

THE
Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXI.—No. 31.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, 1901.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

A Christian Cassandra.

THE *British Weekly* seems to be fond of wails and warnings. It must be a most depressing paper for zealous Christians to read. Its front-page articles, supposed to be written by Dr. Robertson Nicoll, generally take a despairing view. It perceives that Christianity is a diminishing quantity. It foresees little else but chaos in the future generations of the world unless care is taken to persevere what it calls "the Deposit." At present it is quite the Mrs. Gummidge of the religious press, with this difference—that its complainings and forebodings and inconsolable dejection are by no means without cause.

In its issue for July 18 it has a front-page article headed with the solitary word "Keep." That, as addressed to many professing Christians, seems rather superfluous advice. But we soon find that it does not refer to worldly possessions, but to principles of faith. It is based on the injunction, "That good thing which was committed to thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us." After reciting this advice, it exclaims, as if a gleam of light and joy had shot across its path: "Then there is something that Christians must keep." Probably there is, if Christians would still call themselves Christians. It is quite a matter for themselves. Then the *British Weekly* proceeds:—

"In a great deal of the so-called religious and critical literature of our time this fact is never recognised. The writers seem to think it is the whole duty of a Christian to give up his beliefs one by one. They promise, indeed, that he shall retain something, but what the something is on which they are to take their stand in the face of all conceivable opposition they never define. They waken each morning with a creed of fewer articles, and the articles that remain they are ready to surrender to a process of argument that convinces them. It is the duty of every believer to be open to light and truth, but it is clearly his duty to hold to the end, against all antagonism, the trust which he received at the beginning."

One would think so, and perhaps it would be so if there were not so much doubt and diversity of belief as to the "trust received at the beginning." The idea entertained at the Vatican as to the nature of "the trust received at the beginning" is very different to that which commends itself to the *British Weekly*. Are Romanists to resolutely adhere to their basis of faith? Perhaps it would be as well, considering the general whittling down and break-up of belief outside the great "infallible" Church.

"Some truths," continues the *B. W.*, "with the Christian are not matters of argument. They were not reached by learning; they were not the prize of the intellect." We do not dispute it, except that we should say not "some truths," but "many so-called truths"—in fact, the major part of the Christian faith. They are evidently not matters of argument with the Christian. When he tries to defend them—to give a reason for the faith within him—he invariably fails. They are emotions, imaginations, assumptions, pure fancies, not deducible from facts and not defensible by reason. They are held by Christians as similar emotions and fantasies are cherished by Mohammedans and Buddhists, and the devotees of the various systems of superstition which have an existence on the face of the globe. These so-called "truths" were distinctly not reached by learning, and are obviously not prizes of intellect. They are mostly foolishness in their milder forms of manifestation, and in their stronger they verge upon, and sometimes become, absolute mania.

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If this is the kind of citadel that Christians in these latter days of criticism have to fall back upon, it would be well to abandon all pretences at establishing the faith by reasoning or preserving it by debate. The Romish Church, with its customary astuteness, foresaw this centuries ago, and sedulously discountenanced the exercise of reason in regard to spiritual things.

Christians, it seems, are entrusted with "the Fair Deposit, which is the faith once delivered to the saints."

Alas, the *British Weekly* laments, "in these days, and perhaps in all days, it is no easy thing to guard the Fair Deposit. Something is yielded, and no doubt something in the forms which our childhood received may have to be yielded." Yes, the Fair Deposit has been considerably reduced. Christians have had to part with much that was taught them in childhood. Modern knowledge, thought, and criticism have wiped away for ever a great deal that was supposed—and in some cases rightly supposed—to be essential to the Christian faith. But the *British Weekly*, with its far-seeing eye, looks out upon a dismal prospect. It says: "We rarely find it possible, after having once parted with a divine truth, to keep the rest intact. There may be an earnest purpose to do so, a real desire to replace with something of a spiritual character what has been lost; but the downward path is easy, and too often that hope to win a purer creed and a higher ideal of life finds itself in the midst of the dissolving views and breaking-up scenery of the ancient heaven."

So Christians must stick as long as they possibly can to the "Fair Deposit"—whatever that may mean—and trust, though not with overweening assurance, that all will come right in the end. "It is a happy thing," says the *British Weekly*, "in some ways that the human heart is so illogical." It is a happy thing for Christianity and kindred superstitions. And perhaps, if we were to make a critical examination, we should find that these superstitions exist not so much by virtue of warm hearts as by reason of weak heads, or the cowardice which shrinks from facing facts. The human heart, we are told, will entrench itself in positions, all the defences of which it has surrendered, and it is a poor business to try to hunt it out of them.

"And yet it is necessary sometimes to do so, for, though one may be illogical, the most are not, and unless a certain purity of feeling, a certain tender reverence for the dead safeguards fragments of the Deposit, the day will come when it is all abandoned, and the soul finds itself in the desert stripped and naked. Nor would we deny, but rather earnestly proclaim, that even when all faith is lost, morality often survives it. When the old faith goes there remain often pure character, natural piety, an attempt to replace Christianity with something better, the hope to purify the temple, the frank acknowledgment that certain inborn cravings in the human heart, constant, profound, and inextinguishable, can only be satisfied with religion. We acknowledge all these, but we do not believe that, if ever the Fair Deposit is lost, the world will be able to keep the ethical gains which Christianity has won for it."

There seems to be something rather absurdly sentimental about this idea of "tender reverence safeguarding fragments of the Deposit." We should think there was something better to do in the world than standing sentinel over a heap of discarded myth and fable. As to the "frank acknowledgment," that is made for us and not by us, and we quite dispute the ethical gains said to be won by Christianity, if they are attributed to Christianity distinctively considered. The *British Weekly* alleges that the movement against the Christian faith which "had the most success and lasted the longest

was Voltairism." But why talk of it as if it had ceased? It lives in the evolution of thought, strengthened by wider knowledge and keener criticism, and the inevitable advance from the acceptance of the God idea, which latter feature the *B. W.* seems to forget when it rashly denounces Voltairism as the "most unspiritual, immoral, and irreligious movement" of all those directed against the Christian faith.

But listen to the following admissions by the *British Weekly*, which, at any rate, are a tribute to the progress of Freethought views:—

"Our foes attack us from ambushes when we least expect them. The great resistance to Christianity of the wisdom of this world goes on, and we are often unable to meet argument by argument, and in faithless moments fancy that it will overcome at last the mighty Antagonist whom it has so often undertaken to slay. Are the gates of hell, we ask, to prevail against the Church at last? Men mock realities when they imagine that the difficulties of guarding the Deposit are light, when they represent the arguments against supernatural Christianity as intellectually contemptible, when they ignore the fact that all round them are perplexed and distressed souls, who are, nevertheless, pure in intent, who are crying in the darkness: 'Help Thou mine unbelief.'"

We take exception to the "gates of hell" in the above extract. But we excuse it. The picture is so thoroughly dismal. It must give orthodox Christians the creeps. We think, after all, that the *British Weekly* writer has less resemblance to the classic Cassandra than to the dejected Mrs. Gummidge. Says that old lady: "My troubles has made me contrary. I feel my troubles, and they make me contrary. I wish I didn't feel 'em, but I do. I wish I could be hardened to 'em, but I ain't. I make the house uncomfortable. I don't wonder at it."

FRANCIS NEALE.

Atheism and its Critics.—VI.

THE only other argument that at present calls for any notice is the familiar one from design in nature. This is the oldest of all arguments for the existence of Deity, and the most popular. Yet, as the Rev. Professor Knight is forced to admit, "its failure is.....signal.....It is illusory as well as incomplete.....and, were we to admit its relevancy, it could afford no basis for worship."* In its pre-Darwinian form it is being rapidly repudiated by all with the smallest claim to the title of a thinker. It is impossible now to argue in the style of the old Bridgewater Treatises that the movements of the planetary system, or the coloring of an animal, are a clear proof of design in nature. Just as the former case is shown to be a direct result of the Persistence of Force, so the latter is as clearly the outcome of Natural Selection, or similar agencies. The argument makes its appearance, nowadays, in the form of what is called "The Wider Teleology." That is, it is asserted that, while we cannot trace intelligence in any special adaptation or in any special event in nature, yet we can assume that there is a directing intelligence back of the whole process of evolution.

Now, I have always been unable to see in what manner this new statement of the design argument evaded any of the difficulties that attended the old presentation of it. At most it only shifts the same difficulties a step further back. Any inference we draw as to the existence of a controlling mind in nature must be based upon our actually-existing world, and whether we take specific instances or the animal world as a whole does not seem to me to make any really vital difference. To say that the eye was fashioned as it now is by an almighty intelligence, and to say that some divine being called into existence forces with the express intention that their unaided operation should result in the production of the eye, seem to me only two ways of stating what is fundamentally the same proposition. In either case, the essence of the proposition is that there is a designing mind somewhere; and in both instances we are basing our judgment upon the world as it is.

The first remark I have to make upon the design argument is one that was laid down very plainly by Hume.† It is that no reasoning can ever justify us in

assuming an infinite cause for a finite effect. As Hume says: "A body of ten ounces raised in any scale may serve as a proof that the counterbalancing weight exceeds ten ounces, but can never afford a reason that it exceeds a hundred." Now, from whatever point of view we criticise nature, we are constantly dealing with finite effects; and, while we are justified in assuming causes adequate to the production of such effects, the conclusion of an *infinite* cause is altogether unjustifiable. The utmost anyone is warranted in concluding is the existence of a limited and finite cause; whereas the Theist first assumes an infinite cause, and next assumes, without the least warranty, that this cause is intelligent.

In the next place, the utmost that the design argument can prove is the existence of an architect, not of a creator. Design necessarily implies two things: difficulties to be overcome and wisdom in overcoming them. We may speak of design in connection with human beings, because man is always faced with the difficulty of encountering and overcoming forces which operate in complete independence of his inclination or existence. Assuming design in nature, therefore, it would be justifiable to infer the existence of some being whose wisdom was shown in the existing structure of the world; but design would be altogether ridiculous in the case of a being to whom difficulties could not exist. The only reasonable inference from such data would be, to quote Mill, that "the author of the Kosmos worked under limitations; that he was obliged to adapt himself to conditions independent of his will, and to attain his ends by such arrangements as those conditions admitted of."*

This is all, by the utmost stretch of logical liberality, that can be granted on the grounds of assuming the argument from design to be logically valid. But the argument is not valid, and one objection that may be brought against it is altogether insuperable. The Theist assumes that he has demonstrated design when he has, on analysis, shown how a number of means combine to the production of a particular end. But, whatever effect is produced, there is bound to be a relation between it and the causes that combine for its production; and, while analysis may rouse our wonder, it can add nothing to the fact itself. Every event is a link in an infinite chain of causes and effects; is an effect in relation to that which preceded, and a cause to that which follows, it. In showing, therefore, in what manner a given cause gives rise to a given effect, the Theist is only increasing our knowledge as to the workings of natural processes, but cannot possibly establish the presence of design. What is required in order to do this is a knowledge of *intention*. In other words, we must first know—assuming the existence of Deity—what was the end aimed at, and then compare the intention with the actual result. It is not enough to say that, because my throwing a stone resulted in the breaking of a window, therefore breaking the window was the result of design. I may have *designed* to break someone's head, and the actual result was, so far, an accident. Before I can be accused of design there must be a knowledge of my intention in throwing the stone. And in exactly the same manner the *intention* of Deity must be known, prior to creation, before the existing universe can be said to show marks of design. But this knowledge no sane person pretends to have; he has only the existing facts upon which to proceed, and no possible scrutiny of these can tell him with any certainty either that they were designed to be, or how far they realise the design of a supposed creator.

