena manifested in Christian religious history, but he has omitted the one thing that would make his work a really scientific treatise. Prayer, faith, asceticism, fear, witchcraft, sex, ecstasy, with other beliefs and frames of mind, are all described; and so far as people need a description of all these things, the book will serve a useful purpose. But what is really needed is a work that will more than describe, one that will explain the full meaning and value of these beliefs in building and sustaining religious conviction. Particularly there is needed a discussion of how far and in what sense the mental states described are peculiarly and necessarily religious. No one will question, the scientific Freethinker least of all, that these mental states have played a large part in the history of Christianity; but unless an inquiry affiliates these to a larger group of biological and psychological facts, or shows them to be fundamentally an expression of religion, it does not take us very far.

It is not always borne in mind that the Freethinker cheerfully admits the existence of the mental states upon which the Christian may build his faith. When the believer cites the "inward experience" of the religious person, when he refers to the "illumination" of one or the ecstatic visions of another, the Freethinker does not and cannot question their reality as subjective experiences. When, therefore, Dr. Cutten says "Religion stands or falls with the personal inner experience," one can only admit the truth of the statement in a much qualified sense. It is not upon the reality of these experiences, but upon their correct interpretation, that the whole question turns. If a man says that he has a pain in his stomach, his testimony is so far absolute and unquestionable. But when he proceeds to interpret the pain in terms of the pathological condition of certain organs, any other person may be as good an authority as he himself, and even better. So also, that certain people have experienced visions, heard voices, or passed through various experiences which to them is proof of the reality of religion, no one will deny. But what to them are indubitable proofs of religious experiences may, from a scientific point of view, and from what is known of religious phenomena among lower races, be nothing more than a misunderstanding of normal or morbid mental states.

Not only is there needed a full discussion of these assumed spiritual experiences from the standpoint of normal and pathological physiology, but to make an investigation thorough the phenomena that meets us in Christianity needs collating with similar phenomena that meets us in savage religions. Unfortunately, beyond a passing reference, Dr. Cutten has restricted his investigations to Christianity, and does not avail himself of the larger and more helpful outlook. Yet only in the light of religious phenomena in general, and in view of a full discussion of origins, is it possible to properly understand any selected religion. Properly collated, it would be seen that religions, from the most savage to the most civilised are identical, presenting only such differences as are due to time, place, and differing stages of culture. History in general is a mere narrative of detached occurrences until we rest it upon the underlying biological and physical laws; and religion, as part of history, is obviously no exception to the rule. Moreover, until we have exhausted the possibility of explaining religious phenomena by known laws, we are certainly not warranted in calling to our aid such an unknown and incomprehensible force as religionists are apt to invoke.

As an illustration of this we may take a statement made by a writer quoted by Dr. Cutten.

"All religions," he says, "depend for their origin and continuation directly upon inspiration.....It may be known under other names.....as mysticism, ecstasy, rhapsody, demoniac possession, the divine afflatus, the gnosis, or in its latest christening, the 'cosmic consciousness.' All are but expressions of a belief that knowledge arises, words are uttered or actions performed not through conscious ideation or reflective purpose, but through the promptings of a power above or beyond the individual mind."

How is this sense of illumination created? It is not something that is peculiar to Christianity; on the contrary, the lower the religion, up to a certain point, the more pronounced the phenomenon. Professor Tylor says:—

"From the earliest phases of culture upwards we find religion in close alliance with ecstatic physical conditions. These are brought on by various means of interference with the healthy action of body and mind, and it is scarcely needful to remind the reader that, according to philosophic theories antecedent to those of modern medicine, such morbid disturbances are explained as symptoms of divine visitation, or at least of superhuman spirituality."*

Tobacco, opium, hashish, Indian hemp, all of which possess the common quality of producing a state of mental exaltation,† with other drugs are used, not of course, with a knowledge of their effects on the nervous system, but only with a knowledge that their use results in a state deemed religious. Quite as common as the use of drugs, if not more so, is the practice of fasting. "The Zulu doctor," says Tylor, describing a common practice with savages in general, "qualifies himself for intercourse with the Amadhloyi or ghosts.....by spare, abstemious diet, want, suffering, castigation, and solitary wandering, till fainting-fits bring him into direct intercourse with the spirits. These native diviners fast often, and are worn out by fastings, sometimes of several days duration, when they become partially or wholly ecstatic and see visions." Moving on a step we find among the monks and saints of the early Church the same self-torture, the same fasting and solitary meditation, and with identical results. In both cases the natural reaction of a tortured body is taken for the divine illumination of a spiritually developed mind. Tylor rightly says that "Bread and meat would have robbed the ascetic of many an angel's visit; the opening of the refectory door must many a time have closed the gate of heaven to his gaze." When the Christian cried out against "fleshy pleasures" he was re-echoing the Zulu maxim that "a stuffed body cannot see secret things"; and both were unconsciously asserting that a sane mind in a sound body is unfavorable to the reception of "divine grace."

Now there is no difficulty whatever in persuading Christians that fasting, the use of drugs, and the contagious influence of music, dancing, and singing among savages are enough to account for their sense of communion with their gods. The difficulty is to get them to apply the same reasoning to their own records. Or one may get Protestants to admit that the regimen pursued by the Catholic saints alone produced their visions and sense of illumination. But as Protestantism, in its antipathy to Rome, pronounces against fasting, and as one cannot to-day miss the connection between drugs and abnormal states, he cannot see that his own sense of "divine communion" is quite as much a misinterpretation of induced nervous states as were the visions of the Zulu doctor or the mediæval monk. If a preacher were to get up in a modern pulpit and declare that after fasting for a week he had seen heavenly visions or heard heavenly voices, his statement would be received with pitying laughter. But he can still talk of the voice of God in the soul, and advise people that if they will deliberately surrender their will to God, practice quiet religious meditation, for a stated period each day, pray regularly, both privately and in public, and deliberately work to cultivate a

* *Primitive Culture*, ii., 410.

† See Dr. Clouston's *Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases*, ch. iv.

belief in divine communion, a sense of man's union with God will develop. Quite probably this will result. For he is all the time deliberately providing all the conditions for self-delusion. Changed conditions no longer admit the practising of the crude methods of the savage or of the early Christian, but substantially the same practice persists under another form. The prayer meeting, the revival meeting takes the place of the savage dance, constant dwelling upon a given idea becomes the civilised equivalent of the medicine-man roaming the forest, or the mediæval monk shunning human society. Epilepsy, or nervous states induced by drugs, is out of fashion; but the misinterpretation of psychical states still continues. In this matter religion is always true to itself, is always placing upon facts that admit of a perfectly natural explanation, a supernatural interpretation.

Religious phenomena, if it is to be studied profitably, must be studied as a whole. We must not separate civilised from savage religion, for the simple reason that both are fundamentally one; and it is only in the light of a study of origins that one can appreciate the meaning of later phases. But for the savage medicine-man mistaking a disordered nervous state for communion with ghosts, the Archbishop of Canterbury would not now exist. The one is directly derived from the other; the modern clergyman's "call" from God is only a modified form of the primitive magician's claim to rule because of his influence over his mythical deities. There is no break in religious history any more than in biology. Let the cell become as modified as it may, let it take on any number of new functions, the basis of organic structure still remains the cell. And every fruitful study of the organism has to be based upon the essential qualities of cell life. So, also, with religion. It may, and does, undergo profound modifications, but it cannot transcend the fundamental facts upon which it is based. And just as we are driven back to the cell for an understanding of the animal organism, so we are compelled to fall back upon the ignorant guesses of primitive man if we would understand the nature of religion. Apart from this method, we are only engaging in an empty word-spinning contest, which inevitably ends in confusion, and so prepares the way for piety.

(To be continued.)

C. COHEN.

Irrepressible Implications.

Now that the May Meetings are once more in full flood in London it may not be uninteresting to note a few of the facts which they are bringing under the critical survey of the public mind. That facts are stubborn things is one of those truisms which occasionally require special emphasis. At a great gathering of Free Churchmen at Oxford the other day the Rev. Dr. Campbell-Morgan, "speaking from the standpoint of his own observation and work in London, and as a man who was constantly going to and fro on the earth, and on the two sides of the Atlantic, said he should say the religious outlook at the present moment might be summed up in the word indifference. There was no active opposition. He wished there were." As a matter of fact there is a considerable amount of active opposition up and down the country; but the reverend gentleman is quite correct in his statement about the indifference of the Church. Naturally, this indifference spells lack of power and consequent failure, as is evident from the numerous reports of Christian work in various parts of the world presented at the May Meetings. Speaking generally, Christian statistics have recently been of a decidedly unfavorable and depressing character, and a bold attempt is being made either to ignore, contradict, or explain away their testimony. We are assured that it is nothing short of blasphemy to estimate the achievements of Divine grace by ordinary human standards. More

than once have we been told that to judge the Gospel by the number of its converts is to rob Jesus Christ of his chance. This kind of talk may sound exceedingly pious to the average devotee of the May Meetings; but in reality it is nothing but sheer nonsense. Can Jesus Christ save or convert a community without winning the individuals who compose it? Can he redeem the world, and leave the men and women who make it up untouched? If not, then statistics are of vital importance. On what ground is the work at Westminster Chapel pronounced an unqualified success? Would it be considered prosperous were the huge building more than two-thirds empty, as it used to be prior to Dr. Morgan's advent? If Dr. Morgan is sincerely anxious to give Jesus Christ a chance, let him vacate Westminster Chapel pulpit in his favor. The fact is that in the Christian Church statistics mean everything; and the official endeavor to depreciate their testimony is only made when the balances are on the wrong side.

Another significant fact emphasised at the May Meetings is the utter lack of charity among Christian people. At one meeting Calvinism was glorified as the only system of theology that enjoys the genuine smile of Heaven. Every other system was of a more or less Devilish origin, and woefully misrepresented the Gospel of Christ. One speaker "greatly pleased the meeting when he declared that that extraordinary rehash of old heresies which goes by the remarkable name of the New Theology had not taken any root" in the part of the country from which he came. Continuing he said: "We have not yet begun to depreciate—or, still worse than that, to patronise—the great apostle of the Gentiles; and when people begin to talk about 'possible Christs,' it seems to me almost to verge upon blasphemy." At another meeting, Calvinism was described as an exploded heresy of the past, as a system in which the Divine Being was represented as a cruel tyrant, and the plan of salvation as an immoral commercial treaty. The heresy of the one meeting was the orthodoxy of the other, but the speakers at both pretended to be divinely ordained representatives of the Lord. One sect does not possess a single grain of toleration for another sect that holds different theological views; and if either had the requisite power it would gladly exterminate the other. Christian charity is only an empty profession under the sun; a name, and nothing more.

