

THE Freethinker

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No human being has gone beyond the horizon of the natural. As to the existence of the supernatural, one man knows precisely as much, and exactly as little as another. Upon this question, chimpanzees and cardinals, apes and popes, are upon exact equality. The smallest insect discernible only by the most powerful microscope, is as familiar with this subject, as the greatest genius that has been produced by the human race.—INGERSOLL.

Ridicule.

"Ce Dieu qui fait mourir Dieu pour apaisez Dieu, est un mot excellent du baron de la Hontan. Il résulte moins d'évidence de cent volumes in folio, écrits pour ou contre le christianisme, que de ridicule de ces deux lignes."—Diderot.

"This God, who puts God to death to satisfy God, is an excellent saying of Baron Hontan. There is less evidence in a hundred folios, written for or against Christianity, than in the ridicule of those two lines." So writes one of our favorite authors, the virile and fecund genius who, if he was the foe of gods, was the friend of man; the leading spirit of the famous Encyclopædia, the pioneer of scientific humanism; than whom, with all his irony, there never was a more earnest soldier of progress.

It is a mistake to suppose that ridicule is incompatible with seriousness. The contrary is nearer the truth. Ridicule is in the long run futile unless it is used deliberately, and it cannot be used deliberately without a purpose. It is, then, not the eccentric sport of levity, but a resolute effort of conviction. Its object is, not to mock frailty, but to expose falsehood; not to deride error, but to shame superstition; not to annoy honesty, but to pillory hypocrisy.

Without it is based on seriousness, said Heine, wit is only a sneeze of the reason. Every great wit in literature was a man of serious aims, and the greatest writers have been the greatest wits. Shakespeare is the wittiest as well as the grandest genius in history. Humorists and Satirists are almost proverbially men of more than average earnestness, and some of them have been intensely melancholy. Many instances could be cited from Juvenal to Hood. Voltaire himself had frequent fits of despondency, and as frequent fits of anger; now silent with despair, and anon a walking tornado of passion. Carlyle's description of him in connection with the Calas incident occurs to one's mind: "The whole man kindled into one divine blaze of righteous indignation, and resolution to bring help against the world." No one can read Voltaire thoroughly, without seeing that he had profound convictions, and that his exquisite wit was chiefly employed as a weapon.

When ridicule is wielded in defence of unpopular truth, and against popular error, it is sure to be directed by earnestness. Who would risk calumny, social ostracism, and even imprisonment, for fun? Men who face these perils are animated by a loftier and a sterner spirit.

Ridicule has a very obvious function in contro-

versy. It is neither scientific, philosophic, nor historic, yet in a certain sense it is all of these, for it employs every resource of knowledge, and moves with equal ease in every field of thought. Mainly, however, it opposes fact to fiction, the real to the fanciful, the natural to the grotesque, the sanity of reason to the diseases of imagination. It may be defined, perhaps, as good-tempered common-sense.

Now, common-sense is practical. It does not object to the head being ever so high, but it insists that the feet shall be kept on the ground; and it demands order, proportion, and consistency in everything. For this very reason it is hated by superstition and prejudice. They like to move in the vague, and detest, above all things, hurtling against a fact.

Ridicule tears away all masks and vestures, and reveals the natural verity. Whatever pretentious disguises nonsense may parade in, it cries, "Strip, strip!" Profane or sacred makes no difference, for common-sense looks at all things with the same impartial eyes. "What are you?" it asks; "no matter about your age, or your connexions, or your prestige; what are you?" And the slightest equivocation is fatal.

Of all these disguises, the most pertinacious is reverence. How many beliefs and institutions does it protect that, without it, would soon perish? Naturally it furnishes ridicule with one of its principal tasks. Reverence and ridicule are mutually destructive. They hate each other with the perfect hatred of instinctive antipathy. Great wits are never really religious men, even when they profess a creed, and intensely religious men never have a sense of humor. No founder of a religion ever loved a joke. Jesus Christ wept, but he never smiled. The slightest perception of the ridiculous on his part would have averted the crucifixion. Even metaphysicians, who rank next to theologians in the list of solemn absurdities, are notorious dunderheads in this respect.

Freethinkers ought to see that ridicule is especially their weapon. The beliefs they attack are all founded on faith and protected by reverence. People cannot be argued out of Christianity, for they were never argued into it. They were trained into it, and their prejudice must be overcome before they will heed the voice of reason. This is exactly what ridicule does. It shows in a strong light the incongruity between the dogmas of faith and the axioms of reason, and rouses men's common sense, in their own despite, against the tyranny of their prepossessions. When their mental soil is once broken up it lies open to the fertilising warmth and light of the sun of truth. But while it remains hard-bound by custom and prejudice, the ploughshare of ridicule must be driven into it. We have no particular delight in the work, but it is a necessary one. By-and-bye the ploughshare will rest; we shall watch the sprouting of the seed, and expect the golden harvest.

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion and Justice.

(Concluded from page 611.)

I MENTIONED in my last article that Mr. Brierly, in his lecture on "Religion and Justice," had a very curious, even an extraordinary, digression concerning the notion of human justice in the pre-Christian world. Here it is:—

"I should like all the young people in this church to take up the study.....of the growth of the idea of justice in humanity. And one of the first discoveries you will make is that this idea of justice between man and his fellow is a very late growth. It is astonishing, when you look into the civilisation of Greece and Rome, to discover that, in all their pride of intellect, they had no notion of human justice as we conceive it. You read Aristotle, his *Politics*, and you find that his idea of citizenship was founded upon slavery; and so slow has been the growth of the idea of justice, even in our Western world, that as late as the beginning of the last century, a Christian Society for the Propagation of the Gospel actually owned slaves."

