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For there is a true Church wherever one hand meets another helpfully, and that is the only holy or Mother Church which ever was, or ever shall be.—RUSKIN.

Heaven and Hell.

THERE is nothing unique in Christianity. Its finest maxims were anticipated by Talmudic doctors and Pagan moralists, while its dogmas were derived from a vast variety of sources. "To assert," says Buckle, "that Christianity communicated to man moral truths previously unknown argues, on the part of the assertor, either gross ignorance, or else wilful fraud." A study of the sacred scriptures of antiquity warrants a similar statement as to the theology of Christendom.

Heaven and Hell, for instance, are very ancient conceptions; in fact, their origin is lost in the dim remoteness of pre-historic times. Primitive man obtained his idea of spirit, or the duality of his existence, from the phenomena of dreams. While his body lay quiescent in sleep his imagination carried him to distant scenes, where he greeted friends long dead, gazed upon dear buried faces still endowed with life, and renewed battle with old enemies whose blood he had spilt in mortal combat. When he awoke, what could he think of all this? Superficial persons might say, "Was he not aware that during sleep some of his mental faculties were nevertheless active? that one part of his brain was at work while the rest reposed?" Brain! Primitive man was ignorant of such a possession. He knew, of course, that there was matter in the skull, for doubtless he had frequently seen its contents scattered on the ground. But he knew nothing of brain as the organ of mind. The only conclusion he could come to was that something distinct from his body, though usually connected with it, had taken a tour abroad, had witnessed all the visions of his dream and performed its exploits. This something was spirit or soul. If it could act independently of the body, it could also survive it. If he had a soul his fellows had one likewise, and their souls survived their bodies as his did. The souls of his and their ancestors must, too, be still extant. And thus the air was made populous with ghosts. These were naturally divided into good and evil, beneficent and malign; and prayers and sacrifices were offered up to purchase their favor or appease their wrath. Subsequently the powers of nature were deified, and similar devotions were paid to them. Gods and ghosts both wielded influence over human fortunes, and both were deemed good or ill according as men were affected by them. Finally, the fancy of man devised separate abodes for these two divisions of supernatural powers; and thus arose the idea of Heaven and Hell: into one or the other of which places theology decides that our souls must go after death, to be eternally happy or eternally miserable.

The Jews derived their conception of Satan from the Persians, and they in turn transmitted it to the early Christians, who seem also to have borrowed their ideas of Heaven and Hell, as places of future reward or punishment, from the Egyptians. Even the later Catholic doctrine of Purgatory was a com-

monplace in the religion of that wonderful people who inhabited the Nile valley thousands of years before the birth of Christ. Purgatory was introduced by the Catholic Church to lighten the popular horror of Hell, but it soon became a bountiful institution for the priests, who undertook to pray souls out of Purgatory into Heaven on receipt of so much money. Their terms were always cash. The fact that souls once prayed into Heaven could never be prayed back again if the money were not forthcoming, made it impossible for the priests to run the risks of credit.

Heaven, according to the Bible, is not a very attractive place. It contains much bad company. The heroes of Jewish history, most of whom were superlative rascals, reside there in company with many illustrious thieves and murderers who have succeeded them. The late Mr. Peace is in Heaven, and as it is full of mansions he has ample opportunity for the exercise of his burglarious ingenuity. Jacob is there, and if he retains his old skill at driving bargains the major portion of celestial property must by this time be in his possession. Fortunately, in Heaven there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage; otherwise it would be exceedingly awkward for husbands, with a fellow like David prowling about.

The size of Heaven is not great. According to the book of Revelation it is fifteen hundred miles square. Either souls are very compressible, or the narrow-gauge railway to the Kingdom of Heaven has not been overcrowded with passengers. The celestial mansions are of pure gold and garnished with "all manner of precious stones." The very harps played on are also of gold. The whole place seems a jeweller's shop on a large scale. As for the inhabitants, their principal occupation appears to consist in floating about on clouds, dressed in white night-gowns, blowing trumpets. And the music of these instruments and of the harps is occasionally diversified by the howling of what Heine called "all the menagerie of the Apocalypse," including the beastly elders and the elderly beasts.

The way to reach Heaven is to believe all the dogmas of Christianity. Philosophers and all sane people are thus excluded. The most certain way, perhaps, is to commit a murder; after which you will have a parson all to yourself for three weeks, and having forgiven all the people you ever injured, you will be swung from the gallows clean into Heaven, with a parson's certificate as your thrice valid passport of admission.

Hell is more commodious than Heaven. Having no bottom, there is at least infinite space downwards, however narrow its walls. The company there is also more select. In the course of a few thousand years we should grow accustomed to the fiery environment, and at length be grateful for the mercy which fated us to pass our time in such agreeable society. Bruno, Spinoza, Voltaire, and Paine would eternally console us for the loss of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David.

Hell is exceedingly warm. The exact temperature has never been ascertained, but with unlimited fuel and the Devil as chief stoker the heat is no doubt intense. An American editor, who had a thermometer stolen from his office, requested the thief to return it forthwith, as it was not of the least use in the place he was going to, seeing that it only registered up to two hundred and twelve. Hell is clearly,

therefore, very hot, and the best office in it is that of *concierge*, which secures a cool place near the door.

Hell is the place where the Devil resides when he is at home, but he is generally out on business. His occasions call him frequently abroad. The duties he has to perform on earth keep his hands well occupied. His branch of business here is very extensive, and half the professed servants of God hold posts in his service.

The pronunciation of the word Hell varies. The High Church curate, preaching to a congregation who object to words unmentionable to ears polite, and resent any attempt to harrow up their feelings, pronounce it so softly, so seraphically, that they mistake it for "Heaven." On the other hand, the Revivalist thunders it out, long-drawn though without linked sweetness, with two *hs* at the beginning and half-a-dozen *ls* at the end.

To the Secularist there is no Heaven or Hell save on earth. He agrees with the great Persian poet, Omar Khayyam, who many centuries ago wrote these fine and noble stanzas borrowed from Fitzgerald's magnificent rendering:—

I sent my soul through the Invisible,
Some letter of that After-life to spell:
And by-and-by my soul return'd to me,
And answer'd "I myself am Heaven and Hell":
Heav'n but the vision of fulfill'd Desire,
And Hell the Shadow of a Soul on fire,
Cast on the Darkness into which Ourselves
So late emerg'd from, shall so soon expire.

"I myself am Heaven and Hell." A truer word was never spoken. Heaven is wisdom, virtue, happiness; Hell is ignorance, vice, and misery. Let us all fight against the powers of Hell in this world, where alone they exist, and strive to realise here the only true Kingdom of Heaven that ever was or ever will be.

G. W. FOOTE.

"Merlin" on the Soul.

IN my last article, in criticising "Merlin's" attack on Haeckel in the *Referee*, I confessed that I had not a very close or lengthy acquaintance with that writer. I also promised, on the assumption that his qualifications for dealing with such subjects were evidenced in those articles I had not read, to pay more attention to his writings in the future. The issue of the *Referee* for July 5 gave me an early opportunity of fulfilling my promise. It contains a couple of columns by "Merlin" on "Guesses at the Soul: the Significance of Suffering," and after reading it I find myself as far as ever from the object of my search.

The occasion of "Merlin's" article, as he says, is the letters that have reached him complaining that however true the perfecting of the race may be in the future, the present groans under intolerable wrongs and sweats under arduous burdens. The happiness of the future will be made out of the misery of the present, and his correspondents inquire as to the justice of the process.

Now, if "Merlin" had not got his heresy and religion so proportioned that each one destroys the effectiveness of the other, his reply might take a simple and, comparatively, sensible form. As a believer he might reply that man is sent here to suffer, and in suffering he is carrying out his destiny. The proper place for happiness is not here, but in the next life, and our suffering in this world will count to our credit in the next. Or, as an unbeliever, he might reply that, on the grounds of justice, the cosmic process does not admit of justification. We can show how the future profits by the past; we can even show that our instincts have been so fashioned by social evolution, that there is some gratification in struggling on, although it is fairly certain that we who sow the seeds will never reap the harvest. But to square the facts of the suffering of the innocent through the misdeeds of the guilty, the oppressing of the weak by the strong, with man's ethical sense of what ought to be, is a sheer impossibility. Out-

side of human consciousness morality has no place in the cosmos.

"Merlin's" method, however—and it is not by any means a new one—is to make a parade of scientific terms, without troubling as to their exact meaning; and, having done this, propound a conclusion that does not *necessarily* follow even from his own questionable premisses. And in doing this he doubles over the ground so frequently that it is difficult to take his points in anything like order, although I will try to do so. These points are:—

- 1.—The Conservation of Energy.
- 2.—All suffering from disease is the result of a departure from law.
- 3.—Nature's method is orderly and progressive.
- 4.—The existence of "certain intuitive and involuntary motions of the mind which appear to indicate an occasional and fleeting memory of a past existence.
- 5.—Conclusion. Man is immortal and "Recurrent."

Of these first four points, numbers one and three may be dismissed with very few words. First of all, why on earth will "Merlin" persistently speak of "Progress" as a *law*? There is no such thing. Progress is no more a law than existence is a law. Probably, what "Merlin" has in his mind is "an intuitive involuntary motion," recalling the reading of the phrase "the law of progress"—which is quite a different thing. But we will take "Merlin's" meaning to be as I have phrased it in number three. And then let me ask "Merlin," as a special favor to himself and his readers, to sit down quietly and think whether he can conceive nature being anything else but orderly. He may reply that he can conceive natural methods as being altogether different to what they are. I admit this for the moment, and for the sake of argument only, but this will not enable him to think of nature as non-orderly, but only changes the form of the order. The orderliness of nature, in brief, is only a registration of the method in which natural phenomena present themselves; and even though nature were to produce men and women from oak trees, and beget crab apples from the mammalia, the order, as order, would remain undisturbed. And therefore (I think I may introduce a "therefore" at this point) as the order of nature is nothing but a description of the way in which things occur, and as this order would remain, no matter how things occurred, the logical inference is that no special conclusion can be drawn from a phenomenon that is necessarily involved in *every* case of reasoning.

Now for the conservation of energy. Nothing, says "Merlin," is wasted. Waste is quite the wrong word here. It belongs to the region of economics, not physics. Using the word in its proper sense, Nature does waste. She is the greatest spendthrift we know of. She produces myriads of seeds to secure the perpetuation of a few. And the waste in nature, untouched by human intelligence, is accentuated by the finer varieties, and more numerous individuals, that man produces on the same area and with no greater expenditure of material. But matter or force, or both, we agree, is indestructible. What then? This principle of indestructibility obviously does not apply to form. That can be, and is, destroyed. All it means is that nature is always working with the same materials, ever moulding fresh forms from the destruction of the old ones. The conclusion of "Merlin" is: "Such a thing as the perishing of any force out of her dominion is a thing unthinkable. The subtlest and mightiest form of energy known to us is found in the intellect of man, and we cannot sweep away the immortality of that force without denying an analogy that everywhere presents itself. Nor can we find a reasonable refuge from this position by assuming that it survives only in the race and perishes with the individual, because personality is truly the soul of the soul, and because very obviously it is not transmitted."