The only grounds, after all, upon which design in nature is inferred is upon the supposed likeness between natural phenomena and human productions. But there is, as Professor Knight says, "no parallel whatsoever between the process of manufacture and the product of creation, between the act of a carpenter working with his tools to construct a cabinet and the evolution of life in nature."† Paley's classical illustration of a watch—an illustration cribbed almost verbatim from Malebranche, but as old otherwise as the days of Greek philosophy, where a statue took the place of a watch—is a plain begging of the question. We do assume that any particular watch is made, because we

* *Aspects of Theism*, pp. 59, 75.

† *Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State*.

* *Three Essays*, p. 177.

† *Aspects of Theism*, p. 64.

know beforehand that *all* watches are made. To make the analogy of any value we should be able to compare universe with universe, as we compare watch with watch, and conclude that, because one bears the marks of manufacture, so must the other. But the universe is necessarily the sole thing of its kind with which we are acquainted; it is, therefore, impossible to institute a comparison, and the only reason we have for concluding that there is design in nature is the palpably absurd one that, because man selects and adjusts means to a given end, therefore any combination of means to ends in nature must have been consciously designed likewise.

Some apparent strength might be given to the argument of design in nature if all natural forces could be seen to be working towards a single end. But this, again, is what we do not find. What we see at work is a multitude of forces and agencies, the action of each of which is often to negative the action of some other force. Put on one side the larger, but not the least pregnant, fact that any animal only maintains its life by a constant struggle with numerous agencies that are apparently bent upon its destruction; put on one side also the fact that multitudes of parasites—which must be as much the result of conscious design as any other form of life—are constantly preying upon and destroying animals higher than themselves, and there still remain myriads of facts altogether inconsistent and completely irreconcilable with the hypothesis of a creative intelligence shaping the course of affairs to a given end. To take only a single illustration: What is to be said of the animals born into the world, and which die or are killed before reaching an age at which they can play their legitimate part in the life of their species? Are we to believe that the same Deity that fashioned these animals fashioned at the same time a number of forces which should destroy them? Clearly we are bound to conclude either that this hypothetical being devises a number of mutually destructive plans, or that there are a *number* of designers in existence, each engaged in frustrating the plans of the others.

If we are to judge nature from the standpoint of human intelligence, then we must decide that it is full of waste, full of bungling, full of plans that come to nothing, of ends that are never realised, and of pain and misery that might well have been avoided by an omnipotent intelligence. There are few animals concerning which a competent anatomist or physiologist could not suggest some improvement in their construction by which their functions might be better or more easily discharged; nor is it quite impossible to think that some more admirable plan by which to develop a better type of animal life might have been devised than that of the constant destruction amid pain and bloodshed of countless myriads of inferior forms. It is stupid to ask, as the late Dr. Martineau did, what right have we to judge the world from "a purely humanistic point of view"; the whole argument from design is based upon precisely this procedure. The Atheist is only calling the attention of the Theist to the consequences of so doing.

What the Theist really does at every step of his reasoning is to read his own feeling and desires into the universe. The design he talks about so glibly is in him, not outside of him. In strict truth, the beauty and utility of natural objects is in ourselves, not in the external world. It is the constitution of our organs that really determines the beauty of the universe, as it is the needs of our organism that constitute its utility. Had we no eyes, the universe would be without color; had we no ears, it would be without sound. Similarly in other matters. Man sees design in the existence of a sheep that may serve him for food. On exactly the same grounds a tiger might reason that man's function in the world was to serve him for a meal. But the sheep is not here to be eaten by man; man is here because he eats the sheep. As well might a maggot in a cheese argue that the cheese was *intended* for him, as man reason that the world was *intended* for his existence. In relation to their surroundings both man and maggot are in the same position. Both are the result of their antecedents co-operating with existing conditions. Nay, in the economy of nature the life of one animal is of no more value than the life of any other animal. There is a more complex synthesis of

forces, a more subtle exhibition of nature's infinite capacity for evolving fresh forms of life, and that is all. It is man himself that paints his own distorted picture on the unconscious surface of things, who reads his own passions, feelings, and desires into nature, and then marvels at a wonder created by himself.

C. COHEN.

The Bigotry of the Churches.

In my article last week I remarked that bigotry was the perpetual curse of the Churches. "A Broad-minded Christian" has written me to say: "Such an accusation is false, as, to my knowledge, many Christians, like myself, are very broad-minded." Now, what my correspondent says in reference to his knowledge of Christians may be quite true, and yet my statement may be strictly correct. I do not deny that among the professors of Christianity are to be found both men and women of broad and liberal minds, but that does not affect the accuracy of my contention about the Churches. The whole Christian propaganda is based upon bigotry. Its supporters assume that they have *the* truth, and that those who differ from them are in error. It has been so from the very inception of the Christian faith, as the New Testament amply proves. Christ himself was not free from this deplorable evil. Hence he exclaimed: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." If Christ were the truth, very few have realised it, and still fewer have reached the Father, for the reason that the great majority of the human race have not heard of Jesus, and among most of those where his name had been proclaimed he is not really accepted as "the truth." A man is not free from bigotry who can say, as Christ is reported to have said: "Those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me." "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." "He that believeth not shall be damned." A similar spirit of bigotry influenced the mind of St. Paul, who said: "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." These certainly are not the words of broad and liberal minds, but rather ejaculations prompted by the evil of bigotry, which, as Francis William Newman has said, "in Christendom has been, and is, of all sins most fruitful, most poisonous; nay, grief of griefs, it infects many of the purest and most loving hearts, which want strength of understanding, or are entangled by a sham theology, with its false facts and fraudulent canons..... The evil of bigotry which has been most observed is its untameable injustice, which converted the law of love into *licensed* murder or gratuitous hatred."

The word "bigotry" is here used to signify an obstinate adherence to a particular faith, a fanaticism in the interests of certain creeds and dogmas. Who can deny that this has been the curse of the Christian Churches? Even the *Sunday Magazine* for last month (July) endorses my charge of bigotry against the Churches. It says:—

"It is a historical fact, and one of the most lamentable in morals, that bigotry, which the Church has counted almost a virtue, and of which very few people repent, has been the cause of larger misery to the human race than any other sin, than the love of money, or the lusts of the flesh. It has been the cause of the bitterest and cruellest wars ever waged, where mercy was shown neither to man nor woman from the Crusades to the war of the thirty years, from the Civil War in England to the massacres in Ireland. For the sake of religion, and in the name of God, Mohammedans have massacred Christians, and Christians Mohammedans; Romanists have tortured Protestants, and Protestants Romanists; Episcopalians have persecuted Presbyterians, and Presbyterians Episcopalians; the Waldensians were hunted in their valleys like wild beasts, and the blood of the Covenanters was mingled with the wine of the Sacrament on Scottish moors; the flower of the French nation was cut down on St. Bartholomew's Eve; the Spaniards erected the Inquisition, and forfeited their place among the free nations; the Friends, gentlest of all Christian communities, were treated as criminals by the Puritans; and Unitarians, the most ethical of all denominations, have been made religious outcasts. And all this has been done in the name of faith, and most of it in the name of Christ."

This is an important admission, coming, as it does, from a Christian source. What the *Sunday Magazine* says is strictly true, as the facts of history testify. Through its bigotry the Church has been throughout its entire history guilty of the worst kinds of persecution and wild fanaticism. It was through the bigotry of the Churches that the writings of Porphyry and Celsus were destroyed, and it was through the same cause, centuries later, that Paine, Hone, Wright, Carlile, Southwell, Hetherington, Watson, and many other pioneers of Freethought, were persecuted and deprived of their liberty, the sole reason being that they were opponents of the orthodox faith. And it is the bigotry of the Churches which to-day, where their supporters have the power, closes the public buildings against Secular exponents, excludes reports of their meetings from the public press, and socially ostracises those who have the courage to openly avow their disbelief in Christianity.

History teems with instances of injustice, brutality, and opposition of the Churches to secular progress. In Alexandria Christianity celebrated its triumph over human reason by destroying the Serapion and scattering its incomparable library, and by murdering the noble-minded Hypatia. With the rise of the Christian Churches commenced a long and vigorous battle between bigotry and science. Draper and Dr. Andrew White give abundant evidence, showing how the Churches manifested their persistent opposition to all new scientific discoveries. That opposition was based upon the assumption that the Bible was a divine and infallible revelation, and, therefore, its teachings could not be improved upon. The Christian Father, Tertullian, put forward the following dictum in the second century: "The Old Testament is the standard and measure of all truth, and that which does not agree therewith must be false." It will be readily seen that in the face of such bigotry as this science must have had a tremendous obstacle to grapple with. It is sad to reflect upon the evils wrought in those times by the fanatical zeal of theologians. The teaching of the rotundity of the earth was vehemently condemned by the pious Eusebius and the vacillating Lactantius. So late as the sixth century Cosmos avowed that the earth was flat, and he found many flats to share his error. Copernicus and the destruction of his great book, Bruno's cruel and unjust fate, the treatment of Galileo for his discoveries with the telescope, and of Roger Bacon for his revelation of the facts of chemistry and physics, all indicate the deadly influence of bigotry. It cannot be urged with truth that this evil was confined to the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestants were also guilty, as the conduct of Luther and Melancthon, the treatment of Dr. Simpson by the Churches in Scotland, and the opposition to Lyell, Darwin, and Huxley in England, unmistakably prove. Dr. White, in his *Warfare of Science*, observes: "Strange as it may at first seem, the war on geology was waged more fiercely in Protestant countries than in Catholic."

As a rule, wherever bigotry reigns fanaticism is its concomitant. Hence we find that the history of Christianity is a record of fanatical deeds. Take the Seven Crusades which were prompted by Christian bigotry and carried out by theological fanaticism. For nearly three centuries the fairest portion of the world was devastated, humanity was degraded, and in the name of religion the most revolting crimes were perpetrated. The capture of Jerusalem by the Christians in 1099 was the scene of a massacre that can hardly find a parallel for brutality in the pages of history. Draper tells us that the brains of young children were dashed out against the walls, infants were pitched over the battlements, women were seized and violated, and men were roasted alive. It was this spirit of bigotry, strengthened by a wild religious fanaticism, that produced the civil wars in France at the beginning of the seventeenth century. During those religious conflicts, says Dr. Dick in his *Philosophy of Religion*, above a million of men lost their lives, and nine cities, four hundred villages, and ten thousand houses were burned or in other ways destroyed. From history we also learn that in the Albigensian war "neither sex nor age was spared. From twenty to fifty thousand persons were slain. The brutal command was uttered—'Slay them all; God will know his own.' The Monk of Vaux Cernay,

the historian of these atrocities, says: 'Our people put to the sword all whom they could find, slaying them with fire and sword. For which blessed be the Lord, who delivers to us some of the wicked, though not all.'" And, according to Carlyle, it was the same religious fanaticism and bigotry that governed the contests between Cromwell and the Covenanters. Both parties fought under the impression that they were supported by "Divine approval," and that they were the people of God. It was, in my opinion, the one drawback in the great character of one of the noblest of England's sons (which undoubtedly Cromwell was) that he yielded too much to the influence of religious fanaticism. When he overthrew the Scotch, and "had the execution of them," he called it "a sweet mercy," vouchsafed to him by God, to whom he devoutly ascribed the glory. After mentioning his victory at Dunbar, where there were about "three thousand Scotch slain," he added: "It is easy to say the Lord hath done this."