Another fact made clear at these May Meetings is that, after all said and done, Christian people do not really believe in God. The profession of belief in him is universal among them. On their knees they acknowledge him as absolutely supreme, and plead with him to do his work. "Thou, and thou alone, canst save," they inform him; "come, then, O Lord, make bare thine arm, and save the people." But a May Meeting preacher declared before a crowded congregation that such a faith, and the prayer founded on it, are wholly vain. "To know the only true God," he said, "and Jesus Christ, whom he has sent, is eternal life. How, then, shall the heathen be saved but by knowing God, and how can they know God unless we take the knowledge to them? Do you say that he will reveal himself to them? He cannot. Deliberately I say he cannot." Surely, on the lips of a professional believer that is blasphemy of the deepest dye; and the explanation of such a statement is more blasphemous still:—

"He cannot. Deliberately, I say, he cannot. For God has spoken his last word in Jesus Christ, God has given the final proof of his love in the Cross. He cannot again be born a babe in some foreign land. He cannot die again. He who lived that stainless life in Palestine, and died the death for sin there, was not born a second time in England for us, nor did he die in London for our iniquities. If we know the power of that death it is because those who knew the story of his incarnation and atonement came to us and told us, and God waits until we, who know it, go and tell it to others."

This preacher's assumed omniscience is simply nauseating. He knows that God did become incar-

nate and die for sin in this world, and he knows that he never did, and never can, do the same in any other world. He knows, also, that if there are lost sinners in Jupiter or Mars, they cannot be saved until some of us are sent to tell them of Christ's atoning sacrifice at Jerusalem. John Wesley thought differently; but John Wesley did not know. It is the Rev. W. Y. Fullerton, of Leicester, who knows; and as the one who knows he tells us most emphatically that God cannot reveal himself to the heathen, nor save them without us. And he is quite right. *God cannot reveal himself to anybody anywhere.* The alleged knowledge of God is invariably, and of necessity, preceded by the belief in his existence. We firmly hold that the only logical inference from such a fact is that God does not exist. If he did exist, he not only could, but, by an irresistible necessity of his nature, would, reveal himself to all without distinction. If Mr. Fullerton did but heed and follow out the implications of his own teaching he could no longer be a proclaimer of an utterly discredited evangel. He would perceive that to limit the Deity is to annihilate him.

The object of Mr. Fullerton's sermon at the annual meeting of the Baptist Missionary Society was to urge the people to make greater sacrifices for Foreign Missions, and certainly no appeal could have been more effective than this: "Without you, God can do nothing." Other divines are more cautious, and on the whole, perhaps, more consistent. They say: "God could easily do the work, and do it infinitely better, without our co-operation; but in his infinite wisdom he has graciously condescended to employ us as his instruments." And, having seen fit to choose such imperfect instruments, he honors them by adhering to his choice. This is rather rough on the heathen and the unsaved generally, but it gives the chosen vessels the satisfaction of knowing that they shall shine as the stars for ever. But Mr. Fullerton ascribes to God a total inability to reveal himself to the heathen. Did it not occur to the reverend gentleman that in casting such a slur upon the Divine Being, and throwing such a tremendous burden of responsibility upon Christians, he was suggesting the most irrefragable of all arguments for Atheism? He made it perilously possible for his hearers to reason thus: "If God can do nothing apart from us, and since he does so lamentably little through us, what is there to prove that he does anything at all? Are the results of missionary enterprise of such a nature that they cannot be accounted for apart from God altogether? Cannot the few changes, or conversions, or new-births, reported from time to time, be fully and satisfactorily explained as the outcome of exclusively human agency? And are not all our home revivals and so-called transformations capable of the same psychological elucidation? What evidence is there of any supernatural interference whatever?" Once Christians are induced honestly to face the facts, both on the mission-fields and in the life of the home churches, it will not be long before the inevitable conclusion is forced upon them that all the work everywhere is of so imperfect and inadequate a character that only man can be regarded as its author.

Dr. Campbell Morgan is a most orthodox minister; but when he delivered the closing address at the recent meeting of the Baptist Union he uttered one sentence that contained the full explanation of all the comparative successes of the Christian Church. In his own solemn and impressive style he said:—

"What does your Church mean to its neighborhood? Do the people say, 'Why, that is the Church where the Baptists worship?' Then you are a disastrous failure. Unless your Church means to your neighborhood, 'Here is a fellowship of men and women who are anxious about us, your work is not a success.'"

The business of the Church is to "watch for souls," to catch men as anglers catch fish, to bring its machinery to such a pitch of perfection that people will not be able to withstand its wooing notes. The Church is an organisation that cannot succeed without securing the most capable officers

to work the machinery in the wisest and most effective fashion. If a Church says, "I am the temple of the Holy Ghost in which he ministers for the redemption of the world," and engages a third-rate man as the mouthpiece of the Holy Ghost, that Church will be described as a white elephant, and will soon be obliged either to shut its doors or to bid for a big pulpit draw. And this fact alone, duly faced, proves beyond the possibility of a doubt that every Church is a human institution which depends for its success upon the efficient manipulation of cunningly devised and ingeniously matured methods, just like a theatre or a music-hall.

Thus even from the Church in its multitudinous ramifications and operations, in its successes as well as in its failures, is derived a most eloquent and pertinent plea for the complete banishment of the supernatural from human life, and for the conversion of all places of worship into centres of wholesome social influence and ethical training. Faith in God is already an ineffectual, worthless sham; let it be superseded by faith in Man, or, as Swinburne puts it, in—

"The great god Man, which is God."

J. T. LLOYD.

The Retort.

I CAST the priestling's nonsense in his face:
He asks me to accept his petty God,
Or else in hell I'll feel his vengeful rod.
He warns me without God I have no place
Among the good, the great. Oh rare disgrace!
I'll dare the path that millions more have trod,
Live as I think, though weak minds call me odd,
Man-like meet death when I have run my race.

The days are gone when childish tales and dreams
Could freeze the nerve and make the weak knee shake
And now the children scarce will say their prayers.
The sun of knowledge spreads its healthy beams,
The minds of men to science now awake,
And all the world for nature's truth prepares.

JULIAN ST. ORRY.

Prayer.

TRUST in the gods if ye with faith are blest;
Give them your flattery if ye think they hear;
Dream that Immortals know man's business best,
But *ask* not aught—make not a single test,
If faith to you be dear.

Or, if ye pray, to youth's assurance cling,
That no true good the gods have e'er denied.
The boon ye asked, which time had failed to bring,
Was (so the gods perceived) no lawful thing—
With this be satisfied!

Pray not for life where mortal sickness reigns;
Pray not that love may thrill the heart of stone;
Pray not for joy where dwell abiding pains:
Who prays for what must *surely* be, retains
His youth, and he alone.

JOHN YOUNG.

Pat Crowe, Evangelist.

A FEW years ago, the son of an Omaha packer was kidnapped, and the father was so delighted to exchange \$25,000 for the boy that he declined to assist in the prosecution of the child stealers. The man who boasts that he planned and executed that crime is now posing on the lecture platform in the middle West as a reformed man devoting his life to reforming others. After telling his story in a Chicago church the other night, he strayed from his newly discovered path of virtue and got into a saloon brawl. An alleged clergyman who is manager of the Pat Crowe lecture tour told him that if he prayed for forgiveness beside the crib of his little child all would be well, and the incident would be a valuable addition to the list of experiences described in his lecture. He did so, and all has been well, although he is not permitted to go about alone so much as before.

For the benefit of the relatives of the Whittaker boy, it might be said that the lecture platform in the East does not require new talent.—*Sun* (New York).

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

ALEXANDRA HALL, ISLINGTON SQUARE,
Liverpool.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 30, 1909.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.
Motion by Kingsland, North London and Liverpool Branches:—
"That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.
(a) The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election: J. Barry, W. H. Baker, J. G. Bartram, R. Chapman, Victor Charbonnel, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, H. Cowell, W. Davey, F. A. Davies, J. G. Dobson, R. G. Fathers, Mrs. Fathers, Léon Furnémort, T. Gorniot, John Grange, S. L. Hurd, R. Johnson, W. Leat, J. T. Lloyd, J. Marshall, James McGlashen, G. B. H. McGluskey, J. Neate, R. T. Nichols, J. Partridge, S. M. Peacock, C. Pegg, Mrs. M. E. Pegg, W. T. Pitt, C. G. Quinton, J. H. Ridgway, Thomas Robertson, Victor Roger, G. Roleffs, S. Samuels, F. Schaller, W. G. Schweizer, H. Silverstein, W. H. Spivey, Charles Steptoe, W. B. Thompson, T. J. Thurlow, John H. Turnbull, Miss E. M. Vance, Frederick Wood, W. H. Wood, G. White.
(b) Motion by Executive:—
"That Mr. A. B. Moss and Mr. W. Heaford be elected Vice-Presidents."
(c) Motion by Birmingham Branch:—
"That Mr. C. J. Whitwell be elected a Vice-President."
(d) Motion by Kingsland Branch:—
"That Mr. E. Bowman be elected a Vice-President."
(e) Motion by Liverpool Branch:—
"That Mr. F. Bonte and Mrs. Roleffs be elected Vice-Presidents."
7. Election of Auditors.
8. Motion by Mr. C. Cohen:—
"This Conference congratulates the English nation on the total failure of another vicious Education Bill, and regards it as a sign that a settlement of the Education question on the lines of religious teaching is utterly impossible: and this Conference calls upon the Liberal Government, which is endeavoring to Disestablish the Church in Wales, to bring in a Bill to Disestablish every form of religion in the public schools of England."
(a) By Kingsland Branch:—
"That this Conference demands that the Government introduce a Secular Education Bill, to put an end to the religious squabble which retards real education, and places England behind our Colonies."
9. Motions re Peace.
(a) By Executive:—
"This Conference profoundly regrets that Great Britain is devoting more and more of its energies and resources to preparations for war, and regards the ever-growing distrust and antagonism between European nations as a proof of the complete failure of Christian civilisation."
(b) By Liverpool Branch:—
"That this Conference deplors the present outburst of the war spirit in this Christian country; declares itself an ardent friend of international peace; and affirms that the substitution of arbitration for war is the only rational method for the settlement of disputes between nations."
10. Motion by T. J. Thurlow (London):—
"That in order to create and sustain a lively interest in the propagandist work of the N. S. S. all Branches having permanent indoor places of meeting should afford all possible facilities to their members to take part in public discussions of questions germane to the anti-religious propaganda of the Society—in the intervals between the visits of special lecturers."
11. Motion by Liverpool Branch:—
"That this Conference, whilst expressing neither agreement nor disagreement with the principles and

objects of Socialism, strongly warns the Labor and Socialist organisations of this country against the recent interest the clergy have suddenly professed to take in industrial, social, and political questions, upon the ground that the history of the Christian priesthood justifies the opinion that the main motive animating the 'Christian Socialist' priests of all denominations is the advancement of ecclesiastical and religious interests."