Now, to take the last point first, if "Merlin" will analyse all that he knows, or can know, of personality,

he will find it resolves itself into memory; and this does certainly disappear. That the constituents of my body existed thousands of years ago there is not the slightest doubt; but I do not say that *I* existed, for the simple reason that the recollection of any such existence is not present. There is no other basis for personality than that of memory. And as to the first point, "Merlin" might bear in mind that the analogy that "everywhere presents itself" is not the perpetuation of special forms of matter or force, but the analogy of their ceaseless destruction and transformation. Does "Merlin" or anybody else know of any specialised form of force of which immortality can be predicated? As a matter of fact the more specialised, the higher the development, the greater the instability, the easier the destruction. The analogy is all in favor of the impermanence of mind, and it is "Merlin" who by his misreading of science, derives an "analogy that everywhere presents itself."

Number two on the list, that all suffering from disease is the result of a departure from law, I was almost saying is the most unscientific of all; but it is probable that the same claim might be put in on behalf of some of the others, and I do not care to discuss the matter. But in what way is disease a departure from law? Such a thing is a sheer impossibility. One is no more departing from law in catching typhoid than in singing a comic song. "Merlin" might reply that if certain laws were carried out disease would be impossible. Of course, if pigs were differently constructed they might nest in trees and fly through the air, instead of walk on the ground. But even here it is the very force of "law" that opens man to the action of disease. "Law" first of all fashions man for living in a special environment, and having done this "law" leads to such an increase in numbers that migration is the mildest way out of the difficulty, and this in turn places man under new conditions for which he is not fitted, and so exposes him to the attack of special diseases. Or, again, "law" transmits diseases, multiplies them, and this certainly cannot be called a departure from law. Added to which there is the fact that the changing conditions of life have all along prevented anything in the shape of a permanent equilibrium being established between organism and environment.

"Merlin" follows up this curious piece of scientific reasoning by remarking, as though it were in the nature of an axiom, "The indisputable postulate is that a sin against nature has somewhere been committed when suffering is experienced as the result of any disturbance of the organism. The operations of nature, when untrammelled, are bland, and, as a rule, conducive to the enjoyment of life." It, of course, requires a little courage to dispute an "indisputable" statement, and yet I venture to point out to "Merlin" that a sin against nature is a scientific impossibility. Whether a man supports his aged mother or strangles her—these actions are equally natural, they are not, of course, equally commendable; but can anyone say in what respect the latter is against nature? Hatred is as natural as love; lust is as natural as chastity; robbery is as natural as honesty. All that the expression, "an unnatural action," means is that they are against certain feelings that have been developed in the course of social evolution, and which are, on the whole, beneficial to the race. "Sin against nature," is a permissible figure of speech as a moral exordium, but in what pretends to be a scientific dissertation, its use is as appropriate as the differential calculus in a nursery rhyme.

The further expression that "the operations of nature, when untrammelled, are bland, and, as a rule, conducive to the enjoyment of life," is so hopelessly confused as to almost defy criticism. It would seem as though "Merlin" were in the habit of jotting down collections of words without ever troubling about either their rhyme or reason. Who puts trammels on nature? Is it man? But man is part of nature. Read in this light, it means that nature puts trammels on itself in order to stop itself doing

what it means to do, and then punishes itself for *not* doing what it prevented itself doing. If it does not mean this, what on earth does it mean? Perhaps "Merlin" will explain. And if the operations of nature are conducive to the enjoyment of life, perhaps "Merlin" will also explain whence come those operations that prevent the enjoyment of life? Are these *outside* nature? Again, I think I can see the cause of "Merlin's" confusion is a popular and much-quoted, but in this case much-misunderstood, sentence of Spencer's, which in this instance is a very clear illustration of a little learning being a dangerous thing.

It is necessary to notice "Merlin's" plea for reincarnation before pressing the point further. There are certain intuitive and involuntary motions of the mind, he says, that are reminiscent of a past existence. I deny that there has ever been a clear case of anything of the kind. The Platonic reminiscences are adequately covered by modern biological and psychological discoveries, as "Merlin" will find if he gets a good up-to-date text-book. I do not deny that certain people have said that they have vague recollections of a prior existence; but anyone who looks into the matter will find that they never possessed these recollections until they had read much literature on the subject, and that their recollections never covered any case that was not explainable as a rehash of their reading, experience, or association of ideas. A savage never recollected a former existence as a civilised being.

But the cream of the joke is that "Merlin" regards this, with his talk of suffering as a sin against nature, etc., as justifying "the ways of God to man as Milton failed to do." The comparison between the newspaper paragraphist and Milton may pass without further comment. But look at the way in which God is justified to man. If we understood nature completely we should not suffer. Probably; but meanwhile God, whom "Merlin" believes works through nature, has been for countless generations punishing with the most loathsome disease, the most frightful pestilences, ravaging with wars and hatreds and other afflictions the creatures he has created, and all for the crime of ignorance. Does not "Merlin" see that a God who can inflict this frightful punishment for ignorance is ten thousand times worse than any mythical devil, that the most bigoted of Christians ever placed in their mythical hell. Says "Merlin": "Learn," says great Nature, "learn, my children, and ye shall cease to suffer." Quite so; and it adds: "And until you do learn you shall suffer. You may be chock full of good intentions, you may be doing the very best you know, but if you do not know how to get the better of me, you shall be punished as though you were the vilest criminal."

Thus does "Merlin" justify God's way to man "as Milton failed to do." Every frowning law, he tells us, hides a smile. May I also add in closing that my frowning criticism also hides a smile—a smile that anyone should mistake this hotch-potch of misunderstood science, ill-digested philosophy, and inadequate reasoning, for a sufficient answer to the question with which it starts.

C. COHEN.

From Christian Pulpit to Secular Platform.

BY RICHARD TREVOR.

III.—LOOKING TOWARDS THE PULPIT.

NOTHING was more natural than that a boy, carefully brought up in a strictly Puritan home, should be resolutely ambitious to enter the ministry of the gospel. Consider, for a moment, the theological atmosphere in which the training would naturally be conducted. Many of my readers are fully aware that the philosophy of the plan of salvation, as expounded on the hearth-stone, from the pulpit, and at most of the ordinary meetings of the church, would be arrestingly realistic. By eating the forbidden apple, Adam incurred the righteous wrath of

heaven, and in consequence of that one sinful act all his descendants were involved in the same inexorable doom. We have all inherited original sin; or, in other words, we are all held and accounted guilty of a sin we have never committed, or, more accurately, of a sin we *have* committed in him as our divinely appointed Head. God hates the whole human race, and has created a lake of fire and brimstone in which to consume it for ever. Every one of us is justly doomed to eternal shame and suffering. Such is the immutable decree of heaven, and there is absolutely no escape from it. Ours is a doomed world, and there is not a single ray of hope for it. In this stern, dark dogma I was most scrupulously indoctrinated. But, fortunately, there are three persons in the blessed Trinity, and we were assured that one of them has always had a tender, compassionate heart. Although the Father is, and always was, in himself utterly implacable, and violently determined to inflict an all-crushing punishment upon the objects of his well-deserved indignation, the Son cherished feelings of yearning pity and forgiving sympathy towards them, and passionately besought the Fatherly heart to graciously spare them. The Supreme Ruler of the Universe, however, showed himself relentlessly unpropitious, and emphatically disinclined either to withdraw or to modify the high claims of his justice. Said the Son: "My heart bleeds with compassion for the condemned sinners of the earth, and I am prepared to do all within my power to deliver them from thy fierce wrath. Wilt thou not punish me, and acquit them? Wilt thou not empty the vials of thine anger into my soul, and bestow upon them thy free and full forgiveness?" In response to so moving an appeal, the Father entered into a solemn covenant with his Son, known in theology as the Covenant of Grace, according to which the Son was to be accepted as a substitute for a chosen number of mankind, and to endure, in his own innocent person, the awful punishment due to them on account of their sins. Hence, in order to secure the complete deliverance of the Elect, the second person in the blessed Trinity came down to earth, was born as a man, lived, toiled, suffered, died on the Cross, rose from the dead, and returned to heaven as the perfect Redeemer of his people.

I know how utterly absurd all this will appear to all who were not brought up to believe it, and even to me now its most prominent feature is its absolute unbeliability. But the most extraordinary and incredible teaching of theology is yet to be described. We were told that the three persons in the glorious Trinity had each his own peculiar share in the grand work of redemption. The work of the Son consisted in offering himself up as an infinite atonement for the sins of the Elect, which he did on the Cross of Calvary, and the Father's work was, partly, to accept the offered atonement as all-sufficient, and, partly, to arrange for the actual administration of the Covenant of Grace. Now, this administration of the Covenant was entrusted to the Holy Ghost, the third member of the Trinity, as his special share of the sublime work. He was therefore commissioned to descend into the world in order to discharge his administrative duties.

But as the Holy Ghost did not become incarnate, he was obliged to work through mediums and agents. As a pure ghost he had to enter into chosen vessels, and fill them to overflowing, before anything could be accomplished. The chosen vessels were the apostles and their duly ordained successors, who are usually known now as clergymen, ministers of the gospel, or men in Holy Orders, whom I was instructed to regard as the representatives of the Holy Ghost, commissioned by him to explain the Covenant of Grace to their fellow-beings, and to urge all to believe the gospel. Of course, the non-elect had no chance whatever of being saved; but, as no one knew who the elect were, it was necessary to preach the gospel to all without distinction. In every congregation some of heaven's chosen ones would surely be found, and on hearing the word of life they would savingly receive it, and be snatched as brands from the burning. Thus the extending of the offer of salvation to

all alike was only a trick to get at the elect, and gather them into the gospel net.

Such was the creed on which I was nourished in my childhood, and having inherited from my ancestors an ardent temperament, and being from a child abnormally sensitive and sympathetic, I was naturally most powerfully affected by it. My heart melted into tears of pity for the miserable sinners round about me. I burned with the desire to make known to them what God, for Christ's sake, had agreed to do for them. Of course, there was the possibility that I did not happen to be one of the elect myself, although I had fervently swallowed the whole creed, and accepted Christ as my Redeemer. Indeed, nobody could be absolutely sure of his election. Even the brightest and most confident faith had a background of fear and trembling. But I passionately yearned to tell all within my reach that Christ had offered himself up as an all-meritorious sacrifice for the sins of his sheep, whom God, for his sake, was prepared to forgive, justify, and sanctify, that at death they might ascend and occupy splendid mansions in the sky. And thus I resolved to become a minister.

