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PRICE TWOPENCE

A healthy poetic nature wants, as you yourself say, no Moral Law, no Rights of Man, no Political Metaphysics. You might have added as well, it wants no Deity, no Immortality, to stay and uphold itself withal.

—SCHILLER TO GOETHE.

Found Out.

It was Mr. John Morley, we believe, who said that all religions die of one disease—being found out. Perhaps that is the reason why none of them was ever known to rise from the dead.

Christianity has been found out by all well-informed, intelligent people. It lives still amongst the ill-informed and the unintelligent. We need not count those who live *by* it. Their fate will overtake them when the detection of Christianity is completed. It is only a question of time.

Theism has not been so widely found out. Thirty years ago Atheism seemed to be making considerable progress. Charles Bradlaugh was thundering it from London and provincial platforms; Büchner's *Force and Matter*, in an English dress, was making it more or less familiar to students; and Professor Clifford was pressing it on the attention of quite "respectable" readers in the *Fortnightly Review*; so much so, indeed, that when the *Nineteenth Century* was started by Mr. Knowles, the introductory sonnet in the first number from the pen of Tennyson alluded to the atheistic contributors in a not unfriendly spirit.

"For some, descending from the sacred peak
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have leagued again
Their lot with ours to rove the world about;
And some are wilder comrades, sworn to seek
If any golden harbor be for men
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of Doubt."

A progressive wave swept over England, as over other countries, after the proclamation of the French Republic. But the reaction came in time, as was inevitable. Clifford died before it set in, but Bradlaugh lived long enough to see it in full swing. A new generation arose, destitute of courage and enthusiasm; a generation that seemed to be born too weary to take an interest in much beyond its bread and butter; a generation without the *verve* for strong ideas and splendid audacities. Atheism went more and more out of fashion. Its timid friends called themselves Agnostics. Freethought even went somewhat out of fashion. Its timid friends called themselves Rationalists—a designation formerly used by advanced Unitarians like James Martineau. All these fresh labels were simply shields to break the force of popular prejudice. It was safer to be thought to have an orthodoxy of your own, if it could only be appreciated.

For some reason there is another reaction beginning, though we cannot say whether it will last for any length of time. Some of the Agnostics and Rationalists are rediscovering Atheism. They do not know—at least they appear not to know—that Atheism has never been out of the field. It has had its dauntless stalwarts in the darkest hours of adversity; its Old Guard that knew how to die, but not how to surrender.

Some of the very people who were so mortally afraid of the very name of Atheism have, however

unintentionally, done it a service by the publication of Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* and Büchner's *Last Words on Materialism*. Büchner, of course, was already known as a militant Atheist; but the Atheism of Haeckel was a revelation to a large number of English readers. It may be that Atheism is more respectable when associated with profit instead of loss; or it may be that its respectability is dependent on social position—just as Professor Huxley was so much more respectable than Charles Bradlaugh, although he simply expounded the same scepticism to a different class of society; the cream of the joke being that Huxley was fully conscious of his superior respectability.

We have just received from the author a copy of a pamphlet entitled *Theism Found Wanting*, by W. S. Godfrey (Watts & Co.). We gather that Mr. Godfrey has been a minister of religion. He rejected Christianity, and he now rejects Theism. He does not call himself an Atheist, but he is one all the same. The term Agnostic is worn threadbare when you hold that the God idea is not only unreasonable, but positively mischievous. For that very reason, perhaps, Mr. Godfrey starts by dissociating himself from an imaginary class of Atheists. He wishes it to be understood that he has no connection with the "ungodly" whose "only object in endeavoring to banish the remembrance of God from their own and the world's thought is to gain thereby greater freedom for indulgence in folly or in sin"—"low types of humanity," as he calls them later on, "who simply 'forget God' to run riot in transgression." Mr. Godfrey, in short, belongs to the good Atheists; he has nothing to do with the bad Atheists.

Some day or other, perhaps, Mr. Godfrey will see the absurdity of all this. Surely a man need not turn his back on religion for the sake of greater "indulgence in folly." One would think he could find all the folly he wanted without shifting. If, on the other hand, he wants to indulge in "sin" and "transgression," he should certainly cover his misdeeds with the cloak of piety. All the great rascals of modern times have had the sense to do this. The last thing a scoundrel who was not an imbecile would ever think of doing is to pose as an Atheist. It would be courting prejudice and inviting suspicion.

Mr. Godfrey briefly examines the main arguments for the existence of God and finds them all wanting. There is nothing new in what he has to say, though it may be new to him. He writes with some eloquence on the Problem of Evil. He shrinks from the idea of a God behind the suffering and misery in nature. "If there were no evil in the world," he says naively, "I am free to confess that I should find it much less difficult to believe in a God." Of course he would, and so would anyone. The problem of evil is the rock on which every ship of faith splits to pieces. God, as an object of reverence and worship, cannot exist except in relation to morality. Mr. Mallock well pointed this out and pricked Lord Kelvin's "scientific" bubble. It is the evil in the world that upsets Theism. To say, as some do, that evil will not last for ever, is nothing to the purpose. It is not the continuance, but the origin, of evil that is the awful mystery in face of the doctrine of an infinitely wise, powerful, and benevolent God. Newman saw this clearly enough, as other theologians would do if they had his brains and courage.

We rather like the way in which Mr. Godfrey turns the tables upon the Theists on the ethical side of the controversy. He reads them a staggering moral lesson. He tells them that the way in which they outrage their own reason "fatally interferes" with their "ethical development." He speaks thus of the Theist:—

"He may admit himself bound by a moral code which does not bind his God, but the very thought that his God is not so bound—that he, whose propriety is unquestionable, does all these things, works by all these means—cannot fail to have a disturbing and weakening effect upon his sense of right and wrong. I am deeply convinced that the disposition abroad to-day to condone cruelty and injustice in a thousand forms, to wink at or indulge in many kinds of iniquity, derives its sanction to an enormous extent from the subtle idea—the idea so paralysing to the true moral sense—that evil is only good in disguise; the idea that a perfect God is behind it all, a God who employs himself these methods, knows what he is about, and will bring all right in the end."

Mr. Godfrey contends that "the thought of God" is already "a decaying superstition." The whole Theistic notion, as man progresses, will "become increasingly unfit and absurd." If the Devil goes, God must go too, for they are twin conceptions. The "mystery" of things, as Mr. William Watson says, is only made "darker with a name." We cannot fathom the infinite. It is enough for us to love and serve Humanity. Mr. Godfrey perceives this. He still casts a sort of Lot's-wife eye at the consolations of the religion he learnt at his mother's knee, but he is brave enough to march forward all the same, although he has to confess, "I stand alone, suspected indeed and sighed over by many who once were not unwilling to learn from me." Alone? No, not alone, Mr. Godfrey. You may meet with others who have gone through the same ordeal, who thought they were passing into the night, but found they were emerging into a brighter day:—

"Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dread endurance, from the slippery steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings."

G. W. FOTE.

The National Need.

SIR NORMAN LOCKYER'S address, as President of the British Association, is a timely and valuable reminder of some of the real issues before the public. On the one side the real question of education runs no little danger of being smothered beneath the rivalry of religious sects, each of whom is animated by the single desire of capturing the children in sectarian interests. And on the other side, the average citizen, thanks to the rapid growth of militarism, seems given over to the worship of brute force, without any apparent recognition that not alone is brute courage one of the commonest of characteristics, but also that its importance is of relatively dwindling value in the contest of nations.

To both of these parties Sir Norman Lockyer drives home the lesson that the great need of the country is a more efficient education, an education in the widest sense of the word that shall reach from the lowest elementary school to the highest university, and result in the most complete training and organising of the nation's intellectual resources. This was the main theme of the Presidential address in 1902, and it has been ably followed by its successor. And in striking this note both Presidents have but pointed out the plain drift of social evolution. The struggle for existence is no longer a struggle between individuals so much as it is a contest of groups of individuals. And in this contest brute strength is steadily replaced by brain power and by organisation. Even war itself is now far more a fight of brains than muscle, and bids fair to be more so in the future. One need only reflect upon the amount of brain power consolidated in modern implements of war to see the truth of this, and to catch a glimpse

of the further truth that in the future the race will be not to the nation that can turn out the greater number of prize animals, but to the one that has best developed and organised its intellectual resources.

And yet, the fact has to be faced, education is not taken in hand in this country in the same serious spirit that it is in either France, Germany, or America. Whose fault is this? A very easy reply is to cast the blame upon the Government. But a government that lives upon popular suffrage, particularly in cases where the electorate is ill-educated, will hardly lead opinion in any genuine sense. It will usually follow, and the more susceptible it is to public opinion the less will it lead. The real leadership in such cases is public opinion immediately, and ultimately the moulders of public opinion. And it is precisely this aspect of the matter that enables one to realise the extent to which religious influences generally, and particularly religious interference in education, obstructs the course of national development.

Sir Norman Lockyer asserts that we are behind other nations in the encouragement of scientific research; and his predecessor in the office, Professor Dewar, asserted that the English public were intellectually poorer than the German public. To recognise an evil and to ask for its removal is substantially the same thing. It is another thing, however, to point to some of the influences that perpetuate certain evils, and this, for obvious reasons, Sir Norman Lockyer failed to do. But let any one seriously ask themselves what is the extent of the influence of religious organisations in this country, and also what their relation has been, and is, to intellectual matters, and it will be found that one of the principal causes of the evil complained of has been touched. I am not fanatic enough to argue that religious influences is the sole cause of the nation's backwardness, but there can be little question that they are among the most powerful.

Let us take one or two instances. Sir Norman Lockyer complains of the little money spent in this country by the State on scientific research. During the nineteenth century the amount of money spent averaged £1,200 annually. Stupendous! It is far less than the Government gives to religious organisations in the shape of remission of taxes. A man like Faraday, whose discoveries have been of enormous benefit to the nation, and continues to be of benefit, receives for a few years of his life £800 a year. A man like the Bishop of London receives £10,000. Nearly £2,000,000 annually goes upon foreign missionary enterprise. Many millions go annually upon endowing churches and chapels, and upon the payment of ministers of religion. How much does this expenditure contribute to the real development of the nation? It is the plainest of facts that, in its best aspect, it is spent in bolstering up theories during one generation that are disowned during the next. Sir Norman Lockyer asks for a huge addition to our thirteen Universities that have to compete with Germany's twenty-two and America's one hundred and thirty-four, and tells us that this would demand the capitalisation of a sum of £24,000,000. This is about the amount—less if anything—that is spent on religion in this country every year. Put the matter upon the lowest possible ground—upon the ground of mere business competition—should we not have a greater and better return if our huge expenditure on religion were devoted towards a more complete intellectual equipment?