12. Motion by the President:—

"This Conference desires to place on record, a hundred years after the death of Thomas Paine, its admiration of his genius and character, and of the marvellous courage and disinterestedness he displayed in fighting against superstition and tyranny: and this Conference rejoices to see that the great cloud of calumny with which his name was surrounded by the sinister interests he attacked is now slowly, but surely, lifting and dispersing, so that he is beginning to shine forth to the world at large as one of the noblest and most effective of modern soldiers in the war of the liberation of humanity."

13. Motion by Executive:—

"Considering the present scandalous state of affairs, under which Freethinkers' funerals are so often, and against their express wish, and even directions, carried out with Christian ceremonies, this Conference is of opinion that its Executive should take special steps to see what can be done to frustrate this gross abuse of power on the part of relatives and executors: and this Conference likewise calls upon the Government of Great Britain to pass a short Bill securing civilised respect for the convictions of deceased persons in connection with their interment."

14. Motion by Liverpool Branch:—

"That in view of the present 'Votes for Women' agitation this Conference expresses the opinion that universal adult suffrage is the only reform of our complicated electoral system worthy of the political energy of the democracy."

The Conference will sit in the Alexandra Hall; the morning session lasting from 10.30 to 12.30, and the afternoon session from 2.30 to 4.30. Both are purely business meetings. Only members of the N. S. S. can speak and vote. A public meeting will be held in the evening at 7 o'clock in the Tivoli Theatre. The President will occupy the chair on all three occasions. A luncheon for delegates and visitors will be provided at the Bee Hotel, St. John's-lane, at 1 o'clock.

By order of the Executive,

G. W. FOOTE, *President.*E. M. VANCE, *Secretary.*

The Cohen-Barton Debate.

LARGE audiences listened to the debate between the Rev. A. Graham Barton and Mr. C. Cohen at Bishop Auckland on the evenings of Tuesday and Wednesday, May 4 and 5. It had been preceded by a vigorous correspondence in the *Northern Echo*, and the interest taken in it was considerable. Mr. Barton, who opened the discussion, read a carefully prepared speech in which he claimed that Christianity alone could lift man to a higher plane and develop all that made for liberty, righteousness, purity and peace. Mr. Cohen, in replying, pointed out that the knowledge of God originated in the ignorant guesses of primitive man, and that progress was measured just in proportion as nations discarded their religious beliefs. Mr. Cohen's peroration, which was a really forceful piece of eloquent argumentation, was loudly applauded. In opening the debate on the second evening Mr. Cohen delighted the Freethinkers present by a beautiful exposition of Secularism. Mr. Barton followed with a prepared speech, which had not the slightest relation to that delivered by Mr. Cohen. He claimed Herbert Spencer and Charles Darwin as believers in Christianity, and said that Christianity alone among the religions preached a gospel of brotherhood. As a proof that the creed of Jesus initiated social reform he cited John Burns, Arthur Henderson, and Will Crooks as local preachers. Mr. Cohen had no difficulty in disposing of the arguments advanced by his opponent, and he was again loudly applauded for the glowing denunciation of Christianity in his closing speech.

Anyone wishing for a full report of the two nights' debate can obtain the same by sending three penny stamps to the *Northern Echo* office, Priestgate, Darlington.

H. B. DODDS.

Acid Drops.

The relation between State and Church has just been shown in the House of Commons in connection with the Bishopric of Sheffield Bill. Sheffield cannot have a Bishop without the consent of Parliament. That shows the "freedom" of the Church of England. It is a creation of the State—from the hair of its head to its toe-nails.

On the second reading of the Bill for making a new Bishop at Sheffield, an amendment was moved by Sir G. Kekewich (Exeter), and no less than 69 against 96 voted for it. The amendment declared that—

"having regard to the extravagant and inequitable endowments now attaching to the Archbishoprics and Bishoprics of the Church of England, this House declines to assent to the creation of fresh Bishoprics except their creation be accompanied or preceded by a scheme for a large reduction of the incomes and properties now belonging to the various Sees."

Sir George Kekewich pointed out that the Bill stipulated the minimum salary of the new Bishop as £2,500 a year, but said nothing about the maximum. That may be as high as the pious flunkies of Sheffield choose to make it. There is very little danger of a Bishop kicking against the maximum. He is more likely to reserve his boot leather for the minimum.

How the Christians of Europe have lied in their bigotry about the Turks. They were wicked unbelievers, the scum of the earth, hopeless scoundrels, and, in a word, "unspeakable." No good could ever come out of them. Sunday-school children were told of their immeasurable inferiority to Christians. But the real truth is that they were badly governed; and badly governed because of the perpetual interference of Christian Europe. It was really the Christian Powers that kept Abdul Hamid on his blood-stained throne. But for them, the Turks would have swept him away long ago. And now that they have swept him away, everybody is wondering at the fine behavior, as well as the political wisdom and efficiency, of the Young Turks. The way the soldiers they command have behaved is simply wonderful. It is doubtful if any Western soldiers could behave better—or as well. Keep the religious charlatans from stirring up his old inherited fanaticism, and the Turkish soldier is a good fellow, and far more of a gentleman than the Western soldier. What a delightful story is the following told by the Constantinople correspondent of the *Daily News* :—

"On Monday last an old English merchant captain was buried in the civil side of the Scutari Cemetery. Macedonian troops were stationed quite near, and as the cortège passed into the cemetery a body of soldiers ranged themselves on each side and accompanied it to the grave. Their officer was informed that the deceased was not in the public service, but, 'Yes! he was an Englishman,' and the soldiers, in good order, so as to create no alarm among the mourners, fired a military salute."

Beautiful! Men are brothers everywhere if the professional patriots and designing priests only leave them alone.

Dr. J. C. Gibson, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of England, has made a notable discovery. He has just been telling the Synod that "the most brilliant Frenchman was not Voltaire, but Calvin." Brilliant! We have read John Calvin, which is perhaps more than Dr. Gibson has done, and "brilliant" is the last epithet we should think of applying to him. Ability he had—but brilliant! Even his little treatise on Relics, in which he tries to be facetious at the expense of Catholics, reminds one of the elegant gambols of a rather elderly cow around her calf.

It is a notorious fact that Christianity lays claim to everything admired by mankind. Every good thing owes its existence to Jesus Christ, while the Devil is the author and proprietor of all evil. The latest addition to Christianity's wealth is the moustache. A Catholic clergyman informs us that the "source of the moustache is in Christianity." Its Christian significance lies in the fact that, "in company with the nose, it forms a cross." And this is the handiest of all crosses. It can never be forgotten, or mislaid, but always goes in front of him who is fortunate enough to possess it. How the ladies will hereafter envy the gentlemen!

Men of God always assert that Jesus Christ can cure the most deadly disease, reclaim the deepest sinner, and save the vilest sinner. The *British Congregationalist* warns the churches in the north of London against a certain black-guard who is trying to get money by false pretences; but

our pious contemporary advises persons on whom he may call not to pray for him, not to hand him over to the all-loving Savior for remedial treatment, but "at once to communicate with the police." And yet this same journal flourishes on the assumption that Christianity is not played out.

The retiring chairman of the Congregational Union of Scotland assured the assembly that "Jesus was the first practical teacher of immortality." But surely the reverend gentleman must have known he was not telling the truth. Not to mention the clear doctrine of immortality in the religion of ancient Egypt, was not Mr. Gardener familiar with Plato's *Apology*, in which immortality is most practically enunciated? Or had he never read the *Phædo*? Why must preachers deliberately distort facts?

Rev. James Adderley—readers of last week's *Freethinker* may recollect—complained of our calling him "Father" Adderley. He said it was only a nickname, given him chiefly by Protestants who disliked him. We promised not to call him so again, but we said that we had seen him described as "Father" so often that we thought he liked it. Only a few days after we wrote that—to be precise, on Friday, May 7—we saw a paragraph in the *Westminster Gazette* referring to Mr. Bouchier's (the actor's) "long-standing friendship with Father Adderley." The paragraph was perfectly friendly, and even more; so there seems to be, after all, some mistake on Mr. Adderley's part about the origin and intention of that "nickname."

The Hon. H. S. Blake has written a stiff letter to Chancellor Burwash, of Victoria University, Toronto, against the "Higher Criticism" of the Bible, which he says is illegally as well as nefariously taught to the students. Here is a sample of the honorable gentleman's orthodox eloquence :—

"It will be an evil day for our ministers, missionaries, and teachers, should God permit that what appears to be about the only sure standing ground left us in the world to be shaken to the centre; that the statement, 'The Word of God which liveth and abideth forever' is proclaimed as an hallucination, and that being born of incorruptible seed by the word of God is an old-fashioned delusion, to be rejected with as little compunction as if it were a heathen fable. If we pursue this process of disintegration so that the wonderful cohesive power of this Book shall cease, the author may write over this wreck, 'They have sown the winds, they shall reap the whirlwind.'"