It will thus be seen that my statement that bigotry has been the perpetual curse of the Churches is supported by the facts of history, and it is to be hoped that "A Broad-minded Christian" will be convinced that my charge is far from being, as he supposed, false.

CHARLES WATTS.

Reason or Love?

A NEWSPAPER reviewer who lately criticised an essay of mine considered that my attitude towards Christianity was too exclusively rational, and that I almost entirely overlooked the force of affection in religious and social development. Reason (so he argued in effect) is good, but love is yet more essential as a civilising force; and, while Rationalism satisfies philosophers, it will never comfort the masses. The question is quite a legitimate one to raise, and is of real interest. And, to come to the point at once, I should say that there is no natural antagonism at all between reason and love. There ought, indeed, to be the closest alliance. More than that, there is an essential connection between them. You cannot truly reason on human affairs (I am not dealing at all with physical science) without love; neither can you truly love without reason. It may seem strange to say that you cannot reason without love, but it is certainly true when (as I had better repeat) we are dealing with human affairs. Imagine, for a moment, that mothers retained all their ordinary physical capacities, and yet lost all sense of personal and magnetic affection towards their babes. They might endeavor to meet the wants of their offspring out of consideration for the needs of the race. They might hold conferences on the nature and requirements of the newly-born; they might compare the results of observation and experiment, and take infinite pains in recording successes and failures in the more or less scientific treatment adopted. Nevertheless, a majority of the babies would die, and those that remained would be a devitalised tribe, malformed by irrational nurture. The mothers would fail because they did not perceive all the facts, and they would miss many of the facts through sheer lack of loving penetration. Love divines, love prophesies, love foresees, love has a marvellous wit of its own, love is an instrument of research far subtler than any means ever yet devised by the brain of the philosopher or mechanician. No science can operate without instruments of observation and test. The science of human culture is helpless without the aid of this unique instrument of love. What I have said of maternal affection applies, with modifications, to yet wider realms of experience. It even applies to politics; and politics, taken in its best sense, is the most extensive of human interests. Statesmanship of the really great order (quite setting aside the merely clever card-playing of a Richelieu, Bismarck, or Chamberlain) rests on sympathy with the ideas, habits, and aspirations of people at home and people afar. Whether a God could govern a universe of living creatures without love I know not; for I neither understand nor believe in Gods. I am sure no man or woman, no master of learning, no captain of industry, no leader of whatsoever kind, can reason with precision and effectiveness on the daily doings, sufferings, and motives of humankind without an abiding

sense of love by which to interpret all that is seen and heard.

On the other hand, reason has several functions to perform in what may be called the administration of love. It will control the love impulse. It will teach the genuine meaning of such a phrase as the Enthusiasm of Humanity. How absurd it appears when we are invited to love a race which contains so many charlatans, fools, and bigots. Yet it is not fundamentally absurd. What is the humanity which we can wisely love? It is that part of humanity which develops the sense of justice and the noble qualities of sincerity, kindness, and honor. We do not, and we cannot, love the whole product of human nature, but we can love its sublimer features. Perhaps there is not a man or woman on earth whom we can entirely love, but we can love the worthier elements. The office of reason is to discriminate these elements, to choose which are to be encouraged and which to be repressed. A gentleman is known infallibly by his *considerateness* towards others. It is an excellent word—*considerateness*. It presents a double conception of love and reason. It implies that the man respects and cares for his fellow men, and still does not impulsively lavish favors; he considers, he reflects. The mother who loves unthinkingly is an enemy of her children and of social progress. Heroism itself is a vain thing, unless reason governs its passion and supplies a rational object of self-sacrifice. Love can only redeem the world under the supreme guidance of reason.

F. J. GOULD.

Rationalism.—IV.

REASON THE SUPREME GUIDE TO TRUTH AND THE ONLY INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY IN BELIEF AND PRACTICE.

(Continued from page 469.)

WITHOUT money neither love nor reason can fructify in this world, and the truth of this is illustrated and proved day after day. The truth of the matter is that any result that springs from, and is dependent upon, a number of causes cannot be ascribed to one more than another, but rather owes its existence to the joint action of them all, as, in the absence of any one of them, the result could not possibly be obtained. Therefore the poet-philosopher attaches equal importance to love and reason, and even money, for he knows that the excellencies of human life are impossible without the possession, the adequate development, and co-operation of them all. With these qualifications, then, we maintain that the place of reason is universal, and its authority is paramount. It must control and guide love, or love may lead us far astray. While love may move us to good deeds, yet without reason we cannot rightly perform them. The judge on the bench must use it correctly, or he will not be able to rule justly, however much his heart may love justice. The lawyer must use it correctly, or he will not be able to maintain the rights of his clients. The jury must use it rightly, or their verdict will not be true to the evidence, and either social justice or the rights of the defendant will be infringed. The statesman must use it correctly, or his policy will be a failure, and his country the victim. The physician must use it correctly, or his diagnosis and prognosis will be false, and, instead of curing his patient, he may kill him. The designer and builder must use it correctly, or their lofty fabrics may fall to pieces, killing all who put their trust in them. The theologian must use it correctly, or his theology will become the sport of school-boys and the contempt of philosophers, and his influence for good in society be next to nothing, as, indeed, we see it is. The philosopher must use it correctly, or his explanations and predictions will be inconclusive and valueless. In all the practical as well as theoretical affairs of life, from the smallest to the largest, some degree of reason is necessary, and without it man would not be able to shape a needle or forge an anchor. Indeed, without it he could not see any use for a needle or an anchor, and never would have invented them; in fact, without it he would not be man.

The authority of reason is paramount. We say it is the final court of appeal on all questions. Do we claim reason to be infallible, then? Yes; we claim it to be

infallible in its authority, though not always in its decisions. This seems paradoxical, yet it is true; for how are the mistakes of reason discovered? Only by the re-exertion and correct action of reason itself.

Reason may make mistakes, but only reason can correct them. Reason may make mistakes by acting too hastily, and on inadequate evidence, in which case reason will learn from experience that a mistake has been made. But our only court of appeal is from reason ill-informed and rashly used to reason rightly informed and carefully applied. The authority of reason, then, is paramount, and, in the last resort, is the only infallible court of appeal. What other can there be? A good Catholic might say, the Pope. But no Rationalist can believe that, and no Protestant either.

In one of his letters to his son Lord Chesterfield gave this excellent advice: "Common sense, which, indeed, is very uncommon, is the best sense I know of; abide by it—it will counsel you best. Read and hear for your amusement ingenious systems, nice questions subtly agitated with all the refinements that warm imagination can suggest; but consider them only as exertations for the mind, and always return to settle with common sense." By this use of common sense we understand him to mean the general application of the reasoning faculty to all matters of human interest, and to accept of that, and that only, which can meet with its authoritative confirmation.

If, therefore, Secularism can satisfy our reason or common sense, we must accept it; but if not, we must reject it; and so with Spiritualism and Materialism, and so with Individualism, and so with Socialism, and so with any other question under the sun. Protestant Christianity, with all its peculiar doctrines, must especially stand or fall as it is sustained or condemned by reason, for it admits the right of private judgment on its doctrines—that is, we are, on its own showing, entitled to use our own individual common sense in judging them, and, if they do not meet with our approval, to reject them. The Catholic Church is in a different case; it does not admit the right of private judgment on the doctrines of Christianity, but postulates an infallible Pope as the true interpreter of these doctrines, and as the true representative of the alleged founder of the Christian Church. Therefore, what the Catholic Church has to do is to satisfy our reason that the Pope's infallibility is real. Only when this is done can we reasonably come under his guidance. So that in every case, in practical matters and in doctrinal matters, in secular and in spiritual matters, in regard to Protestant claims and in regard to Catholic claims, reason must be satisfied. Where this has not been done, reason must reject them all as being contrary to its dictates and authority. The place of reason, then, is everywhere, and its authority paramount; and those who are possessed of it in an adequate degree, and use it honestly, reject the dogmas of Protestantism and the Pope's claim to infallibility, as they reject other forms of error, because they do not meet with the approval of reason, and are incapable of being confirmed by its supreme authority.

This authority of reason has caused us to reject the pretensions of Protestantism, as well as those of Catholicism; and, while we find a certain interest, and some profit, in reading and studying the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, still we claim to be allowed to exercise our private judgment—which is reason and common sense—as to their origin, authority, and meaning. As free thought, or private judgment, is the prerogative of man and woman, we demand the right to use it, and we allow the same right to others; and when we (the laity) all do this, then—

No minister, priest, or pope
Can have much scope
To give us nonsense for our hope.
But all will think the best they can,
And, doing so, will save each man
From ignorance—his greatest ban.
For evil is wrought for want of thought
As well as want of heart;
And reason into action put
Shall be his future glory's root.

We hope we have now said enough to convince you that reason has a place in all human affairs, and that its authority is paramount.

J. MACDOUGALL.

(To be concluded.)

Echoes from Everywhere.

FROM THE BARD OF AVON.

It has become quite a usual thing to see church services announced in this style: "Good music. Hearty singing. Bright, brief addresses." The sinister word "sermon" is wholly dispensed with; we are invited to hear *addresses*, which are rendered the more alluring by their *brevity*. This is "giving the show away" with a vengeance. What should we think of an amusement caterer who laid stress upon the brevity of his entertainment? Should we not be inclined to doubt his sanity, or the quality of his fare? It was a notable prescience that enabled Shakespeare to write, some centuries ago:—

A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play.
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious.

And I make bold to think that these "brief" addresses are somewhat tedious, despite their brevity.

FROM THE N. S. S. CONFERENCE.

At the recent Glasgow Conference a telegram of greeting was received from the Belgian Freethinkers, who were also assembled in congress.

Now, had a Baptist or Wesleyan Conference received such a message, we should at once have known that missionaries of those denominations had been at work in Belgium. But Freethought requires no such aids. Scepticism arises naturally and spontaneously wherever freedom and culture exist. It is universal, simply because truth is universal.

How long would the Christians have to wait before their dogmas arose spontaneously in men's minds?

FROM THE "ARMY."

Some people find material for comfort in the successes of their relatives. They will confide to you, with evident pride, the fact that their uncle is so-and-so, and will mention, in an admirably casual way, what their brother happens to be worth in landed property. But it is only very foolish people who do this. Even the Salvation Army man is wiser in his generation. He places himself under the limelight, before a background of Egyptian blackness. But even with the aid of religion (which is limelight to the "General"), and of the background of his alleged past, he is not exactly a paragon of brightness. Yet the contrast makes him passable.

There is the fool who would screen his own littleness by describing the attainments of his grandmother. And there is the humbug who strives to lessen his present laxity by exaggerating his past wickedness. A little sense and a little honesty would mend them both.

FROM HOLY SPAIN.

They have a solemn way of playing the fool at Madrid. On the Eve of St. John's Day the populace assemble around a huge fountain at the Plaza. When midnight is sounded, those who have managed to secure a place near the water duck their heads therein simultaneously. This secures good luck for twelve calendar months—which may account for the fact that last year the crush was so great that several people had an involuntary bath.

The Spanish maidens desirous of marriage take jugs with them; and, as the clock strikes, they besprinkle the nearest man, whose name is always that of their future spouse, whom they will meet during the ensuing year. When the douche happens to fall upon one who is not in the secret, the scene is extremely funny. While he shakes himself, and swears accompaniment, the blushing damsel asks in a sweet, entreating voice: "What is your name, Señor? Do tell me your name!" And we may imagine the reply: "Name be damned! Give me a towel!"