The clergy might say in defence that people could spend their money and energy on scientific development if they pleased to do so. Exactly; if they pleased. But they do not please; and one asks, Why do they not? Largely, I take it, because of the influence on public opinion and on public matters that religion has always had, and still possesses. Thousands of sermons are preached every week; hundreds and thousands in the course of a year. In how many of them does one find the value of intellectual development impressed upon the people?

Scarcely any; none that I have come across. One meets with plenty of warnings against "intellectual pride," plenty of advice to be humble and cultivate habits of contentment, plenty of half-maudlin verbiage about the necessity of cultivating a feeling of dependence upon and reverence towards some mythical monstrosity or other, but little of any real value otherwise. If science is touched upon at all, it is either in the shape of some dishonest harmonising of religion and science, or else to assure the people that science is still ignorant upon many questions, will perhaps be always ignorant on others, and that when the Darwins and Lyells and Kelvins have had their say they must come to some little Bethel to get any really reliable information about the ultimate problems of the universe.

When the religious teacher deals with the intellect it is to show up its weaknesses, to dwell upon its failures. The scientist is content to point to its strength and successes, and so incite to further triumphs. The one thing that a religious teacher notes with pleasure is that some scientific experiment has failed. He cackles joyfully that science cannot explain the origin of life, the origin of conscience, or the origin of something else. Suppose it cannot; this is no occasion for joy, but rather for depression. There is really nothing elevating in the discovery that there are many things we are ignorant of, and that our attempts after knowledge are fruitless. Yet this is the one thing that delights the soul of the religious leader. Let anyone reflect upon the influence of this class upon the race generation after generation; let anyone bear in mind the constant opposition that has been offered to the great discoverers in science, and also that this class had for generations practically the sole direction of such education as existed, and still largely influences it, and it will be seen that here is a very evident cause of the nation's backwardness.

As with the higher education, so with the lower. Over and over again I and others in these columns have insisted that the whole question, about which Nonconformists and Churchmen are fighting, is a religious question, and nothing else. Neither of them care the value of a brass button about education, as such. Both are faced with the fact that *some* education must exist, and each is striving for its direction. And whether this be directed in the interest of church or chapel makes little difference—except that an education controlled by the chapel is likely to be even narrower than that controlled by the church. But that, between the two, the issue is a religious one, there can be little doubt. The wariest hypocrite exposes himself occasionally, and the very people who are protesting that the fight is a citizen's fight, pure and simple, are the ones who are declaring that they intend to drive Romanism out of the country through this agitation. A laudable object, maybe, but one is puzzled to see why Romanism has not the same right to existence as any other form of religion. And, in addition, we are promised a Nonconformist political party, so that the rank-and-file may vote for a man solely in proportion to his devotion to chapel interests, and without any regard to his qualification for directing the nation's destinies.

If these parties really had the interests of *education* at heart, religious instruction would be left a matter for private enterprise in the case of children, as in the case of adults. But it is not; it is the religious interest first—education is a mere subterfuge with both. As an example of the hypocrisy that the country is being deluged with, one may take Mr. Sylvestre Horne's suggestion that religious instruction should be limited to the Bible, and this left to the wishes of each electoral district. The hypocrisy here is patent. The question of religious instruction is not one that should be decided by majorities in any district. Justice demands that it shall be excluded altogether from State-supported schools. And why leave it to the electoral districts to decide? Simply because Mr. Horne knows that, as the Christians outnumber the non-Christians, some form of religious

instruction is almost certain to be taught *at the expense of non-Christians*, while the limitation to the Bible will make it more favorable to Nonconformists than to Churchmen. Thus religious hypocrisy masquerades as social justice.

It is not surprising, all things considered, that the people pay so little attention to intellectual matters. They are what their education has made them, and that education has been fatally influenced by theology. Of old, religion burned the scientific teacher. To-day, it handicaps his efforts by obstructing the general development of the public mind. But its policy is always the same—obstruction, obstruction, and yet again obstruction. We can agree with the present band of Nonconformist shouters that "clericalism is the enemy," and that it must be kept down under pain of national degradation. But we see no reason to except their own peculiarly narrow "clericalism" from the generalisation.

C. COHEN.

Praying for Fine Weather.

How futile and unreasonable this appears to a reflecting mind! As if that fictitious and fickle power called God knew, or cared about, any kind of weather, or had cognisance of atmospherical conditions, or was familiar with, or could regulate and interfere with, the law of storms. It is pitiable to see men going down on their marrow-bones to beseech the Almighty to change the weather, and send something more favorable and less disastrous. Bishops—good, easy men—set forth prayers, often old and quaint, with untruthful liturgical expressions. One is said to be a form a thousand years' old, though none the better for that, and evidently not effectual then, and assuredly not now. It tells him, who is said to "ride upon the storm," that, "although we for our iniquities have deserved a plague of rain and waters, yet upon our true repentance Thou wilt send such weather as that we may receive the fruits of the earth in due season." What does the farmer, whose crops have been ruined, say to such silly, puerile talk as that? What can any sensible man say to it? He can only condemn and reprobate the widespread destruction, the great injury, which the uncontrolled elements have wrought, and put his faith and his prayers in his pocket and cease imputing so much mischief to "O Thou," as they dub the sovereign majesty on high.

But these petitioners for fair, fine weather are rather wary of the Beneficent One. They seek to bargain with him. "Thou the Lord shalt be our God and portion evermore," only give us a little decent weather. They pretend lowly confessions of "iniquity," which was sufficient to have opened the flood-gates upon them. But what was the iniquity of the poor, trusting farmer, beyond, possibly, "a big, big D"—at the forbidding prospect? Even a godly bishop may have said as much. Where was the "iniquity," causing, as the *Daily Express* put it, "this failure of the British harvest—for a failure we are afraid it must now be called, even though seasonable weather were at last to set in." A woman, after the great Johnstown flood in America, brought her Bible to be sold, saying, "I have no further use for it." It had not kept her from disaster and ruin.

But where were the "ten righteous" through all our bad weather, whose merits might have averted the catastrophies? But such do not come to the front when sorely wanted. Do they ever put in an appearance? Are there not "ten righteous" any more, or five, or two, or even one left? Yes, brethren, there are, we hope, scores on hand, but righteousness and moral excellence do not count in atmospherical disorders. As well fling up a patent pill into the air to cure the raging floods, as to expect insensate nature to heed our prayers.

But let us cease imputing these troubles to any divine caprice, which, angry as a fretful, fractious child at our "iniquities," in this way displays its

spleen. Were this so, we could well employ the line of Omar Khayyam:—

"Man's forgiveness give—and take!"

We dismiss the out-of-sorts God as unworthy of consideration. Man has far too much to say on his own side. We do not believe there is a being in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, who, supposed to be omnipotent, could be so mean and find nothing nobler to do than to be always hunting up, and scenting out, and raking over the refuse of "iniquities."

GERALD GREY.

If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?*

THERE is a good deal of free thought in the Bible. When I was an orthodox Christian, the many passages suggestive of doubt and unbelief never struck me as such. As a matter of fact, the idea of free thought in the Bible, which was the inspired and infallible Word of God, was impossible to my mind at that time. It must be the case with all Christians, or they could not ignore many parts of the Scriptures, as they all do. Until men begin to think for themselves, they see in the holy book nothing more than has been taught to them in their churches and chapels. But, when I began to think for myself, doubt was born. I ate of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the middle of the garden, and my eyes were opened, and I began to see many things in the Bible that I had never seen before. One of the things I saw was, that the immortality of the soul was not an article of faith in the religion of the Jews. Another thing I found was, that there are many passages in the Bible that deny the immortality of the soul. Here is an example from the third chapter of the Preacher: "For that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: all go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again." A Free-thinker could not easily deny or dispute the immortality of the soul in plainer or stronger language.

Similarly, the same thoughts are expressed in the fourteenth chapter of the Book of Job, from which the heading of this article is taken: "If a man die, shall he live again?" It seems to me that this is a question containing a negative answer within itself—a denial in the form of an inquiry. To the author of the Book of Job the idea that man would live after he was dead seemed so absurd, that he thought, putting the supposition in the form of a question, would be sufficient to show its absurdity. Other passages in the same chapter seem to confirm this notion. "For there is a hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease; but man dieth and wasteth away; yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fall from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised from their sleep." Pretty plain and strong these passages from a Book said to be the holy and inspired Word of God, are they not? They show conclusively, I think, that Job had no belief in the immortality of the soul, and that he intended his question to be a denial of the doctrine.

It is doubtful whether Job had evolved the idea of a dual nature in man. At first man was an unit, his body, life, and breath being one person. The idea of a soul dwelling in the living body, separate from it, independent of it, and different in nature, had not been born. Man was only a man like a beast, and nothing more. The word in the Bible translated soul and spirit meant breath, air, and wind, and gives no suggestion of an immaterial and immortal soul as that word is now understood.

How did the idea of a soul originate? As there is

no record of the genesis of ideas, we can only guess how they were born, and answer the question accordingly. Seeing that all men died and decomposed, it is not easy to understand how the conception of immortality was evolved. But it was evolved, and a belief was held that man, though dead, was still alive, somehow and somewhere. The thought was not very clear, and the arguments for it could not be very strong, as all the circumstances seemed to indicate that death terminated the existence of man as a separate individual. Man has a high estimation of his own importance and value. Primitive man, in all probability, thought he was too great to cease to be when he died, as the beast did. At all events, a crude notion of immortality came to be an article of belief at a very early time. But the difficulty of believing that the body of flesh and blood, which had died and decomposed, was still alive, became so great to the most intelligent that thought was prompted to devise some theory to support the belief. Proud man could not bear the idea that he would die like a beast, and be no more. His death was only a sleep, and he would awake again and rise from the dead. The first idea was immortality; the second, probably, the resurrection of the dead body. But the great difficulties inherent in the idea of a resurrection would, again, prompt the most intelligent to formulate a speculation to make the notion appear more reasonable. Man was a dual person. He had a soul separate from his body. This soul was spiritual, immaterial, and immortal. When the body died the soul left it, and went to Hades; but it would come back to join the body at the resurrection. The idea of a resurrection of the body probably gave rise to the practice of embalming, to keep it ready for the soul to reoccupy at the resurrection.

Very likely, the great difficulties and impossibilities involved in the belief did not strike thinkers in its early stages. Other thoughts would have greater influence over them. Were they not conscious of a soul which often left them during sleep and returned again before they awoke? And how could they think that the great and powerful men, whom they know, ceased to be when they died? It could not be. Their death was only a sleep, to rest awhile, to come back to life with renewed vigor and glory. Such thoughts, it is possible, confirmed the belief in the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body.