There ought to be an interval for refreshments after that. But the honorable gentleman goes right on. "I have never been in the least shaken," he says, "in the simple creed as to the Bible given to me as a child over sixty-five years ago." We can quite believe it. Mr. Blake is one of those elderly men who, religiously speaking, still wear the bib and tucker of their childhood.

It must be admitted that Mr. Blake scores a point in the following suggestion; namely, that the Higher Critics should draw up a positive statement, showing clearly—

- (a) What books of the Bible, in addition to Jonah, do they think should be eliminated as not being the inspired Word of God, to be accepted as such by their students.
- (b) What chapters in the other books of the Bible they consider should be treated in the same manner; what portions of the books are—
- (c) Merely myths.
- (d) What allegories.
- (e) What poetical effusions, to be merely admired.
- (f) In what way do they replace the story of the creation.

WHAT IS LEFT?

- (g) Was there any Garden of Eden?
- (h) Was there any Adam and Eve?
- (i) Was there any Satan?
- (j) Was there any sin?
- (k) Was there any punishment for it?
- (l) Was there any promise of a Savior?
- (m) Was there any deluge?
- (n) Was there any Abraham?

(o) By what means is the ordinary reader to know what portions (if any) of this Book are to be taken as the absolute Word of God, to be accepted and acted upon as the peril of the reader, and when does the apparent Word of God pass into scientific subjects, unreliable history, poetical effusions, myths, allegories, parables, etc., which are withdrawn from the region of inspiration and are mere human utterances, to be dealt with as the reader pleases?

Mr. Blake winds up by declaring that a Bible ought to be printed "showing what portions (if any) are the inspired Word of God" and what is the "errant human portion, including 'Mistakes of Moses.'" Of course this ought to be done. But the Higher Critics won't do it. They know better.

"Teddy" Roosevelt is a countryman of Evangelist Torrey. This is as it should be. It would be a pity to spread such dirty libellers of Thomas Paine over the globe. Roosevelt still sticks to his description of Thomas Paine as a "filthy little Atheist"—which contains three words and three lies. Some day or other that is all Roosevelt will be remembered by. Meanwhile we express regret that the English newspapers find room for the daily announcement of the number of lions this good Christian has slaughtered in South Africa. The gratification of his brutal instincts is hardly a matter of importance to the British public. Even the Americans must feel very small interest in it. We see no reason why the world should grieve if Roosevelt made a very intimate acquaintance with a South African king of the forest. If we have any preference it is rather in favor of the four-legged beast.

Dr. Aked, the reverend gentleman who left Liverpool to preach Christianity to millionaires in New York, is striking out a fresh line of business over there. He is taking up the "woman question," but not in the spirit of St. Paul. He refers to the "suffragette" movement in England as "the greatest cause for the sake of humanity since Christ's birth." Without admitting or denying this, which is beyond our province, we may ask "Why bring in the birth of Christ?" That event, if it ever happened, was of no particular importance to "humanity." The "suffragette" movement might easily go one better—without a miracle.

We see it reported that Dr. Aked is kicking against the smallness of the church in which he preaches. It was big enough to hold his wealthy congregation, so his wealthy congregation thought it was big enough. But outsiders have come in, and the reverend gentleman is determined to have a bigger church. There have been internal "ructions" over the question, but, by threatening to resign, Dr. Aked has obtained from the trustees a promise to build a new House of God for him at a cost of £100,000. It will be the largest Baptist church in the world. He ought to be happy now.

The Rev. J. G. Greenhough, a great star in the Baptist armament, is of opinion that the Churches are giving up Biblical Christianity and becoming enamored of "concert or variety entertainments with the names of the performers prominently advertised." "There is little or no place for prayer or the reading of God's Word," he adds, "and the preacher is graciously allowed five minutes to give a touch of religious sobriety to the lighter coloring." And yet in spite of "all this lightening and brightening and adaptation to modern tastes, we have to face the depressing fact of steadily declining congregations." The truth is, that no amount of modernising and tinkering can prevent Christianity from becoming an extinct superstition.

Another prominent minister, the Rev. W. Cuff, of Shore-ditch Tabernacle, commenting on Mr. Greenhough's pessimistic utterances, says: "To me, it is a deep, keen sorrow to see the people drifting away from us, and our own dear children going with them." Like Mr. Greenhough, Mr. Cuff puts all the blame on the new methods; but they both forget that the new methods were adopted because the old ones had signally failed. It was only when the alleged presence and power of the Holy Ghost had ceased to attract and hold the people that the Churches began to ape the theatre. But you cannot permanently bolster up a discredited superstition. It is the growing intelligence of the age that is emptying churches and chapels.

A man of God excitedly asks, "Where has Christianity failed?" and we answer, "Everywhere, and always." And all the men of God know it quite well, though it doesn't suit them to publicly admit it.

"Modern Secularism" is the subject of a long article by the Rev. J. T. Hesilton in the *Rotherham Advertiser*. The value of the reverend gentleman's article may be gauged from the fact that he does not appear to have heard of Holyoake, or Bradlaugh, or the National Secular Society, or the *Freethinker*. Is it necessary to say more?

Having declared that there are no Atheists, the Rev. R. J. Campbell now declares that there are no Agnostics. He adds that there never have been. Unfortunately—for himself—he does not stop there. He goes on to give a reason. "No man," he says, "is an agnostic in the sense that he refuses to order his life on faith in what to him is the undemonstrable highest." Faith! But what connection is there between the Christian's "faith" and the Agnostic's. Faith according to knowledge is a very different thing from faith without knowledge. Belief in heaven and hell, and

purgatory, and inspiration, and the deity of Christ, is religious faith. Belief in truth, goodness, and beauty—in human progress—in the value of effort for the common good—is secular faith. The word "faith" is used in both cases, but clearly it has two different meanings. A belief that rests on the teachings of science, history, and present experience, has nothing in common with a belief that rests on mere speculation or inherited dogma. Mr. Campbell will have to try again. In the present instance, he is merely roasting a venerable "chestnut."

Mr. Campbell seems to think poetry (of a sort) is an excellent substitute for reason in matters of religion. The sermon we have just quoted from is entitled "Vision of God"—and the title indicates its character. Mr. Campbell dreams, and tells his congregation all he sees and hears in that condition. Thus his sermons are stuffed with poetry (of a sort). "We lie in God's arms," he says, "like the lake amid the everlasting hills." This is a frightfully cold simile,—enough to make one shudder and creep near the fire. But, even at that, the simile is not sufficient for Mr. Campbell's purpose. The everlasting hills are only everlasting in poetry (of a sort). They are not everlasting in fact. Time was when they were not, and in time they will all cease to be; for every hill in the world is surely, if slowly, being disintegrated by wind and rain, and cold and heat, and gradually being swept away by running water into the plains and the sea. Indeed, the everlasting hills are only a very ephemeral thing in the everlasting existence of the universe.

Mr. George Lansbury, writing in the *New Theology* organ, says that the mission of the Independent Labor Party is "to help build up here and now the Kingdom of God on earth." Is that in the Party's program? Mr. Lansbury will perhaps tell us. Meanwhile we may remind him that piety doesn't improve his composition. "Here and now" is a pleonasm. "On earth" involves "here and now." We might add that if the Socialist movement is "too religious, too sacred" for certain things, it is not religious or sacred enough to dispense with grammar or sense.

Mr. Lloyd George's voice failed him in his long budget speech, and the House adjourned for half an hour to allow him to recover and finish. In an article suggested by this incident, the *Christian World* mentions the case of Gladstone, who was seventy-six when he made that great speech in introducing his Home Rule Bill. Gladstone's voice held out to the end, and there is a reference to it in his Diary, which, our contemporary says, casts light on "other things in Gladstone than his eloquence or his physical stamina":—

"My speech, which I sometimes thought could never end, lasted nearly 3½ hours. Voice and strength and freedom were granted to me in a degree beyond what I could have hoped. But many a prayer had gone up for me, and not, I believe, in vain."

This is very interesting. But are we to conclude that want of "prayer" was the cause of Mr. Lloyd George's breakdown? We understood that he was a gentleman of exemplary piety.

The Rev. Principal Forsyth has just made the startling discovery that God nurses in his heart "a great new word" of revelation for the world, and that in his own good time he will send a brand new Apostle to speak it. What a pity the good Lord does not commission Dr. Forsyth to impart the precious revelation to us without delay. Meantime, will the reverend gentleman be good enough to inform us how he got hold of the secret about the forthcoming "great new word" from heaven? He has whetted our curiosity.

The Liverpool Auxiliary of the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews held its annual meeting in Hope Hall lately, and the Rev. S. Barrow presented a glowing report of the conversion of Jews in various parts of the world. When he came nearer home, however, the glowing report cooled down to a black cinder. Several Jews had "received systematic Christian instruction," but "they had only one baptism." And that one convert must have cost a good deal. Practically it was the only return for all the Liverpool Auxiliary's expenditure. How much that was is not stated in the *Courier* report, but as £421 13s. 2d. was remitted to headquarters in London during the year the local outlay must have been considerable.

The Bishop of Bloombfontein, poor man, wants ease. He asks to have his diocese subdivided. Two new dioceses should be formed, he says; one called Kimberley and the other Basutoland. He reckons that this would cost £50,000—for shepherds of Christ are expensive luxuries. Accordingly, his right reverend lordship has issued an appeal for a

"Million Shillings Fund." And perhaps he'll get it. You never can tell. There is plenty of money, and plenty of fools, in South Africa—as elsewhere.

The Prophet of Nazareth is kept to the front by huge organisations and a vast expenditure of money. Nothing of the sort is responsible for Shakespeare's ever-growing fame. During the past year no less than 39,000 visitors paid for admission to the poet's house at Stratford-on-Avon, representing 68 nationalities. Shakespeare lives by the might of his own genius. Where would the prophet of Nazareth be if he had to do the same?

Mr. C. F. G. Masterman, M.P., Parliamentary Secretary to the Local Government Board, was the principal speaker at the annual meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society. "They had to face," he said, "the spreading disease, not of opposition, but of apathy. Although obloquy and blasphemy at the Bible had gone, there was still indifference to combat." How hard the Christians are to please! Oppose the Bible, and they call you a blasphemer. Take no notice of it, and they cry that this is worse.