About the *slowness* of the growth of the conception of justice there need be no discussion, and for the moment the reference to slave-owning religious societies may pass without further notice. But the rest of the quotation is of such a character that either Mr. Brierly's mind is a complete blank regarding the history of the idea of justice, or his dictum was based upon a perfect faith in the non-reading character of his listeners.

If one may venture at a guess as to the most probable reason for Mr. Brierly making this assertion concerning justice in the Pagan world, it would be this. Mr. Brierly finds himself faced by the fact that for some hundreds of years a rational system of jurisprudence was absent from Christian society. For a much longer period the notion of justice as comprising relations between man and man, independent of religion, was either non-existent or existent as a highly-debatable theory. Added to this is the fact that staunch Christians were by no means the first to awaken to the reality of this conception, nor the keenest in its exercise. While so far as the subject is illustrated by the question of slavery, so long as the slave trade was possible and profitable, Christians were its chief and most strenuous supporters. To point out these facts, or to let the student stumble upon them unawares, would be likely to give rise to some curious reflections. At the very least one would ask where, in the face of these things, is the beneficent influence of Christianity? And as a safeguard the position is adopted that the conception of justice is a very late growth indeed; it commenced in Christian times, and, presumably, Christianity had been all along fighting to inoculate mankind with this fruitful conception. A pretty theory, for parsons; but, unfortunately, the facts are dead against it.

Mr. Brierly himself supplies a very apt commentary upon this position. He says you may trace the growth of this idea "from Hobbes and Locke downwards; you may trace it in the writings of Cumberland, and of Hutcheson, and of Huxley, and of Jeremy Bentham, and John Stuart Mill, down to our own Herbert Spencer. You trace there the growth of this idea of the rights of man in relation to his fellow-man." Here is a Christian minister, in the very act of demonstrating (?) that justice is practically inseparable from Christianity, who, when he comes to select names as illustrating those who have aided its development, picks out a list of six, not one of whose orthodoxy is not open to question, and four out of whom were avowed Freethinkers! Thus is Freethought justified of its enemies.

Mr. Brierly refers for proof of his statement to Aristotle, and asserts that in his "Politics" he bases citizenship upon slavery. And this is also intended as a general picture of the Greek and Roman civilisation. Now, as a mere matter of fact, instead of citizenship being based upon slavery, slavery was generally the condition that excluded citizenship. But a more unfortunate illustration than Aristotle

could hardly have been selected. The fundamental teaching of Aristotle's "Politics" may be summed up in a few words. These are (1) that man is by nature a political animal, and therefore only in society can man's all-round development be accomplished; (2) while the origin of the state is due to the instinct of self-preservation, it continues to exist for the promotion of upright living, its principal business being the development of capacity, moral and intellectual, in its members; (3) The basis of the State is the family; (4) while the *form* of government must be decided by circumstances, the distinguishing characteristic of good and bad governments is whether government is carried on for the benefit of the public, or for the ruler's private interest.

And if Mr. Brierly after reading the "Politics" (it is most charitable to assume that he has not done so) will turn to the *Ethics* he will find there a lengthy discussion on the meaning of justice, the explicit statement that justice is concerned solely with the relations between men, and he will also find an exclusion of theology in such sentences as "The province of justice is among men." Nor is this all so far as Greece is concerned. What is a large part of the Platonic dialogues but a discussion of the nature of justice as a social force? There is much of it in *The Laws*, in *The Statesman*, and more still in *The Republic*. Indeed, if Mr. Brierly reads carefully the fifth book of the *Republic* he will find there the description (afterwards repeated in the New Testament and applied to the church) of the members of a State standing in the same relation as the organs of the body, and that one cannot be injured without inflicting injury on the whole. How, in the face of all these and hundreds of similar instances a preacher, addressing a crowd of young men, can inform them that the conception of justice between man and man was unknown in pre-Christian ages, is more than can be accounted for, except on a theory derogatory to the speaker's honesty or knowledge.

This distortion of historic fact is still more striking when one turns to Rome. The *sense* of justice is not always synonymous with legislative enactments, but the one is always more or less the expression of the other. And there can be no question here that the whole fabric of Roman government rested upon the absolute equality of its citizens. Official favoritism and official corruption existed, of course, but the legislative efforts of Rome produced a greater degree of all-round equality among its citizens in all parts of the world than has, in all probability, ever been achieved by any other empire under the sun. Gibbon's emphatic assertion is that "In the eye of the law, all Roman citizens were equal, and all subjects of the empire were citizens of Rome," and the forty-fourth chapter of his history bears out the statement. And in another place, dealing with the forty-two years during which the Antonines ruled, he says, "Their united reigns are possibly the only period of history in which the happiness of a great people was the sole object of government."

Lecky, a witness by no means anxious to strain a point in favor of Rome, also says, contrasting the legislative efforts of Pagans and Christians:—

"It was in the reign of Pagan emperors, and especially of Hadrian and Alexander Severus, that nearly all the most important measures were taken redressing injustices, elevating oppressed classes, and making the doctrine of the natural equality and fraternity of mankind the basis of legislative enactments. Receiving the heritage of these laws, the Christians, no doubt, added something; but a careful examination will show that it was surprisingly little.....The most prominent evidence, indeed, of ecclesiastical influence in the Theodosian code is that which must be most lamented."