But a thought has often arisen in my mind, that the craftiness and shrewdness of chiefs, kings, priests, and others, had much to do with the evolution of the idea of immortality and the resurrection. In tracing the birth and growth of ideas, beliefs, and rites, I have often thought that writers do not give sufficient importance to conscious and deliberate cunning fraud on the part of the privileged few in order to keep the masses in mental and social slavery, to minister to their comfort, safety, and honor. At the present day, is it possible to believe that the leaders and rulers in Church and State have faith in the doctrines taught by them? I think not. Some of the more ignorant and backward amongst them, may think that their creeds and politics are true; but the great majority, being intelligent, educated men, I cannot conceive how it is possible for them to be sincere in their professions. The facts of science and growth of knowledge compel intelligent men in Church and State to abandon or modify nearly all their old opinions and creeds. They may think that the old superstitious dogmas and rites are necessary, not for themselves, but for the masses, to keep them in subjection to king and priest. It is an old order, to have one creed for the few, and another, quite different, for the many. It seems to me palpable, that Church and State to-day are full of conscious and deliberate fraud, to keep power, wealth and honor in the hands of the few. And is it not clear that vested interest in errors, and efficient organisations, under the control of trained and interested ministers, are a powerful means to spread and perpetuate superstitions?

If that is true of Church and State to-day, how

* Job xiv. 14.

much more must it be true of the early stages of civilisation, when culture and knowledge was kept exclusively to the few. The crafty few gradually found out that the masses were superstitious, easily frightened, ready to believe anything their superiors told them, facile to be persuaded and led, and generous to serve and contribute of their wealth to their rulers. They also soon found out the power of knowledge, and the influence of creeds and rites on the public mind. Then, knowledge, as far as it could be, was kept from the masses, and the priest came on the stage with his dogmas and ceremonies, to enslave the mind. This, I think, had much to do with the origin and establishment of superstitious beliefs, and it has had much to do ever since to spread and perpetuate them in the world.

The belief in immortality is very old and widespread. Therefore, in discussing the question, *pro* and *con.*, both sides in the dispute ought to be cool and tolerant. The object should be, not to triumph in argument over one another, but to get hold of the truth, if possible. If man is immortal, denial will not make him mortal; and, if mortal, affirmation will not make him immortal. No amount of discussion will alter facts, and heated passion, for or against, is indefensible and out of place.

In all disputes it will be well to remember that all ideas come from nature. There is no other place for them to come from, as nature is all. There is no idea in the world but has been prompted or produced by nature. The God idea is a product of nature; so also is Agnosticism. The belief in immortality was evolved by nature, and the denial of it, by the same nature. The existence of different and contradictory doctrines, it seems to me, cannot be accounted for satisfactorily on any other theory. Whatever difficulties may be found in this theory, there would be more and greater in any other. Once we grasp this great fact, we shall learn to be tolerant to one another, and not too dogmatic in our disputations.

R. J. DERFEL.

(To be continued.)

'Postle Paul.

"It's very hard to believe when we are laid in the ground we are not done with."—ROMAN CATHOLIC LADY (in conversation).

Though we not bend, like Rome, to saints
In stone on every shelf,
Still, every mortal nation takes
Some idol to itself:
And, sans dispute, look where we will
Through England's wrangling Church,
With every faction, 'Postle Paul,
You hold the tip-top perch.

Now, Paul, we know, when dogs are dull,
Pigs may be thought divine;
Though, when the dogs are well alert,
The swine are only swine:
And, in the realm of worship, some
Like law must be the case;
For it would task the Sphinx to tell
How else you won your place.

I skip, from fellow-feeling, Paul,
That marvellous conversion:
When faith was strong, and wits were green,
I had a small diversion.
But, Paul, it puzzles one to read
How slick the new-boom'd Ghost
Came to your tail, and bustled round
With you from post to post.

We know (Rome knows) that wonders, Paul,
Give faith the swing and go:
And, troth, your Holy Bogey pops
In pat, like potboy Joe.
You trot him out, as Showman trots
Out Punch, when gab's worn frowsy;
Your trick and his the same, to keep
The crowd from dropping drowsy.

That little tiff with Barnabas,
My 'postle, I pass by:
True, sometimes with our own best friends
We don't see eye to eye.

You parted: and (although I guess
Your word was curt and snubbish)
I think it well, Paul; so you get
Sole credit for your rubbish.

But what of circumcising Tim,
Paul? What of Peter's vision?
What of the council where you had cried,
No more of circumcision!
What of clean hands? * Such deeds would sink
The whole priest crew in Styx:
And, oh! to find you, 'Postle Paul,
Backsliding in such tricks!

Next, you "converted" blue-frock'd Lyd.
(I say! What size her sandal?)
Paul! Paul! you rogue! But I forbear;
I really don't like scandal.
I pass to those epistles, Paul,
Whereo'er divines grow dizzy;
Which set the simple fools agape
And keep the pulpits busy.

That "thorn within the flesh," (and re
That "thorn," what speculations!)
What was it, Paul? Come! speak out plain!
And satisfy the nations!
I heard a merry dame once say,
(Her words the truth may carry)
"Why didn't Paul, to lose his thorn,
Get him a wife, and marry!"

Then there's that slop old Blackcoat reads
When we are laid aside:
About the sun and stars and moon
And bodies glorified:
What is it all but moonshine, Paul?
Unschool'd Semitic thinking?
Or (as my Girl suggests) you had
Been out late, or been drinking.

"Even as the grain-seed rots," you say,
"When put into the ground,
Then springs again; so mortal clay
Shall rot and rise."—Profound!
But as the grain-seed doesn't rot,
But germinates, 'tis plain,
Your rotten carcase, 'Postle Paul,
Will never rise again.

Suppose a bear had closed one's days;
Had munch'd one, legs and butts;
That one had "gone" (in Hamlet's phrase)
"A-progress through his guts";
When that archangel trumpet sounds
In call to all who have died,
Say! would one's meat-stripp'd shanks upstand,
The same, but glorified?

And, last, there's your grand doctrine, Paul,
Election unto grace:
Who but a smug, conceited coward
Could dream a scheme so baso?
In reason's face the bigot's door
For evermore is slamm'd.
"Tremble! believe! and go to heaven!
But doubt, and ye'll be damnd!"

At times you make confession, Paul,
'Tis not the Holy Bogey
That wags your gab; that uninspired
You speak, my grand quack-fogey!
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee
I let the dogs decide;
Content, Paul, that among the saints
You hold the place of pride.

CONTRE L'IDOLE.

NEEDED RESPITE PROVIDED.—Teddy and Mary had been taken to church for the first time, and on the way home they discussed what they had heard and seen. "Well, now," said Teddy, with a frown, "I'd like to know what the sermon was for, anyhow." "Why, Teddy," said little Mary, with a superior air, "don't you know that yet? It is to give the singers a rest, of course."

A PERSONAL MATTER.—"I think I am giving general satisfaction," said the young minister, a little doubtfully, "although Elder Wilkins has found a good deal of fault with my prayers." "You are sure to have that trouble," responded the retired pastor, with a reminiscent sigh. "The Elder is a good man, a most worthy man. But he never can remember that he is not the party addressed in prayer."

* Read Dean Swift's tract on the circumcision of Daniel Churll.

Acid Drops.

The new oracle of the City Temple, having returned from America, has promptly resumed his task of amusing the Non-Christian world—and probably some of the Christian world too. One of the first things Mr. Campbell said, at Oxford, was that "Prayer is our great means of contact with reality." This looks exactly like truth upside down, but, as it was said to a Conference of ministers, it is hardly worth troubling about by the laity. At the same Conference, however, Mr. Campbell had something to say about the Bible, which is rather more in the general line. He hazarded a few words as to the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and they were really clever. He observed that some of the contributors were "unfortunately chosen." Now we regard that as a most excellent expression. These contributors did not fail in learning and capacity; they suffered from a lack of reticence; in other words, they told the truth; and it cannot be denied that this is very unfortunate.

Mr. Campbell also regretted that "some of the more acute questions of Biblical criticism had passed from the school to the street, and that in their congregations there were many men who were not qualified to pass a judgment, but who knew, or thought they knew, that the Bible had been assailed in certain particulars, and therefore could no longer be spoken of as the Word of God." This is extremely rich. Mr. Campbell regards these men as unqualified sceptics; on the other hand, he seems to regard them as well-qualified believers.

We are obliged to Mr. Campbell for admitting that "Even the children seemed to be feeling certain difficulties which had hitherto been reserved for the ranks of adult Bible students." Yes, there is even a revolt of the very children against the solemn absurdities of the Christian faith; which must surely be the beginning of the end.

Mr. Campbell was good enough to wind up with an optimistic word to his ministerial audience. It was couched in the future tense, but it was the best he could do for them. He said that he "looked for a wonderful rehabilitation of miracles." This was an admission that they *want* rehabilitation. On that point we agree with Mr. Campbell. The rest is sheer prophecy; and, as Mr. Morley remarked, all you have to do to answer a prophet is to prophesy the opposite.

We see it reported that a scheme is on foot at Shanghai to erect a memorial to perpetuate the memory of the Christian martyrs of the Protestant missions who have fallen in China during the past century, and more especially those who fell during the Boxer rebellion of 1900. Would it not be well, at the same time, to erect a memorial to the thousands of Chinese women and girls who, in 1900, killed themselves to escape the brutal lust of the Christian soldiers who ravaged their land?

Captain Shawe-Taylor promises, or threatens, to call a Conference of the Orange Society, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Protestant Churches in Ireland, with a view to ending the old religious feud in that distressful country. He hopes to get the question of University and other education in Ireland settled equitably and acceptably to all sections of the nation. Well, we wish him success, but we fear he is much too sanguine.

Ilford is threatened—yes, actually threatened—with a theatre; and a gentleman signing himself A. Butler, who seems to be in a very different line of business, raises his voice against this calamity in the local *Recorder*. He says that the safest side of a theatre is the outside. Anyhow, he "fails to see how lasting good can be received from a theatrical performance." We should judge from this gentleman's use of the word "lascivious" that he has a good nose for a certain class of entertainment. Perhaps he frequented it too much in his youth, and is unaware that superior entertainments may be enjoyed by persons with a higher taste. We give him credit for good intentions, but he is in an awful state for all that, and his friends should give him the benefit of their prayers.

Dr. R. T. Nichols wrote to the Ilford *Recorder* anent this letter from Mr. A. Butler, and asked whether he could name any theatrical performance which would be likely to corrupt the minds of the young like the reading of the nineteenth and thirty-eighth chapters of Genesis, in that book appointed to be read in Churches and Chapels, in Sunday and Day-schools? The *Recorder* inserted Dr. Nichols's letter up to a point. It stopped short at the words "the reading of." The editor did not like to give the reference to those peccant chapters. "I am a firm believer in the open Bible,"

he said, "but there are a few paragraphs in the Best of all Books which, in my judgment, might be eliminated with advantage." Evidently the paragraphs that should be eliminated were not inspired by God. Perhaps the editor of the *Recorder* will tell us what paragraphs were inspired by God. It would be interesting to have them identified.