We suggest to Mr. Masterman that, as blasphemy is gone, he and his Liberal-Christian friends should repeal the Blasphemy Laws. But perhaps he didn't quite mean what he said. He may recollect that there was a "blasphemy" prosecution in London in the early part of last year. "Blasphemy" wasn't "gone" then, for they found the prisoner guilty.

Mr. Masterman looks and talks like a sanguine young man. We are not surprised, therefore, that he still considers the Bible as "the hope of all the world." It is particularly so in England, where men now living have been imprisoned for disbelieving it, and others imprisoned for believing it.

The Bible Society, by the way, had an income last year of £238,040, and had issued "nearly six million copies of the Scripture." How many of them were applied to what Hamlet calls "base uses"?

The Bishop of London has found somebody that he thinks more foolish than himself. "The biggest fool in the world," he said at Wood Green, "is the man who lets his child grow up to the age of 21 and then tells him that he may choose a religion." "You really find people like that to-day," he observed, "mad as they are." No doubt they are mad from the Bishop's point of view, but probably not from their own. Their object, and the Bishop's, are naturally different. He wants the sheep branded early; they prefer to postpone the operation.

Bishop Ingram went on to say that "children begged for what people called dogmas—for what he called distinct and clear truths." Substitute "statements" for "truths" and the assertion may stand. All the Bishop has is statements; he must die to know if they are truths—and perhaps he'll know nothing then.

Mr. G. R. Thorne, M.P., addressing the annual meeting of the Liberation Society, said that when the great principles of Nonconformity "got into the hearts and consciences of the people they would get rid of a State religion and get something infinitely better—a religious State." This foolish remark was greeted with applause. It is easy enough to see that a religious State is a State religion carried to the highest degree of development. The true principle is that the State should neither be religious nor irreligious. It should leave religion alone, as a private and not a public matter.

Rev. Theodore Wood, vicar of St. Mary Magdalene, Lyford-road, Wandsworth, explains to his parishioners that his new Assistant Priest—*alias* Curate—the Rev. W. A. Haslam, cannot be expected to accept the paltry £150 a year, which was the stipend of his predecessor. "It is not right," the vicar says, "that one on whom such responsible work is laid as that of a Priest in a parish such as ours, and of whom so high a standard of education is expected, should be required to live on an income from which a skilled artisan would turn away in disdain." The reverend gentleman seems to have an exaggerated idea of the wages of skilled artisans. He also forgets that a high standard of education is not necessary to soul-saving. There were no university men amongst the twelve apostles. Moreover, any man could follow the teaching of Jesus on £150 a year; and if the teachings of Jesus *ought* to be followed, surely the clergy should make a beginning.

We do not wish to say anything uncivil, but, frankly and seriously, it seems to us that a true disciple of Jesus, and practitioner of the Sermon on the Mount, might be satisfied with five shillings a week, some clean straw, and a kennel.

Conservative papers are Church papers. Liberal papers are Chapel papers. The *Daily Chronicle* belongs to the latter class—and it keeps up its pretence of orthodoxy fairly well. But now and then it lets the cat's whiskers out of the bag. Reviewing Mr. J. Allanson Picton's *Man and the Bible*, our Chapel contemporary said:—

"He treats the collection of writings grouped under that name [the Bible] as every liberal and educated theologian now treats them—as human documents, therefore fallible, but of priceless value as man's speculations concerning, and aspirations after, the unseen and eternal."

The last words are as beautiful and consoling as "Mesopotamia." The Bible might as well have been called "the holy record of man's sublime efforts to reach the moon." But the great point is that the Bible is a human, not a divine, book—and as fallible as all other human productions. This is really an end of the Bible. The coating of adjectives will soon disappear, and the substantial fact remain in its naked bitterness.

The Pope has just issued a new encyclical letter, in which he denounces the Modernists with Vatican vigor. He reproaches their "shameful activity within the Catholic Church itself" which "outstrips in perfidious wickedness that of its enemies who are alien to Catholicism." Evidently his Holiness is feeling the draught.

"Why Priests are Hated" is the headline of a leaderette in the *Catholic Times*. The answer is, on account of their virtues. "The enemies of God," we are told, "are aware that the Catholic priest alone is the minister of truth and goodness, the light of the world, and the salt of the earth." If by "the enemies of God" our Catholic contemporary means *Atheists*, we beg to reply that they are not aware of anything of the kind. Catholic priests are hated, in Catholic countries, because they are bigots, and because they are always trying to use political machinery for religious ends.

Rev. John Hosking, D.D., of Melbourne, has been trying to enlighten the Wesleyans of Tuckingmill, in Cornwall, on "Science and the Bible," but we cannot say that he succeeded. We admit, however, that he said *one* true thing; namely, that "established facts in Nature would always be found to agree with Revelation." Certainly; but then there is no Revelation. When the reverend gentleman said that "nothing in the Bible was contradictory to known science" he forgot that hundreds of his fellow Christian ministers are ready to contradict him on this point. We leave him to effect a settlement with *them*; though, if necessary, we are prepared to put him right ourselves. We might ask him meanwhile whether he thinks a talking donkey is contradictory to science. We mean a four-legged donkey, of course; two-legged talking donkeys are only too plentiful.

SERVED THEM RIGHT.

The late Mrs. Clara Dewey How, of Philadelphia, whose philanthropic work among immigrants made her well known, had a trenchant wit, says the *Detroit News Tribune*, and one afternoon in Philadelphia, discussing the Woman Suffrage movement with a clergyman, she said:—"You men are all alike. You all resemble the orphan that Mrs. Stanton and her friends brought up. Mrs. Stanton and a body of women from her church, all interested in Woman Suffrage, once took a little newsboy from the gutter and educated him superbly. They sent him through school and college and finally made a minister of him. This young minister, the work of their hands, preached his first sermon in the good church. That was a proud Sunday morning for the good ladies. They thought they had at last firmly planted among the male sex a strong and splendid supporter. So in their best bonnets, they filled the church that Sunday morning. They were on tiptoe with expectation. Who could tell but that their young charge might preach in their honor a Woman Suffrage sermon? Imagine their emotions when the youth arose in the pulpit, looked calmly and even sternly over the congregation, and announced that his text would be from St. Paul: 'Let the women keep silence in the church.'"

Why drinkest from the fountain of Belief?
Why soekest at the Saki's door relief?
A lie imbibed, a thousand lies will breed,
And in the end thyself will come to grief.
—*Abu'l Ala (Arabic poet).*

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Whit-Sunday, May 30, Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool: N. S. S. Annual Conference.

To Correspondents.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Annual Subscriptions.—Previously acknowledged, £191 17s. Received since.—A. W., 2s.; J. K., £1; Wilson Whitworth, 1s. 6d.; Tom White, 5s.; H. Irving, 3s.

A. LITTLE.—It was an Englishman who invented the theory that Scotchmen can't see a joke without a surgical operation. Of course, it's a long way out of sight of the truth. Different countries have different jocularities. But there are cosmopolitan jokes also, that don't depend on local circumstances, and are appreciated universally.

H. J. HYETT.—We don't print all the fortunes left by clergymen. We only note them occasionally, when the fit takes us. Glad to hear you have "taken the *Freethinker* since last June, and don't know what you should do without it now." Certainly the Socialists are getting into a pretty mess with their "real Christianity."

ALEC FINCKEN.—Our compliments to the old carpenter who sent his hard-earned shilling through you.

W. McLAREN.—Glad you have made an impression on one Roman Catholic. That is something. You cannot expect to compass the conversion of a large number of Christians; so many of them are quite impenetrable by argument. We note that you have found *Natural Religion* "a regular treat." The author will be pleased to note it too.

S. HARTLEY.—Pleased to know you "look forward each week for the *Freethinker*" and give it away when you have done with it.

HELENA GUNNING.—The state of things is not quite as bad as you suppose. There are more than two readers of this journal in your district of London. Pleased to receive your bright letter. See "Acid Drops" re enclosure.

L. M. ELLIS.—Our best compliments to your mother. Our greatest cause of satisfaction in recent years is the number of women who are rallying to Freethought.

J. CLAYTON.—Thanks for sending us the copies of *Northern Echo*.

J. K. writes: "I thought surely to have been able to go to Aberdare to hear you, but, finding it impossible, I enclose £1 for the Honorarium Fund—which I consider would have been my expenses in attending. 'More power to your elbow' and long may you live."

J. GRANDON.—Thanks for cuttings.

WHITEHOUSE & Co.—Correction seen to. We hope the advertisement still brings you adequate business.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

E. C. CORNETT.—We understand that a verbatim report was not taken.

COUSIN JACKAY.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

G. BRADFIELD.—In our next. Don't worry over the other matter.

JAMES THOMSON.—We cannot answer such questions by post. Certainly Dr. Foote's book is a good one for people of sense. We met him in America in 1896 and formed a high opinion of his mind and character, which our friendly correspondence with him, up to the time of his death, some two years ago, only confirmed. He was one of the best supporters of Free-thought and liberty of the press in the United States. His son, the present Dr. E. B. Foote, is a true chip of the old block.

S. M. HIRST.—Someone has been playing you a joke. Mr. Foote has not defended free-will against Mr. Blatchford; he wrote in favor of Determinism thirty years before Mr. Blatchford heard of it. His complaint is that Mr. Blatchford misunderstands Determinism.

H. IRVING.—Accept our thanks, though we should put Mr. Stead's effort higher. He did a very courageous thing, and found himself alone—as we warned him he would be. Our compliments to your friend White.

W. R. JULES, 10 Locomotive-terrace, Todhills, Willington, Durham, would like to hear from Freethinkers in the West Auckland district who are willing to form a Branch of the N. S. S.

ANNIE CLIFFORD.—Glad you have derived so much intellectual benefit from this journal. Thanks for your very good wishes.

A. W.—Letters like yours, showing how we and our colleagues on the *Freethinker* have helped you to a better and happier life, are our highest reward. With regard to the affirmation in the ground that you have no religious belief—though the form of affirmation is "I do solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm." Then follow the usual words of the old oath, omitting the "So help me God" at the end.

Y. PAGE.—We can't be everlastingly answering questions about H. Musgrave Reade. He is the party mentioned in our pamphlet on *Torrey and the Infidels*.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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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.

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

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PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.

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.

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Shilling Month.