And it is worth while bearing in mind that the most deplorable periods of Roman corruption and partiality in administering the law were those when the Empire developed a taste for Eastern religions that culminated in the adoption of Christianity.

But the legislation of Rome was, in truth, only a carrying out of the teachings of her best thinkers. One might easily fill half this issue of the *Freethinker*

with expressions from the Latin writers teaching the equality of men and the doctrine of natural justice. "Wilt thou not," says Epictetus to the slave-owner, "remember who thou art and whom thou rulest—that they are kinsmen, brethren by nature, the progeny of Zeus?" And, again, "You are a citizen and a part of the world.....The duty of a citizen is in nothing to consider his own interest distinct from that of others." And Epictetus was the friend of the Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, who said: "There is but one thing of real value—to cultivate truth and justice, and to live without anger in the midst of lying and unjust men." Cicero also taught, "Men were born for the sake of men, that each should assist the other." "To reduce man to the duties of his own city, and to disengage him from duties to members of other cities, is to break the universal society of the human race." Seneca and Lucan bristle with the same teaching. The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius is full of it. Even slavery was defined by a great Roman lawyer, Florentinus, as "A custom of the law of nations, by which one man, *contrary to the law of nature*, is subjected to the dominion of another. Yet it is these men of whom Mr. Brierly states they possessed no notion of human justice!

But Mr. Brierly would no doubt say, with a very sanctimonious air, these people practised slavery. Quite so. So did all the people of antiquity. But this has to be borne in mind. The Romans were growing out of their slave-holding. Legislation gave the slave distinct rights against his owner, and even slavery did not prevent a person rising to eminence in letters or in art. But, while the Romans were growing out of a slave-trade that existed as the heritage of a lower civilisation, the Christian world grew into it again. It was Christian influences that put a stop to the emancipatory legislation of Rome and reversed some of its most beneficent provisions, just as it was Christians who, at a later date, inaugurated the African trade from greed of gold. Mr. Brierly professes astonishment at a religious organisation owning slaves a century ago. He need not have travelled so far back. A little more than half a century ago he could have found in America religious societies buying and selling slaves and devoting the profits to *missionary enterprises*. He would find at the same period the New Testament, which he now asserts contains the gospel of freedom, being circulated, with marked passages, by the slave-owners against the abolitionists. And he will *not* find that any Christian community has ever given up slavery while slave owning was economically profitable.

Not that I anticipate that this discovery—if it would be a discovery to him—would have much effect. Men who can seriously place such a travesty of facts before an audience may well be proof against a discovery of this kind. Yet these are the men who are at present blossoming forth as politicians, as leaders of the people, and as the nation's guides in matters of education. The world offers many mad and many sad spectacles, but the maddest and the saddest of all is that of a large number of people who are willing to place the destinies of a nation in the hands of such teachers.

C. COHEN.

Are Atheists Hypocrites?

WE are confidently assured by the leaders of English Nonconformity that there are now no real Atheists on the earth. Even the Agnosticism that prevailed thirty years ago is utterly dead. There may be a few people who still call themselves Atheists and Agnostics; but at heart they know they are quite wrong, and dare not assert themselves. Atheism is the city of refuge for cowards, who are either morally degraded or intellectually weak, if not both. Such people *pretend* to be Atheists in order to silence conscience, deaden remorse, and so be able to revel

unchecked in all sorts of sinful indulgences. That is one way of putting it. But Dr. G. Campbell Morgan puts it in another way. Speaking of America, where he now resides, he said that "the general religious outlook among the masses of the people may be characterised by the one word 'indifference.'" The cause of this indifference he finds in the lack of passion in the American Churches, and these, consequently, have no drawing power. Then he added: "The old proud, dogmatic, conceited Agnosticism is dead; the remaining Agnosticism is that of men who want to believe something better." Preaching at the City Temple, the other day, the Rev. R. J. Campbell, the present idol of Congregationalism, made this stupid statement: "We call God by different names, but we all believe in God. *A man who says he does not believe believes all the same.* All life is God; nothing is that is not God." If that is not sheer nonsense, pray what is it? Rank Pantheism is essentially different from the Theism generally taught in the Churches. When Mr. Campbell leads his congregation in prayer, does he address the Sum Total of Existence, or a living, loving, personal Father in heaven? Was Jesus Christ the only begotten Son of the Sum Total of Existence? If we call him God, as Mr. Campbell does, we must believe that in him the Sum Total of Existence was born in a stable, went about doing good, died on the cross for the sins of men, and triumphantly rose from the dead on the third day. Pantheism has a very strange sound on the lips of a man who is an official champion of Christianity. Spinoza was an enthusiastic Pantheist; but, then, he did not preach the Christian Gospel. By the word "God" Mr. Campbell and his followers mean, not "all life," not "all that is," but an intelligent, infinite, and eternal Person, by whom "all that is" was made, and in whom it consists. Atheists refuse to believe in such a God, arguing that if such a God exists, he has never done anything to justify his existence. It is infinitely better to be without a God than to worship a wicked one, who is responsible for all the crimes, sins, sufferings, and cruelties so rampant in the world. But Mr. Campbell says that all Atheists are hypocrites, pretending to be what they are not. They wear a mask behind which the great oracle can see genuine believers in God and embryonic Christians.