E. R. WOODWARD.

Exposed!

"Those new neighbors humiliated me dreadfully to-day."
"How?"

"Why, they sent over to borrow our Bible. Said they had forgotten theirs when they moved. And I'm almost sorry I let 'em take it."

"But why?"

"Because it doesn't look as if it ever had been used."—
Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Meditations.

I AM a Christian, and it is my trade
To rescue sinners' precious souls from hell.
How many have I rescued? Shall I tell?
No! nor what sum per annum I've been paid!

I've told the Lord his duty oft and oft,
And, though I speak in deep humiltee,
He's not despised a hint or two from me;
Talents like mine are prized by One aloft!

I love to lead some wanderer to the Cross,
And with him at its blessed foot to pray,
Reiterating Kipling's "Pay, pay, pay!"—
Perchance he "forketh"; still, it is but dross.

I love to take a dear one by the hand—
A maiden fair, methinks, I do prefer;
And to explain the love of Christ to her,
Whilst—ah! you worldlings cannot understand!

I love at times to leave the rural "kirk,"
And mingle with my fellows in the mart;
Thanking the Holy One with all my heart
That it was not decreed that I should work.

Lastly, I love to hear my mellow voice
Proclaiming things I know not ought about.
Some day, mayhap, my "flock" will find me out:
Meantime, I draw my stipend—and rejoice.

JOHN YOUNG.

Acid Drops.

THE great question, "Is Betting a Sin?" still engages the attention of the readers of the *Church Times*. No one, so far, has been able to discover any Scriptural prohibition. Our previous remarks, therefore, still hold good. The Rev. A. C. Taylor says he has for thirty years taught, and still desires to teach, as a general proposition, that gambling is immoral. "There is a transfer of property, and that neither by theft, nor by free gift, nor by exchange." It will be seen that the Rev. Taylor admits that the transfer is not by theft. He disposes, therefore, of the argument of Dr. Horton that betting is prohibited by the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal."

There is, of course, a "transfer of property"; but it is by consent and arrangement—and the questions of theft, free gift, and exchange do not enter into the matter at all. Each person—the one who bets and the other who takes his bet—agrees to abide by a certain event. It is a perfectly voluntary act on the side of the one who bets, and it is open to the man on the other side whether he takes the bet or not. There is, therefore, no element of thievery about the transaction itself. Upon the general ethics of gambling much may be said. The question is wide, and embraces not only the greater part of Stock Exchange transactions, but a not inconsiderable section of commercial dealings. But the point raised is: Do the Scriptures prohibit betting—or, indeed, speculation *per se* at all?

Rev. A. C. Taylor says: "It is sinful to gamble, because it is written, 'Thou shalt not covet.'" But then every-one in this world of strife and competition is coveting and struggling for something. Are there not many in the Rev. Taylor's church who are coveting comfortable livings—canonries, deaneries, bishoprics, archbishoprics? Perhaps they call their ambitions by another name; but the desire is all the same.

"A Churchwarden" contributes a sensible letter to the *Church Times* controversy. He says: "It seems a curious thing to be writing to a Church paper in anything but terms of denunciation about betting; but the letter on this subject in your last issue from 'A Sporting Parson' is so full of common sense that it is well worth following up. It is a pity when good people—well-meaning, but absolutely ignorant of the system of betting, and prejudiced—talk arrant and rank nonsense about it, as if moral and financial ruin must follow the man who indulges in what, perhaps, Sir, all your readers will not understand, as 'a mild flutter'—i.e., a moderate bet or two."

The "mild flutter" of this Churchwarden does not cover the undoubted evils of gambling and betting. The Bishop of Hereford, who is on the House of Lords Committee on betting, may not approve of the "Churchwarden's" views. But, to repeat a suggestion of last week, does he not feel that Christ would have done well to drop a hint on the matter before he made that quite too hasty ascent to the realms of glory?

There is yet another letter on this subject to the *Church*

Times. The writer cannot agree with the "Sporting Parson" that there are "many sensible, well-balanced men" who are accustomed to betting. But he says: "I am inclined to agree with him in doubting the force of the usual argument against the practice—viz., that the winner pockets gains unlawfully acquired. It is impossible to eliminate the quality of chance from any money transaction. Industry may help a successful butcher or tailor, but it may also help a successful gambler. We may object to 'corners' and 'strikes,' but there is nothing dishonest about them. 'Bulls' and 'bears' are not thieves and robbers. Nor is the man who exercises his wit upon the racecourse, or upon football and cricket, and backs his opinions with his money, making any dishonest gain when he wins, however foolish may be the person who has lost."

When Price Hughes went to Monte Carlo, and of course visited the "gambling hell," he came back with one of his usual cock-and-bull stories. This time he didn't copy it all out of *Murray's Handbook*, as Canon MacColl accuses him of doing in regard to Golgotha and the "Holy Sepulchre." He found the atmosphere stiling, and someone told him that "the exclusion of fresh air is a part of the policy of the institution." The closeness of the atmosphere tended, he thought, to that "sluggishness of mind and conscience which is favorable to the gambling frenzy."

The absurdity of this is obvious. "Sluggishness of mind" is a perfectly nonsensical phrase as applied to the habitués and visitors who are racking their brains on "systems" and the calculation of chances. He says, "I never saw such depressed wretches," speaking of all whom he saw. But how could that be? They weren't all losers. He says that "all looked more or less dazed."

Evidently no one was more dazed than the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, whose account of Monte Carlo is a jumble of absurdities. Some friend of the Anti-Gambling League has raked up these reminiscences of Price Hughes's with the suggestion that they should now be printed and circulated. We should rather think that Mr. Price Hughes would prefer to let them rest.

From several American papers we learn that the Dowieites were mobbed at Evanston, Ill., on July 10. Mob law is always to be deprecated; but what is more astonishing than the violence of the residents is the fact that the Mayor is said to have ordered out the fire brigade, and turned the hose on the Dowieite missionaries! We haven't the least sympathy with the Dowieites; but persecution will do them good instead of harm, and one would rather not see them elevated to the position of martyrs.

Rev. Alfred M. W. Christopher writes from St. Aldate's Rectory, Oxford, thanking the editor of the *Evangelical News* for drawing attention to the way in which "God was publicly dishonored" by the performance of the Elizabethan Stage Society at the Charterhouse. He says: "Whether your protest in the *News* of July 19, in the first leading article, against a theatrical performance in which 'the High Father of Heaven and Death' take prominent parts, is effectual or not, we are sure that our Lord will say respecting it: 'He hath done what he could.' He will repeat this if you reprint the protest and spread it abroad."

This Oxford rector undertakes rather recklessly to say what Christ will do when he sees the protest of the *News*. Query: Is there a celestial Press Cuttings Agency? But will the Rev. Christopher, who talks about "prominent parts," say whether he has in mind the "back parts" referred to in Exodus xxxiii. 20-23?

Dr. Fairbairn says that when he was a young minister he pleaded that amusements should be made Christian. Now he thinks the modern tendency is to make Christianity amusing. Precisely; except that Christianity does not require so much "making," being rather built that way.

An American sculptor of the name of Partridge has recently returned from the Holy Land. He went to seek a model for the face of Christ. He says: "I had looked everywhere for an idea of his face in the people that we met. Once I saw it—the type that was forming in my mind. Two peasants we passed on the road in Samaria had the features, but lacked the refinement and power of presence that should go with it. I can see the face of Christ very plainly indeed. It is the face of a man of kingly presence, of great and commanding personality, wise, benign, tender, but strong. The brow is high, the eyes are deep set and luminous, with a peculiar tenderness and modesty in their frankness. The eyebrows are well marked, and almost straight in line; the nose gently aquiline, and not too thin; the cheeks not worn and hollow, as we see in ascetics; you see lines of suffering, but the face is not anæmic, as shown in many paintings. One can follow the modelling of the bones of the jaw. The beard is Nazarene and definite. The hair is divided in the centre, and falls naturally on either side. He wears an Oriental headdress."

Partridge says he could see all this in his mind's eye, but it was not until he had fever (and when he was delirious) that the face of Jesus "became definite" to him. Assuredly Mr. Partridge is not lacking in artistic imagination.

A cheap issue is announced of Dean Farrar's *Bible: Its Meaning and Supremacy*. It is unnecessary to review it again. The first thing, the author says, that the inquirer must bear in mind is that the Bible is "the selected and fragmentary remains of an extensive literature," and that the traditional dates and names of the writers of the various books are in many cases wholly wrong. The Pentateuch, for instance, "is a work of composite structure"; it "has been edited and re-edited several times," and it "contains successive strata of legislation." The Proverbs "consist of four or five different collections"; "three at least of the books of the prophets" are probably the work of "six or more different authors"; and the current idea of the Old Testament as a body of exclusively inspired writings dates only from the Synod of the Jews at Jamnia, held seventy years after the birth of Christ.

St. James's, Exeter, had an unusual visitor on Sunday. A large monkey escaped from Hancock's Show, which is pitched in an adjoining field, and was followed by a crowd of children. It eventually took refuge within the precincts of St. James's, where service was proceeding. Cautiously pushing open the door, he had a look round, and then beat a retreat. The service was too much for the visitor.

A Galashiels minister has been admonished by a local bailie to give up fanciful grievances and live at peace with his neighbors, following on a summons for assaulting a boy by slapping his face.

Mr. McArthur, a Liverpool M.P., has been visited with a great deal of censure in the Church newspapers for blocking the Southwark Bishopric Bill. Says one of these prints: "South London, as everyone knows, is in danger of becoming a district of heathens." We did not know that it was in such imminent peril. And we are not at all sure that spending money on a new bishopric will save it. Better secular teaching and social conditions, especially in the way of housing, might avert the danger. But, in any case, with so many clergy already in the field, the funds necessary for maintaining a bishop and his palace might easily be better applied.

The Local Government Board have just issued a memorandum for the guidance of Guardians and infirmary authorities on the subject of religious services in sick wards. Some kind of instruction—or we should prefer to say, restriction—is certainly needed. It is no uncommon thing for nurses and religious visitors to give out such hymns as "Shall we meet beyond the river?" "Going to heaven to die no more?" and "Is there room for Mary there?" To set sick persons speculating on how long their illness is going to last is not very likely to quicken their recovery.

A woman, who is a follower of Dowie, has lost, says the *Boston Investigator*, ten of her twelve children in the last ten years. They have all died under Dowie and the elders of his church. Not one of them had medical attendance. The woman appears satisfied with the result. She says: "Where Dowie is powerless what is the use talking of doctors?" There seems to be no cure for religion.

A terrible storm having burst over the village of Palan (France), some children went to ring the church bells, in the belief that they would thus avert the lightning. The bellry, however, was struck, four of the children being killed and four others and a woman seriously injured.

The Lord allowed the whole side of a new Wesleyan chapel which was being built at Totnes to collapse. No one was hurt, but there will be considerable expenditure entailed by the rebuilding. Still the pious will exclaim: "Blessed is the name of the Lord!"

Rev. John Kemp has been preaching at Southsea on Materialism. He says Christ never came into the world to save animal organisms. It would not have been "worth his while" to have renounced the splendors of heaven for the benefit of mere animals. Genesis said that God breathed into man the breath of life, but it did not say that he did the same to animals. Then the preacher went on to retail the old fiction that the Materialist must necessarily become a prey to despair, and might end with suicide. But what are the facts? How many of the cases of suicide reported from week to week are suicides of Materialists or Freethinkers? Do not nearly all the suicides leave letters containing pious allusions to God?