My father was the senior deacon of the church, and the most prominent member of society in the community, in consequence of which fact I enjoyed several high privileges that did not fall to the lot of ordinary children. For example, most of the itinerant preachers who visited our little Bethel were my father's guests during their stay. Ah, how well I remember those holy men of God. What an infinite honor it was to entertain them, and with what deep, rich joy my parents waited on them, and offered them the choicest fare that love could procure! With what tremulous reverence I used to regard them, and with what grateful avidity I treasured up all their precious sayings! They were not made of common clay. They were the mouthpieces of Jehovah, and their sermons came down to them as sacred gifts from heaven. As I thought of them my soul was on fire with envy, and O how fervently I prayed God to appoint me to the same exalted vocation. Sometimes one of these semi-divine beings would condescend to speak to me, and at once my whole being quivered with proud delight. "What would you like to be when you grow up, my boy?" he would ask, and tremblingly I would answer, "A preacher, sir." "That is a good boy," he would add, gently stroking my hair; "I hope God has called you, for without his special call no one has a right to enter the pulpit." I felt the truth of his words, and gave myself more than ever to prayer, assuring the Supreme Being that if he permitted me to become a preacher, I would do my best to be an honor to him. At times, I almost fancied I could hear his welcome voice distinctly calling me to the sacred profession. But when, at fifteen, failing to restrain myself any longer, I appealed to the church for permission to exercise my preaching gifts, my request was firmly refused, the church being evidently sceptical as to my possessing such gifts to exercise. Still, the fire burned in my bones, and preach I must, at whatever cost. I used to go up to the mountain top, and deliver eloquent and all-convincing discourses to a congregation of sheep, lambs, and lapwings. The sheep were somewhat dense, and responded but slowly to my passionate appeals, but the lapwings rewarded me with inspiring applause. I little thought, at the time, that the lovely birds were only trying to decoy me away from the vicinity of their much-cherished nests. Eventually, however, the church accepted me as an accredited candidate for the sacred profession, and started me on the preparatory course. I was then the proudest and happiest young man in all the land. For weeks I walked on air and partook of angels' food. To keep down my pride a messenger of Satan occasionally came to buffet me with this hateful insinuation: "What if thou art not one of God's elect, after all? What if thou art thyself, by heaven's decree, a miserable castaway?" But to prevent my sinking into utter despair, a messenger of God would breathe into me the consolation that arose from the fact that

the church had chosen me, and that it was through the church God was accustomed to reveal his will.

O blind, misguided, and superstition-ridden fool that I was, and knew it not.

Pre-Christian Charity.

PAUPERISM, like most other diseases, is the product of civilisation. It is in a religious atmosphere, however, that it reaches its fullest development. The more pious the people the more numerous the mendicants, as any European traveller can testify; for the instant he passes from a Protestant to a Catholic country, the increased number of beggars reminds him of the change; and Spain and Italy, the most religious portions of Christendom, have long been proverbial for the multitude and pertinacity of their beggars. In Muhammedan countries, where superstition is still more closely bound up with the lives of the people, one half of the population is engaged in sponging on the other half; no true Muslim is ashamed to beg, and *bakshish* is the sole object of his existence. In Further Asia priest and mendicant are convertible terms, and not only are all lands impoverished by mobs of hungry Brahmins and lazy Buddhist monks, but the profession of ordinary beggary is a recognised and organised institution numbering its tens of thousands.

The earliest known European civilisation, of course, had its beggars, and from the *Odyssey* of Homer we may gather many particulars of the habits of the fraternity—habits that often have a strangely modern ring about them, for the life of the idle vagrant has been much the same in all ages. One of the tricks of the landlowner was to pretend to bring news of an absent warrior, and the court of Ithaca appears to have been pretty thoroughly exploited by wandering vagabonds with lying stories of Ulysses; and it is as the bearer of such news that the disguised monarch gains entrance into his own palace. He was the less suspected because the beggar of the period frequented feasts, and was a recognised nuisance at such gatherings, being permitted even to enter the banqueting hall where, although he stood a chance of having a footstool or a beef-bone flung at his head by some surly guest, yet he was certain of making a good collection of broken victuals, and occasionally more substantial presents. From the incident of Irus and Ulysses, it is evident that rival mendicants sometimes came to blows over the spoils, such fights being hailed with delight by the rougher spirits among the guests. The profession of beggar was, in fact, a recognised means of livelihood; and Penelope promises the disguised Ulysses that if his tale were found true, he should receive a suit of clothes, and then be free to beg his bread throughout the countryside. Such a wandering, careless life had its attractions for the idle loafer who preferred begging to the regular routine of farm-work.

To Hesiod also the mendicant was a familiar object who "averse from labor drags his days, and greedy on the gains of others preys"; roaming the country in the summertime, and huddling for warmth round the village bronze-foundry in the winter.

The existence of these swarms of beggars in ancient Greece must be traced to an abuse of the claims of hospitality. The Greek mind did not distinguish very clearly between the honest traveller and the mere tramp. In fact, the proverb ran:—

By Jove the stranger and the poor are sent;
And what to these we give to Jove is lent.

As a consequence, hospitality was freely extended to all, quite irrespective of merit. The larger householders had guest-chambers, where the wayfarer was lodged, and supplied with food and fire free of all cost. In the cities there were officials charged with the duty of providing for all applicants out of the public treasury; so that throughout Greece there was ample provision for strangers, travellers, and vagrants. In later times we have instances of philosophers desirous of spreading their doc-

trines, and who possessed private fortunes, but who adopted the life of a mendicant in order to wander at will throughout the Greek-speaking world, being assured of subsistence everywhere, and preferring the disgrace of a pauper's dole to paying their way like honest men. Among the Romans similar customs of public and private hospitality prevailed; and therefore it is no wonder that the ancient world swarmed with idle vagabonds, who found it so easy to prey upon the industrious and the benevolent. We learn, further, from Lucian and Menander that the roads were infested with wandering troops of devotees, carrying images and pictures of Oriental deities, and who played the rôle of the modern gipsy, telling fortunes, selling charms, and exorcising demons.

Cases of actual distress were met in various ways. Some of the misfortunes which excite pity in modern times either did not exist or were ameliorated by the family systems of antiquity. Thus widows and orphans were cared for as a matter of course by their relations, and had definite claims upon the clan to which they belonged. Hesiod shows that accidents of fortune were met by a system of friendly co-operation among neighbors. If a farmer's draught-ox died suddenly he was lent another till his season's work was done. Ploughs and wagons were reciprocally lent. In some cases loans of money or grain were made to put a needy farmer on his legs again. These loans were repaid when the recipient could afford it; and, although he was under no obligation to do more than return the exact amount, the grateful borrower, if possible, made some addition to the sum in recognition of the kindly assistance. At a later period statesmen like Solon, Pisistratus, and Pericles sought to make themselves popular by granting loans to private persons out of the public treasury. Assisted emigration and other political nostrums were also tried.

Shipwrecked and distressed sailors were justly considered as peculiarly deserving of hospitality. To refer once more to the *Odyssey*, Homer shows us that the first care of the mariner cast upon a strange shore was to ascertain whether he had to do with Greeks or barbarians. Among the former he was always sure of welcome and generous assistance, notwithstanding the fact that the sailors of the period frequently added piracy and kidnapping to their regular calling. The treatment accorded to Homer's heroes by the Greek landsmen compares favourably with the deliberate wrecking practised on some parts of the British coasts down to quite recent times.*

Private persons of means expended large sums in charity. Thus one of the orations of Lysias (about 425 B.C.) proves at some detail that the father of a defendant in a lawsuit had expended more than two thousand pounds of our money in works of benevolence—and we must remember that money had a far greater purchasing power in those days than in these. In the present case the citizen had helped poor citizens by portioning their daughters and sisters (for a Greek woman stood little chance of contracting a legitimate marriage without a dowry); he had ransomed prisoners of war, and paid the funeral expenses of others—for Greek superstition laid great stress upon proper burial, and funerals were very expensive affairs.

The care of the sick receives great attention in most communities. In Ancient Greece, as elsewhere, the practice of medicine was at first largely entangled with superstitious observances, from which it

* The wrecking spirit has not entirely died out, even in these days of lifeboats and refuges. In *Notes and Queries* for Feb. 14, 1903, is an account of a recent Bible Christian festival celebrating the wreck of an East Indiaman, called the *John and Lily*, on the Cornish coast in 1841, when the villagers helped themselves freely, and sang the doggerel lines:—

The *John and Lily* came ashore
To feed the hungry and clothe the poor.

The contributor expresses surprise that the destruction of the fruits of years of honest labor should be regarded in the nineteenth century as a happy dispensation of Providence in favor of the undeserving.

slowly emerged. Medical science grew up with the cult of Æsculapius, whose temples were numerous, and were usually placed in high and salubrious situations. Large buildings were attached for the accommodation of patients, the famous temple at Epidaurus having 160 rooms. At Rhodes, Cnidus, and Cos there were famous medical schools; and we learn from an inscription at Athens that the priests of Æsculapius attended the poor gratuitously. Besides the temple schools and hospitals, however, there were secular organisations for medical aid and relief. States appointed trained physicians, and provided them with buildings for the reception of patients, instruments for operations, medicines, etc., and students resorted to these establishments for instruction. The State physician attended gratuitously anyone who applied to him, saw out-patients, and visited the sick in their homes. At Rome there were consulting-rooms and dispensaries, and houses in which the sick were received. Public hospitals were mentioned by Roman writers of the first century, and each division of the city had its chief physician solely occupied in attending the poorer people. We may be sure that in those times, as in this, all this gratuitous doctoring led to abuses; and persons who were quite able to pay for a physician took advantage of these provisions to get advice and medicines free, thus cheating the practitioner, and enormously increasing the cost of the medical relief contributed out of the taxes.

With such ample public and private provision for the unfortunate, as well as for the lazy, it might have been thought unnecessary to artificially foster pauperism any further; but the exigencies of party politics vastly increased the evils already due to unthinking benevolence and indiscriminate charity. In Greece the most familiar instance is that of Athens, where the various schemes for catching votes finally culminated in a system by which every elector was rendered eligible to take part in all political and legal proceedings and to draw fees for his participation. Any voter who chose to attend the public assembly was paid at the rate of three obols per diem. This was less than he might have earned by an honest day's work, but of course no one was inclined to labor when he could get paid for doing nothing; and these public assemblies often consisted of as many as 5,000 citizens. Law cases were managed by mobs of jurors, sometimes five hundred strong, who also drew the same pay. In addition to this, two obols a day were paid for attendance at the national festivals, which were pretty numerous; and the public sacrifices were practically periodic feasts as far as the citizens were concerned. There were other emoluments of a miscellaneous character, including the proceeds of occasional confiscations, which were distributed amongst the electors. It may be wondered where all the money came from for all these fees; but we must remember that the enfranchised citizens formed a very small part of the population, the greater portion of which consisted of slaves and aliens, whose industry supported the political idlers. The citizens were supposed to serve in the state militia, which, naturally, was habitually defeated in the field; for helpless paupers make worthless soldiers. The history of Athens after the Peloponnesian War is a sufficient commentary upon the folly of abandoning the business of a state to mobs of paupers and unemployed. Most of the other states of Greece were modelled more or less on Athenian lines, and thus honest industry was everywhere handicapped by having to support large numbers of useless politicians, whose squabbles and factions tended to make life unbearable to the peaceably inclined.