Surely it is high time such intolerable charlatany had an end. Surely there will be a Christian protest against such silly dogmatism. Mr. Campbell possesses many admirable and fascinating qualities; but he has no right to pose as an infallible pope. Even he is not omniscient. On the present occasion he has borne false witness against his neighbors, to whom he owes a humble apology. The truth is the direct opposite of what Mr. Campbell stated. There are tens of thousands of people who do not believe in a Supernatural Being. Some of them began life as earnest believers. In early manhood serious doubts assailed them. They wanted to believe but could not. For years they resolutely fought their doubts, and once or twice almost vanquished them. By today their faith is all gone, and they are happy in their unbelief, feeling as if they had been delivered from the awful pressure of a horrible nightmare. Will Mr. Campbell venture to assert that these people believe all the same? Will he classify them as conscious or unconscious liars? There was a time when they would have given the world to be able to crush their doubts; but now their wonder is that they ever did believe. There are others who have been Atheists from the cradle, and they are firmer Atheists now than ever. They are amazed how any reasonable person can believe in a God of love, when the whole earth teems with pain and sorrow, and groans under oppression's heel. Surely an omnipotent Deity, with a sympathetic heart, could not permit such evils to continue.

All the arguments by which our forefathers thought they could prove the Divine Existence have been completely abandoned. From the time of Kant they have been represented as both sophistical and

useless. Tennyson regarded them as wholly worthless:—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless, O my Son,

and the best advice he could give to his reader was to—

Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt.

The present generation know nothing about the Cosmological, Ontological, and Teleological Arguments for the existence of a Deity; and even Mr. Campbell himself has nothing but his own *feeling* and *experience* on which to rely. But is a man's *feeling* or *experience* a safe guide in such a matter? How is it possible to feel or experience God? The Christian retires into his private chamber, falls on his knees, and begins to pray. He abases himself to the dust, he calls himself all manner of bad names, he praises the name of God, enumerating his attributes, describing his various works, and calling him the Maker and Sovereign of the Universe, and, when at last the long monologue comes to a close, he rises to his feet elated, all aglow, and exclaims: "I have had a vision." Well, what has he seen? He cannot tell, but his belief is that God has spoken to him, and shown him his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. What has he seen? *His own shadow*. He worked himself up, emotionally or nervously, to such a pitch of excitement, that he believes he has seen God. Well, he who believes in ghosts is always seeing them. Martin Luther had several absorbing interviews with his Satanic Majesty, at whom, losing his temper on one occasion, he flung the ink-bottle. We do not believe in ghosts, and never see them; we have dropped the Devil, and never have the chance of throwing our ink-bottles at him. So, likewise, they who believe in God are always seeing him, and receiving messages from him; but the Atheists neither see nor hear him at any time. This is a curious fact, and worthy of all consideration; and I think it involves the amplest justification of Atheism.

On one occasion, Henry Ward Beecher was asked by a Wesleyan minister: "Mr. Beecher, what have you against our doctrines?" "Nothing in the world," answered the great orator, "except that your people practise them." "What do you mean?" "This only: your people believe in Falling from Grace, and they practise it with a vengeance." Mr. Campbell's failing is of an opposite nature. During the Ministers' Conference at Oxford he said that "he could not, as a preacher, be dogmatic except in matters in which Christ and the Gospel had actually done him good." Let the reverend gentleman live up to that utterance, and never again undertake to speak for other people, as if he understood them better than they understand themselves. There *are* Atheists, and they are much more numerous than Christians are willing to admit. They are multiplying, and a reaction in their favor is rapidly setting in. The Christians anticipate a wonderful revival of spiritual religion in the near future: a revival of Secularism has already begun.

JOHN LLOYD.

Reply to Mr. Engstrom.

WHEN my article appeared in the *Freethinker* of September 6 I was at once, by Christian Evidence speakers, publicly branded as a dishonest man, as a liar, and as a blackguard, for daring to attack the great Mr. Engström. It was, therefore, with some apprehension that I looked forward to the wrath to come from that gentleman himself. Imagine, then, my delight with the agreeable tone of his letter. The rev. gentleman says he always tries to speak the truth. So should every man. That does not, however, merely consist in stating a fact as we know it, but also in not hiding our thoughts. A perfectly truthful man speaks, not only the truth, but the whole truth, and so I am sure that the good and amiable Mr. Engström will forgive me for saying that his letter to the *Freethinker* is another "little

sermon," and that he will pardon me for suggesting that he, by such letters, and such speeches, puts himself entirely out of court as a controversialist, though he may be a very excellent preacher.

I briefly criticised his central argument. I only wish he would have been good enough to reply to that criticism, instead of merely taking this opportunity of laying his views before the Freethought public. That was that the centuries of Christian teaching in the school and preaching in the church, and the weeding out by brute force of the unbelieving type of mind, has caused Jesus to be thought the very incarnation of perfection—a belief which is not warranted by the four gospels—which in its turn has given rise to the *belief* of which Mr. Engström speaks.