The York coroner thinks there is something to be said for the old-fashioned law that a man who commits suicide should be taken to four road-ends and buried with a stake through his body. No doubt something might be said for many kinds of ancient barbarity, as, for instance, the treatment of witches.

It might be said that that treatment was founded on Biblical teaching. But we have, at any rate, progressed beyond that phase of superstition, and are hardly likely to revert to the senseless practice of offering indignity to a suicide's body, even to please the pious coroner of York.

The announcement of his marriage by the Rev. E. A. Cantrell, of the First Christian Church of Washington, Ind., was a shock to his congregation, because it had been kept secret; but that was nothing, says the New York *Truthseeker*, to the upheaval which resulted from his farewell sermon. Then the young minister declared he was a non-believer in much that the Bible contains. He referred to himself as a "doubting Thomas," and said he did not believe the world was made in six days, the Bible story of the Flood, or that the sun stood still. The story of the whale swallowing Jonah, he said, was ridiculous. He closed by saying he was done with conventional ministry. There is plenty of room for Brother Cantrell on the breezy common of the universe.

At Dunoon every Sunday a fierce struggle has been going on between the Clyde trippers and the Town Council. Certain of the Sabbatarian residents object to the influx of trippers on the Sabbath, and have carried their opposition so far as to erect barriers to keep them out, while the latter, on their part, have met the difficulty by bringing ladders to climb them.

Torquay is remarkable for possessing three churches that have been diverted from the purposes for which they were built. An old Congregational church is now a brewery store; a Baptist chapel has become a sale-room; while another is used as a drill-hall.

The *British Weekly* thinks the ordinary sermon might be interesting if one half were omitted. "All I have to say about this sermon," said a famous preacher to a student who had preached before him, "is that one half should be omitted, and it does not matter which half."

It is estimated that in the British Isles there are 15,000,000 persons who fail to attend a place of public worship. And no wonder, considering the kind of pabulum provided in the national conventicles.

Mrs. Goldstein, a widow, living in New York, told her friends that the spirit of her husband had visited her, assuring her that he was happy in the other world, and wished her to join him. She inhaled gas, and died.

After the friends of the Rev. W. G. Brooker, of Kearney, had buried him, and explained that his suicide was caused by headache arising from overwork, word came from Grand Island, in the same State, that the reverend gentleman was charged with bastardy and in the hands of the law when he took his own life.

A resident in Memphis, Tenn., entertains curious notions as to the relative criminality of swearing and murder. Because a neighbor named A. H. Palmer used profane language in the presence of a lady, William Nolan shot him dead.

A Jesuit priest declares in an interview, published in the *Liberté*, that as a result of the Associations Bill becoming law the Jesuits will probably take up their domicile in England, whence the noviciate of the Order is about to be transferred. The Benedictines of Solesmes have already sent their library to Farnborough.

The *Christian Herald*, of New York, is raising a fund to relieve the starving in China. As the conditions it seeks to alleviate are the results of looting and massacres of the "Christian" powers, assisted by the missionaries, the *Christian Herald* should know where to send its appeals.—*The Star*, San Francisco.

A remarkable book has recently appeared in Germany, written by Count von Hoensbroech. It is a powerful arraignment of Rome, written by a man who was educated by the monks from his ninth year, a German nobleman, who, after studying law, and much travel, entered the Jesuit order in his twenty-sixth year. For thirteen years he sought to accept burning of heretics, celibacy, intolerance, till in his fortieth year he found himself a deluded man; he must either leave the system of horrors, or be torn to pieces by it. He left it in 1893, and now begins to show the reason why.

Business is starting up at the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre, near Quebec, on the St. Lawrence river. They have there the forefinger and a piece of the wristbone of the grandmother of God, and also "a most precious fragment of rock

extracted from the room of St. Anne in Jerusalem." These relics are believed to have great efficacy in the healing of diseases, provided the mystagogue in attendance is liberally tipped. We should like, says the New York *Truthseeker*, to see a curing competition between St. Anne and the Rev. John Alexander Dowie, Mrs. Eddy to challenge the winner.

The *British Weekly* calls attention to the articles on marriage in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and points out that it is hinted by the writers that St. Paul's ethics of marriage are not the ethics of present-day Protestantism. For itself the *Weekly* adds: "We might quote many assertions to the effect that St. Paul's view of marriage is the ideal view. It may be so. What we wish to point out is that it is not the ideal view of modern times. In the loftiest spiritual conceptions of the modern mind the wife stands above the husband as an object for his worship, higher than he, purer, loftier of soul, more forgiving, more tender, more holy. This is not St. Paul's view."

Dr. Parker is very frank in regard to the contributions by the "faithful" to the "Lord's work." He says: "If we were to prepare a list of benefactions, giving on the one side the offerings of Christians and on the other the offerings of non-professors, I should not be surprised if, for the public good, rich worldlings have not given quite as much as rich Christians." Then he exclaims: "What an infinite shame! What an affront to the love that gave us the Cross!" This seems to suggest that, according to Dr. Parker, the public good and the promotion of the Christian faith are things quite apart, which has long been contended by the adherents of Secular principles.

The ceremony of conferring red hats on the new cardinals took place in the Sala Delle Benedizioni, Rome, in the presence of all the cardinals, bishops, prelates, diplomats, functionaries of the Vatican, Roman nobility, etc. The Editor of the *Freethought Magazine*, in congratulating the cardinals on their new red hats, observes: "What they now need is heads with some brains in them."

Rev. Dr. N. D. Hillis says that twenty years ago the leading professor in a certain institution always spoke of evolution as the theory of "devolution," and now, by a singular coincidence, not a single professor in that great college but reverently and joyfully teaches the very theory that once its founder scored. Already the time has come when almost everybody exclaims: "Evolution—certainly; why, I always believed in evolution."

A Pacific Coast attorney, who prides himself upon his way of handling Chinese witnesses, was defending a railway damage case. The lawyer is a trifle near-sighted, and failed to notice, when a certain Chinese witness came upon the stand, that his clothing was of finer texture than that of the ordinary coolie. This dialogue ensued: "What is your name?"—"Kee Lung." "You live in San Francisco?"—"Yes." "You sabe God?"—"Mr. Attorney, if you mean, 'Do I understand the nature of the deity?' I will say that Thursday evening next I shall address the State Ministerial Association on the subject of 'The Evolution of the Idea of God,' and shall be pleased to have you attend." When order was restored, the examination proceeded on ordinary lines; but to the day of his death the lawyer will never cease to be asked: "You sabe God?"

Waiting for the Lord to Provide.

"THE Lord'll provide," he said,
And sat around;
While others pushed on ahead,
And sought and found,
He waited in idleness.
"The Lord'll provide, I guess,"
He said when the grey wolf prowled,
And "The Lord'll provide, I guess,"
He said when the wild wind howled
Like a fiend unbound.

"The Lord'll provide," he said
When they came and found
The rags on the broken bed,
Where he tossed around;
He that waited in idleness
Said, "The Lord'll provide, I guess,"
As they looked and sighed—
"The Lord'll provide, I guess —"
And the Lord did, at last, provide—
A hole in the ground. S. E. SISER

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September, Athenæum Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

ALL communications for Mr. Charles Watts in reference to lecturing engagements, etc., should be sent to him at 24 Carminia-road, Balham, S.W. If a reply is required, a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed.

F. J. GOULD writes: "I am sorry for the conflict between you and Mr. Anderson. I have received kindnesses at his hand, and have nothing to say against him so far as I am concerned. But I also think the cause of progress owes you very considerable debts, and I take this opportunity of expressing my own sense of those debts." Mr. Gould adds that the bankruptcy forced upon us is not likely to do us any injury in the opinion of Freethinkers; at any rate, we have the good wishes of the party in Leicester.

C. SIMMONS.—The verses you send us, entitled "The Parson's Idol," were printed by us a great many years ago as a *Freethinker* Tract. We believe Miss Vance can still supply copies.

J. HERRINGTON.—Yes, it is amusing, and something more too, to read the list you enclose of Generals who have received, and are receiving, vast sums of money from the nation. We have fought very different battles, and our reward after thirty years of incessant struggle, except during the year that we were a prisoner of war, is—well, what you see.

H. GILL.—"Sweet are the uses of adversity," said the Master. Well, it has some uses, and the sweetest of them is learning the power of human sympathy.

ONE whose name we would not reveal sends us a very touching and manly letter. He admits that he was misled, and that he misjudged us some years ago. He takes this opportunity to express his regret—and of course, as far as we are concerned, the misunderstanding is cast into oblivion. "I have always been," this correspondent adds, "a subscriber to the *Freethinker* ever since I joined the movement in 1886, and I have always admired your splendid services to the cause of Freethought. And I cannot stand by and see you assailed in the diabolical fashion adopted by Mr. George Anderson."

L. W. WILLIS.—We cannot tell you—no one can tell you—exactly when a periodic day of rest originated; but it is at least as old as the ancient civilisations of Babylon and Egypt. The Sun's Day was a day of rest and recreation under Pagan Rome before the Christian Era. The early Christians simply took advantage of it for their own religious assemblies. By-and-bye they called it the Lord's Day, and eventually said they had invented it. But the very name of Sun's Day or Sunday still shows its Pagan origin.

JOHN BLAND, sending his promised subscription to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, after doing what he could for the Freethought Publishing Company, expresses his admiration of the work that Mr. Foote has done for the movement, and adds: "My view of Mr. Anderson for some time has been that of a man offering money to build castles in the air."

DORCAS HARRIS suggests that if Mr. Anderson admires the Salvation Army so much he should join it. To Mr. Foote she says: "Good luck to you. You are made of the right stuff."

F. WHATCOTT.—You speak truly. False friends are the greatest bane of life. "God save me from my friends," cried a knight of the days of old; "my own right arm will save me from my enemies."

MANY YEARS' READER.—It is not a question merely of finding £200 to pay Mr. Anderson. If he received that money, he could not release us. He has placed the matter out of his hands as well as out of ours. It is in the hands of other persons absolutely now. And creditors who are waiting, and content to wait, cannot help themselves either when their debtor is forced into the Bankruptcy Court. You must also remember that Mr. Anderson has still a part of his suit pending—namely, the claim for £167 interest, which he has not foregone. He has also a bill of legal costs against us.

R. P. EDWARDS.—Very glad to see you are upholding the traditions of our cause at Chatham. Let Miss Vance know how you stand as to the legal expenses.

G. FREEMAN hopes we shall be able to say "All's well that ends well."

CLODHOPPER.—We recognise your handwriting. Pray accept our thanks.

W. ROGERS, writing to Mrs. Foote, says: "I trust that all will come right with Mr. Foote at the finish. Indeed, I think it is a good thing it has happened. We shall all appreciate him the more."

JOHN HINDLE, a veteran Freethinker, in his eightieth year, writes: "I sympathise very deeply with you in your present difficulties, and regret that the financial crisis has been brought about by one who should be your best friend. I fancy it is not all Mr. Anderson's doing. There must be some sinister influence at work upon him, and I should like to know what it is."

W. APPLEBY trusts that we shall be "victorious against such un-English vindictive action."

S. HOLMES, sending a second donation to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, writes: "I am somewhat disappointed that the call for help has not been more generously responded to, and can only think that the rank and file do not do their duty.....My confidence in you has never wavered, and I feel that the donation I send is but feeble thanks for the great pleasure and profit I have received from reading your delightful and masterly writings. I glory in your work and the way you do it, and I strongly hope the Freethinkers will make a big rally round you now."