There is a clergyman who evidently thinks the readers of the *Daily News* are a soft lot; witness the following advertisement which recently appeared in that paper:—"WANTED, immediately, to PURCHASE, first-class profitable *Periodical*, also private person to finance same for clergyman. Repayments from profits of same. Apply, etc." This about takes the cake. When that clergyman gets to heaven Jacob will have to look out for his laurels.

We have been looking through the Rev. C. Lloyd Engström's letter in last week's *Freethinker* with a view to ascertaining what he is driving at. As far as we are able to make head or tail of it, he simply restates, at greater length, what Mr. Maagaard represented him as saying in Regent's Park.

We pass over the personal matter, with just this observation. Mr. Engström was until recently, and for a great many years, the paid secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. His attention was frequently called to the gross personalities indulged in by the Society's open-air lecturers—personalities so gross, in some instances, that they are quite unprintable. The game went on, however, just the same, in spite of all complaints; and it was reasonable to infer that Mr. Engström approved of these personalities. He says he did not, and was not even aware of them. Well, in that case, it must be concluded that Mr. Engström had no control over his Society's lecturers, or that he took no trouble to learn what they talked about from their outdoor platforms.

Let us now deal with Mr. Engström's argument which he states so "simply." What it amounts to is this. Jesus Christ saves some people (no matter how many) from sin; therefore he was something more than a man; he, must, indeed, have been sinless himself; consequently he could not have been born in the ordinary way, and two of the Gospels say he was born of a Virgin; therefore he *was* born of a Virgin. Such is Mr. Engström's argument in a nutshell, and it is the veriest absurdity.

The starting point is moonshine. Suppose Mr. Engström tells us that someone has saved him from sin: how do we know he is telling the truth? If he means that he is saved from the future penalty of sin, we should reply that he must die before he can prove that. If he means that he is saved from sin now, he practically informs us that he is as sinless as Jesus Christ was. Well, perhaps he is. But if we are to drop theory and come to the facts, we beg to tell Mr. Engström that we know Atheists who are quite as good as he is. Are they sinless too? And, if so, how did it happen? On the other hand, if sinlessness is something else than wickedness, we invite Mr. Engström to explain it.

In the next place, Jesus Christ was *not* sinless. The Gospels prove it. We could give several instances, but one is sufficient. He declared that it was a sin to call another man a fool, and that whoever did so was in danger of hell fire; yet he himself called other men fools—not to mention far worse names. He is therefore judged out of his own mouth.

A word in conclusion. We have met several Christians in our time who were "saved from the power of sin," and we never found one of them a bit better than his neighbors.

Old Dowie, the astute Scotch-Yankee who bosses Zion City, near Chicago, will soon be sighing for new worlds to conquer. His latest project is taking 8,000 Restorationists to New York City, where they are to attend to "the business centres, where men and women have ceased to care for the Church and worship the Golden Eagle." If the Grand Old Man of American religious enterprise converts Wall-street and wipes out the bulls and bears, as he threatens to, he will find any other pious job on this planet comparatively easy. We expect to hear before long of his fitting out a missionary expedition to the planet Mars.

The new Pope still calls France the eldest daughter of the Church. Why not the eldest *son*? Because "daughter" is supposed to be more poetical. Also because the Church has more to do with women than with men.

Atavism expresses itself in mind as well as in structure. Of this a New York Bible class has just given a convincing illustration. This class not only believes in the veracity of the Jonah legend, but it has actually traced the course the whale took, passenger and all, from the Mediterranean to the mouth or higher waters of the Tigris. What makes the thing more wonderful still is the fact that the whale must have travelled through the *Suez Canal*. How this discovery was made we are not informed; but it is wonderful all the same.

Religious people, particularly Dissenters, are always playing the devil with history. Mr. Arthur Chamberlain—a member of the great Birmingham house—recently told a *Manchester Guardian* interviewer that Oliver Cromwell said to his army that "He didn't want serving-men and tapsters to fight the national battles, but men of religion." Cromwell never said that to his army at all; nor to anybody else. The real case is this. In a speech to a Committee of his second Parliament on April 13, 1657, Cromwell indulged in some reminiscences of the Civil War. He referred to the fact that the Parliamentary forces were at first "beaten at every hand." The reason of this he explained to John Hampden.

"Your troops," said I, "are most of them old decayed serving-men, and tapsters, and such kind of fellows; and," said I, "their troops are gentleman's sons, younger sons and persons of quality: do you think that the spirits of such base and mean fellows will ever be able to encounter gentlemen, that have honor and courage and resolution in them?"

What Cromwell did was to raise troops himself (his Ironsides) who had honor and courage and resolution in them too. He found them amongst his neighbors, the yeomen of England; men of bodily vigor and some force of character, who felt the inspiration of the cause for which they were fighting. Far too much has been made of the fact that they were religious men. There was religion on both sides in that struggle. Charles I. was as religious as Cromwell, Strafford was as religious as Pym, and Prince Rupert as religious as Lord Fairfax. "You must get men of a spirit that is likely to go as far as gentlemen will go," Cromwell said, "or else you will be beaten still." Yes, the "spirit" was everything. Cromwell knew that the gentlemen of England, however erring in other respects, even if they were sons of Belial, had a certain tradition of honor that would make them stand up and fight to the death. And they couldn't be beaten except by men who had some spirit which would make them stand up and fight to the death too. That was all. And how simple, and natural, it is when you look at it fairly.

A correspondent of the *Daily News* says that when Emperor William makes his next speech in public he had better leave Providence alone. This is because of his friendship for the "Unspeakable Turk." What nonsense! The most brutal and bloody scoundrels in history have been on good terms with Providence. At least they have said so, and Providence has not denied it.

The dear *Daily News* again! In a review of Mr. W. E. Adams's Autobiography it refers to "Mr. Charles Bradlaugh"—how respectable it sounds!—and to "the political paper called *The National Reformer*." Political paper! It was *Atheist* as well as *Republican*.

Frederick Gardener, late of Cornwall-gardens, Willesden, is now residing for six months in one of His Majesty's Hotels. He produced a razor, and said to his wife and daughter, "You have only a minute or two to live. If you have any sins to confess, you had better say your prayers." This shows he was of a religious turn of mind. His wife and daughter were in no hurry to go to glory, so they struggled with him, and he only succeeded in wounding them. According to the evidence, he sang a verse of a hymn before beginning the attack. Another sign of confirmed piety.

North British clergymen seem to be waking up. The Rev. D. A. Rollo, B.D., minister of Buccleuch Parish Church, Edinburgh, has been preaching to a crowded congregation on the question, "Was there ever such a person as Jesus?" with reference to the articles recently published in the local *Evening News* on Mr. J. M. Robertson's *Pagan Christs*. The preacher appeared to think that Mr. Robertson's scepticism as to the personal existence of Jesus Christ was something novel. But that only shows his ignorance. Many scholars have entertained the same scepticism. We believe even that Mr. G. W. Foote's lecture on "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" has been delivered in Edinburgh, though it was not reported or alluded to in the *Evening News*—perhaps because the lecturer was not a Scotchman.

Mr. Rollo was not very skilful in the first part of his reply to Mr. Robertson. He took the ridiculously untenable position

that the legends of Brahmanism, Mithraism, and Buddhism were borrowed from Christianity. Perhaps he will say next that the Egyptian legends were borrowed from the same source; and there is no reason why he should not make a similar statement about Bacchus and Hercules. It is a pity to do things by halves.

Older apologists of Christianity were more astute than Mr. Rollo. They admitted the wonderful similarity between Pagan ideas and those of the Gospels, but they argued that the former were foreshadowings of the latter; just as they argued that the universality of sacrifice amongst the Pagans only corroborated the Christian truth of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Son of God. There is something rather subtle about this. At any rate it is better than a blank denial of the most authentic facts.

Mr. Rollo proceeded to give "positive proof" of the existence of Jesus. He referred to Tacitus, but he forgot to say that the Christ passage in the *Annals* was never heard of until the fifteenth century, and that it appears to be modelled on a passage in Sulpicius Severus, a Christian writer of about A.D. 400—that is, quite 300 years after the time when Tacitus is said to have written it. This matter is gone into very thoroughly in Mr. Foote's *Sign of the Cross*. Dr. Rollo next referred to Suetonius, who, in his *Life of Claudius* (A.D. 41-54), says that "the Emperor banished the Jews, that is, the Christians, from Rome.....Christ being their leader." Thus the reverend gentleman's statement stands in the *Evening News*; and, if this is what he really said, he must be a well-practised perverter of the truth—unless, as is possible, he took his information at second hand from a former practitioner in the same line of business. What Suetonius says is simply this, that the Emperor "drove the Jews, who, at the instigation of Krestus were constantly rioting, out of Rome" (*Judæos impulsore Chresto, assidue tumultuantes Romæ expulit*). How on earth can this refer to Jesus Christ? Was he at Rome, several years after his alleged crucifixion, stirring up the Jews to riots that led to their expulsion from the city? "Learned men," said Lardner, "are not satisfied that this relates to the Christians." We should think not, indeed. But Christian apologists will make anything relate to anything, if it only serves their purpose.

After this display we need not be surprised at any of Mr. Rollo's antics. He actually has the face to trot out that silly old exploded story that "The Emperor Domitian, who reigned at Rome from 81 to 96, had relatives of Christ brought before him, and they frankly confessed their royal origin and their near relation to the Messiah." A hundred years ago this sort of rubbish passed current as serious Christian Evidence. You never hear of it to-day except in a church where the minister is a long way behind the critical scholarship of the age; so far behind, in fact, as to be a curiosity of ignorance—or something worse.

The rest of Mr. Rollo's sermon was simply an appeal to Christian prejudices. Christ existed, and was God, because they felt so! Just as if this argument—if we may call it one—could possibly have any force to a non-Christian! How, too, the preacher asked, could they explain the influence of Jesus? Well, it doesn't need to be explained, for the simple reason that it is purely imaginary. Certain lines of conduct are ordered by Jesus in the so-called Sermon on the Mount. When a dozen Christians are produced who follow them, it will be time enough to account for the influence of Jesus.

It has been a Christian fable about the Jews that they sacrifice Christian children in their secret religious ritual. This silly story has been devoutly believed, and many a Jew-hunt has taken place in consequence. One occurred at Arnswalde some six years ago, on the report that a child, who had disappeared, had been sacrificed in this way. It went hard with the Jews in the district, which was represented in the Reichstag by the famous anti-Semite, Ahlwardt. Their property and persons were attacked and much damage was done. Recently the murder has been cleared up. A gamekeeper, named Janke, has confessed on his deathbed that he killed the child by accident, and buried the body in the forest.

Two Hebrew gentlemen lately turned up as jurors in the Battersea Coroner's Court. Of course they demanded to be sworn on the Old Testament, and the only swearing-block in court was a New Testament. An offer seems to have been made to believe them on that, but the Hebrew gentlemen appear to have felt that they couldn't tell the truth over the Christian Scripture; so they walked home again, and the inquest proceeded without them. Probably it made no difference to the corpse.