Ten million people BELIEVE "in their own redemption from the power.....of sin through faith in, and union with, Jesus Christ." But what is the use of such an argument to Freethinkers? It is suited to Christians only. Let Mr. Engström go and preach it to them and not to us. Such an argument will only convince those who are already convinced. For it implies three cool assumptions. First, it implies that the belief is true, and that the ten millions *are* saved from the power of sin. Secondly, it assumes that Jesus Christ ever lived. Thirdly, that he, if he did live, lives to-day and has the power to save others from sin. All of which the Freethinker disbelieves. I have never known one of those who proclaim themselves as saved from the power of sin, that is that they are infallible, to be so. "Christian saintliness" is often accompanied by Christian hypocrisy, and "Christian saints" are often despicably mean. Those who blush when they hear a "swear-word" frequently use "goody-goody" phrases that answer the same purpose, and are made to sound as nearly as possible like the real thing. I could give some samples of Christian speakers, but refrain. We have also daily reports from all parts of the world of the doings of fallen saints. But perhaps Mr. Engström will say: "These belong to the category of merely nominal Christians." Then I suppose people are only real Christians till they are either found out or fall. Then they are only nominal. That is a very convenient way of making out that all real Christians are saved. All real Christians are infallible, because the moment they sin they are not real Christians. Analysed, this is Mr. Engström's position in all its ridiculous nakedness, and it puts him on a level with the lowest type of "Christian Evidence" monger, who says that "You might as well talk about a drunken teetotaler or a round square as an immoral Christian, because the moment a Christian breaks the laws of Christianity he ceases to be a Christian." To which my reply is, that what he means by observing the laws of Christianity is to be perfect, and as a perfect man is as yet an unknown quantity, there are no Christians in the world.

If conversions really took place, as is alleged, as the result of the action of the Holy Ghost, he could, and it is reasonable to suppose *would*, accomplish his purpose singly. But, as a matter of fact, the "regenerations" always take place at prayer-meetings. I went to one of these performances a while ago, in the hope of hearing the experience of a Salvation Army colonel's conversion from Atheism. He said he had been an Atheist lecturer, but made but a slight reference to the past. The "captain" conducted the prayers at the close, and the cunning way in which he deliberately played upon the emotions of those present is proof positive to me of the truth of my statement that "it is the dramatic way in which prayer-meetings are conducted which brings people to their knees." The speech consisted of sudden shouts and sudden whispers; now he spoke in awe-inspiring tones, and then in words of solemn warning, and I know the man well enough to know that all this was unnatural to him. When no one came to the penitent form he went down off the platform and walked up and down amongst the people, preaching in the most unnatural ways imaginable. When this

had no effect the band struck up. Then there was hymn-singing, which was more ear-splitting than melodious; then solemn prayers, amid the sobbing of the unfortunate servant girls who, having no home nor relatives in London, nor being inclined to roam about the streets, go into such halls for a "Sunday evening out." When, finally, some repenting souls came, they turned out to be "backsliders." One young man related briefly his experience. He had before belonged to the Salvation Army, but had been living in sin for twelve months. Before he sat down the "captain" asked all to take note of him, so that they might shake his hand as a brother "when you see him at our meetings." The obvious meaning of this was that the public were to "keep an eye on him," and this is proof of what I said about "their new friends keeping the converts on their knees." I have not seen him at any of their meetings since. Probably he departed to be "converted" elsewhere.

But back to Mr. Engström. He evidently holds that a belief of ten millions of people that it is Jesus Christ who has saved them from their sins (assuming that they are so saved) is a proof that the belief is true. But he will not deny that there are many—very many—non-Christians in the world who live honorable and upright lives. Indeed, he admitted it in his lecture in Finsbury Park by saying that Atheists may be partakers of the Holy Spirit. Of these I will not speak. I should have the majority of the Christian world against me; and Freethinkers don't claim to be faultless. But I can speak for Spiritualists, ordinary Theists, and Jews, many of whom have as much claim to be considered saved in a Christian sense as any disciple of Jesus. Let me put these, at the very lowest estimate, at ten thousand. And these go on from generation to generation. But these do *not* believe that Jesus Christ has saved them from their sin. They seem, therefore, to hold Mr. Engström's ten millions in the balance. Which belief is the correct one? Is it that the opinion of the greater number weighs down that of the lesser? If so, Catholics are right in Spain, Protestants in England, and Mohammedans in Turkey.

Then Mr. Engström reiterates the statement that if Jesus himself was not free from sin he could not redeem others. If the shortcomings of which I found him guilty in my first article are not "sins," what does Mr. Engström consider as such? Is finding "an ass and the foal of an ass" before they are lost a sin? If Jesus was God, certainly not; but we are now bringing him to the bar of human law and judgment. Jesus himself proclaimed that if a man shall call his brother a fool he shall be in danger of hell-fire; consequently that must certainly be a sin. He was himself guilty of calling his enemies worse than that. He also said, "Judge not that ye be not judged." He himself was guilty of it.

Even when my rev. opponent turns to the Bible he is incorrect. The Bible does not "*everywhere*" speak of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Scarcely ever, except by implication, and in a mystic way that needs to be explained. Jesus called himself by preference the "Son of Man," as though he wished to emphasize that he was not in any special sense the Son of God.

The very theory we are discussing—namely, the theory of sinlessness proclaimed by one's self—was denounced in the strongest possible terms by Jesus, especially in the story of the Pharisee and the publican who both went up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee thanked God because he was better than the rest, and the moral of the story is that his prayer was not heard, whereas that of the publican, who debased himself, was. I agree with Jesus on that point. The self-righteous man is a hypocrite.