ANONYMOUS busybodies who send us stupid malicious letters just now are warned that their letters go into the waste-basket. For the rest, their insults do not rise to the level of our disdain.

H. PERCY WARD.—We hope your brief holiday will do you much good. When you return to work send us a note of your projects up to date.

F. E. WILLIS.—Thanks for cuttings.

E. EVELIN.—Yes, you can order through the Freethought Publishing Company any books published by the *Truthseeker* Company, New York.

J. BARRY would be "pleased to see a practical effort made to provide the President of the N. S. S. with a regular yearly income, irrespective of who the President should be."

TWO CLIFTON ADMIRERS write: "It was with feelings of deep sympathy, and, at the same time, of indignation, that we heard of your trouble, and our resentment was rendered keener when we found that the cause of it was a member of our own household of Freethought. It is now the time for your true friends to declare themselves, and if they feel about it as we do they will snatch at the opportunity to help you as far as they can, if only in gratitude to you for the good you have done for the cause which is so dear to us all."

N. S. S. CHILDREN'S PARTY.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Grace Murrell, 10s.; A Freethinker, 2s.; G. C., 1s.

TWENTIETH CENTURY FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—H. L., £2.

R. CHAPMAN.—Our warmest thanks are due to the South Shields Branch for its second list of subscriptions to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, amounting to £2 14s. 6d. We hope your bright example will inspire some slower Branches to more active sympathy. Anyhow, we shall not forget you in the days to come. "These are the times that try men's souls," as Paine said, and the test will show us who are our friends.

T. HOPKINS.—Miss Vance has handed us your letter. You are a humorist with a warm heart.

W. MUIR and J. WALKER.—Yours is "a mite," you say. Perhaps so, but the moral value lies in the heart behind it.

T. ROBERTSON, secretary, Glasgow Branch, sending a donation to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, explains that he is late because he has been holidaying in an out-of-the-way part of Scotland.

R. GREEN.—Thanks for your sympathetic letter.

A. G. LYE, on behalf of the Coventry Branch, sends 10s. 6d. to the Fund for Mrs. Foote, partly in recognition of the fact that Mr. Foote did not charge the Branch, consisting as it does of poor members, anything for his expenses in visiting and lecturing in Coventry in April. Mr. Lye hopes the value of Mr. Foote's home and books will not be run up vindictively in order to prevent Mrs. Foote from becoming the purchaser. He also thinks the Freethought party is entitled to know *what* sinister influence has been brought to bear on Mr. Anderson. "They applaud the great dead," he says, "and malign the living leader."

J. ELLIS.—Unfortunately we have not time to write this week on the subject of the Company formed to acquire the Alexandra Hall, Liverpool, for the use of the local N. S. S. Branch. We desire to say, however, that we hope the Shares will all be taken up forthwith. It is good to hear that 175 of the 400 Shares are subscribed already. This should be a chance for the £15,000 gentlemen.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Progressive Thinker—People's Newspaper—Crescent—Psyche—La Raison—Two Worlds—Neues Leben—Licensed Victuallers' Sporting Gazette (Cape Town)—Boston Investigator—Secular Thought (Toronto)—Portsmouth Evening News—South Essex Mail—Yorkshire Evening Post—The Housing Question—Islington Daily Gazette—Public Opinion (New York)—Truthseeker (New York)—Lucifer (Chicago)—Free Society (Chicago)—Workers' Republic (Dublin).

THE National Secular Society's office is at 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 1 Stationers' Hall Court, Ludgate Hill, E.C.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. Special terms for repetitions.

Personal.

I REFERRED last week to a resolution of the Board of the Freethought Publishing Company, which had been communicated to Mr. George Anderson. I also stated that the message from the Board was a direct and formal appeal to his sense of honor; but that, instead of treating it in that light, he had placed it in the hands of his solicitors.

It is now necessary to go into the matter more fully. I shall, therefore, with the Board's authority, put the Freethought party—or the vast majority of it who read the *Freethinker*—in possession of the full text of this document. It ran as follows:—

The Board of Directors of the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, hereby resolves to place the following statement on its records, and to publish the same, if necessary, for the information of all concerned.

1. This Company was formed with Mr. George Anderson as one of its founders and one of its first Directors.

2. Mr. George Anderson was publicly announced, by Mr. Foote, the vendor and promoter, as having promised to subscribe 500 Shares in the undertaking; and that announcement, repeated week by week for months, undoubtedly influenced other persons who gave promises of support.

3. Mr. Anderson did not repudiate his announced promise at the time, but allowed the Company to be registered, and a large number of persons to apply legally for Shares, on the understanding that he intended to perform the said promise, and that the amount of £500, or some approximate sum, would be his contribution to the working capital of the Company.

4. Mr. Anderson only applied for 25 Shares in all, and he now appears to repudiate the promise made by Mr. Foote on his behalf and ostensibly with his authorisation.

5. Such a large amount of capital as £500 is of very great importance in so small an undertaking, and it is felt that the Shareholders of the Company have a serious interest in the matter. They have been deceived by someone, and it is necessary to decide by whom.

6. The Board, having investigated the subject, has come to the conclusion that Mr. Foote's announcement of Mr. Anderson's intention to take the aforesaid Shares in the Company was not only made in good faith, but was made with Mr. Anderson's authorisation; that authorisation being not merely verbal, but formal, in Mr. Anderson's own handwriting.

7. The Board, therefore, representing all the Shareholders, calls upon Mr. Anderson to redeem his pledge, and to contribute his honest share to the working capital of the Company. Should he not do so—which the Board can scarcely believe, when he realises all the facts of the case—it will be the duty of the Board to convene a special meeting of the Shareholders, with a view to eliciting a general resolution on the question of Mr. Anderson's relations to the Company.

(Signed)

CHARLES WATTS	} Directors.
C. COHEN	
JAMES NEATE	
G. W. FOOTE (Chairman).	
E. M. VANCE (Secretary).	

Mr. Anderson's solicitors acknowledged, on his behalf, the receipt of a copy of this resolution, and asked for copies of the documents referred to in it. Miss Vance, as secretary of the Freethought Publishing Company, replied that the documents had already been in their hands, and that copies had been supplied to them in the course of the action of *Anderson v. Foote*. Mr. Anderson's solicitors then sent another letter, making no reference whatever to the documents previously in question, but asking for copies of other documents, including a complete list of the persons who originally applied for Shares in the Company, and the dates of their allotments. This extraordinary request was naturally refused. The Company was not going to give its secretary days of extra labor for Mr. Anderson's information or amusement. But as his solicitors might be simply seeking a shelter for him, based on what they might be pleased to call "refusal

of information," they were told that, while copies of the documents would not be made at the Company's cost, the *originals* could be seen by appointment at the Company's office.

During this curious correspondence Mr. Anderson (through his solicitors) was "considering" his answer to the Board's first communication. That is to say, a wealthy gentleman, who had extensively advertised his ability to donate £15,000, was "considering" what reply he should make to a solemn call upon him to fulfil a long-standing public pledge of his to the extent of only £500. And the "considering" was done through the medium of his solicitors; perhaps because they had informed him that the matter was too serious for mere evasion.

That message from the Board to Mr. Anderson was meant to be an appeal to his conscience. It was, however, drawn up very carefully, with an eye upon all the essential facts of the case; and, as it stands, I can quite see that, even if it does not affect Mr. Anderson's conscience, it is calculated to carry alarm into another part of his nature.

I do not propose to say any more on this point at present; but I may have to say a good deal more about it later on, and perhaps something may be said about it elsewhere than in the columns of the *Freethinker*.

Meanwhile I wish to say, not on the Board's account, but on my own, that Mr. Anderson has placed himself in a very awkward position. For the moment, I do not say legally, but morally. It is idle for him to assert now that he did not promise to take Shares in the Freethought Publishing Company. What he could assert when there was nothing but my word, and his own silence, to prove the validity of the announcement I made in his name, is no longer possible. *We have now his promise in his own handwriting.* Well then, he either meant to take the Shares or he did not. If he *did* mean to take them, he has to explain why he went back upon his word. To say that he had lost confidence in me is easy enough, but it does not meet the case. Why did he leave all the supporters of the Company in the lurch? Why did he leave them fancying that he was good for five hundred pounds when he was only good for twenty-five? Why did he let them put down their money on the faith that he was putting down his, and keep his own money in his pocket all the time? That is what Mr. Anderson has to explain to the Shareholders. But if, on the other hand, he *did not* mean to take those Shares, every honest man will know what to think of him. For, in that case, he was doing something more than making a false promise, likely to deceive others to their disadvantage. It must be remembered that he had an evident *interest* in the formation of the Company. Even if he took Shares only to the amount of his old advances to me, such Shares in a registered Company, with a considerable if inadequate capital, would be better worth having than acknowledgments of indebtedness from me personally. But he did not take those Shares. What he did was to take a payment of £100 from me; and then, instead of using the money to purchase Shares at least to that amount, he put the cash in his pocket, said my payment had nothing at all to do with Shares, and took advantage of it to revive a debt which was legally barred by the Statute of Limitations. Thus he gained £100 for certain, and, had I been more pliable or opulent, he might have gained not only £200 more, but also £167 which he claims as interest. It follows, therefore, that the case against Mr. Anderson wears on this side a very ugly appearance. I do not say that he has no sort of explanation. That is a point on which he must enlighten those concerned. But I do say that if, after *challenging* publicity by his action against me, he makes *no* explanation, judgment will go against him by default.

It is very curious, by the way, that Mr. Anderson failed me (and the party) once before for the same sum of £500. In 1895 I was making a desperate effort to retain the Hall of Science. Mr. R. O. Smith, the vendor, held a mortgage for £2,000 on the lease and furniture. Of this sum £500 had been paid off, and under pressure he agreed to take another £500 or so in full purchase of his interest in the concern. Mr. Anderson had talked a good deal about the necessity of having a memorial to Charles Bradlaugh—which the

Hall of Science was intended to be. I therefore put the matter to him, and he agreed to find the money to clear off the mortgage. This removed a mountain of anxiety from my mind, and I left London with a light heart. But almost as soon as my back was turned Mr. Anderson went back upon his word, and declined to find the £500 or so that would have completely changed the situation.

I now see that Mr. Anderson's contingent offer of £15,000 towards a Freethought Institute has come to nothing. When the offer was advertised (by payment) in the *Freethinker*, I was asked to say something about it. I did so, and I have said nothing about it since. One observation I made at that time was that Mr. Anderson was not likely to be called upon to write out that cheque. The project was poorly conceived, and badly broached, even if there had been a possibility of raising a second £15,000. But, as a matter of fact, there was no such possibility. The offer, therefore, was a perfectly safe one. I might have made it myself on the same conditions. Still, I was very glad, in one way, to see the offer in print. I laughed when I saw it. "Here," said I to myself, "is a man who is pursuing me to the uttermost for a debt of £200, and also claiming a Shylock interest of no less than £167. At the same time, he is repudiating his promise to take Shares in the Freethought Publishing Company. Moreover, he is steadily refusing to accept any adjustment of the conflict. Now I know that he is a rich man, as everybody (except fools) knows that I am a poor one. But other people may have their doubts about his wealth. They may be tempted to think, when they learn the facts of the case—as they will some day—that he must have wanted the money. Just at the psychological moment, however, he bursts upon the world with the public announcement that he can afford to give £15,000. How fortunate! What a lot of trouble it will save me! There is no need for me to assure the Freethought party that he is a rich man; they have his own assurance of the fact. And although the offer of £15,000, on such conditions, will probably not cost him much beyond the expenses of advertising, it may eventually cost him a good deal more in the way of reputation."