SEVENTH LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

Figures after the names of subscribers indicate the number of shillings they send. No number means one shilling.

S. Hartley, 5; W. McLaren, 2; L. Hinson, 2; An Old Carpenter; W. J. Paul, 3; L. Paul; Chas. Booker; Mrs. C. E. Crow, 5; W. H. Deakin (Bombay), 10; Cousin Jacky (2nd. sub.), 2; Annie Clifford; Anglodemos, 5; Ernest Wainwright, 5; J. Griffiths.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote had fine meetings on Sunday at Aberdare. "Saints" came from all parts of South Wales; from Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, Porth, Merthyr, Mountain Ash, Blaenavon, Llanbilleth, Bargoed, Gilfach, Ferndale, Clydach Vale, and many other places. Two waggon-loads of "saints" came over from one small town. And certainly they all seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly in the New Public Hall. Mr. Foote could not wish for more appreciative and enthusiastic audiences. They took all his points with the rapidity and certainty of a rifle-bullet on the bull's-eye. Mr. J. H. Edwards, of Cardiff, made an excellent chairman in the afternoon, and Mr. George Garrett, of Mountain Ash, in the evening. Questions were asked after the second lecture, and one Christian opposed for ten minutes.

Two of Mr. Foote's auditors (lady and gentleman) walked from a place eighteen miles distant by road, and walked back. It was brilliant weather, and they shortened the journey a bit by walking over the hills. They paid the President a compliment as brilliant as the weather in telling him that they were well repaid for the journey. For his part, he felt almost ashamed of bringing them so far—the lady especially.

The Paine Centenary Celebration, our readers will recollect, takes place at St. James's Hall, Great Portland-street, London, W., on Tuesday evening, June 8. The following is the list of speakers who have already accepted the invitation to address the meeting:—Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. Harry Snell, Mr. Herbert Burrows, Mr. C. Cohen, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. F. A. Davies, and Mr. G. W. Foote. Mr. Lloyd's name is withdrawn, as he unfortunately finds that he will have to be at some distance from London on that date.

Those who want reserved seat tickets for the Paine Celebration meeting—such as ladies, elderly persons, and persons coming some distance—should apply to Miss E. M. Vanco, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C.

We see by the *Northern Echo*, which gives a summary report—too summary to quote from—that Mr. Cohen has been having a two nights' public debate at Bishop Auckland with the Rev. A. Graham-Barton, Baptist minister, of Crook. The debate took place in the Town Hall, and the report says there was "a good audience" on both occasions.

The *South Durham and Auckland Chronicle* gives a fuller report of the debate, and says editorially that Mr. Cohen "made a sound impression on the audience."

Mr. Lloyd delivers two lectures to-day (May 16) afternoon and evening, in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester

—closing the winter session there. We shall be glad to hear that South Lancashire "saints" have rallied well round Mr. Lloyd on this occasion.

"Shilling Month" realised, up to last week's acknowledgments, 1,705 shillings; which is a good way off the 5,000 shillings we suggested, though perhaps as much as could be expected in the circumstances disclosed in so many subscribers' letters. Trade is bad, and money is tight, and everybody seems looking forward to a brighter summer and brisker autumn. Our work, of course, has been a good deal increased by reason of the large correspondence, to say nothing of the mechanical duties connected with the Fund, which we cannot transfer to others. We have handed over our cheque for one half of the Fund, £42 12s. 6d., to the National Secular Society. The other half goes to assist us in maintaining and promoting the *Freethinker*—in accordance with our original announcement.

The number of subscribers to "Shilling Month" was 381. This is not bad, in its way; but the number is only a small percentage of our readers. We don't seem able to reach the great mass of them yet. Perhaps we shall do better next time; perhaps the "times" will be better too.

Mr. P. W. Madden, subscribing to Shilling Month, made the following suggestions, which he thinks may appeal to other Freethinkers:—

"The present effort to 'boom' the *Freethinker* deserves the support and encouragement of each reader, and it is just possible that, by concerted action and schemes wisely planned and ably conducted, the journal might in a very short time be rendered self-supporting, as it should be, instead of its having to encroach upon your personal preserves. Solidarity amongst the Freethinkers would, I am sure, achieve much. I would suggest that—say for the next twelve months—all readers be invited to contribute, by Postal Order or Cheque, not less than one shilling on the 1st of each month, and that the whole of the moneys so subscribed be used in the furtherance of the journal's interests, but primarily and mainly by means of advertising. The plan of campaign could be set in operation, say, immediately after three months' contributions had been received.

The scheme might include:—

Poster advertisements.

Lantern advertisements at Theatres and Music Halls.

Motor-bus advertisements.

Sales by street-hawkers.

A four-page cover for advertisers."

We leave this matter entirely to the friends of the *Freethinker*.

In connection with the N. S. S. Annual Conference there is to be an excursion on Whit-Monday to Llangollen, a very beautiful part of Wales, forty miles from Liverpool. Saloon carriages will be provided, and the total cost of the trip, including railway, dinner, and tea, will be about 6s. 6d. Those wishing to join the excursion should communicate with the N. S. S. secretary as early as possible. The President has promised to make one of the party on this occasion.

The *Journal de Charlevil* made large use of Mr. Footo's articles on Swinburne, translating, of course, into French from the articles and the poet's verse.

La Pensée, a Freethought paper, ably edited by Eugène Hins at Brussels, often translates paragraphs from our "Acid Drops," which look quite fresh again when we read them in M. Hins' excellent French.

We see by an American exchange that a biography of Ingersoll is being written by Dr. Herman E. Kittredge, apparently with the consent and assistance of the Ingersoll family. It is to be published in two editions—a trade edition and a subscription edition, the latter uniform with the "Dresden Edition" of Ingersoll's works.

Dr. R. Farquharson, writing to the *British Medical Journal* on "Kissing the Book," says:—

"I have had the great privilege of swearing myself six times into the House of Commons, and can never forget the indecent scene. Recently elected members stood three and four deep round the table struggling for a corner of the book with the energy of a football scrimmage or a pack of hounds squabbling round their dinner trough for the best bones. Bradlaugh did a real service when he declined to take part in such a meaningless ceremony, which had as little binding effect upon him as on the other occupants of the green benches, none of whom, I guarantee, has the slightest notion what he is swearing about."

Dr. Farquharson adds that "if a man is fit to be a member of Parliament" he ought not to be "officially bound over to

work within the limits of certain theological precepts." He does not appear to know that Bradlaugh altered all that with his Oaths Act, under which a good many members of Parliament now make affirmation instead of taking the oath.

At the annual meeting of the Liberation Society, the Council re-affirmed its conviction—"That no system of national education can be accepted as satisfactory unless it is based on the common rights of citizenship, and leaves to parents and churches the entire responsibility for religious instruction." This was carried unanimously. But as Dr. Clifford was present there must have been some reservations. Mr. Halley Stewart, M.P., and Mr. Illingworth, M.P., mover and seconder, are honest straightforward men.

Last week's *Nation* contained an excellent article "To the Memory of Thomas Paine," written with a fairness, respect, and even admiration which took us quite by surprise. Roosevelt is severely censured for his "dirty little atheist" libel, and told that he will sink into his natural obscurity while "history will gradually set in its proper place among the makers of the Republic the memory of the man whom he defamed." The article ends by observing that Paine's real offence was writing for the people. "For this reason," it says, "he was hated and maligned by those classes endowed with the power to make hatred and malignity effective. For this reason he will recover a glorious though tardy fame among those who take the necessary trouble to rectify false estimates and to do honor to one of the most truly honorable men who have striven to serve mankind." The article is unsigned.

We have only one fault to find with the *Nation* article. It is really not true to say of Paine that "in a depressed period of his later life he indulged in excessive drinking." It would not have been astonishing if he did, but as a matter of fact he did not. Mr. Conway lighted upon Paine's bills at the time, and the "rum" shrinks into very modest proportions.

Free Thoughts.

BY LEMUEL K. WASHBURN.

If you want to find the truth look for facts.

The man who obeys a priest is of no use to this country.

You cannot love your enemies, but don't try to hurt them.

Following Jesus is a Marathon race in which most of the starters drop out in the first lap.

We have never "made fun of God" as a critic charges us with doing. We admit that we have no reverence or respect for the character in the Old Testament called God, or, the Lord God. No one can make anything of him but a brute. We know of no god to make fun of. All we know is Nature and all we do not know can have no name. But the power, be what it may, that can fashion a rose, or any other flower, that can carve from dust a human face, has our devout admiration. You cannot make fun of the Sun.

The great religious question to-day is not: How to save man, but: How to save God.

Because we criticise parts of the Bible we are charged with making fun of the Word of God. Is it not making fun of God to charge him with being the author of the Bible? Can a human being with any sense of humor, or of horror, read the stories in the Bible, and charge them to a god of justice, a god of kindness, a god of sense and decency? You cannot make fun of the sun and stars, of the sea and mountains, of truth and love, of right and justice.

Would not the Church do more good than it is doing now, by paying its taxes? Would it not set a better example by paying its taxes, than by favoring laws which compel other people, who do not accept their religion, to pay them? Would not the Church kick if it were compelled to pay the taxes on property belonging to people of a different faith? Would the Christian act differently from the other fellow if he were in that other fellow's place? Put the boot on the other leg, Mr. Christian, and see if you would not limp.

The man who believes he is saved cannot prove it.

Religious vaudeville is relied upon to fill the churches to-day.

A better chance in life is what men and women want more than salvation hereafter.

There seem to be spots or streaks of Providence along the road of human history, but for the most part they can be accounted for in some other way.

Praying is fast becoming a "lost art."

People follow Jesus with reservations.

The woman who sings: "Jesus, lover of my soul" is easily satisfied.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Early Life of Thomas Paine.—I.

Social, Political, and Religious Reformer.