J. K. MAAGAARD.

IN A CHRISTIAN CHURCHYARD.

This field of stones, he said,
May well call forth a sigh;
Beneath them lie the dead,
On them the living lie.

—James Thomson ("B.V.")

Aias in Hades.

See the *Odyssey*, Book XI.

The Hell (or Hades) of Pagan poetry, unlike "the everlasting bonfire" of the Christian superstition, has a quiet dignity in its retribution. There, the "shades of men outworn" seem doomed only to possess the master-passion of their life on earth, though conviction may have come of its woe.

When down into the under world
Odysseus went to learn his fate,
And saw the shades of heroes, hurl'd
Eretime by death from kingly state,
Among the mighty, Aias came,
Anger aflush upon his cheek;
And though Odysseus call'd his name,
He turn'd away, and would not speak.

For dead Achilles' armour these
Wrestled on earth, and Aias fell:
The anger and the agonies
Of that defeat he keeps in Hell:
And though Odysseus' eye is dim
For friendship, and his strong heart weak,
Aias, great Aias, frowns on him,
And passes on, and will not speak.

Many in this wide world have met
In unwill'd battle, led of Fate;
And bonds are broken, and regret
And the heart-yearning come too late;
One bears the anger, one the pain;
One all averse, one fain to seek;
And maybe many times again
They meet, but Aias will not speak.

H. BARBER.

The Retiring (?) Chancellor.

[The rumor was circulating again last week-end that the Lord Chancellor is retiring.]

"RETIREES with a pension"? And what has he done?
When the bigot storm ran high
For a foolish creed that was laugh'd to scorn,
And the yell was "Blasphemy!"
The tool of a Party, he struck at men
Of a nobler purpose and name,
Whose laugh bade wake to a sleeping world.
Like a coward he struck. Ah! shame!

There were post and pay and a pension for 't.
And little, it seem'd, did he lack,
While he heard the Lords, and glanced at the clock,
With his rump on the Chancellor's Sack.
Once he said something wise on "a sort of a war,"
And scratch'd his professional ear
When the laugh went round; but, for all, he drew
That solid ten thousand a year.

Creeds with their rabble rage and pass.
The rabble are ever the same:
But the tool of the Tories, that yoked with the slaves,
With him, with him, be the shame!
Did decency ask (was it thus with his soul
He paltered, that soul to deceive?)
The jail walls should silence our laughter at what
The void, babbling rabble believe!*

CONTRE L'IDOLE.

GOETHE'S EPIGRAM ON THE CROSS.

Very much can I put up with. Most things that are trials
of temper
I in tranquility bear, as if imposed by a God.
Some few, however, I find as hateful as poison and serpents
Four: the smoke of tobacco, garlic and bugs, and the cross
—(James Thomson's translation.)

* See the end of the 33rd chapter of Exodus. For publishing a true and faithful illustration of the Jew-God in the action there described, the editor of the *Freethinker* was condemned to Holloway Jail for twelve months, the publisher for nine months, the office manager for three months, by a Roman Catholic Judge. Sir Hardinge Giffard (now Lord Halsbury) was the leading prosecuting counsel.

Acid Drops.

Mr. A. G. Hales, the Australian war correspondent, is now representing the *Daily News* in the Balkans. Writing from Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, he throws some light on the state of affairs in that country, which, be it remembered, is not Turkish but Christian. King Alexander and Queen Draga, as we all recollect so well, were brutally assassinated, together with a number of their political and military friends; and King Peter fills the throne thus rendered vacant, while the ring of officers who carried through the revolution surround him and keep him under their tutelage. It would be ridiculous to say that the nation has gained anything by the change. The people remain as they were. They are toilers and moilers, hewers of wood and drawers of water. "I take a horse," Mr. Hales says, "and ride out to look at the fields. It is early, very early, yet, though the East is flushed with the pink beauty of the Eastern dawn, the peasants are astir. Men, women, and children are all at work, bareheaded, barefooted, g.unt, and harsh. Famine, linked with unending labor, adds no beauty to man or maid. They are forced to keep that comic opera army of theirs, and those gay bucks and bloods who ruffle it so gaily in Belgrade.....All the finer feelings are stamped out of them, ground out of them, worked out of them. They are human oxen, beasts of burden, with the shadow of the soldier on one side of them and the shade of the priest on the other."

Mr. Hales gives a striking picture of the priests in the streets of Belgrade. "The priests were plentiful," he says, "as peas in Covent Garden, well shod, well dressed, well fed, their long, loose robes, like women's garments, fluttering to their feet, girdled round the waist with gaudy sashes. Their long hair fell upon their shoulders. Their heads were crowned with little red caps that tilted backwards. They were sleek of jowl and portly of middlepiece. Good fare was no stranger to them; they paced the streets like lords of the manor. Servants of the Church they may be, but masters of the poor, and their wives, for these priests marry. They were puffy and proud, wanting the wall side of the pavement every time, whilst the barefooted *canaille* had to take the gutter. Of a truth I saw no over-plus of meekness going begging. My eyes wandered from the priests to the eternal swarm of military officers. Common soldiers were few, but officers were as plentiful as grasshoppers in a green field."

Someone will tell us, perhaps, how much better off the Servians are now than they were under the yoke of Turkey. The only alteration seems to be that their oppressors and spoliators are Christians and not Mohammedans. It reminds us of the one false note in Byron's "Isles of Greece."