Such were my reflections when this £15,000 job was started; and I think it will be allowed that in this respect, at any rate, I was not altogether lacking in sagacity.

One part of the advertisement of this wonderful scheme was particularly nauseous. It nearly turned me sick, although I made no sign. I refer to the allusions to the sacred place in the unrealisable Institute that was to be dedicated to the memory of Charles Bradlaugh. Had it been possible for Charles Bradlaugh to read those allusions, they would either have aroused his anger and indignation, or have made him heave and vomit in his grave. Of all the cant and humbug I ever met with in my life I think this was the very worst.

But I must leave Mr. Anderson and his "trusted friends" for the present, and come to my own immediate concerns.

I have had to visit the Bankruptcy Offices in the natural course of things, and I must say it is a shocking ordeal. I see nothing to fear, but much to loathe. And not being a Christian, I make no pretence of being able to forgive the man who subjected me to this disgusting experience. I have a Christian creditor, who has not tried to make me bankrupt. That was reserved for a Freethinker, and one who has frequently lectured the Freethought party on its financial shortcomings and its want of generosity.

There is no immediate danger, I understand, in regard to my home. Matters will rest as they are until after the first meeting of my creditors—which will be a meeting of the size that Jesus Christ had in mind when he promised to be in the midst of them and to bless them.

During this interval, which will not be a long one, I hope my friends throughout the country will contribute what they can afford to the Fund for Mrs. Foote. I do not think they are likely to send more than is necessary; nor, if I may believe one half of the flattering things so kindly said by my numerous correspondents, do I think they will send more than I have some kind of reason to expect.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Fund for Mrs. Foote.

A. J. Fincken and Family, £5; C. Bowman, £1; Mrs. B. E. Marks, £1; A Well-Wisher, £2; F. Whatcott, 1s.; J. Pruett, 5s.; J. E. C., 1s.; Dorcas Harris, 5s.; A. F. Bullock, 2s.; J. E. P., 1s.; John Bland, 10s.; F. J. Gould, 5s.; C. C. Monk, 5s.; G. P., 2s. 6d.; Z. Guainazzi, 2s. 6d.; E. H., 2s. 6d.; D. Chapman, 1s.; R. Tyson, £2 2s.; Grace Murrell, £1 1s.; C. Cohen, 10s.; T. Gorniot, 10s.; H. J. Stace, 5s.; D. Powell, 5s.; Mrs. Dunbar, 1s.; Stamps, 1s.; H. Hardingham, 2s. 6d.; J. E. Stapelton, 5s.; A. S. Vickers, 2s. 6d.; W. M. M. D., £1; J. Herrington, 1s.; D. Jones, 10s.; T. Whiteley, 5s.; A Friend, per F. J. Gould, 5s.; Lindum, 10s.; W. Hopper, £2; J. Smith, 5s.; J. Millett, 5s.; R. Shaw, 2s. 6d.; T. Charlton, 2s.; T. Robertson, £2; R. Green, £1 1s.; W. Muir, 5s.; J. Walker, 5s.; R. Gibbon, 10s.; Mrs. Davis, 10s.; J. Thurlow, 5s.; C. A. S., 5s.; W. S. M., 5s.; D. Prosser, 4s.; J. Strachan, 4s.; M. G., 6s. 6d.; W. S., 1s.; S. Porter, 2s.; J. Kason, 1s.; A. C. Brown, 2s. 6d.; T. Hopkins, £1; J. F. Finn, £1; C. and R. Thomson, 2s. 6d.; J. Young, 5s.; Coventry Branch N. S. S., 10s. 6d.; Two Clifton Admirers, £1; W. Rowland, £1; J. Bullock, 2s. 6d.; J. Barry, 10s.; E. Evelin, 5s.; S. Holmes (second donation), £1; W. Appleby, 10s.; T. Gooday, 1s.; M. Dye, 3s.; John Hindle, £1; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; W. Rogers, 3s. 6d.; J. Menhinick, 5s.; Clodhopper, £1; G. Freeman, 10s.

Sugar Plums.

We have to thank the London *Star* for its kindly reference to our present trouble. Our contemporary appears to think that our long labors for the cause of Freethought have merited a very different reward.

The Bradford *Truthseeker* for August opens with a reprint of the speech Mr. Foote made at the Hall of Science breakfast on Monday morning, February 25, 1884, a few hours after his release from Holloway Gaol. The editor thinks it will be "read with great interest by Mr. Foote's admirers, both old and new." There is one sentence in it which is not unseasonable just at present: "The rogues ran me aground, but they never made me haul down the flag."

We are much pleased to see that Mr. John Grange, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, has accepted the presidency of the new Bradford Branch.

The *Boston Investigator* reproduces part of Mr. Foote's article on "A Pious Poet."

Mr. P. Shaughnessy has been calling attention in the *Glasgow Evening Times* to the paucity of Freethought works in the fine Mitchell Library. This is all the more regrettable as Mr. Mitchell, the founder of the Library, was himself a Freethinker. We hope Mr. Shaughnessy's letter will lead to an improvement.

The Christian Brigade were defeated at Mile-end Waste on Sunday morning, and were compelled to pitch their platform at a respectable distance from the Secularists'. Local "saints" are requested to support the Secular platform again to-day (August 4). The East London Branch meeting will be held on the second Sunday in August at the Stanley Temperance Bar, 7 High-street, Stepney. After the important Branch business is disposed of, Mr. G. Ware, the secretary of the Shop Assistants' Union, will read a paper, to be followed by discussion, on "The Early History of Trade Unionism."

Mr. R. P. Edwards has been fighting the battle of free speech at Chatham. It appears that the police objected to certain meetings at the corner of Mill-road; first the Secularists were worried, and then the Labor parties; but the advanced parties got their backs up, and as the meetings were persisted in the police proceeded against Mr. Edwards. We are glad to see from the press reports that the case against him was dismissed, on the ground that there could not really have been any "obstruction," as the police allowed religious meetings to take place unmolested on the very same spot.

Mr. H. Percy Ward delivered his farewell lectures at Birmingham on Sunday. He was in his best form, and his audiences were large and appreciative. General regret was expressed at his having to leave Birmingham, but it was hoped that his visit to the city would be as frequent as they would always be welcome.

Miss Budd—"Is an amethyst supposed to be unlucky?" Mrs. Malaprop—"Well, if he ain't he oughter be. Anybody that don't believe in God don't deserve to have any luck."—*Boston Investigator*.

Authority.

THIS has been the awe-inspiring and dreadful word which has done as much to enslave humanity as any other word of evil import known. It has chained and degraded thought, it has denounced inquiry, it has persecuted and punished freedom of opinion. And still to-day, where its arrogant assumptions are heeded, it continues to persecute and punish, not only by the infliction of judicial penalties, but, where these cannot now be used as aforetime, it fastens the suspicion, or the social stigma, or the "religious" sneer, or else the patronising pity of ecclesiastical forbearance or toleration for him who dares to think for himself, as though he were an object of proper compassion. "A good man, perhaps, but not quite right—not a safe guide, not a sound, submissive, unquestioning, docile child of Authority."

But whence came this authority, and who gave it, and who has the undoubted right to exercise it over others? If it inheres in just constitutional law and government, it is one thing, and must so far be respected; but if it be the dictum of a Church, or a sect, or a book, or a cult, it is another thing. It is then of no more value than individual opinion, even when that opinion is massed in hierarchies, councils, assemblies, convocations, and synods. Against any and all of these the individual has the right to protest and exercise the invaluable right of private judgment on every doctrine of religion, every form of ethics, every method of seeking to control thought and action. The creed or the council or the pronouncement of any body of fallible men must bend to the decision of the individual conscience as to its personal acceptance, however loud the ecclesiastical thunders, however sharp the flashes of theological or dogmatic lightning, or however fierce the tumult of angry voices shouting "Authority! Authority! Submit to Authority!"

Whose authority? That of a fallible Church stained with crime and persecution? That of an ecclesiastical organisation which has had its days and deeds of splendor doubtless, but also its nights of darkness and cruelty and injustice—that still clings to mouldy traditions and false statements and foolish dogmas, and exalts one man or a class of men as the infallible exponents of sovereign truth? We refer not to Rome now, only, but to all churches, creeds, and sects which seek to dominate all human thought and investigation and free assertion by that one omnific, potent, fearful word, "Authority."

Omnific once, no doubt, when it kept the world in leading-strings, but regarded now as simply a huge bag of gas, let off to frighten the irresolute and the timid, and to scare them into unquestioning submission and "acts of faith." But the valorous man and the brave man need no such "acts of faith." They know that in loving humanity and doing good to it lies the one true test of worth and right. They are not awed by the unsupported pretensions of centuries, nor the claims of a class, nor the power of a book, nor the veneration of a person, be he mythical or real. Every assumption, every pretension, every statement, must be presented before the bar of absolute truth, dispassionate, calm reason, and all-discerning intelligence. If it meets the approval of these judges, it shall be esteemed as worthy of credence and honor; if it merits their disapprobation or condemnation, let it not be accepted or believed; it is unworthy of any further consideration by the intellect of a reasonable being. No so-called "authority" can determine that to be positively true which is not founded in fact, and established in the unmistakable evidence of reality.

Adieu, then, to that overweening, overbearing, overreaching demand of mere "authority"—intolerant, sophistical, subtle, and legendary. Let it no longer terrorise; let it no longer fulminate impotent judgments. Truth, certified by Reason, is the only safe arbiter.

GERALD GREY.

A predisposition towards the miraculous is the characteristic of all semi-civilised nations.—*Lecky*.

A wise man conquers circumstances; but a fool is afraid of his own shadow.—*Seneca*.

The Holy Supper and the Lowly "Cupper."

"And He took the cup.....saying.....*this is my blood.*"—
MATTHEW xxvi. 27, 28.

GENTLE JESUS gave a supper
To some friends in days of yore,
In a room upon an upper
Floor.

Given to a dozen chaps, 'twas :—
Bread and—*something in a dish* ;
"Fishy" is the yarn, perhaps 'twas
Fish.

Judas, one of the Apostles,
Was a guest—at any rate,
So the Gospel-grinding "fossils"
State.

"One of you," said Christ, "betrays me ;
Nick will have him in his clutch."
Really, Jesus doth amaze me
Much.

He ordained before Creation
Father Adam's "fall," and that
Judas should, for our salvation,
"Rat."

Surely, Christians should be slow to
Scorn the "keeper of the cash" ;
But for him, they all would go to—
Dash !

Said J. C., "This wine is holy ;
'Tis my blood ; the bread's my flesh."
Was He mad, the meek and lowly
Jesh?*

Why did Jesus act so oddly?
Was it alcoholic "lush"
Made him rant and talk such godly
Gush?

Parsons praise the Blood of Jesus,
Son of Mary, Joseph's "mash."
Why? For that of which they ease us—
Cash.

"Though your sins be red," they mutter,
"In the Blood of Jesus wash ;
It will make them white." What utter
Bosh !

Christian brains are much too small to
Scorn the Eucharistic trash,
Though we've long since knocked it all to
Smash !

ESS JAY BEE.

Correspondence.