In Rome, as is well known, similar political manœuvres ended in converting the plebeians into full-blown paupers, dependent on doles for their subsistence. But as the Roman offices of state were not paid, the doles took the form of monthly distributions of corn from the public granaries. In course of time the paupers got too lazy to grind and bake their allowances; and therefore in the second

century state bakeries were established, from which wheaten loaves were distributed two or three times a week. To the gifts of corn and bread were periodically added pork, oil, and occasionally wine; also clothes, such as were worn by the plebeians—that is to say, white tunics with long sleeves. Candidates for public offices were required to give expensive shows for the amusement of the voters, and thus the Roman citizens had their fill both of bread and circuses. The population of Rome during the early days of the Empire was about a million and a-half, and the pauper plebeians, with their wives and families, numbered about 960,000, to be supported at the expense of the industrious. It is therefore not surprising that the wealth of the ancient world passed through Rome like water through a sieve.

In addition to the governmental distributions, and the sums extorted from political candidates, the Roman patricians advertised their wealth by ostentatious doles of food and money to their clients, who assembled before the house with their baskets to carry off the food, and even charcoal stoves to keep it warm until they got it home. The almoner was provided with a list of the clients entitled to the distribution, and tried to identify each recipient; but this was not at all easy, as the function attracted numbers of impostors, and, as the Roman proverb cynically expressed it, *sportulam furunculus captat* (it is the pilferer that grabs the dole). Some of the Emperors made ineffectual attempts to regulate these distributions, because they only tended to increase the already numerous tale of idle beggars. Nero fixed the patrician doles to a payment of 1s. per head in money. Domitian, in his turn, tried to remedy the obvious abuses of money payments by restoring the custom of giving food. In later times both money and food were doled out.

Owing to the break-up of the family and clan systems of antiquity by the spread of Roman law and the movements of population, the duty of providing for poor orphans was evaded more and more by their relations; and, instead of insisting on people fulfilling their natural obligations, the authorities proceeded to assist the evasion of such responsibilities. Nerva and Trajan instituted a special service for the maintenance of orphans, and the details of the scheme are best known from the inscriptions of Veleia and Beneventum. The Emperor lent a certain sum of money at a low rate of interest, and a number of the local landed gentry pledged their estates as security. The proceeds from the imperial loan were entrusted to special officers for the maintenance of the children. Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius, and Septimius Severus also established similar bursaries for children in the names of their respective wives; but the system came to an end during the military anarchy of the next century.

Ignorant or mendacious apologists frequently assert that almsgiving and benevolence were first introduced into the world by Christianity; but the above brief and imperfect sketch of the eleemosynary systems of antiquity will be quite sufficient to prove the contrary. Christianity found these systems in practice, and merely continued them. The Church found it advantageous to act as almoner, for it gave the ecclesiastical authorities command of large sums of money, and secured the adhesion of crowds of pauperised dependents. The boasted charity of the Early Church was thus nothing new; it was merely a politic extension of the old methods of multiplying misery and perpetuating poverty.

CHILPERIC.

Our lively Roman contemporary, *L'Asino*, announced in its issue of May 31 that the papal authorities had placed it upon the Index. This is an indisputable proof of its influence in the historic stronghold of the Church. Since its excommunication, *L'Asino* has greatly increased its circulation, and the senile Pope probably cursed his own shortsightedness.

PIETY.—Christians are so conscientious about loving their enemies that if they haven't any they are perfectly willing to make a few.

Acid Drops.

Dr. Horton, the Hampstead Congregational preacher, having settled the hash of Professor Haeckel, and gained the approval of "Merlin" of the *Referee*, now turns his attention to the Church of England, and gives it a solemn warning. If the parsons of the Establishment do not fraternise with Dissenting ministers, and recognise Nonconformist churches as part of the real Church of Christ, it will be the worse for them some day. They will have to do this in their own defence, he observes significantly; hinting, of course, at the future possibility of Disestablishment—to say nothing of Disendowment. "The revelations of the recent religious census in London," he says, "are very serious for the Established Church, for those outside are far in excess of the Church of England. Out of 940,000 worshippers only 412,819 were in the Church of England." So the Church had better beware.

We understand that Dr. Horton is a very great man; at least we have heard so—from his friends. But his strong point is not statistics. Had he looked at the London figures carefully, he would have seen two important facts; first, that the overwhelming majority of the people of London are outside *all* Churches; second, that the Nonconformists are not themselves numerous enough to beat the Church of England in a stand-up fight. Now it does not follow that the Nonconformists would get more support than the Church of England from the outside public; but, on the other hand, it is practically certain that the Church of England would have the support of all the Roman Catholics—which would ensure it an easy victory. Catholics will always vote, under the guidance of their spiritual directors, for the maintenance of the Establishment; partly because it is a principle of the Catholic Church that the State should profess and uphold religion, and partly because the Catholic ecclesiastics cherish the dream of some day capturing the Established Church in England for themselves.

Carlyle long ago pointed out that you want a head as well as the figures to work out the lessons of statistics. Dr. Horton has the figures. The other requisite seems doubtful.

Dr. Horton, the Hampstead Congregational preacher, has been interviewed for *Great Thoughts* by Mr. Raymond Blathwayt. Presumably, therefore, the reverend gentleman is a great thinker; though the report hardly bears out the presumption. He is not, however, without a certain artfulness. Recognising that the masses of the people do not care a straw for Christianity, he suggests that dogmas should be cast aside, and an attempt made to catch the multitude with a bait they would snap at. "The social questions in which they are mainly interested," he says, "are essentially Christian—housing of the poor, education, the rights of labor." So the Christian Churches must go in for these things, and then they will prosper. But does not Dr. Horton recollect an old text about spreading the net in the sight of the bird? And is he quite sure that Christianity has anything whatever to do with the social questions he enumerates? Jesus Christ said nothing about them. There is nothing about them in the New Testament. Indeed, the very essence of Christianity is the doctrine that this world is nothing and the next world everything. What is the use of troubling about your dwelling for a few short years on the earth when you have to gain or lose an eternal mansion in the skies?

The *Daily News* religious census for London was superintended by Mr. R. Mudie-Smith, who writes at length on the completion of his labors, and suggests that in open-air preaching lies the only chance of a Christian revival. He refers to the successes of Wesley in the eighteenth century. Yes, but where are you to find your Wesley now? And where will you find the simple, ignorant population to whom Wesley preached? The intellectual conditions are very different to-day. In brief, there is an absence both of the hour and the man. Wesley could not do to-day in England what he did a hundred and fifty years ago; and, even if he could, there is no Wesley now. John Wesley believed Christianity. He would have called Dr. Horton little better than an Atheist. The very things that Dr. Horton would cast aside were the very things that Wesley regarded as vital; and the very things that Dr. Horton makes the most of Wesley regarded as insignificant.

Mr. Mudie-Smith professes to have tackled the problem of the "Twicers"—the people who attend church or chapel both morning and evening, and are counted twice over in the

census. He says the "Twicers" are 35 per cent., or roughly one-third of the total number. This reduces the grand total from 1,002,940 to 850,205. The estimate of the number who could attend divine service in London is 2,268,270. Consequently, 1,418,065 persons absent themselves.

The grand total of attendances for the Church of England in this London census is 430,153, and for the Nonconformist Churches 416,225. Thus the Church of England alone beats all the Nonconformist Churches together. And behind the Church of England, as we have said before, there are the Roman Catholic reserves, numbering 93,572. These will fight as one man to uphold the Establishment. What chance, then, have the Nonconformists of disestablishing the State Church unless they get outside support from Jews, Secularists, Atheists, Agnostics, Freethinkers, Rationalists, and other sections of the outside public?

Dr. Clifford replied to Mr. Balfour, but he was too discreet to notice the important parts of Mr. Balfour's letter which we reproduced in the *Freethinker*. It will be remembered that Mr. Balfour twitted the Nonconformists with being perfectly satisfied with religious teaching in State schools as long as it was of the kind that had their approval, although the schools were maintained out of rates paid by Jews and Agnostics. This was a point on which Dr. Clifford thought "the least said the soonest mended," so he kept a judicious but dishonorable silence.

A Nonconformist wrote to a daily newspaper on the wicked Education Bill. He suggested that a verse of the old National Anthem should be sung by the Dissenting demonstration at the Royal Albert Hall. "It appears," he said, "to suit the situation admirably."

O Lord, our God, arise,
Scatter our enemies
And make them fall!
Confound their politics
Frustrate their knavish tricks;
On Thee our hopes we fix
God save us all.

Such was this Nonconformist's version. But by some accident—let us hope it was not malicious—the daily newspaper printed "Thee" as "Three," which made it very comic. For who could be the Three? Clifford, Horton, and Meyer?

The resolution carried at the Albert Hall demonstration, convened by the Free Church Councils of the metropolis, declared that it would "rest satisfied with nothing short of a national and unsectarian system of education under direct popular control." Lord, said Jack Falstaff, how the world is given to lying! These Free Churchmen are simply playing at hide-and-seek with the truth. They try to work the trick with that sweet word "unsectarian." But the word has "Christian" after it in their own minds and intentions, and if they were honest they would place it there in their public declarations. What they are fighting for is "unsectarian Christian education," and they know it, but are afraid to say so. "Unsectarian education" means education free from all taint of denominationalism. In this country, however, there is no religious unanimity. Christianity itself is a sect; a big one, but still a sect; for there are many citizens opposed to it, and a still larger number indifferent to it. Thus the long and the short of it, once more, is a "Fight for the Schools" between Church and Dissent. That is all there is in it.

The Mayor of St. Albans scored neatly off a Passive Resister. "I recognise," the Passive Resister said, "a higher tribunal than the Bench." "You can apply," said his Worship, "for a mandamus."

The dear *Daily News* chortles over the Sabbatarian triumph of the Southport Nonconformists, who have fought tooth and nail against the proposal to run Sunday tramcars, and defeated it by a considerable majority. The Wesleyans took "a very active and leading part" in this effort, and "the result was hailed with much rejoicing in the Free Churches of the town." At the Southbank-road Wesleyan Chapel they sang the Doxology in honor of the event. It also appears that "the Rev. J. Crompton Sowerbutts, superintendent of the Mornington-road Wesleyan Circuit, says he is entirely satisfied with the poll, and Southport has done itself credit, and shows it is not to be dominated by any capital-seeking company."