The *Westminster Gazette* review of the final volume of the *Encyclopædia Biblica* regrets the "dead set" made against this valuable and important work in ecclesiastical circles—Nonconformist as well as Church of England. The work is too outspoken, in other words too honest, for the taste of these gentry. Perhaps we should say for their interest. When it comes to the sticking place the average Nonconformist man of God is quite as bigoted as the average Anglican man of God, and sometimes rather more so. The majority of preachers know that they lie for a living, and they naturally hate the publication of the truth.

There is a monthly magazine called *Vitality and Health Culture*, edited by Jonathan Nicholson, who, if we may judge from the advertisements, as well as the literary contents, of his publication, combines a probably paying mentorship in sexual affairs with a most exemplary piety. This gentleman replies, in the September issue, to Mr. Frank Arnold, of Pontypridd, who is, we believe, a teacher of physical culture. Mr. Arnold tells him that Science is all right, but Bible worship is all nonsense, and that Religion simply "sprang from vice, darkness, and superstition." The editor's reply is about the greatest rubbish we ever read. He winds up with a mystic reference to the "danger there is in dabbling with secularism, and the depth to which the mind can sink apart from Almighty God." Well, the depth to which the mind can sink in company with Almighty God is shown by a long article in this magazine on "The Writings of Marie Corelli." The laudation of this lady's novel, in which she introduces Jesus Christ and the Crucifixion, and actually gloats over his physical development, is really too much for any but the strongest stomachs.

What is a Christian? There was a time when you were burnt to death if you did not answer this question properly. Now you give a "go-as-you-please" answer without being a penny the worse. Catholics, of course, know what Christianity is, and so do Freethinkers; but the mob of Protestants seem to have some queer notions on the subject. This was exemplified by a paragraph in "The Religious World" column of the *Daily News* the other day. A certain Mr. P. P. Tobit—no relation, we hope, to the party of that name in the Apocrypha—wrote concerning the report of a Mohammedan judge occupying a Christian pulpit; the said Christian pulpit being a Unitarian pulpit. "When," Mr. Tobit said, "a society of men who deny that Christ is God are acknowledged as Christians, it is indeed crucifying Christ afresh." No, no, the *Daily News* says; nothing of the kind. Here are its very words: "The *Daily News* recognises as 'Christian' all who are striving to establish on earth the kingdom of God." That settles it, of course. Here is a definition of Christianity that makes not the slightest mention of, or reference to, Jesus Christ. All that now remains for our contemporary to do is to give a definition of "the kingdom of God" which will include Atheists. Then we shall all be happy—like Ixion, embracing a cloud.

How is it that the Irish party can do nothing for "Colonel" Lynch? That quixotic gentleman, who foolishly trusted to the generosity of England, by coming over from France and giving himself up to the authorities, is being treated like a common felon in an English prison. Mr. Michael Davitt made a noble protest against this national meanness, but the Irish party as a whole have done nothing. Is their supineness due to the fact that Mr. Lynch is a Freethinker? Has the word gone forth from the Romish hierarchy that he must be left to his fate?

Mr. G. F. Watts, the veteran painter, interviewed by the Rev. Conrad Noel, quoted Swinburne and expressed considerable contempt for the Churches. "The clergy," he said, "reserve their weapons to fight against things that don't really matter." "From the little I read of the debates upon the Education Bill," he added, "neither party seemed to touch the root of the matter at all." Here is a longer and striking passage from Mr. Watts's lips:—"I sometimes wonder if these great Churches have not after all done more harm than good, with their bigotry, their anathemas, and restrictions, and especially the crudity and immorality of their doctrine of material rewards and punishments."

"At this crisis Mr. Balfour is at North Berwick playing golf." Thus saith the *Daily News* in a recent article on the Macedonian question. Poor Mr. Balfour! Is he never to have a day off? Must he always be within call from Bouverie-street, Fleet-street, London, E.C.? The organ of the Nonconformist Conscience will be excluding "golf news" shortly. There must be something wicked in a game played by Mr. Balfour.

No answer has yet been received to the letter of "Natural Religionist" in the *Eastern Daily Press* asking when and where the Rev. J. Menzies Love, of London, had ever been an "infidel lecturer," as he gave out that he had been in a sermon at Swaffham. Unless the reverend gentleman, or one of his Swaffham friends, hurries up, honest people will know what to think on this matter.

Pope Leo XIII. is dead, and Pope Pius X. reigns in his stead. Archbishop Vaughan is dead, and Archbishop Browne succeeds him at Westminster. Men come and go, but the Great Lying Church lives on, and plays its old profitable game of imposing on the credulity, and exploiting the pockets, of the thoughtless gaping mob. The annual pilgrimage to Lourdes started from London last Monday, a pilgrims' service having been held at St. Patrick's, Soho, the previous evening, when Canon Vere discoursed on "Lourdes" and crosses were distributed to the silly men and women who were going there. The pilgrimage included more than twenty-six priests, ten of whom were from Ireland; also a number of sick people who expected to be cured of their ailments at the Shrine of the Holy Virgin. Poor wretches! Their very misery is traded upon by the charlatans of faith.

What a sordid thing the death of Pope Leo XIII. turns out to have been. The two doctors, Lapponi and Mazzoni, now confess that the Pope's malady was deliberately misrepresented; in other words, lies were issued from the death-chamber of God's vicegerent on earth. The doctors say they detected the true character of the Pope's illness, which seems to have been cancerous, but Cardinal Rampolla objected to have it published. Intrigues were going on all the time, and the lies were apparently dictated by the necessities of certain Cardinals' candidature for the popedom. And these are the men, forsooth, who pose as the upholders of morality and all the "higher" interests of mankind. Pah! It is enough to make an ostrich sick.

Passive Resistance goes on merrily. We read of a Nonconformist mob in one place running the auctioneer into a horse-pond, and in another place whacking him with an umbrella and smothering him with red ochre. Very *passive* resistance.

There are some Wesleyan day-schools in England, and they are being carried on under the new Education Act—at the public expense. It follows, therefore, that Nonconformists are actually persecuting Nonconformists in the matter of the Education rate. What a glorious comedy!

The *Board Teacher* is responsible for the statement that the master of a Church school, highly commended by the inspector, was heard to begin a lesson on the Catechism with "Now, boys, make haste to learn this rot that we may get on with something useful." How many other masters would say the same if they only dared!

Mr. E. Walter James, of Croydon—whoever he is—says to the *Daily News* that Christian reformers "will not be deterred by the libels which opponents of Christianity spread abroad." We suppose this refers to the pointing out of the drinking texts in the Bible, for this gentleman also says, "It seems to me that all Christians should be in favor of total prohibition." Perhaps so, but not as Christians. Did not Jesus Christ drink wine with his disciples. Some of the tectotal Christians say it was a non-intoxicating beverage—something like Zoedono or Kop's Ale; but this brilliant idea never occurred to them until quite recently, when they found it necessary to find tectotalism, somehow or other, in their old Book of God. It certainly does not appear to have been a tectotal beverage that Jesus supplied at that free and flowing marriage feast in Cana of Galilee; for the guests were well liquored already, and were not in a state to give a certificate of excellence to an insipid tipple. Nor was it a tectotal beverage that the Old Testament writer had in mind when he referred to the "wine which checreth God and man." And most assuredly it was not a tectotal beverage that Solomon had in mind when he wrote, "Let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."

Rev. W. E. Banks has committed suicide at St. Leonards. The evidence at the inquest showed that he suffered from heart disease and chronic alcoholism. There is no moral to this incident, except that Atheism does not supply all the suicides, as the late Dr. Talmage asserted.

George Percy White, a young engine fitter, committed suicide at Peterborough. His body was found on the line decapitated. His sweetheart's prayer-book was clasped in his hand. Not an Atheist, evidently.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, September 20, Queen's (Mionr) Hall, Langham-place, London, W., at 8 p.m., "Mr. Bernard Shaw's New Evangel: or, How to Raise a Better Crop of Men and Women."
 September 27, Manchester.
 October 11, Glasgow.
 November 1, Birmingham.
 December 6, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton. September 20, m., Kingland; 27, m., Kingsland; e., Queen's Hall, Langham-place. Oct. 4, Glasgow; 25, Leicester.

G. I.—Sorry to hear you have "entirely failed" in your efforts to get newsagents to sell the *Freethinker*. The boycott against this journal was always severe, and has lately been grievous. Unfortunately our position is made harder by the timidity of many "advanced" people, who rush off into all sorts of "respectable" agencies for bringing about the millennium; which agencies, by the way, orthodoxy does not fear. The *Freethinker* is boycotted because it is dreaded.

INOCENT.—If you affirm under the Oaths Act, you have to repeat the form of affirmation after the clerk of the court, as others repeat the form of oath. You solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that the evidence you shall give, &c. &c. is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

A. L. COATES.—Glad to see your letter in the *Northern Weekly Leader*. We fear you will not succeed in bringing E. Kay Robinson to book. He seems a very careless person—or something worse.

A. J. WILLETTE.—Pleased to hear you read us weekly "with increased delight." Who is the author of the poem you refer to? With regard to Heine's prose writings, there is a good translation of the first half of the *De l'Allemagne* by John Snodgrass under the title of "Religion and Philosophy in Germany." It was published in 1882 by Trübner, and is still obtainable. The *Reisebilder* was translated in spirited fashion by the late Charles G. Leland. We do not know whether it is now procurable. Our copy bears the imprint of John Weik, Philadelphia, 1856. There is a miscellaneous collection called "Heine in Art and Letters" translated by Elizabeth A. Sharp, and published in the "Scott Library" at 1s. 6d.

A. K. DOUGHTY.—Always pleased to receive cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

R. T. NICHOLS.—See "Acid Drops." Very pleased to see you took the matter up.

RECEIVED.—El Libre Pensamiento—Searchlight—Torch of Reason—Heath Culture—Public Opinion.

J. K. MAAGAARD.—In our next.

E. GROCOTT.—It is high time that the self-seeking old bigot who sits on the Woolsack gave place to a better man. The way in which the magistrates are allowed to deal with the conscientious objectors to vaccination is a perfect scandal.

M. BLISS.—Copies forwarded direct as desired. We regret that your Dublin newsagents—Eason & Son—had to return your money because, to use their own words, "our London agent will not supply us with the *Freethinker*." This is a further illustration of our "Special" this week.

J. W. GOTT.—Very sorry to hear of your bad illness, and hope you are now on the road to perfect recovery.

AN article by John Lloyd ("Richard Trevor") will appear in our next issue. We hope many articles from his pen will appear in our columns.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

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

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

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

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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.

Special.