ATHEISM AND MORALITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—After some years of reading your valuable paper, I came to the conclusion that there were gentlemen among Atheist writers; but the tone of Mr. Ball's letter of attempted reply to mine makes me think that the old leaven of Christianity still clings to him. Does Mr. Ball think that he disposes of the principle, or that he proves the fact of morality, by the use of such terms as "incredibly ridiculous assumption," "long-winded reiterations," "ridiculously perverse idea," and many like others? If so, I fear Mr. Ball comes a cropper in debate. Does it not savor of the phrase, *petitio principii*? Does not Mr. Ball think that, if there be any moral sense, it carries with it that which is called charity? If I have displayed any want of logic or cohesion, has Mr. Ball's morality exceeded the morality of his own Christian opponents? Let me suggest to Mr. Ball that he meets my arguments by argument, so that my ignorance may be instructed by his superior knowledge.

Mr. Ball, I read, has thought it expedient to submit the latter half of my first paragraph to the *prayerful* consideration of some of his "friends." It would seem, however, on reading further, that Mr. Ball so far realised that it is a question of *argumentum ad veritatem*, and not a question of *argumentum ad populum*, that he finally submitted the statements under consideration to personal supervision. If he has not grasped my meaning, he has at least afforded an illustration of how necessary it is, in the interests of truth, to discuss principles, and not opinions; to reason from what is, and not from what people say or believe; though he himself colors me pretty strongly with his own erroneous conception of my arguments as suggesting a connection between Atheism and immorality, without—to say the very least of it—having once paid me the compliment of understanding me. All that my two sentences involved was, that if Mr. Ball considered that I

* *I.e.*, Jeshua, Joshua, or Jesus.

had wrongly stated the alternative positions of Christian and Atheist, or did not understand correctly what Atheism was, why, in the name of reason, did he say: "Whether Mr. Kingham is a genuine Atheist or a Christian enemy I know not?" But *is it* really necessary to ask Mr. Ball what he would think if his opponent turned upon him and remarked: "I know not whether your opinions differ from mine, but I deny them most emphatically"?

May I inquire of Mr. Ball by what process of reasoning he traces a relation between Atheism and the argument that "morality stands or falls by the existence of a supernatural sanction"? If I mistake not, Atheism involves the absence of any knowledge of the supernatural, and, therefore, cannot logically be expected to deny that which, to it, does not exist. To one who claims to be an Atheist, and to understand Atheism, the arguments which I have brought forward to show that there can be no natural basis for morality should have been sufficient to render my position clear, without taking into consideration the statement which I was careful to make—that "I should no more think of asking him [Mr. Ball], or any of his colleagues, as *Secularists*, to deny moral responsibility, than I should think of asking them, as *Atheists*, to deny God."

In the hope that there may be some possibility of extricating Mr. Ball from his dilemma, I hasten to assure him that none of my former propositions say, or mean, that Atheists are *morally irresponsible* or *immoral*; on the contrary, if he will take the trouble to study them, he will find that the child of nature is all along classed as *unmoral*.

How does Mr. Ball reconcile his assertion, "that the inevitable laws and blind forces of nature produce and maintain moral responsibility," with his assertion that "the struggle [for existence] is largely against natural hardships"? No organism can struggle against the inevitable, and "the inevitable laws and blind forces of nature" can hardly be postulated as containing the elements of conscience. Mark me here: I distinctly stated that "to use the phrase 'caused volitions' would be to perpetuate a paradox; for the application of the term 'cause,' in its scientific significance, would render it involuntary volition." And why? Simply because, as I went on to indicate, the generalised scientific applications of cause and effect in relation to our conscious states would render human consciousness as but a quality dependent upon material structures which could only undergo that form of activity as parts of the living material organisation of man. We cannot argue logically on scientific lines that quantity and quality are two separate and distinct factors in a chain of causation, or that any *one* part of the cosmos can by itself produce an effect. If we say that our ideas of right and wrong depend upon the consideration of conscious states as *effects*, we say that right and wrong do not exist—no more than hardness, softness, brittleness, smoothness, or brightness exists. To talk of them in this sense as existences would be just as unreasonable as to talk of pain and pleasure apart from interactions between matter-systems, or to talk of heat apart from molecular oscillations. If we call things right or wrong, good or bad, merely according to the effects or sensations they produce in us, what grounds have we for differentiating in principle between the ugly or displeasing shape of a tree and the injurious or unpleasant actions of a man; or what grounds have we for postulating that purpose or motive is exemplified in human actions, and not in the activities of a crystal? If the natures of all things consist in their activities, qualities, or relations to other things—which is the cosmical view—we have no grounds at all; indeed, in the above cases, as in all other cases, there is precisely the same principle at work. As cosmic processes, the most complex of our activities are no more suggestive of an element of volition than is the falling of a stone or the running of a stream. The activities produced in each case are exactly proportionate to the conditioning forces. The crystal is just as complete relative to the conditions which have produced it as man is relative to the conditions which have produced him. If I discriminate in terminology between the tree and its shape, the process is legitimate enough as a convenience; but if I begin to talk of the shape as an existence, or as a thing in itself, I afford an illustration of language run amuck. In the case of the individual it may be expedient to verbally differentiate between him and his qualities, relations to, or the sensations he produces in us; but it would be more than ridiculous to talk about considering them separately when we were at the same time arguing for the existence of such relations. The question we have to deal with is as to whether the distinctions in principle which we draw between the tree and the man have any connection with reality. Is there an essential difference between them, or do both exist in virtue of their relations to other things? Is man's consciousness, as with the responsiveness of the tree, concomitant with physical reaction, or does it exist as a producing factor? Does it determine causally, or is "consciousness" simply a term to express brain activities, the original factors in the production of which are external; as, for example—to take Mr. Ball's illustration—in the case of Mr. Ball securing a man's labor by the offer of greater inducements in the form of higher wages—a case in which the economic status or the conditions of life of the one who has to sell his labor vary according to the opportunities of demand. In neither of the cases which Mr. Ball cites does the individual

under consideration take the initiative; in both instances the *moving* factors are external factors. Volition can only exist as causal, or as a subjective cause; for it must necessarily involve conscious control, and, through that, the conscious direction of actions, and the attainment of results thereby. There can be no volition in a consciousness which is but the manifestation or the *effect* of the relations between an organism and its environment.

All that I can say in answer to Mr. Ball's eighth paragraph is that, if we accept the theory of natural selection as efficient, we accept it as sufficing to account for past and present species in terms of the struggle for existence *between* variations, and admit its operations to be continuous with the whole span of life. On this hypothesis, in the world of human life as well as in the world of animal and plant life, of all the different characteristics which mark the different individuals, there is not one but what has clear and direct reference to the individual who possesses it. What, then, do we mean when, speaking in terms of natural selection, we say that an organism "benefits"? Obviously, when that organism possesses some advantage, however slight, which its opponents in the struggle for existence lack. We cannot, if we wish to be logical, postulate benefit in equilibration; for the theory of natural selection is inseparably connected with differentiations between variations. T. W. KINGHAM.

A CLERICAL CRITIC'S REPLY TO MR. NEALE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Kindly be good enough to let me reply to Mr. Neale, though the portion of his letter devoted to any serious attempt to justify his language is exceedingly small. Further, a certain portion of this is beyond argumentation. Here is a sample referring to the giving of the Decalogue: "Serious apprehensions arose in the minds of these high priests, who eventually deemed it necessary that their God should be represented as doing something to assert himself. Consequently we have Mount Sinai enveloped in fire and smoke," etc. To the mind of Mr. Neale it seems easy for "these high priests" to envelop a lofty range of mountains "in fire and smoke," and persuade an assembled nation that here was a manifestation of Deity, and likewise get the fable inserted in the Hebrew national chronicle. To the generality of minds the wildest ravings of a lunatic would appear equally credible as this childish statement, for the belief of which there is no evidence whatsoever—good, bad, or indifferent. Truly the difficulties of Agnosticism are innumerable and insurmountable.

Coming directly to the defence of the language I condemn, I find references only to the two first commands, all remarks on the third being omitted. Yet Mr. Neale quietly refers in his last paragraph to "these three commandments," the third of which he has never referred to. So much for the accuracy of his letter.

Moreover, references to the two first are sadly confused. The first command is: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." On this our critic remarks: "He recognises that there are other gods, and accepts the position of one amongst many." Now, this is mere culpable trifling. In a certain sense there are "gods many"—namely, creations of fancy "that are called gods" (1 Corinthians viii. 5); while in the rightful signification of the word "God" there is but one. The first command, then, forbids adoration of the heart being given to lifeless idols, at that time worshipped elsewhere all over the world. And so deep and far-reaching is this command that we Christians, who recognise our religion to come from the Old Testament, are forbidden by this command to yield our energies and affections to such modern idols as pleasure, ambition, and money-getting.

The second command forbids the worship of the true God in a wrong way. The Searcher of hearts knew that, were graven images made for assistance in worship, the reverence due to the Creator would gradually pass to the image. Hence He forbade aught that implied the purity of His spirituality could be connected with matter. Ornamental representations are not forbidden.

A second quotation from Mr. Neale, and I give him up. On the threat of the second command, that the sins of the fathers would be visited on the children, he wastes much eloquence. A sample is: "It is a revengeful savagery, only conceivable of a mere tribal god." Now, if he would come down from his tall talk and lofty speculations, and steadily reflect upon what is taking place everywhere, and ever has been taking place so far as we know, he would perceive that what he holds incredible is actual every-day fact in all lands. Sins of fathers are plainly visited on children, of which the sons of drunkards, spendthrifts, and criminals are melancholy evidence. Nor is it possible to see how this can be otherwise so long as the viewless moral government of earth continues what it is. The threat is obviously given to teach parents an additional motive to refrain from sin. This is that they will be injuring, not only themselves, but also those they love best. The agreement of all history with the command given on Sinai is one of a thousand proofs that the God who spoke to Israel is the God who has governed the world ever since, and governs it now.

(REV.) HENRY J. ALCOCK.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): Closed for the summer.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Thomas Paine."

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, E. Pack; 6.30, E. Pack.

STATION-ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, E. Pack.

CLERKENWELL GREEN: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Belief and Blasphemy."

EDMONTON (corner of Angel-road): 7, W. Heaford, "The Gospel of Freethought."

FINSBURY PARK (near Band Stand): 3.30, W. Heaford, "Prayer and Providence."

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY: 7.30, R. P. Edwards, "Character and Teachings of Christ."

HYDE PARK (near Marble Arch): 11.30, R. P. Edwards, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; 3.30, R. P. Edwards, "Atheism"; 7, A lecture.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity at the Bar of History"; 7.15, W. J. Ramsey, "The Gospel of Atheism." August 7, at 8.15, E. White.

PECKHAM RYE: 3.15, W. J. Ramsey.

REGENT'S PARK: 7, F. A. Davies, "Christianity and War."

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7, E. B. Rose, "The Religion of the Boers."

VICTORIA PARK: 3.15, C. Cohen, "Something Superior to Christianity"; 6.15, C. Cohen, "The Message of Secularism."

KINGSLAND (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, E. B. Rose, "Blasphemy, Real and Fictitious."

COUNTRY.

BRADFORD BRANCH (Vacant Ground, bottom of Morley-road): H. Percy Ward—2.30, "The Dream of Heaven"; 7, "The Nightmare of Hell." August 4, at 6.30, "What Secularism Offers in the Place of Christianity."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 2.45, Sunday-school.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, Musical and other Recitals, etc.; and particulars as to important excursion on following Sunday.

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