The last part of Mr. Sowerbutts' tribute to the orthodox virtue of Southport is a bit of deliberate *blague*. Whether tramways should be worked by companies or by municipalities is one question; and whether the tramcars should run on Sunday or not is quite another question. The two

have absolutely no relation to each other. And we dare say the reverend gentleman is perfectly aware of the fact. But he is also aware that he and his friends cannot afford to disclose their real motive in fighting against Sunday tramcars. They must pretend that their motive is not religious but social; that their object is, not to fill their gospel-shops, but to protect the people, and especially the working classes, against the greed of profit-mongers.

If the people, and especially the working classes, are taken in by such hypocritical humbug, they are hopeless fools, and must be left to the mercy of these pious charlatans. What we desire to do is to point out that any love of freedom the Nonconformists possess is an historical accident—the result of their conflict with the Church of England. Naturally they hate freedom just as much as other religionists. There would be no more liberty under their rule than there is under the rule of Roman Catholics. We know what Presbyterian tyranny was in Scotland. We know what Puritan tyranny was in New England. And this Southport case shows what they are still capable of doing where they have the chance. A man who says to his neighbor, "You shall not ride in a tramcar because I want to go to church," is capable of anything in the shape of intolerance.

Freethinkers should note that the Nonconformists, and not the Churchmen, at Southport are the most active friends of Sabbatarianism. It should be remembered, also, that what is true now has always been true. The Puritans and Nonconformists have striven to make the Sabbath a day of gloom. The only relaxation they understand is church-going and psalm-singing; and if this is not good enough for you, why you can just go to Hades, and take precious good care you don't annoy "the saints" on the road!

One of the "cheekiest" propositions that have come to our notice is that of the Rev. F. J. Salmon, pastor of the Baptist church at Saranac Lake, N. Y. Just before the late drouth was broken by the wet spell which still prevails, Governor Odell appropriated 15,000 dols. for experiments in rain-making, with a view to refreshing the crops and putting out the forest fires. Of course the copious rain made unnecessary the spending of the money in that way; and now the Rev. Salmon, in a letter addressed to Governor Odell through the Post-Standard of Syracuse, proposes that the 15,000 dols. shall be devoted to God as a "thank-offering," "to be equally distributed among different denominations representing God's kingdom in the missionary work, both home and foreign, as they may see fit." Was a more barefaced steal ever contemplated? The damage done by the drouth is reckoned by millions, and it can never be repaired, and yet the minister proposes to add to the waste by spending 15,000 dols. among the churches in the name of a God who, if he were worth anything as director of the weather, might have saved all the loss by sending the rain a month earlier. The only proper disposal of the money is to return it to the treasury; there is not enough of it to do the losers any good if distributed among them. Suggestions regarding thank-offerings always originate with the priests, who get the money.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Comic Cuts is publishing "Ten Years' Penal Servitude: by One who has just been Released." The writer, whoever he is, does not take a lofty view of the religious services in prison. The following passage is worth quoting: "Church followed this parade and inspection, and as all the ordinances of the Church of England were observed, the Communion was a privilege which no man refused. But, as a rule, the numbers were too large for all to be communicants at the same time, and so each Sunday had its own particular quota. It was very odd to see some of the men, whom I knew to be hardened ruffians, taking the Communion with a smug piety as though they were really repentant sinners. The real truth was, it was a change from the monotony of prison life, and that little scrap of white bread was a delicacy which few could resist."

A *Daily Telegraph* man, writing "From the Temple," makes a very absurd reference to Henry Hetherington, one of the bold pioneers of the free press in England. Hetherington is said to have instituted a prosecution against Moxon, the publisher of Shelley's *Queen Mab*, in 1841, for "malicious motives." This is quite untrue. There was no malice at all in Hetherington's mind. He simply tried to put a stop to the hypocritical practice of prosecuting the editors of cheap Freethought papers for blasphemy, while the "respectable" publishers of high-priced blasphemy were never molested. Being prosecuted himself, he initiated a prosecution of Moxon, in order to draw attention to the method employed by the authorities. *Queen Mab* was as blasphemous as anything Hetherington published, and the jury found Moxon

guilty. But no sentence was passed, and the Court never called Moxon up for judgment. Hetherington himself, however, being found guilty, was sentenced to four months' imprisonment. Could anything more conclusively show the class spirit that was at work in such prosecutions? Blasphemy as a crime—distinct from blasphemy as a literary recreation—has always consisted in speaking or writing Freethought to the common people.

Dr. Torrey, the Yankee revivalist, whose rubbishy pamphlet on *Difficulties of the Bible* we criticised several weeks ago, has returned to America, and is boasting before the Lord of the mighty conquests he achieved on his foreign tour. He declares that in Edinburgh he saved two hundred students at one meeting. They rose and marched in a body to the platform and found Jesus. At Glasgow there were 2,700 converts. In Belfast 4,000 souls were saved. At one meeting 900 drunkards knelt in prayer till two in the morning. All this is reported in the *Belfast Evening Telegraph* as Dr. Torrey's statement to a crowded "reception" meeting at Chicago. "I tell you folks," he exclaimed, "we have been praying for a world-wide revival. Friends, it has come." Has it? What has come is another Ananias. Dr. Torrey tells a tall yarn with exemplary coolness. Those nine hundred drunkards, all groaning at one meeting, are worthy of the imagination of the Bible writer who reported the falling of a wall that killed twenty-seven thousand people.

Robert Hall, a van boy, and William Whitehead, telegraph messenger, both of Normanton, were fined at Wakefield for using birdlime for the purpose of taking a linnet. The principal witness was another boy, named Ernest Stables, who admitted having bought the lime. All these were reported as Church Sunday-school boys. What they learnt at Sunday-school does not appear to have done them much good.

"Really, not since Gladstone's death," the *Daily News* said, "has there been a pluckier fight with old Death than Leo XIII. is waging at the Vatican." What would Landor say if he could see such a word as "pluckier" in a leading article in a paper established by his friend Charles Dickens? "Pluck" is the vulgarest of vulgar slang. Yet the organ of Political Nonconformity uses it quite seriously, and leaves it to "that vulgar *Freethinker*" to defend the honor of the English language. Nor is the substance of our contemporary's statement any better than its expression. Here is an old man in his ninety-fourth year; he professes himself God's vicegerent on earth, and is believed to be so by millions of human beings; he is the first teacher in the world of the doctrine of a heaven for all the flock of Christ; and death means to him—if he believes his own teaching—the passage from a life of trial to a life of everlasting bliss. Yet he fights against death; medical science is exhausted to assist him in the conflict; and the *Daily News*—which also believes in heaven—admires his "pluck."

The old Watch Story has just been trotted out again by the Rev. Dr. Bradney Dunne, vicar of Goldington, Bedford. Speaking at a Norwich centenary meeting of the British and Foreign Bible Society, after mentioning that the president of the Society was the Marquis of Northampton, this carefully veracious man of God proceeded to say that Northampton was "the very town where Mr. Bradlaugh once held his watch in his hand and gave the Almighty five minutes in which to strike him dead." Now the chief defect of this story is that it is absolute fiction. Mr. Bradlaugh never went through that watch performance either at Northampton or elsewhere. He himself hunted down the silly falsehood while he was living, and his daughter has hunted it down again since his death. But here it is as lively as ever. Yes, it flourishes in this age of newspapers and libel actions. What an easy job lies must have had to get into circulation some eighteen hundred years ago!

Rev. G. W. Simpson, vicar of Blackford, near Carlisle, agrees with the "honest Turk" in Byron's verses on the Waltz. His letter on the subject of dancing has caused quite a sensation in Cumberland, especially as he has given the public the benefit of his own personal experience. Having himself "sinned in a measure through dancing," and suffered and repented, he is anxious to warn others against the "animal passions" raised in ballrooms. We dare say the reverend gentleman means well, but he overlooks the fact that all men are not as inflammable as the average preacher. We say this advisedly; for, at the Plymouth Wesleyan Conference, it was objected to the proposal to admit lady delegates that they would distract the male delegates from spiritual sentiments.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

(All Engagements suspended until September.)

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.—July 19, m. Kingsland.
- S. STEVENS.—Miss Vance has written you about obtaining the *Freethinker* at Gainsborough. It is not our fault that you have any trouble. We publish as regularly as clock-work, but the trade sometimes throws obstacles in the way of our circulation. This has always been one of our great difficulties.
- A. T. GREENING.—We strongly advise you to read Shakespeare for yourself, and again and again, before reading much about him. There is a good deal of truth in Hazlitt's saying, that if you want to see the height of genius you should read Shakespeare, and if you want to see the depth of folly you should read his commentators. Great things have been written about Shakespeare, however, by persons who are not exactly commentators; such as Coleridge, Lamb, De Quincey, Landor, and Swinburne. If you read French you will find, when the time comes, some of the very finest passages on Shakespeare in Flaubert's Correspondence. But no other man's writing will compensate you for the loss of anything of Shakespeare's. Exhaust him, first of all; or rather do your best to, for you will never succeed. The most wonderful feature of this most wonderful genius is the universality of his spiritual experience. You will always find he has been before you. Many have noticed this, and Keats was so struck by it that he thought we might almost drop everything else and make Shakespeare do. One feels at times that if there be a God, and he was ever incarnated, he must have been born, not at Bethlehem, but at Stratford-on-Avon.
- RECENT SUBSCRIBER.—Pleased to hear from you, and hope you will continue to find the *Freethinker* so "delightful and refreshing." The references to John Wesley which have caught your attention in "Acid Drops" will be followed, as soon as opportunity permits, by an article or two on his Sermons. We believe we could write upon them in a way that would interest our readers—even the most iconoclastic of them. For, with all his faults and defects, John Wesley was a great man; and his honest Christianity is in striking contrast to the equivocal religion of his degenerate followers.
- AN OLD FRIEND.—We said, and meant, that the "Personal" paragraph you refer to would not be repeated. Once was quite enough for all who had any real desire to contribute towards Mr. Foote's long holiday; and the matter will not be alluded to again under any circumstances whatever.
- GEORGE JACOB.—You must see on reflection that we really cannot undertake to be responsible for the correspondence of our contributors. We see to our own, which is quite sufficient, and sometimes too much. Why do you not write a brief temperate letter on the subject which apparently so occupies your mind?
- WELL-WISHER.—We are obliged.
- F. J. GOULD.—Very pleased to hear you will possibly stand for the Leicester Town Council in November; and shall be still more pleased to hear of your success. An educational program like yours ought to be kept to the front.
- J. W. GOTT.—Glad to know our appeal brought help to support the Freethought open-air platform, and that you have thus been able to hold several meetings with more comfort and satisfaction. Sorry to hear, though, that the police do not recognise that your right to protection is the same as that of all other citizens.
- W. H. TWYMAN.—Thanks for your encouraging letter. You must remember that Freethinkers cannot get up a totally new dictionary.
- W. WAYMARK.—You will in all probability hear us in London in September.
- TWO CLIFTON ADMIRERS.—Your communication is welcome, and we would quote from it if we had not decided that the matter was not one to be long-drawn through the *Freethinker*. As we have said in reply to another correspondent, one announcement was enough for all who really cared.
- J. C. POINTON.—Your order has been attended to. We are very glad to have your pleasant letter, and to learn that Freethought propaganda can be carried on even in the Royal Navy.
- THE COHEN PRESENTATION.—*Eighth List*. H. Harrington 2s, John and James McGlashan £1, S. Leeson 10s., per V. Roger, F. C. 2s. 6d.; *South Shields Branch*: J. Charlton 1s., E. Chapman 1s., W. Bowie 1s., R. Fitzpatrick 1s., G. White 1s., M. L. B. 1s., C. Shepherd 2s., R. Lewis, 1s. 6d., W. W. 1s., R. F. 1s., A. F. 2s., W. F. 1s., H. F. 1s., L. G. 1s., C. F. 3s., Bishop of Ipswich 2s.
- G. M. POOLE.—Your letter will appear in our next.
- T. ROBERTSON.—Thanks for good wishes, which are on the way to realisation.
- HONI SOIT, ETC.—See "Acid Drops."
- A. W. HUTTY.—Pleased to read your kind letter.
- W. C. MIDDLETON (North Shields).—We are glad to hear from you as a visitor that Mr. Cohen's meetings on the Newcastle Town Moor were so successful. You say that the enthusiastic applause at the evening lecture should mean an increase in membership. We hope so too.
- H. HARRINGTON.—It is quite beyond our province to suggest such a permanent fund for Freethought lecturers and writers.