IF our heart were made to break it would have broken long ago. We have paid the penalty all our life of being honest and outspoken in a world of liars and cowards. Swift said you were sure to know a man of genius, for the dunces were always in a conspiracy against him. You may as surely know the effective Freethinker, for the bigots are always in a conspiracy to silence him. This journal has the

natural disadvantage that it cannot obtain advertisements like ordinary publications. It is compelled to live on its circulation. And that is hindered in every possible way. If we only had bare justice done us, without the least favor, our circulation would soon double or treble, and the *Freethinker* would be a good property instead of a burden to everybody concerned with it. Some wholesale agents will not supply a copy of it; others take care not to supply a copy more than they can help. We do not care to print a catalogue of trade bigots, but we have referred to Smith & Son before, and theirs is an important and a typical instance. We have figures to work upon, though we cannot afford to publish them, which satisfy us, and would satisfy anyone else, that Smith & Son's monopoly stands in the way of the circulation of thousands of copies of the *Freethinker* weekly. We are prepared to submit these figures, privately, to any friend of Freethought who may be inclined to help us in fighting this obstacle to our success.

When we started the *Pioneer* we expected it would have a better chance, but we find the boycott against it just as bad as the boycott against the older paper with the more aggressive name and reputation. Smith & Son, like some other firms, will have nothing to do with it. They have been requested to let their provincial agents act on their own judgment when copies were ordered. It was pointed out that one agent in a small town had orders for nine copies, if he were only free to supply them. Smith & Son had to be pressed to say Ay or No. At last they have said No—this time in writing. In a letter to the *Pioneer* Press, dated September 10, they say, "In reply to your letter of yesterday we have to inform you that we are not inclined to place the *Freethinker* and the *Pioneer* on our Bookstalls." So much as this was not asked of them; still, their answer is plain enough; they mean that these two journals shall have no chance whatever through their vast distributing agency.

Oh, for a Freethought Carnegie, who could plank down money enough to teach these bigots a lesson! After all, it is a question of money. If we had the means we could circumvent and defeat the newspaper-trade bigots, and make some of them look ashamed, if they have so much grace left in them.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

There was a good meeting at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote opened the course there with a lecture on "The Fate of Faith," Mr. Victor Roger acting as chairman. Some seats were vacant, but these will probably fill up as the course proceeds. Unfortunately there was a little misunderstanding about the seats. Some people—not Freethinkers, we believe—expected more *free* seats; but we explained that the "free seats" were only a concession to a certain view of the law. There were no free seats at all at the Athenæum Hall, where Mr. Foote carried on Sunday evening meetings for nearly seven years. Perhaps, however, if we may not charge for admission at the door, in the usual way, it will be better to drop the ticket arrangement, and have "free admission" all round, with a collection to defray expenses. But that cannot be done very well with the present course; so the advertised arrangements must hold good, and our friends must make the best of them in the circumstances.

Mr. Foote delivers the second lecture of the course at the Queen's Hall this evening (Sept. 20), when the chair will be taken by Mr. C. Cohen. Mr. Foote's subject will be "Mr. Bernard Shaw's New Evangel"—dealing with Mr. Shaw's brilliant new book, *Man and Superman*, which has caused such a flutter in certain circles. Freethinkers may take our word for it that they will find this lecture particularly interesting. They should come themselves, try to bring some of their friends, and fill the hall.

Many questions were asked after Mr. Foote's first lecture, and there might have been some decent discussion if it had not been for a ridiculous old mountebank named Jones, of the Christian persuasion, who insisted on calling the lecturer

"Mr. What'shisname" and otherwise abusing the opportunity of free debate. In the interest of common sense and common decency Mr. Jones will have to be excluded from these meetings; and his Christian Evidence friends, who want to turn our debates into a farce, may apprise him of the fact.

In addition to the Queen's Hall course of lectures, the Board of the Secular Society, Limited, is arranging for courses of lectures at Camberwell and West Ham. It is probable too, that, similar lectures will be arranged for at South Shields and other provincial towns. Some publishing enterprises are also in contemplation.

At the last meeting of the Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Limited, a grant of £120 was voted to the National Secular Society, and one of £20 to the Leicester Secular Society, in recognition of its long, arduous, and gallant struggle to uphold the banner of Secularism.

The Secular Society, Limited, received the sum of £683 2s. 9d. as the net amount of the Barrett Legacy of £800, which was not left free of legacy duty. The Smithyman Bequest, which is residual, will be realised very shortly.

Freethinkers should recognise the importance of this Incorporation. While others were making vain efforts to obtain Liberty of Bequest by means of a new Act of Parliament, Mr. Foote devised and carried into effect a plan for counteracting the financial disabilities of the old Blasphemy Laws. This plan is realised in the Secular Society, Limited, which was pooh-poohed at the outset by some people who perhaps did not wish it success, but is now seen to be as firm as the rock of Gibraltar. It has even received the flattery of imitation, which is the sincerest form of compliment. Henceforth the Christians, who would not repeal their old Blasphemy Laws to please Freethinkers, may bite their thumbs at their leisure. The greatest injury they inflicted on Freethought was a financial injury, and that is now a thing of the past.

How greatly religious bodies profit by legacies and bequests may be seen almost any day in the newspapers. As we are writing this paragraph our eyes turn to a newspaper cutting which states that the British and Foreign Bible Society receives £7,000 from the will of a Bournemouth lady, another £1,000 from the will of an Admiral's widow, and still another £1,000 from the will of a gentleman named Maitland. Here is £9,000 in one morning's news for one Christian organisation. It is easy enough to see that these organisations operate very largely with dead men's money. The same ought to be true of Freethought organisations. Many persons, who can only give a trifle now and then when living, can leave something handsome—that is, *relatively* handsome—to "the good old cause."

According to the Registrar General's figures for 1901, just published, marriages in Church of England places of worship have decreased by 6 per 1,000. Marriages in Nonconformist chapels remain stationary. The 6 per 1,000 lost to the Established Church represent a gain of 1 by the Roman Catholic Church and 5 by Civil Marriage.

Mr. Hornidge, president of the Leicester Trade Union Congress, presided over a meeting held on Wednesday evening, September 9, in the Shoe Trade Hall, Leicester, and condemned the Education Act as unfair. The meeting had been called in favor of the removal of the religious difficulty in State-supported Churches by providing secular education, freedom being given to the religious denominations to impart in their own way, at their own expense, and out of school hours, such religious instruction as parents might desire for their children. A resolution embodying this proposition was moved by the Rev. J. Page Hopps, who remarked that Nonconformists were learning a lesson. If they had faced the situation thirty years ago there would have been now the finest school system in the world. The first part of the resolution he believed to be inevitable, and the second part was fair. The Countess of Warwick seconded the resolution, and said they had heard a great deal about education difficulties, but little about education itself—much about the wrongs of Nonconformists, but little about the rights of the children. She believed that it was not the duty of the State to teach religion. There were so many religions, so many interpretations or creeds; and who was to decide which form the State should teach? Soon there would be a strong Labor Party in the House of Commons—and the party would necessarily have a definite policy in all matters affecting the wellbeing of the people. Mrs. Brydges Adams, who described herself as the only Labor member of the Loudon School

Board, said she was more assured than ever that the solution proposed was the only solution of the religious difficulty. She complained that progressive members of that Board who were in favor of secular education in private were all for compromise when on the platform. The resolution was carried with three dissentients.

The result of the Trade Union Congress's discussion on Education was highly gratifying. Mr. W. A. Appleton (Amalgamated Operative Lace Makers) moved the following resolution:—

"This Congress condemns the educational policy of the Government, and desires to formulate a constructive educational programme based on the principle of equal opportunities for all; such programme to aim at securing:

"(1) Full popular control over all State-aided schools, and the abolition of all school fees.

"(2) Removal of the religious difficulty by providing that the education in all State-aided schools shall be secular. Any religious denomination desiring to impart religious knowledge must do so at its own expense and out of school hours. Only such religious instruction as parents may desire for their children shall be given.

"Primary, secondary, technical, and higher education to be free, and to be placed within the reach of every child by such an extension of the scholarship system as will permit the granting of free maintenance scholarships to all children whose usefulness would be enhanced by an extended education; and that adequate provision shall be made for children to continue at school until the age of 15 years.

"(4) The establishment of technical schools for the industrial training of the capable blind.

"(5) That all expenses incidental to education and scholarships be charged to the national Exchequer, with special reference to the taxation of ground values and the proper management of educational endowments."

This was seconded by Mr. W. Thorne (National Gasworkers and General Laborers), and opposed by Mr. J. Kent (Scottish Typographical Association) who moved the omission of Clause II, on the ground that religion was the most important part of teaching, and that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." This being negatived by a large majority, Mr. J. Holmes (Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants) moved the omission of the words "Only such religious instruction as parents may desire for their children shall be given." This was agreed to, and the Resolution as amended in Clause II. was then voted on by card; the result being—for the Resolution 1,032,000; against the Resolution 5,000. It was a magnificent victory for pure and simple Secular Education.

The Leicester Secular Society's Bazaar takes place on Saturday, Monday, and Tuesday, September 26, 28, and 29. It will be opened by Mrs. Theodore Wright on the Saturday at 2 p.m., and there will be a musical entertainment from 3 to 5. A tasty program is printed, and a copy has reached us through Mr. F. J. Gould, secretary. The Society's thanks are given (we note) to friends in London, Birmingham, Bristol, Tynemouth, Scotland, Bury, Bolton, Alston, Failsworth, Cheltenham, Newark, Brighton, Liscard, Stockport, Yarmouth, Peterborough, St. Neots, Oldham, Cape Colony, &c., who have given aid from a distance. Gifts of books are acknowledged from the Freethought Publishing Company and others.

The Manchester Secular Hall has been repairing and re-decorating at considerable expenso, which we regret to say was increased through the results of the late severe weather. Everything will be ready by September 27, when Mr. Foote delivers the reopening lectures and starts the new season's propaganda. Meanwhile we invite the "saints" in the Manchester district to do something towards the aforesaid expenses, as it is not right that the burden should fall upon one or two pairs of shoulders. Subscriptions should be sent to the honorary secretary of the N.S.S. Branch—Mrs. M. E. Pegg, 15 Mytton-street, Hulme, Manchester. We hope to hear that this appeal has met with a liberal response. Those who read it should not put it aside with a half resolution to "do something some day," but just send on something at once. The sooner the better.

The statue of Ernest Renan, the great French Freethinker, was unveiled at Tréguier on Sunday by M. Combes, the Prime Minister. The baser sort of Catholics, stirred up by the sweet and gentle priests, acted like hooligans, hissing and blowing police whistles, and finally attempting violence, which was soon settled by the police and the Premier's military escort. Addresses were delivered by M. Combes himself, by M. Chaumié, Minister of Public Instruction, and by M. Anatole France, one of the first names in present-day French literature. Another distinguished person present was M. Berthelot, the first chemist in France, and perhaps in the world.

The Tabernacle of the Congregation.—V.