BY W. G. CLARKE.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THOMAS PAINE was born at Thetford, Norfolk, on January 29, 1737; he died at Greenwich, U.S.A., on June 8, 1809, and these articles are offered as a tribute on the cairn of his memory, a century afterwards. His vilifiers have had a lengthy innings, and their unfounded assertions have sunk deep into the popular consciousness. From the first there have, nevertheless, been men who have endeavored to look at Paine and his life-work free of religious and political prejudice, and these have seen that he was a brave pioneer, who for his open-mindedness, his freedom from sordid considerations, his conscientious efforts to lead the peoples of three great countries—Britain, North America, and France—a further stage in the evolution of political, social, and religious liberty, has been attacked with the bitterness of despair by those whose interests lay in the maintenance of the existing order of things. Yet there is not a man or woman in the countries named who is not at this moment reaping some benefit from the words and deeds of Thomas Paine, from the ideals of freedom which he put forward so lucidly and logically, from the methods by which he sought to carry them out.

As early as 1817, William Cobbett in "an address to the Men of Norwich," alluded to "your famous countryman, Paine," and when on July 11, 1865, three persons were nominated at Thetford to fill the two vacancies in the Parliamentary representation of the borough, one of the speakers on behalf of the Liberal candidate was Mr. Charles Bradlaugh, who, standing above the porch of the old Town Hall and addressing the townspeople, said: "One day you will be proud to erect a monument to Tom Paine, as high as the Town Hall clock." Writing to Mr. F. H. Millington, of Thetford, on February 16, 1891, prior to the publication of his *Life of Thomas Paine*, the late Dr. Moncure D. Conway said: "When I have told my story, good men like Dr. Fowler Smith"—(rector of St. Mary's, Thetford, from 1862 to 1891, and a former master of the Boys' Grammar School)—"will recognise amid his faults, which will not be concealed, a stout-hearted Englishman, reflecting even in his faults, the wrongs of an England now extinct, and faithful to the best light he could get. Traditional severity of judgment will change in just men to deep compassion, and Thetford will respect the memory of its famous son."

But the day is not yet. Mr. J. Burrell Faux, a former Town Clerk of Thetford, had Paine's works finely bound and lettered "Tracts," probably because of the obloquy attached to any person known to possess them. Not until 1904 was there anything relating to Paine in the library of the Thetford Mechanics' Institute, but in that year eight of his local admirers purchased the "Life" by Dr. Conway and presented it.

It is the writer's hope that Thetford may some day disprove the ancient assertion that "a prophet is not without honor save in his own country and among his own kin," by making public recognition of the fact that Thomas Paine was born within the borough. And what more fitting time than this present year, that in which the centenary of his death is being honored?

CHAPTER I.

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE LIFE OF THOMAS PAINE.

As already noted, Paine was born at Thetford in 1737, and after an unsuccessful attempt to start his own career on a privateer, left home on a like adventure in 1756, but soon tired of the sea, and subsequently found work in London as a staymaker, at

the same time studying philosophy and astronomy. In 1758 he moved to Dover, and the following year set up in business as a staymaker at Sandwich, Kent, where he married Mary Lambert, but the next year went to Margate, where his wife died. Paine thereupon returned to London and in 1761 to Thetford, at both places studying to qualify himself for the Excise of which his wife's father had once been an officer. Having succeeded in his object, Paine was appointed to Grantham in 1762 and to Alford in 1764, but at the end of the year was discharged, owing to his adoption of the common practice of registering visits which he had not made. He then worked as a staymaker at Diss, and afterwards served as an usher in London, but in 1766 was reinstated in the Excise, though a suitable vacancy did not occur until 1768, when he was appointed to Lewes, Sussex, where in 1771 he married Elizabeth Ollive, but from some cause which has never been explained he and his wife soon agreed to an amicable separation. His abilities appear early to have been recognised, for in 1772 he was selected by the whole body of excisemen to draw up the "Case for the Officers of Excise" in support of a petition for increased salaries to be presented to Parliament. This procured Paine an introduction to Oliver Goldsmith, with whom he continued friendly during his residence in England. Owing to unauthorised absence from Lewes, perhaps on account of debts incurred while working for his fellows, debts which were ultimately paid in full, Paine was in 1774 again discharged from the Excise, and on the recommendation of Dr. Benjamin Franklin decided to go to America, and arrived at Philadelphia just before Christmas.

About a month afterwards a bookseller named Aitkin started the *Pennsylvania Magazine* and made Paine editor. For eighteen months he remained in this post, his first essay to be published being one against slavery, and subsequently he wrote article after article which would have been up-to-date at the end of the nineteenth century, and which evinced a wonderful prescience of the trend of political, social, and humanitarian movements. He advocated the abolition of duelling, pleaded the rights of animals, better treatment for women, showed the benefits of international arbitration, and national and international copyright. As early as 1776 he issued a proposal for steam navigation to America, but more urgent matters soon occupied his attention. He naturally took a keen interest in the politics of the Colonies and was one of the first to advise the Americans to assert their independence, and in his famous pamphlet *Common Sense*, which appeared at the beginning of 1776, he voiced the popular feeling, and was undoubtedly the influence needed to nerve the colonists to break away from the mother country, which they formally did by the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Few pamphlets have had so great an effect, and Paine showed his disinterestedness by giving the copyright to the States for the cause of independence. Cobbett is certainly justified in asserting that whoever wrote the Declaration, Paine was its author. Having done what was possible in this direction he joined the army and became a general favorite with officers and men. In December he produced the first number of *The Crisis*, which was issued at intervals during the great struggle, and had a widespread and remarkable effect, being read, by Washington's orders, to each regiment on service. Of this Dr. Conway says: "The pamphlet was never surpassed for true eloquence—that is, for the power that carries its point." The next year Paine was appointed Secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs, and remained in that position until 1779, but having denounced the peculation of Silas Deane, whose friends in the Congress resented it, Paine resigned and subsequently devoted himself to writings which were the guide and inspiration of the Americans in their struggle. In a time of financial difficulty Paine also contributed 500 dollars to the funds, and helped in the establishment of a bank that supplied the army throughout the campaign. In an endeavor to obtain a loan from the French

Government Paine and Colonel Laurens were despatched to France in 1781 and returned with 2½ million livres in silver, and stores to the value of 16 million livres, for which Paine never received any payment or acknowledgment. In 1781 the Americans compelled the Marquis of Cornwallis to capitulate and the independence of the colonists was acknowledged in 1783. Congress thereupon voted Paine 3,000 dollars; the State of New York gave him an estate of 300 acres and a stone-built house at New Rochelle; the State of Pennsylvania gave him £500, and the State of Virginia was about to make him a liberal grant when his sense of duty compelled him to protest, in a pamphlet entitled *Public Good*, against a claim to territory made by them, and the grant was lost by one vote. From George Washington he received a most flattering letter, and was admitted a member of the American Philosophical Society. He had previously had the degree of Master of Arts conferred on him by the University of Philadelphia. In a brilliant pamphlet Paine pointed out the errors in Abbé Raynal's *History of the Revolution*, and subsequently published *Dissertations on Government, the Affairs of the Bank, and Paper Money*, an argument in favor of supporting the Bank Company which had rendered such valuable financial help to the army. Paine spent some of his subsequent leisure in mechanical inventions, the chief of which consisted of a design for an iron bridge without piers.

Early in 1787 Paine returned to Europe, and, after exhibiting his model of the iron bridge in Paris, presented it to the Academy of Sciences, by whom his project was most favorably received. In the autumn he paid a visit to Thetford, and while in England published *Prospects on the Rubicon; or, An Investigation into the Causes and Consequences of the Politics to be Agitated at the Meeting of Parliament*. Returning to Paris early in 1788, Paine was lionised as the representative of America, and it was to him that Lafayette gave the key of the destroyed Bastille for presentation to Washington. Back again in England, he arranged for the exhibition in London of the iron bridge which had been made from his plans at Rotherham, Yorkshire. Then in 1790 Edmund Burke issued his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, and Paine replied with the *Rights of Man*, which had as profound an influence on English politics as *Common Sense* had on American. In it he advocated old-age pensions, a progressive income-tax, "one man, one vote," the referendum, free education and food for children, the extension of government workshops, and various legal reforms. Despite its great value, Paine gave the copyright to whoever would print it. It was translated into French, and Paine, on his return to France, also issued a manifesto in favor of a republic. Returning to London, he issued another manifesto of a similar character, though in this he did not, as in France, suggest a break with the throne. In London he enjoyed the company of a circle of intellectual and artistic friends, living the simple life of a gentleman of cultured tastes. The first part of the *Rights of Man* appeared on March 18, 1791, and the second part on February 16 of the year following. An unsuccessful attempt had been made by the Government to purchase the MSS. of the second part, and in May, 1792, the King issued a proclamation forbidding its sale and ordering the writer to be prosecuted. Paine had determined to defend the action in person, but in September a deputation from the inhabitants of the department of Pas-de-Calais waited on him to say that they had elected him their Deputy to the National Convention in France. His friend, William Blake, urged him to go, and twenty minutes after he left Dover the officers arrived with a warrant for his arrest. At Calais he had a royal reception, and in Paris was one of the leading spirits in the Convention, being one of the Committee appointed to draw up a Constitution. He opposed the execution of Louis XVI. at the risk of his own life, and brought on himself the hatred of Robespierre, through whose influence—and that of the American minister, Morris—he

was first excluded from the Convention on the ground that he was a foreigner, and then thrown into the Luxembourg because he had been born in England. Before his trial in England Paine issued his famous *Letter to the Addressers*, which, says Dr. Conway, "in humor, freedom, and force may be compared with Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets*." Almost all over England Paine was burnt in effigy, and as the result of the trial with a packed jury he was convicted and outlawed. Those who sold the *Rights of Man* were fined and imprisoned. While in prison in 1794, in daily expectancy of being guillotined, he completed the *Age of Reason*, the work of his maturest years, to which he devoted all his powers. The door of the cell in which he was confined was one day marked with chalk as an indication that the occupants were to be guillotined; but when the officers came round the door had been shut, and the mark, being on the inside, was passed by. After ten months' imprisonment Paine was liberated on the representations of the new American Minister, afterwards President Monroe of the U.S.A., and, having again taken his seat in the Convention, he wrote a *Dissertation on First Principles of Government*. During all his misfortunes in France, Washington had made no sign, and his ingratitude has never been satisfactorily explained. It may have been that he was influenced by the *Age of Reason*, which was the popular predecessor of many books on the Higher Criticism, and expounded an enlightened Theism. It had as great an effect in the religious world as the *Rights of Man* had in the political, and is probably the only eighteenth-century book on the subject that still enjoys a widespread circulation. Paine thus summarised his own belief: "I believe in one God and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life. I believe in the equality of man, and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow creatures happy." Furthermore he stated: "My country is the world, and my religion is to do good"; while his will closes with the words: "I die in perfect composure and resignation to the will of my Creator, God."