J. BLACKHALL and J. S. HASELTINE.—Will be dealt with in our next.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

T. EDWARDS.—Sorry we cannot use it.

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote will be away from London for some time, and his letters will be forwarded to him. It is requested, therefore, that Lecture Notices will *all* be sent in on *postcards* for the present, and that anything addressed to Mr. Foote for use or insertion in the *Freethinker* will be posted so as to reach the office at the latest by the first delivery on Monday.

We beg to call our readers' attention once more to the *Pioneer*, which is now seven months old. The object of this venture is to provide a cheap propagandist organ of advanced ideas, with a non-aggressive title, so that it may find its way into fresh circles more readily (perhaps) than the *Freethinker*, the very name of which seems to give some people a severe mental stomach-ache. The July number of the *Pioneer* is a very good one for wide distribution. It contains more Freethought than any previous number. "Spectator" contributes some pointed paragraphs on interesting topics of the month. "Julian" writes an admirable article, which should be widely read, on Christianity and the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Women would profit by reading the paragraphs specially written from their point of view by one of their own sex, who takes the pen-name of "La Pensee." "Radicus," a new writer, contributes a vigorous article on "Marriage, Morality, and the Church," while another writer deals with the position of the place which is said to be unmentionable in polite society, though, until recently, no place was more frequently mentioned in Christian churches and chapels. Finally, there is a long, and in some respects important, article by the editor on James Cotter Morison and his last work, *The Service of Man*, with special reference to the cheap reprint and Mr. Frederic Harrison's extraordinary Introduction. All Freethinkers should read this article.

The Cohen Presentation subscriptions now amount to a little over seventy pounds. Mr. Foote desires to say that he is not disposed to waste time and effort by pressing this matter during the holiday season. He intends to reopen it in September, when many who mean to subscribe will no doubt be in a better position to do so.

Last week's *Pitman's Journal* included Mr. F. J. Gould in its "Portrait Gallery." Mr. Gould, in the portrait itself, is a good man struggling with adversity. He is trying hard to be visible, and succeeds but partially. The biographical notice is much better. It is well-written, and discriminating as well as laudatory. Justice is done to Mr. Gould's work for "advanced" causes, particularly at Leicester. It appears also that he is "a skilful phonographer of twenty years' standing."

Mr. J. W. de Caux had a rattling good letter on "The Story of the Fall a Myth" in last Saturday's *Yarmouth Mercury*. Unfortunately he had a very insignificant opponent to dispose of in Mr. John Rudge, but we see that the Rev. C. Lloyd Engström has now joined in the discussion. This gentleman wants to get away from Grandfather Adam, and appeals to "a larger view of inspiration." Mr. de Caux will be able to deal with this windbag argument.

John Rudge was a fool, but he was honest. Mr. Engström is nothing if not slippery. In this very letter he refers to a book which can be bought at the Christian Evidence Society's office. "At least, so I believe," he says. So I believe! What a delicate sense of veracity the man has! But the game is up when you know he is the Secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. That fact is not stated in the *Yarmouth Mercury*.

The Liverpool Branch "picnics" to-day (July 19). Waggonettes leave Alexandra Hall at one o'clock prompt

for Newboro. The tickets are 4s. single, 7s. 6d. double, and 1s. 9d. for cyclists. Owing to unavoidable delay in the arrangements, it will be necessary to notify the secretary promptly that tickets are required; either at his address, 51 St. Ives Grove, Stanley, Liverpool, or at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square.

Under the auspices of the Bradford N. S. S. Branch lectures have been delivered by Mr. E. Paek, of London, on Woodhouse Moor, near Leeds. The people who listened seemed to be remarkably well pleased, yet the very same lectures at Bradford caused a riot. What an extraordinary difference between two neighboring towns! Mr. Gott informs us that Leeds will be cultivated, while Bradford will have to be gradually trained into civility by Wednesday evening meetings. "I wish," he writes to our Editor, "we could have you here for one outdoor lecture. I am sure you would make the hooligans thoroughly ashamed of themselves." Well, you never can tell, you know. God Almighty himself visited the Jews, and addressed outdoor meetings, and they nailed him up like a weasel.

M. Alphonse Renard, the celebrated mineralogist and Darwinian, who died quite recently at Brussels, did not allow the priests to convert him on his death-bed. He was at one time a Jesuit priest, but two years ago he seceded from the Church and married in London. Strenuous efforts, we understand, were made to secure a recantation from him in his dying hours, but he remained firm to the end.

The *Humane Review* is published quarterly by Ernest Bell, York-street, Covent Garden, London, W.C. It is not officially connected with the Humanitarian League, but is independently devoted to its objects. It is well got up, and the price is only one shilling. The July number contains some able and interesting articles. Mr. Edward Garnett opens with one on "The Nature Books of Mr. W. H. Hudson"—a writer with whom we must find time to be better acquainted. Lady Florence Dixie contributes "The Vision of Izra," which is rather fantastic, though not without a certain kind of merit. It is intended to illustrate the horrors of war. Mr. Richard Heath's article, "In the Potteries: Sixty Years Ago," tells an awful story of a social state we have happily left behind us. Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner writes ably and temperately on "The Death Penalty." The historical part of her article is interesting and valuable. With regard to the death penalty itself, we are bound to say it is far more merciful (though it is not intended to be) than imprisonment for life. Also you must do something with your murderers, and what is a great difficulty. Hanging murderers is a dreadful occupation, but looking after them is hardly a pleasant pursuit. It appears to us that Mrs. Bonner does not face the truth that the abolition of capital punishment, if it is to be anything else than an expression of the mere squeamishness of society, must be a part of a general plan of dealing with criminals on broad sociological grounds. Reformation, at least by law and public agency, is a very doubtful business. The great thing is to cut off the supply of criminal human nature; and this might be done with no more cruelty than is involved in preventing anti-social men and women from becoming fathers and mothers. Indeed, it would pay society to surround congenital criminals with comfort for the rest of their lives, subject to the enforcement of this all-important condition. Mrs. Bonner's article is followed by Canon Barnett's "Object Lessons in Whitechapel"—which is a strong protest against city slaughter-houses. Finally, we note an article by the Rt. Rev. Mgr. Canon John S. Vaughan, giving a Roman Catholic view of "Cruelty to Animals and Theology," and containing one of the most extraordinarily foolish pleas for vivisection we ever read or listened to. We pity the reverend gentleman when Miss Tucker, whom he replies to, gets at him in the next number of the *Humane Review*. He has three months to set his worldly affairs in order.

The South Shields friends have decided to hold their Annual Picnic in Holywell Dene on Sunday, August 9, and it is hoped that the Newcastle and other local friends will join with them upon this occasion. Any other method of travelling to the Dene may be adopted, but it is desirable that those intending to avail themselves of the brakes engaged to leave North Shields about one o'clock should send their names in as early as possible to the secretary, 32 James Mather-street.

Secularists in Wolverton and the district are invited to put themselves into communication with Mr. R. D. Williams, 530 Glyn-square, Wolverton, Bucks, with a view to forming an N. S. S. Branch and carrying on some local propaganda.

The Temptations of Abimelech.—III.

I AM afraid lest on this study I shall deservedly incur the profound disapproval of Mr. J. M. Robertson for my neglect in quoting my authorities—a good habit so ingrained in Mr. Robertson's case that, whilst it may silence his opponents—a result which is, in my case, the last end I desire to attain—it certainly tends to crib, cabin, and confine the play of the imagination on those and cognate weighty themes. Therefore it is with a feeling of satisfaction that I preface this section with three quotations, and conform for once to Mr. Robertson's excellent, because effective, procedure, at the same time giving that desirable tone of seriousness to my contributions which might, to a superficial observer, seem somewhat to lack:—

"Say, I pray, that thou art my sister, and it shall be well with me—for thy sake!" (Abraham to his wife on their arrival in Egypt, Gen. xii. 13.)

"And Abraham said of Sarah, his wife, 'She is my sister.' And Abimelech, King of Gerar, sent and took Sarah." (Abraham of his wife fifty years later at Gerar, Gen. xx. 2.)

"And when the men of the place asked him of his wife, he said: 'She is my sister.'" (Isaac a generation later still to the men of Gerar on his arrival there with his wife, Gen. xxiv. 7.)