THE result of our quest, so far, may be stated in a few words. There was certainly no Tabernacle of the Congregation or tribe of priests and Levites during the five centuries which embrace the period of the Judges, the governorship of Samuel, and the reign of king Saul. The ark—the only historical object sacred to the god Yahveh—was kept in a private house until the eighth year of the reign of David, when it was removed to Jerusalem and placed in a tent which the last-named king had erected to receive it. Here the Lord's holy box remained, save for one day's airing, until the twelfth year of the reign of Solomon, when it was removed to the newly-built temple.

Up to the time of David there appear to have been no regularly-appointed priests. Eli exercised authority chiefly as a judge, and, after his death, there was no one to take his place. The model King, David, took two professional priests into his service, apparently merely as custodians of the ark; for no regular sacrifices were then offered. Amongst the names of the chief officers in the reigns of David and Solomon we may note the following:—

2 Sam. viii. 16-17. (Reign of David.)—".....and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder; and Zadok the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelech the son of Abiathar were priests; and Seraiah was scribe," etc.

2 Sam. xx. 24-25. (Reign of David; later.)—".....and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was the recorder; and Sheva was scribe; and Zadok and Abiathar were priests," etc.

1 Kings iv. 2-4. (Beginning of reign of Solomon.)—".....Elihoreph and Ahijah were scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder;.....and Zadok and Abiathar were priests," etc.

It is quite clear, then, that there were but two salaried and recognised priests in the kingdom in the reign of David and in that of his successor, Solomon. Each of these priests had a son, who probably assisted in the business—when there was any to be done. These were all; there was no army of priests and Levites. In the lying book of Chronicles, as already noticed, no less than twenty-four companies of priests and 88,000 Levites are represented as engaged in the service of Yahveh in the reign of David (1 Chron. xxiii.)—a statement which every page of real history in the books of Samuel and Kings proves to be an unmitigated falsehood. Of these imaginary Levites 4,000 are stated to have been "door-keepers," another 4,000 are said to have been musicians who "praised the Lord" upon their instruments; 6,000 are set down as "officers and judges," and the remaining 24,000 as overseers of "the work of the house of the Lord." Let us imagine, for a moment, four thousand men, all clad in linen ephods, standing in close formation in concentric circles around David's tent containing the ark, all agog to prevent anyone looking in. Outside these, also ranged in circles, another four thousand Levites blowing, banging, and twanging their different musical instruments. Outside these, again, six thousand "officers and judges," waiting for cases in which to display their powers of judgment. Finally, massed all round this big crowd of door-keepers, musicians, and judges, we are to imagine the 24,000 overseers, waiting to examine "the work of the house of the Lord," whenever any such work—whatever it may have been—was required to be done. This is without taking into account the twenty-four companies of priests who assembled whenever a sacrifice had to be offered. Such is the picture which the priestly concoctor of the account in the Chronicles would have us receive as fact.

Just before the Exile, in the reign of the last king of Judah, we find that there were still but two priests in the king's service.

2 Kings xxiii. 18-20: "And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three doorkeepers of the door.....and the scribe.....and brought them to the king of Babylon."

From this passage it would appear that two priests and three doorkeepers, without the assistance of any Levites, sufficed for the temple service at Jerusalem.

Returning to the time of David, it becomes necessary to notice another interpolation. Towards the end of the reign of this pious monarch Absalom, his son, stole the hearts of the people, and nearly succeeded in making himself king. When the latter was advancing on Jerusalem, David thought it wise to leave that city, and, accompanied by his guards and mighty men, crossed the brook Kidron towards the Mount of Olives. At this point we read:—

"And lo, Zadok also came, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city" (2 Sam. xv. 24).

Here we find introduced "the Levites," whose duty it was, according to the Levitical code, to carry the ark. In this passage, as it stands, it was "the Levites" who bore the ark; for Zadok could not have borne it alone, and the other priest, Abiathar, came up later. The passage, however, should read:—

"And lo, Zadok also and Abiathar came, bearing the ark of God: and they set down the ark until all the people had done passing out of the city."

There can be no doubt whatever as to the latter being the original text; for David preferred not to have the ark accompany him, and ordered it to be taken back to its tent in Jerusalem. In accordance with this command we read (verse 29):—

"Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem, and they abode there."

Thus, the same two who had borne the ark out of Jerusalem carried it back again, and remained in charge of it. Where, now, are the Levites? The priestly interpolator overlooked the latter passage.

Later on, when David was very old, another of his sons, Adonijah, set himself up as king, and was joined by David's general Joab and "Abiathar the priest." Upon hearing news of this conspiracy David caused his son Solomon to be anointed king by the other priest, Zadok. Shortly after the death of David, the new king, Solomon, ordered Joab to be put to death. Upon the other offender, Abiathar, he passed sentence as follows:—

"Get thee to Anathoth unto thine own fields; for thou art worthy of death: but I will not at this time put thee to death, because thou barest the ark of the Lord God before David my father (1 Kings ii. 26).

Here, again, we have evidence that it was the two priests, and not some mythical Levites, who bore the ark out of Jerusalem. The account then proceeds: "So Solomon thrust out Abiathar from being priest of the Lord," and "Zadok the priest did the king put in the room of Abiathar" (verses 27, 85). From the last statement it would appear that Abiathar, who was the friend of David before the latter became king, had been "chief priest" and Zadok only "second priest." One can easily understand how the name of Zadok came to be placed first by the compilers when they learnt from the narrative the degradation of Abiathar. All the priests in the kingdom of Judah from this time to the Exile were the descendants of Zadok, and were known later as "the priests the Levites." These, as we have seen, are several times referred to by the Deuteronomist and the prophet Ezekiel.

In 1 Kings iii. we are told that prior to the building of Solomon's temple "the people sacrificed in the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the Lord until those days." We are also told that Solomon kept "the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in the high places" (verses 2-3). From these statements we learn what had been the practice during the whole forty years of David's reign. Sacrifices were offered to Yahveh, not upon the brazen altar at the door of the great Tabernacle of the Congregation, as commanded in the Priestly code, but upon altars called "high places" scattered all over the kingdom

—the same high place (*bamah*) being used for offerings generation after generation. Neither David, nor Solomon, nor any of the people of their days, ever heard of commands such as the following:—

“Whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among them, that offereth a burnt offering or sacrifice, and bringeth it not unto the door of the tabernacle to sacrifice it unto the Lord, even that man shall be cut off from his people” (Lev. xvii. 8-9).

There is but one explanation of such great remissness on the part of two kings who delighted in keeping any known statutes of Yahveh—the laws in the Levitical code were unknown, and the grand Tabernacle of the Congregation was non-existent. It is further recorded of Solomon that upon one occasion he “went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place; a thousand burnt offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar.” Gibeon was in the tribe of Benjamin, about six or seven miles from Jerusalem, and its inhabitants “were not of the children of Israel, but of the remnant of the Amorites” (2 Sam. xxi. 2). The “high place” at Gibeon was therefore an old Canaanitish altar, which after the conquest of the city had been transferred to Yahveh.

We will now see what the lying book of Chronicles has to say upon this matter.

“So Solomon, and all the congregation with him, went to the high place that was at Gibeon; for there was the tabernacle of the congregation of God, which Moses the servant of the Lord had made in the wilderness” (2 Chron. i. 3).

There is some satisfaction in finding this elusive tabernacle at last. I was beginning to fear that we should never discover where it had been hidden. We have searched for it in Shiloh, where it ought to have been, but found it not. Yet, if we believe the compiler of the Chronicles, it was in the land all the time—in a city peopled by Canaanites, where no one would be likely to look for it. The astonishing statement in the Chronicles, however, naturally suggests a few crucial questions. Why, for instance, was not “Eli the priest” in charge of this tabernacle, instead of the little shanty at Shiloh? Why, later on, when no place could be found for the Lord’s ark, did not the men of Bethshemesh or the men of Kiriathjearim send to those officiating at this tabernacle, asking them to come and remove the sacred box to its proper dwelling place? Did the men of Kiriath-jearim know, when they placed the box in the house of Abinadab, that less than five miles north of their city there was stationed a grand tabernacle sacred to Yahveh, with a whole tribe of priests and Levites engaged in its service? Did David, when he caused a tent to be made at Jerusalem to hold the ark, know that there was then at Gibeon an elaborately constructed tabernacle, containing an apartment designed by the Lord himself as the proper and sole abiding place of his holy box? Why did not David, instead of making an ordinary tent in Jerusalem to receive the Lord’s ark, remove the grand tabernacle to that city, and place the sacred box in its proper sanctuary? When it was known that this king was about to make a tent to hold the ark, was there no one in the land who could inform him of the existence of the great Mosaic tabernacle in a city only about two hours’ walk from Jerusalem? If this ancient Tabernacle of the Congregation was at Gibeon in “those days,” as stated in the Chronicles, how is it that we find no mention of the fact during the judgeship of Samuel or the long reign of David? How is it that nobody appears ever to have heard of it save the unveracious compiler of the Chronicles?

If, again, the grand tabernacle which is said to have been made by Moses was then standing in the little town of Gibeon, what is the meaning of the statement, already quoted, that “The people sacrificed in the high places, because there was no house built for the name of the Lord until those days”? The great Mosaic tabernacle described in Exodus, with its brazen altar, nine feet square, standing in front of it was a “house of the Lord,” having its interior and

furniture precisely the same as Solomon’s temple, though of smaller dimensions. If this building were then in the land, as stated in the Chronicles, there was no reason, and no excuse, for the people offering sacrifices in the old high places—as we have abundant evidence that they did. All that was needed was a building and an altar recognised by the whole nation as sacred to Yahveh, with priests in attendance ready to offer the sacrifices. These they already possessed, and had possessed from the earliest times, if the statement in the Chronicles be true. But, it is scarcely necessary to say, the account in the book of Chronicles is *not* true. The whole history of the nation from the earliest period of the judges to the reign of King Solomon proves conclusively that no Mosaic tabernacle, no Levitical priesthood, and no laws which are found only in the Priestly code, were known to anyone who lived during this period. They were most certainly unknown to Samuel, Saul, David, and Solomon. They were unknown to the ancient historians from whose accounts (a large number of facts, with some admixture of fable) the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings were compiled, and were also probably unknown to the original compilers of these books, the interpolations being the work of a later priestly editor.

This inquiry, I may say here would have been brought to a conclusion some weeks back but for the numerous interpolations and the false statements in the Chronicles—neither of which could be allowed to pass unnoticed. As it is, I shall have to trouble the reader with one more paper before I can say *Finis*.

ABRACADABRA.

Missing People and the Jesuits.

MR. HICKMAN, the father of the missing lady doctor, has suggested that his daughter is kept hidden by Jesuits. This has produced the usual fury among Roman Catholics. The characteristic temper of pro-Jesuits is beautifully exhibited in two letters printed together in the *Sun* of August 13. One man wants to tear Mr. Hickman to pieces, and have five rounds with him, for his suggestion; while the other wonders at all this fuss at a daughter absconding without an intimation of her continued existence. “For what is more natural than for a daughter to take such a step when her father would not sanction her entrance into a convent? And he says: “It would not be the first case of a child braving a father’s anger to leave all and follow Him. Bigotry and malice are still rife in our free and enlightened England.”