"Our tyrants then
Were still at least our countrymen."

As if that were an improvement!

Mr. Raymond Blathwayt, the prince of interviewers, has "done" the Rev. Frank Ballard for *Great Thoughts*. Mr. Ballard is the Methodist minister who is trying to reply to Mr. Blathford in the *British Weekly*. According to Mr. Blathwayt, his speciality is "intellect," for which reason he is "not as much appreciated as he ought to be." But perhaps things will change now. According to Mr. Ballard himself, if he has a special bent towards anything it is towards Christian apologetics; indeed, he has felt this ever since he was "eighteen years of age, and publicly withstood Mr. Charles Bradlaugh in the Sheffield Hall of Science."

Mr. Ballard, apparently, is the gentleman to do the job for the "infidels." Mr. Blathwayt laments the fact that so few men of God are equal to this task. "It is much to be deplored," he says, "that comparatively few preachers, either Anglican or Nonconforming, are to be found sufficiently trained in apologetic literature and theology as to be able to withstand the onslaughts of such trained dialecticians as Haeckel and his followers." We are not going to deny this; it is a statement which (as Hamlet says) we do most potently and powerfully believe. But is there not a little looseness in all this sudden talk about Haeckel? Haeckel is no chicken. He did not begin writing yesterday. He is nearly seventy years of age. His chief work, the *Natural History of Creation*, was first published in 1868, and was translated into English in 1876. Other works of his appeared in English during the following ten years. These works contained, practically, all the heresies that are avowed in the more recent *Riddle of the Universe*, which has caused such a stir amongst ignorant, untrained people who have only just heard of Haeckel, and have a sort of idea that he is the "coming man." And this in the land of Darwin, Huxley, Tyndall, and Clifford! Every student knows there is nothing really new in Haeckel's

splendid book; nothing new, that is, in the way of attack upon theology. He puts the Freethought case with great freshness and force, and, on the scientific side, with a confidence born of complete mastery of the subject. But the truth still remains that every objection to Theism in the *Riddle of the Universe* is thousands of years old; with the single exception, perhaps, of the objection to the design argument arising from the theory of natural selection, not only as accounting for the origin of species, but as accounting on purely scientific grounds for the adaptation of organisms to their surroundings—and, of course, to the necessities of their existence. But we do not owe the theory of natural selection to Haeckel. We owe it to Darwin.

But let us get back to Mr. Ballard. This gentleman shows more honesty than most of his clerical brethren. He wants to face "infidelity" instead of playing the ostrich and showing it his rear. "I regret to say," he told Mr. Blathwayt, "that Methodists scarcely appreciate apologetic theology at all. I have often urged that a special chair of apologetics should be founded at all our colleges, where men might be thoroughly instructed, in all the arguments for and against our Christian faith, but Methodism generally has received such suggestions with indifference, if not with something like downright hostility." Mr. Ballard sees that the battle of the future will be over the supernatural—where, by the way, it has always been; and he wants Christian ministers to be trained for the fight. But he has been cold-shouldered, regarded as too outspoken and even dangerous, and twice hauled up at the Methodist Conference for alleged heresy. No wonder he is doleful.

Evolution now holds the field, and the men of God don't like it—just as though that made any difference! "Modern science," as Mr. Ballard says, "is pledged to evolution, and Christianity can only be justified scientifically on evolutionary lines. But a large proportion of Christian preachers and workers still hold practically to the ancient *régime* and regard the evolutionary idea with aversion. To them a firm belief in, and acknowledgment of, the verbal inspiration of the whole Bible is absolutely necessary to salvation; but such a position is quite indefensible. The perfection of the 'original autograph' is a sheer delusion." Yet—we may say in passing—it is just this "sheer delusion" that is taught by Evangelist Torrey, who has been imported from America to give a fillip to Christianity in England, and whose meetings are promoted by the leaders of all denominations—except, of course, the Catholics. This gentleman says you must believe all the Old Testament yarns literally; if you don't you make Jesus Christ a liar, and this is the straightest road to hell.

We honor Mr. Ballard for not prophesying smooth things. He does not share the opinion of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, Dr. Horton, and the Bishop of London, that the "working-men" are "really and innately religious." Mr. Ballard "shook a rather pessimistic head" at this comfortable view of things, and spoke as follows:—

"My experience leads me to the opinion that, if the British working-man is let alone by the Secularists, he has no definite or bitter opposition to religion, but he is very susceptible to the arguments employed by them, and once they get hold of him he is generally lost to Christianity. I should account for this partly by the fact that he lives in an atmosphere of mental indifference to religion, and partly that he is peculiarly liable to the growing pressure of our modern civilisation, which all must acknowledge does not tend to bring a man into line with the Christian spirit."

Mere praying and singing won't do for "sceptical and hard-headed working-men." Christians must give a reason for the faith that is in them. Mr. Ballard says he is called a pessimist, but he replies:—

"What they call pessimism I call open-eyed honesty. We are entering on a very grave and probably prolonged struggle, as Dr. Flint has recently stated. The modern atmosphere is, in general, tending away from, rather than towards, all that is distinctive of Christianity."

Which is substantially what the Oracle of the City Temple lately said, in a lucid or unguarded interval, to a meeting of ministers at Oxford. Mr. Campbell confessed that they all had to fight against the *Zeitgeist*—the Spirit of the Age.