The first thought to occur to one on reading the above is that in those early Genesiac days our admirable progenitors were arrant plagiarists. Abraham plagiarises himself, and Isaac plagiarises his father Abraham. They are plagiarisms naked and unashamed, with not an attempt at variation. What could have been easier for Abraham, after passing off his wife on Pharaoh as his sister, to have passed her off on Abimelech as his grandmother, and for Isaac to have passed off Rebekah on Abimelech as his daughter? Close even then as the plagiarism would have been, there would have seemed some faint striving after variety, some avoidance of mere stupid imitation. Isaac was indeed a chip of the old block, a mere echo of his free-loving sire. Was it cheek or dulness which prompted him to play the sister "fake" on the very man his father had tried it on with sixty years before? Abimelech, whose age we do not know when Abraham tempted him with the ninety-year-old fascinations of Sarah, but whom we may guess as being eighty, was, when Isaac undertook to pass off Rebekah on him, at least 140 years old; and, although Abimelech did not apparently add Rebekah to his harem, he seems to have accepted her as Isaac's sister; but—and here, in deference to the remarkable realism of the quotation rather than as a further tribute to Mr. Robertson's example in exactness, we must again quote—"When he [Isaac] had been there a long time Abimelech—looked out of a window and saw and, behold, Isaac was sporting with Rebekah" (Genesis xxiv. 8)—then, indeed, might Abimelech exclaim with the confiding Frenchman who found his wife and her lover in *flagrante delicto*, "Begar, now I do begin to soospect!" In fact, Abimelech not only suspected but charged Isaac, as he had fifty years before charged his (Isaac's) father, Abraham, with wickedly cheating him, and roundly denounced Isaac for his shameful conduct. But at this phase of the adventure we would go back a step. In that delightful quotation wherein Abimelech is described as looking out of a window we have really the raw material for a long essay on the manners and customs of our early ancestors.

"Are not the joys of morning shorter than the joys of night," says William Blake, possibly with some unconscious remembrance of this incident. Nor if Isaac had been sporting with Rebekah in the dark Abimelech could not have seen them out of his window. This Jew and Jewess must then have been indulging in their sporting propensities in broad daylight and *in coram publico*—or Abimelecho! Further, a window implies a door, and a door and window suggest a house, and a house suggests a civilised town or city.

So these spontaneous generated Gerites (who are also Philistines!) seem to have had a civilisation on a par with Pharaoh's and Egypt.

There were no windows in Israel unless we admit the window in the ark, which is the only one we hear of until that of Abimelech; and the Israelites, up to this time, seem to have been nomads, dwelling in tents ("to your tents, O Israel"), bearing then the same relations to Gerar and (say) Babylon as the desert Arabs of to-day to the Cairenes or the Alexandrians.

Thus we arrive, *en passant*, at the conclusion that spontaneous generation was far superior to special creation, men of the former having reached a high civilisation in towns and cities, whilst the specially-created were roving about in the manner of Central Australian Aborigines, and prostituting their wives with as little compunction as the said Aborigines are said to do to-day to the lusts of their Christian superiors.

SIRIUS.

Moses and the Pentateuch.—X.

IN the most primitive of the three codes now bound together in the "books of Moses" the only reference to different kinds of sacrifices is the following: "An altar of earth shalt thou make unto me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy *burnt offerings*, and thy *peace offerings*, thy sheep, and thine oxen" (Exod. xx. 24). These two offerings were known to the Israelites from the earliest times (Judg. xx. 26; xxi. 4; 1 Sam. x. 8; xiii. 9; 2 Sam. vi. 17; xxiv. 25; 1 Kings iii. 15; ix. 25; etc.). In the later Priestly Code, however, we find, besides the Burnt offerings and Peace offerings, several others, to wit, Sin offerings of three different kinds, Trespass or Guilt offerings, Meal offerings, Drink offerings, Wave offerings, Heave offerings, and Freewill offerings. Of these only the Meal offering appears to have been known before the exile.

The prophets Hosea, Amos, and Micah, who lived in the reigns of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah—that is, about two or three generations prior to the time of Josiah, when a certain book was found in the temple—these three prophets regarded with strong disapprobation the great immorality of the times, and each made strenuous efforts to recall the people to a proper sense of their duties towards their neighbor. Knowing nothing of the ritual in the two later codes, these ancient reformers, as well as the writers of some of the early Psalms, imagined that "the Lord" cared more for truth, honesty, sobriety, mercy, justice, and other virtues, than for sacrifices and offerings, and in accordance with this belief called upon the people to renounce their evil practices. The following are some of the statements of these simple-minded individuals:—

Psalm li. 16-17.—"For thou, O Lord, delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it: thou hast no pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

Hosea vi. 6.—"For I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

Amos v. 21-24.—"I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.....But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream."

Micah vi. 6-8.—"Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil?.....What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

The Lord, according to the Levitical code, required a great deal more than justice, mercy, and righteousness, though Micah and the others did not happen to know it. As a matter of fact, that deity really approved of just dealings and moral conduct; but

sacrifice of the proper kind, offered at the proper season, and in the manner prescribed, came first. The Jewish god knew of but one method by which atonement might be made for sins. This was by vicarious sacrifice, an innocent animal of the herd or flock being slain and offered up instead of the guilty man. Even when sin had been committed unwittingly, the Lord held the sinner guilty until sacrifice had been offered (Lev. v. 17-19); for without the shedding of blood was no remission. Repentance and contrition were of no avail without sacrifice.

The following are some of the requirements of the Jewish deity with regard to the number and different kinds of sacrifices which were to be offered every year on behalf of the whole nation:—

(1) DAILY SACRIFICES.—The Lord commanded and required a he-lamb of the first year to be sacrificed every morning, and another every evening, as a burnt offering for the sins of the people. To these were to be added a Meal offering of fine flour and oil, and a Drink offering of wine. Each of these was to be "a continual burnt offering throughout your generations" (Exod. xxix. 42).

(2) WEEKLY SACRIFICES.—On every Sabbath the Lord required an additional lamb to be offered both morning and evening, with additional Meal offerings and Drink offerings (Num. xxviii. 9, 10).

(3) MONTHLY SACRIFICES.—On the day of the New Moon the Lord required, in addition to the Daily sacrifices, an offering of two bullocks, a ram, seven he-lambs of the first year, a he-goat, and a Meal offering and a Drink offering with each animal (Num. xxviii. 11-15).

(4) THE PASSOVER.—On the fourteenth day of the first month (Nisan) the Lord required a paschal lamb to be roasted and eaten by every family, and from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of that month he commanded unleavened bread only to be eaten. If anyone neglected these commands "that soul shall be cut off from his people: because he offered not the Lord's oblation in its appointed season, that man shall bear his sin" (Num. ix. 13). At this feast the Hebrew deity also required, on behalf of the nation, in addition to the Daily sacrifices, an offering of two bullocks, a ram, seven he-lambs of the first year, a he-goat, and a Meal offering and a Drink offering with each (Num. xxviii. 16-25).

(5) THE FEAST OF WEEKS.—On the fiftieth day after the Passover the Lord required, besides the Daily sacrifices, an offering of two young bullocks, a ram, seven he-lambs of the first year, a he-goat, and a Meal offering and a Drink offering with each animal (Num. xxviii. 26-31). The first-fruits of wheat harvest were also to be offered at this feast—which lasted seven days.

(6) THE FEAST OF TRUMPETS.—The first day of the seventh month (Tisri) was, by the Lord's command, to be a day of blowing of trumpets. On that day the priests were to offer (in addition to the Daily sacrifices) a young bullock, a ram, seven he-lambs of the first year, a he-goat, and a Meal offering and a Drink offering with each victim (Num. xxix. 1-6). It should here be noted that only *one* bullock was to be offered on this day instead of the usual two, the reason for which only the Lord himself knew. That deity was most particular as to the carrying out of his ordinances exactly as prescribed. The two sons of Aaron, for instance, are stated to have been taken to task by Moses for omitting some slight formality connected with the sacrifice of a he-goat (Lev. x. 16-18).

(7) THE DAY OF ATONEMENT.—On this great fast day (the tenth of Tisri) the priests were to offer in sacrifice a young bullock, a ram, seven he-lambs of the first year, a he-goat, and the usual accompanying Meal offerings and Drink offerings, besides the Daily sacrifices (Num. xxix. 7-11). On this day the high-priest was commanded to enter the Most Holy Place, and to sprinkle the top of the Ark and the floor in front of the Ark seven times with the blood of the bullock just killed (Lev. xvi. 14, 15). This done, he was to confess the sins of the people over a scape-goat, which was then to be led into the wilderness and set free.

(8) THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES.—On the fifteenth day of Tisri commenced the feast of Ingatherings or Tabernacles, which lasted eight days. During this short period the Lord required as offerings seventy-one young bullocks, fifteen rams, 105 he-lambs of the first year, eight he-goats, and Meal offerings and Drink offerings in proportion, besides the sixteen lambs of the Daily sacrifices. Thus the Lord, who cared nothing for burnt offerings, commanded 215 animals to be slaughtered and offered to him in sacrifice within eight days, besides the same number of Meal offerings and Drink offerings. Not only so, but he was very particular as to the number that were to be offered on each day of the feast. Of the seventy-one bullocks, for instance, which he required to be sacrificed, thirteen were to be offered on the first day, twelve on the second day, eleven on the third day, ten on the fourth day, nine on the fifth day, eight on the sixth day, seven on the seventh day, and one on the eighth day. Why they were to be offered in this particular order only the Lord himself knew. What might be the consequences if, by some mischance, the priests sacrificed one too many or one too few of these animals on any of the appointed days, is almost too fearful to contemplate.

All these offerings were the Lord's food; consequently, the animals were to be without blemish, and the flour, oil, and wine to be the best that could be obtained. The Lord fed on the smoke of the sacrifices and the odorous exhalations—"the sweet savor"—of the burnt offerings. It is not surprising, then, that that deity should require as a regular allowance two meals a day, with double that number on the sabbath, and a few extra tit-bits on high days and holidays. Thus the Lord, who was believed to care nothing for sacrifice, commanded to be offered to him every year, to the end of time, 101 young bullocks, 31 rams, 1,051 he-lambs of the first year, 24 he-goats, 1,207 offerings of fine flour and oil, and 1,207 offerings of the best wine to be had. Respecting these offerings the Lord says: "My oblation, my food, my offerings made by fire, of a sweet savor unto me, shall ye observe to offer unto me in their due season" (Num. xxviii. 2). See also Lev. xxi. 6, 17, 21; etc.

Besides the foregoing, the Lord required from his worshippers the first fruits of everything cultivated, and the first born of all their cattle, as well as tithes of all they possessed (Num. xviii. 12-21; Lev. xxvii. 30). It has further to be borne in mind that the sacrifices already mentioned are only those appointed to be offered on account of the nation, taken collectively, and had nothing to do with the thousands of voluntary offerings made daily by private individuals. Thus, if a man had unwittingly done something "which the Lord had commanded not to be done," he was required (in the case of a priest) to offer a young bullock; or (in the case of a ruler) a he-goat; or (in the case of the "common people") a goat or a lamb, "a female without blemish"; or (if very poor) two turtle-doves or two young pigeons; or (if poorer still) "the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour." These were "Sin offerings" (Lev. iv. v.).

Again, if a man "lay carnally with a woman, that is a bondmaid," he was required to bring a ram "for a guilt offering," and the priest would "make atonement for him," and he should "be forgiven for his sin which he hath sinned" (Lev. xix. 22).