After the Peace of Amiens was signed, Paine left for America, landing at Baltimore on October 30, 1802. His past services to the State seemed to have been forgotten, and he received little but persecution and ingratitude. He resided for a time on his farm at New Rochelle, and then at Greenwich, where he died on June 8, 1809, and was buried on his own estate, a plain headstone being placed on his grave. This was chipped away either by orthodox vandals or admiring visitors—the deed has been credited to both. In September, 1819, William Cobbett, the English Radical, first the vilifier and then the vindicator of Paine, dug up the coffin and brought it to England just as it was. Those who looked for a striking judgment on the vessel were sadly disappointed, and Cobbett with his strange enterprise "was met with mingled wrath and ridicule." Byron wrote:—

"In digging up your bones, Tom Paine,
Will Cobbett haq done well;
You'll visit him on earth again,
He'll visit you in hell."

The bones were stored away, and almost forgotten for years, although occasionally exhibited at Normandy Farm, near Guildford, where Cobbett died on June 18, 1835. James Paul Cobbett, his son, inscribed his own name on the skull and on the larger bones. He became insolvent, and George West, a neighboring farmer, was appointed receiver. He kept the bones nine years, and in March, 1844, conveyed them to Benjamin Tilly, who had been Cobbett's factotum in London. Tilly died about 1860 in the house of a Mr. Ginn, a wood merchant, of Bethnal Green, and left a number of Cobbett's manuscripts and relics. In 1879, the Rev. George Reynolds had his attention called to these by Ginn's daughter, and he purchased the box of papers and relics. The box contained some of the brain and

hair of Paine. Before Tilly's death the skull and right hand of Paine had gone on a career of their own. In 1853 or 1854 these were in possession of the Rev. Robert Ainslie, secretary of the London City Mission. The skull and hand came to Mr. Oliver Ainslie after his father's death, and during some alterations were taken away by a Mr. Penny, and cannot be traced further. The other remains of Paine's skeleton were not destroyed, for they were seen in 1873 by the Rev. Alexander Gordon, a Unitarian minister, and heard of by him in 1876. Dr. Conway says: "The correspondence that has passed between us leaves no doubt in my mind that he was led by his respect for Paine, despite divergences from that author's religion, to secure for the remains quiet burial—perhaps near his parents at Thetford." This, however, is a tradition that cannot be substantiated. There are now traceable a portion of Paine's brain and two locks of his hair. One of the latter was presented to Dr. Conway by Cobbett's biographer, Edward Smith. It is soft and dark, with a reddish tinge. The brain was sold to a second-hand bookseller by the Rev. Geo. Reynolds, and purchased for £5 by Dr. Conway.

In the summer of 1900, Dr. Conway wrote to Mr. F. H. Millington, of Thetford, to inquire if any local traditions existed as to the whereabouts of Paine's bones. Dr. Conway then said: "I would be much gratified if I could say with certainty that they rest among his people. There would be something poetic in that, and my interest is limited to that." There was subsequently some correspondence among those interested in the question, and the Rev. Alexander Gordon, of the Memorial Hall, Manchester, who was for eleven years minister at the Octagon Chapel, Norwich, in a letter to the writer, said: "I have visited Thetford more than once, and of two houses, each of which more than forty years ago was regarded as Paine's birthplace, I could never ascertain that there was in either case convincing evidence. In regard to Paine's bones, I can only say, as I said some years ago to Mr. M. D. Conway, that I hope they are finally at rest." This leaves the matter just where it was—at a tantalising point.

(To be continued.)

HOW THEY SAW JESUS.

In the legends of saints and martyrs it is a regularly recurring feature that the saint, shortly after his death, reappears in dreams and in waking hours (ecstasies) and bids his people be of good cheer, adding words of consolation and instruction: the longing love loses itself completely in memories, and the precious image of the departed presents itself so vividly, that, in the supreme moment of ecstatic enthusiasm, faith believes itself face to face with the living. When we consider Peter's nature, a lively temperament, easily swayed by sudden and momentary impulses of emotion, it becomes easy to conceive that he should be the first to go through this experience. Following other analogies, it is also easy to understand that this experience of inspired vision did not confine itself to Peter, but repeated itself soon for other well-known fact of experience that there is a contagion in the condition of high grades of excited psychical life, especially of religious enthusiasm and ecstasy, and that such conditions overpower entire assemblages with an elemental force. Many succumb to the suggestions of individuals to such an extent that they actually repeat the experience; others less susceptible, imagine, at least, that they see and hear the thing suggested; dull and sober participants are so carried away by the enthusiasm of the mass that faith furnishes what their own vision fails to supply.

The historical basis of the disciples' belief in the resurrection we find in the ecstatic visionary experiences emanating from an individual and soon convincing all; in these experiences they believed that they saw the crucified master alive and raised to heavenly glory. At home in the world of the miraculous, the imagination wove the garment to bottom, the moving force of the resurrection of Jesus in their faith was nothing more than the ineffaceable impression which one person had made upon them; their love and their confidence in him were stronger than death. This miracle of love, and not a miracle of omnipotence was the foundation of the resurrection—belief in the early congregation.—Pfeiderer's "Christian Origins," pp. 137-8.

Correspondence.

THE "PAINE" MEETING AT SOUTH PLACE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The paragraphs in last week's *Freethinker* dealing with the South Place meeting on May 2 suggest a possible misunderstanding which, I think, it may be well to clear up. Coming after what had been said in the preceding paragraph, the statement that an announcement had been made to the effect that the N. S. S. would be invited to cooperate in some forthcoming commemoration of Paine, and that in default of such invitation reaching the Society the St. James's Hall meeting was decided on, suggests that the N. S. S. had been slighted in the matter. If such had been the case, my speaking at the meeting of May 2 would, to that extent, have condoned the offence. I need hardly, I hope, point out that, had such been the case, I should have been the last person to have sanctioned such an affront.

The South Place meeting was arranged entirely by the South Place Society, and societies were, I believe, neither invited nor were they officially represented on the platform. The invitations were to individuals only, and I believe care was taken to get as many sections represented as was possible. Our own meeting at the St. James's Hall on June 8 was decided on without any reference whatever to the South Place meeting, the Executive being in ignorance at the time that such a meeting was to take place. I mention this in order to guard myself against even the suspicion of disloyalty to any Society with which I am associated.

Being invited to attend the South Place meeting, I did so, and had no cause to complain of my reception. I was not there, as you point out, as officially representing the N. S. S., but if there be such a thing as unofficial representation, I hope I may flatter myself that members of the N. S. S. have sufficient confidence in me to feel that they were not unworthily represented on that occasion.

C. COHEN.

[Is not Mr. Cohen making too much of this? Only one of our paragraphs dealt with the South Place meeting, and that one was occasioned by an article in the *Sunday Chronicle*. Mr. Cohen's name (we say it without offence) was accidental. It was the reference to the National Secular Society in that article—and nowhere else—which induced us to state that the N. S. S. was not represented at the South Place meeting. Had it been represented, Mr. Cohen would, of course, have made a worthy representative. For the rest, we do not think the paragraph ought to suggest any personal reflection. The South Place meeting was self-contained, and had no relation that we know of to the Rationalist and Ethical announcement we mentioned in another paragraph.—EDITOR.]

CHRIST.

When we would see thee man and know
What heart thou hadst toward men indeed,
Lo, thy blood-blackened altars; lo
The lips of priests that pray and feed
While their own hell-worm curls and licks
The poison of the crucifix.

Thou badst let children come to thee;
What children now but curses come?
What manhood in that God can be
Who sees their worship, and is dumb?
No soul that lived, loved, wrought, and died,
Is this their carrion crucified.

Nay, if their God and thou be one,
If thou and this thing be the same,
Thou shouldst not look upon the sun;
The sun grows haggard at thy name.
Come down, be done with, cease, give o'er;
Hide thyself, strive not, be no more.

—A. C. Swinburne, "Before a Crucifix."

But a few friendships wear, and let them be
By nature and by fortune fit for thee.
Instead of art and luxury in food,
Let mirth and freedom make thy table good.
If any cares into thy day-time creep,
At night, without wine's opium, let them sleep.
Let rest, which nature does to darkness wed,
And not lust, recommend thee to thy bed.
Be satisfied, and pleased with what thou art,
Act cheerfully and well th' allotted part;
Enjoy the present hour, be thankful for the past,
And neither fear nor wish, th' approaches of the last.

Martial (Cowley's translation).

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.**OUTDOOR.**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, J. Marshall, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Charles Bradlaugh."

WEST HAN BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, F. A. Davies, "Atheism."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): 11, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, a Lecture.

COUNTRY

FAILSWORTH (Secular School, Pole-lane): Annual Services—Joseph McCabe, 2.45, "The Outlook for Secular Education"; 6.30, "The Dusk of the Gods."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, H. Percy Ward, "What Has Become of God?"—Wednesday, May 19, at 8, Mr. Ward lectures at Edge-hill Lamp.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): J. T. Lloyd, 3, "The Cowardly Conscience"; 6.30, "Heaven and Hell in Freehought." Tea at 5.

OUTDOOR.

BRISTOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Durdham Downs): 7.15, B. G. Brown, "A Plea for Secularism."

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY: The Meadows, 3, a Lecture; The Mound, 6.30, a Lecture.

LEITH (Foot of the Walk): Wednesdays, 8.15, a Lecture.

MUSSELBURGH (Town Hall): 6.30, a Lecture.

WIGAN (Market-square): Monday, May 16, at 7.45, H. Percy Ward, a Lecture.

JOSEPH BATES' EAST ANGLIAN MISSION.

BOSTON BRANCH N. S. S.: Bargate Green, Sunday, May 16, at 6.30, "The Holy Bible: An Examination of its Science, History, and Ethics."

SIDSEY: Wednesday, May 19, at 7.30, "Truth—What?"

SKEGNESS: Thursday, May 20, at 3, "The History of the Conflict Between Myth and Science."

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