Notwithstanding the protests of such maniacs as this tear-him-to-pieces pro-Jesuit, the fact is the Roman Church regards it as the duty of priests to abduct converts, and young persons with a “vocation” where either the conversion or the vocation is opposed by their guardians. The lives of the saints, especially the more popular and those commonly given to young persons, are full of such elopements. Every first-class saint left his or her father and mother to wonder if he or she were dead, or in some horrible enslavement. The Benedictines besides St. Benedict himself, have scores of examples. The Dominicans boast of St. Thomas Aquinas. The Franciscans relate that St. Clare, then a beautiful girl, eloped down a rope ladder to join St. Francis, himself, a young gentleman who had embezzled his father’s money “for charity.” But the greatest of these flights and abscondings is that of which the Jesuits are never tired of bragging: the secreting of Stanislaus Kostka in a foreign country for several years, until he attained his majority.

The thing is of every-day occurrence. Some years ago the captain of Westminster School vanished as this lady—the first medical woman to be given the charge of a hospital—has. There was the same hue and cry, when at last the Superior of the Oratory, Fr. Dalgairus, coolly wrote to say that he had had him in hiding at Brompton the whole while, and that, as he had at length come of age, there was no longer a reason for secrecy. Again, there was the famous “Oratory Case.” A beautiful model—a girl of seventeen or eighteen—was lost suddenly. A young priest was suspected of abducting her; and, after the usual excitement and racket, it was admitted he had placed her in a convent at Finchley—a penitentiary for fallen women! This man was quite a youth, yet he took this girl from her widowed mother without as much as informing his Superior—and his Superior protested that he did not require to have such unimportant details of a priest’s ordinary duties reported to him; while

Cardinal Wiseman, on his death-bed, wrote his very last letter to this young fellow—not of admonition or rebuke, but of sympathy and condolence with him under his "persecution."

The instances in which boys have been decoyed away and hidden are more numerous even than those of females. Besides the numberless cases given in the Lives of the Saints, and this one just quoted, there is the notorious one of the abduction of the Jewish child, Montana, and Pius the Ninth's refusal to restore him to his parents. Some while since a priest in London defied the magistrates, and told the authorities he would not restore to his father a boy that he had hidden. This same priest kidnapped a lad, and, by shifting him from one obscure mission to another, kept him hidden for several years; but, having at length placed him in a seminary, the boy was recognised in the football field by a sharp commercial traveller, who, aided by a lawyer having the requisite authorisation from the lad's mother, pounced down on the college and captured him. In another instance a young lady left her family and disappeared for two years, when she as suddenly reappeared. A Jesuit had first placed her in a home for ladies, and then sent her to Constantinople as a governess. In the Levant she was eventually placed by the Jesuits as companion in a family who were travelling in the "Holy" Land; but on a sudden outbreak of cholera they deserted her in a plague-stricken city because she hampered their flight home. By her own energy she contrived to get back to London to her family, who then heard for the first time that this Jesuit was in any way connected with her disappearance—and he was the confessor of four of its members, inclusive of the mother, and was in almost daily communication with them the whole while!

These things are characteristic of the Church of Rome; but Protestants should bear in mind that they are common to all religions, and that Jesus set the example by taking two boys from their father, his friend's sister from her brother, and at least one rich maniac from her husband. It also should be remembered that a distinct advantage would accrue to the Jesuits were an excitement got up against them in regard to Miss Hickman without any substantial basis and it should eventually be discovered they had no hand in her disappearance. As it stands, no evidence is given that she had any bias towards Romanism, or anything to do with it; should it be discovered that she is deranged and turned wanderer, as happened to a curate who was discovered driving cattle in Cornwall some years ago, or has formed an illicit union, or is the victim of a trades-union rattening by the doctors, the Jesuits would get such a capital out of their "persecution" that in future no one will dare mention them; under cover of which change of sentiment they will have a free hand to carry out whatever intrigues they care to enter on.

G. T.

Correspondence.

STATE SCHOOLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have not noticed your paper taking a certain objection to State schools which, perhaps, Freethinkers should take.

"By association with rules that cannot be obeyed," said Herbert Spencer, "rules that can be obeyed lose their authority." State teaching is, from the nature of the case, certain to be directly or indirectly connected with the State religion. Personally, I consider the compulsory provision of either to be inequitable. But, leaving this, take the Ten Commandments, and in order.

I. "Thou shalt have none other gods but me."—A child, as it grows up, sees various people of various religions ignoring this commandment, and being quite successful and esteemed.

II. "Thou shalt not make thyself.....the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth."—A child, as it grows up, sees artists, statuary, and cinematographers doing something of the kind, and becoming wealthy and estimable.

III. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."—It is done daily on every race-course, in every street, and in nearly every game in England. Such phrases as "Lorlumme," "Gordelpus," "Goldurned," "Gosh," "Zounds," and "Gor!" all testify to its frequency. Moreover, such initials as J. C., J. T., Christo,* or Oscar produce roars of laughter in all State schools.

IV. As to doing no work on the seventh day.—Apart from the doubt as to which really is the seventh day, nearly everyone does do work on Sunday. Many recreate on Saturday, but work harder on Sunday than on any other day. A child may see its pa smugly repeating this commandment and breaking it on one and the same day.

* Some spell Oristo.

VI., VIII., and IX. As to murder, theft, and lies.—All three bad things, and form a fitting portion of the Communion Service. They are never omitted, even though the grape juice run short.

V. and X. As to honoring your parents, and not coveting your neighbor's house.—These are quite minor matters, and not essential nor to be applied universally. Neither a parsonical pa nor a boosey ma need much honor. A nice vicarage may be justly coveted—you pay tithes towards it.

VII. Is barbarously put, and is untrue.—If the passionate ecstasy of love is criminal without a marriage service (fully choral), then nearly all great men have been great criminals. Consequently, to my mind, commandments to truth and honesty which tally with the ethics of reason lose weight and caste by being mingled with this balderdash. They should be omitted. Their inclusion may account for the increase of paupers and criminals which invariably attends the erection of State schools.

THE SON OF SIRACH.

A SIXPENNY HEINE?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am charmed with Mr. Mann's opening paper on Heine, and trust that your readers are to be lucky enough to have a long series on the subject of Heine's thought and work from Mr. Mann's pen.

It occurs to my mind that there exist, in scattered form, quite a large number of translations both of verse and prose from Heine's books by James Thomson, our own "B. V."

In addition to these translations, there is a short *Life of Heine*, by "B. V." which is quite the finest I am acquainted with.

Could not the whole of these scattered productions of "B. V.'s" genius be got together under some such title as *Thomson's Heine*, and, as a sub-title, say, *or a Short Biography and Some Attempts at Translation*. Thomson called his translations "attempts," but that arose from his own excessive modesty, combined with his great admiration for Heine's wonderful "wit, wisdom, and pathos" and his desire to impress upon readers the difficulty of attaining an adequate *general traduction*.

Miss Blind, Karl Marx, and his daughter Eleanor Marx, all considered "B. V.'s" attempts as the finest translations made into our language of Heine's work, and I am sure that they are.

Do you not think that a public sufficiently large would now be found ready to buy a sixpenny *Thomson's Heine*?

And could not the Freethought Publishing Company make the venture?

I doubt if a more intellectual sixpennyworth could be published, and I think now that there must be a public ready to buy such a book, although at the time "B. V." wrote his biographical sketch and his translations there was probably no sufficiently large public to warrant such an experiment as I suggest.

I would myself take fifty copies if the collection can be published.

SIGVATSON.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND FREETHINKERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your last issue Mr. Barber urges Freethinkers to support Mr. Chamberlain, who gave £50 towards Mr. Bradlaugh's election expenses. Even if Mr. Chamberlain would and could do as much for Freethought as is assumed, I would protest against the selfish policy of putting our own interests before those of the nation. At present Mr. Chamberlain does not represent Freethought at all. He represents, as everyone knows, a policy of Protection which has been condemned by political economists almost without exception. It is the plain duty of all Freethinkers who believe in the beneficent policy of Free Trade to work and vote against a man who is endeavoring to delude himself and the public with the mischievous fallacies of Protectionism.

W. P. BALL.

FAR ADVANCED IN THEOLOGY.—Harold celebrated his fifth birthday by attending Sunday-school—his first experience The teacher of the class to which he had been assigned gave to each child a card on which was printed the Apostles' Creed, and told each one that she should expect them to memorise it by the following Sunday morning. Harold, having been given one of the cards, felt so very important to think he had a lesson to learn that on his return from Sunday-school he rushed to his mother's room, and, holding the card for her to see, remarked importantly: "See, mother, what I shall have to learn by next Sunday!" "My dear child," exclaimed mother, "you cannot possibly learn it by then!" "Yes, I can, too," responded Harold. "Why, I know 'way down to hell now!"

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.**OUTDOOR**

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N.S.S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, F. A. Davies.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, C. Cohen.

EAST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Mile End Waste): 11.30, E. B. Rose.

FINSBURY BRANCH N. S. S. (Clerkenwell-green): a Lecture.

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Brockwell Park): 11.30, W. Sanders.

WEST LONDON BRANCH N.S.S. (Hyde Park, near Marble Arch): 11.30; Hammersmith Broadway, 7.30, Lectures.

COUNTRY.

BINGLEY (Myrtle-square): Tuesday, 22, at 6.30, Ernest Pack, "The Parson's Dream."

BRADFORD (Town Hall-square): 11, Ernest Pack, "Old Nick."

BRADFORD (Covered Market): Saturday, 26, at 6.30, Ernest Pack, "Bible Beauties who are on the Black List."

Huddersfield (Market Cross): Wednesday, 23, at 6.30, Ernest Pack, "Why I Cannot be a Christian."

LEEDS (Vicar's Croft): Monday, 21, at 6.30, Ernest Pack, "Prayer"; Thursday, 24, at 6.30, "The Parson's Dream"; Friday, 25, at 6.30, "Heaven and Hell."

LEEDS (Woodhouse Moor): 3, Debate ("Christianity v. Secularism") between John Powell and Ernest Pack; 6.30, Ernest Pack, "Some Christians I have Met."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): H. Percy Ward, 3, "An Outline of the Evolution Theory: III. The Descent of Man"; 7, "Immortality and Science." Monday, 21, at 7.45, Edgehill Church, Mr. Ward will lecture. *Special Note.*—The Sunday lectures will be given in the Large Hall, which has been redeccorated.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, Lecture arrangements.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Willie Dyson, 3, "The Teachings of Evolution"; 7, "The Causes of Evolution" (being the fifth lecture on Spencer's *First Principles*). Tea at 5.

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