In each case the man who had transgressed was ordered to lay his hand on the head of the victim about to be sacrificed, and by so doing transferred his guilt to the animal, who was made to suffer for it. This was the Lord's method. That god had no idea of forgiving sin without punishing some one or something; that is to say, there was no forgiveness without sacrifice. Hence, the prophets Hosea, Amos, and Micah were very far out indeed when they proclaimed that the Lord "desired mercy and *not* sacrifice," that he cared nothing for "thousands of rams," and only required his people to "do justly, and to love mercy, and walk humbly" in his sight. It is quite clear that these would-be reformers knew nothing of the commands and regulations respecting sacrifice in

the "books of Moses," the reason for which is plain—those books were then unwritten. The three prophets named had no idea that the Lord troubled his head about such trivial matters as the form, the dimensions, the material, and color of the various articles of furniture connected with his Tabernacle, and with the composition of the oil and incense used in it, as well as with the articles of dress of the high-priest, and with the way in which the animals sacrificed should be cut up and offered on the altar. They believed that the god they worshipped thought only of righteousness, truth, and good moral conduct, and that he cared nothing for sacrifice and ceremonial nonsense. In this they were very much mistaken; they had never heard of the Lord's commands in the Priestly Code.

As we have already seen, none of the set feasts of the latter code was observed before the eighteenth year of Josiah. Neither, as a matter of fact, were the sacrifices connected with those feasts offered before that date. Sacrifices *were* offered, it is true, now and again, as the people felt disposed; but these were not offered at the times, or of the kind, or in the place, or in the manner prescribed by the Levitical code. The grand temple erected by Solomon was built for show, not for use, as will be seen by the following statement:—

"Three times in a year did Solomon offer burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar which he built unto the Lord" (1 Kings ix. 25).

Three times in a year! Why, had the daily sacrifices only been offered, the altar would have been used 780 times in a year; for *all* sacrifices were commanded to be offered on the brazen altar in the court of the Tabernacle or temple. Had the weekly sacrifices been offered, the altar would have been used 104 times a year. It is unnecessary to pursue the subject farther. There can be no doubt whatever that the regulations respecting sacrifice in the Priestly Code were unknown.

There are many other matters which all point to the fact of the late date of the Pentateuch. These I shall leave unnoticed, with one important exception, viz., the mythical character of the grand Tabernacle described in Exodus, and its attendant army of imaginary priests and Levites.

ABRACADABRA.

Death and Beyond.

BY ERNEST RENAN.

I.

I HAVE SO enjoyed this life that I have really no right to require a compensation beyond the tomb. It is for other reasons that I am so angry with death. She is an equaliser to a degree which irritates me; she is a democrat who blows us up suddenly; she should at least wait, and consult our time and convenience. I receive, several times a year, an anonymous letter containing these words, always in the same writing: "Suppose there should be a hell!" Certainly the pious person who writes me this is anxious for my salvation, and I give him my thanks. But hell is an hypothesis very little in conformity with what we otherwise know of the divine goodness. Besides, upon my conscience, if there is one, I do not believe I have deserved it. A little of purgatory might be just; and I would accept the risk, since there is paradise to follow, and good souls, I hope, would pay for indulgences for my release. The infinite goodness I have met with in this world inspires me with a conviction that no less a goodness fills eternity, and in this conviction I have an absolute confidence.

And now I only request of the good genius who has so often guided, counselled, and consoled me, a quick and easy death, for the hour is fixed, be it near or far. The Stoics maintained that a happy life might be led in the belly of Phalaris's bull. This is an exaggeration. Suffering degrades and humiliates, and makes us blasphemous. The only acceptable death is the noble one, which is not a pathological accident, but an end that is deliberate and precious in the sight of the Eternal. Death on the battle-field is the finest of all; and there are others illustrious. If ever I have desired to be a senator, it was because I imagined that the mandate might soon furnish me with fine occasions to club and shoot people; forms of death, indeed, which are very preferable

to a long sickness that kills you slowly and by successive demolitions. The will of God be done. Henceforth I shall learn nothing of importance; I see nearly as much of truth as the human mind is able to perceive in its present stage of development. I should be grieved to go through one of those periods of feebleness, in which the man who has possessed strength and virtue is only the shadow and ruins of himself, and often, to the great delight of fools, occupies himself in demolishing the life he has laboriously built up. Such an old age is the worst gift the gods can bestow upon man. If such a fate is reserved for me, I protest in advance against the fatuities that a softened brain may make me say or sign. It is Renan sound in heart and head, as I am now, and not Renan half destroyed by death, and no longer himself, as I shall be if I decompose gradually, that I wish people to listen to and believe.

—From "Souvenirs d'Enfance et de Jeunesse" (1884).

II.

I have before related how a pious person, in the neighbourhood of Nantes, who evidently believes that I live in the midst of feasts and dissipations, warns me every month or two that *There is a hell!* This person, whom I thank for his good intentions, does not frighten me as much as he fancies. I would like to be sure there is a hell; for I prefer the hypothesis of hell to that of annihilation. Many theologians think that the damned had better be than not be, and that these unfortunates may be accessible to some good thoughts. For my part, I fancy that if the Eternal, in his severity, sent me to that evil place, I should manage to get out of it. I should offer supplications to my creator that would make him smile. The reasons I should advance to prove to him that it is his fault that I am damned, would be so subtle that he would find it difficult to answer them. Perhaps he would admit me into his holy paradise, where the life must be very tiresome. Among the sons of God, he lets Satan, the critic, enter now and then, to afford the assembly a little amusement.

—From "Feuilles Détachées" (1892).

Correspondence.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I shall be thankful if you will allow me to draw attention, through the columns of your valuable paper, to an article in the issue of *Great Thoughts* for July 11 on "Lord Kelvin on Science and Religion," by W. E. Ashwell.

Although I believe the writer to be sincere, and of just intentions, I cannot but feel indignant at his article, for this reason. He quotes Lord Kelvin's remarks—made upon the occasion of Professor Honslow's recent lecture on "Present-Day Rationalism"—and holds them up as if they were all that had been said upon the subject that had any possibility of being right.

Granted, that he mentions that "a good deal of comment in the daily press" has been made upon Lord Kelvin's words, but even then he does not give any of the criticism that has been made, in his article, and the consequence is that some people are under the impression that science, and scientific men, taken as a whole, are "coming over" to religion, and others that science is affirmed by its champions to be in agreement with religion! Of course these people have not read the letters from other scientists, and consequently are deceived by the article alluded to.

The question is this—Is it fair to bring forward statements that have been dogmatically made by a scientific man, but which have since been refuted scientifically (witness Mr. E. Ray Lankester's letter to the *Times*) and logically (by Mr. J. M. Robertson at South Place Ethical Society), and to hold forth these statements as authority—as final authority—simply noting that "comment" has been made upon them.

Lord Kelvin's statements are not by any means accepted by scientific men as reasonable or true—far from it; and the evil lies in the fact that many are under the impression that they are. Yet we hear so much about Rationalists stretching points and using unfair means to convince others.

As regards the article itself, we read about "the strong tendency that exists of pitting science against religion. At the same time, what religion has to fear from science it is hard to understand." And then that religion is "an influence at work, in which men from the very earliest and most primitive ages have sought to discover their attitude and relation to that mysterious Unseen Power, who has caused all things.....to come into existence."

I think that if the writer looks into the matter carefully he will soon understand what "religion" has to fear from science. Geology, astronomy, *psychology*, and paleontology are sciences that he would do well to study in relation to

religion and—then perhaps it will not not be so "hard to understand."

The writer's statement that religion is "an influence at work, in which men," etc., is not clear. It is hardly conceivable that men *in* an influence have sought to discover their attitude and relation, etc. If the writer will study the logic of definition, he will see here what religion has to fear very often from its defenders.

He goes on to speak of "that mysterious Unseen Power who has caused all things.....to come into existence," and "begs the question" by *assuming* that the Unseen Power is something of which "who" is predicable—*i.e.*, that it is a personal being, and asserts that that being has caused all things. Here we have another *assumption* depending on the first. Can the writer bring anything to *prove* that this "Unseen Power" can be spoken of in terms of personality?

Proceeding, we are told that science is "but an enlightened philosophy." Perhaps it is—or not; but yet what is present-day religion but a muddled theology—one might say dogmology!

Later we read that "both seek to know more of the Creator." This is news indeed—science seeking to know more of a Creator! *Science assumes nothing, neither does it beg questions*—although Lord Kelvin says that it "positively affirms Creative Power"; but he has had his answer.

Towards the end of the article we read that religion's "God" and science's "eternal energy" are one and the same thing. I wonder how many English and German scientists would agree to such a proposition.

The end of the article implies that Lord Kelvin is a final authority on this matter. "Lord Kelvin expresses himself distinctly in this respect."

This is the kind of teaching that is held out to people, many of whom are in blissful ignorance of the other side of the question.

CHAS. D. THOMSON.

METHODS OF EDUCATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I observe in a recent issue of your journal a letter by a Mr. T. Warbis, and, whilst agreeing to a certain extent with what he says therein, I must say that, in my opinion, the scheme is impracticable in its essential points.

The remarks about the abolition of sectarianism from schools supported by rates and taxes I quite support, but the clause which suggests watching the "bents" of the scholars I hold to be absolutely erroneous.

In the first place, few children display any marked ability until they leave school. In the second, it would hardly be fair for Mr. A to pay the same rate for his boy to learn brick-laying as Mr. B paid for his boy to become an artist. The proposition may be very well in words, but there would be insurmountable difficulties in the way of its execution.

II. C. GODDARD.

LEICESTER BAZAAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In September next, the Leicester Secular Society will hold a second bazaar in aid of its funds. Our work includes Sunday evening lectures all the year round (except August); Saturday evening lectures during three winter months; Sunday-school, morning and afternoon; Young People's Guild; Sewing-circle; Classes for study and discussion; Library (1,000 books); Reading-room, smoke-room, etc. We keep this machinery going in spite of a loss of nearly £100 per annum through the recent abolition of the sale of alcoholic drinks at the Club bar. May I ask Freethinkers all over the country to help us? In this case, we do not beg for money. We want ever so many useful articles sent us carriage-paid—clothes, boots, books, pictures, china, glass, furniture, timepieces, cutlery, knick-knacks, dolls (large or small), etc. We shall sell at moderate prices, and our side-shows (pictures, geological specimens, dolls, etc.) will be free from the silly element. Shopkeepers may be able to spare us some items from their stock, and that eternal fount of generosity—the heart of woman—will, I am sure, incline to our assistance. We really do need all that friendly hands can give us, and if readers of your pages have at any time been entertained by my essays, reviews, and sermons, I beseech them—as humbly as the one-armed organ-grinder in the street—to remember the poor.

F. J. GOULD.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

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OUTDOOR

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6.15, Mr. Edwards.

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste): 11.30, E. B. Rose, "And the Lord Said—"

KINGSLAND BRANCH N.S.S. (corner of Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, C. Cohen.

STRATFORD GROVE: 7, G. Parsons, "Did Man Make God?"

COUNTRY.

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