Mr. Ballard calls for sixpenny editions of the best Christian apologetics. Well, we hope they will be produced. We also hope they will be read—which is more sanguine. Freethought always stands to gain by discussion. Mr. Ballard does not see this. Perhaps some of his silent brethren do. They may have less brains and courage than he has, but they may have more instinctive wisdom; yes, and logic, too—not the logic of debate, but the logic of self-preservation. Some of them, perhaps, would tell Mr. Ballard (under the rose) that all his Samsonian efforts only help to pull down the pillars of his own temple.

Mr. Blatchford is to be congratulated and commiserated. The Rev. E. Rattenbury believes him to be fair-minded and honest, but "simply blind in relation to Christianity." According to this critic what Mr. Blatchford needs is "a vision." We have no doubt this would be effective. Many people have had visions, and many have them still, but they are not always allowed to roam at large as they once were, nor are they treated with much deference by the visionless ones. Mr. Blatchford at least shares this particular blindness with men like Darwin and Spencer, but if over he is afflicted with "visions" we are afraid his *confrères* will be found nearer the neighborhood of Colney Hatch.

The Pope has greatly shocked the religious sentiment of the Vatican by inviting his sisters to dinner. What a religion! And what a light it casts on the history of Christianity when one of its greatest representatives cannot sit down to dine with his own sisters without raising a storm over the indecorum of his conduct!

What was Lord Beaconsfield's religion? Probably no one is quite certain. A Jew by birth, he was made a Christian by his father. Whether he believed in it in after life is another matter. Here, at all events, is a story worth telling. When he became Prime Minister, Mr. Clay, M.P. for Hull, said to him: "Who would ever have thought that you would be Prime Minister!" "Who, indeed," said Disraeli. "But, as we used to say when we were in the East, God is great, and now he's greater than ever!"

The Sunday bigots have been defeated at Ipswich. A petition was presented to the Corporation against running the electric cars on Sunday. The Corporation decided that the cars were needed on the Sunday as well as on the weekdays, and declined to fall in with the wishes of the petitioners. Apart from the Sabbatarian aspect of the matter, it is a good illustration of how much use as a social reformer the religionist is. All authorities are warning us as to the deteriorating effects of town life, and yet a handful of bigots would prevent, if they could, people getting outside the town on the only day they have full leisure to do so.

A curious coincidence occurs in the *Times Weekly Edition* for September 25. Mr. Mandeville B. Phillips, Secretary of the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation, writing for lay help for a clergyman's widow on the ground that her late husband had subscribed £50 or £60 a year to clerical charities, winds up his letter with, "I also venture to question if there is wisdom in the scheme now pressed by some whereby the ordination of poor men may be made cheaper and easier. What future awaits them?" Two pages further on is the announcement that the Archbishop of Calcutta, Metropolitan of India and Ceylon, has just consecrated his brother the Right Reverend Ernest Arthur Copleston, Bishop of Colombo. This Archbishop Copleston, and probably his brother also, was a "charity boy" at St. John's Hospital, an endowed school at Exeter. They were therefore indisputably poor, and owe their rise to their own Devonshire energy and grit. Archbishop Copleston is a phenomenal linguist, and must be self-taught, as no languages were taught at St. John's Hospital. Oddly enough, the Coplestons were contemporaries with two other Exeter boys—brothers, who became Archbishop and Bishop: The Most Reverend George Porter, Archbishop of Bombay, S. J.; and the Something-or-Other Reverend James Porter, Bishop of Trinidad, S. J. These were the sons of a grocer, but were educated at Stonyhurst, out of a misappropriated bequest, which had been left for the purposes of the Roman Catholic church at Exeter; at any rate, the money vanished, and their education was given by the priest as the reason of it.

Two Archbishops and two Bishops of one generation from the citizen class of one small city is surely answer enough to Mr. Phillips's question, What future awaits poor men in church? But the poor men must put their shoulder to the wheel, when they will become petty kings and govern the aristocratic or wealthy dolts upon whose education a small fortune may have been spent. It will interest Freethinkers to know that Archbishop Copleston's schoolmaster was named Gould, a conservative fossil who wore all his life a sugar-loaf hat of the style of the French Directory. Father Archbishop George Porter was of Scotch blood—a hard, "hatchet-faced" man. Preparatory to leaving London for his see, he gave a course of lectures on Buddhism, at Farmstreet, in the course of one of which he forgot himself, and drew a parallel between Buddha and Christ, to the advantage of Buddha!

A country parson, writing on "Recreation" in the *Church Times*, offers a very curious apology for "sport"—that is, for the hunting, catching, and killing of the lower animals as an amusement. We need not trouble about his nonsensical

statements as to the incapacity of the lower animals for suffering pain, but just take his principal argument. It is this. "In the Incarnation," he says, "all human qualities are reconciled to God; and, if so, then sportsmanship, which is a human quality." This is certainly a new view of the subject. Fancy the Lord Jesus Christ coming on earth to reconcile sportsmanship to God! If he really did this, he ought to have proved it by joining in a fox-hunt and putting a bit on a horse. Perhaps he did: only it is not recorded in the Gospels.

The Rev. J. Menzies Love, of London, who told a Baptist congregation at Swaffham, as reported in the *Eastern Daily Press* of September 3, that he was an ex-infidel lecturer, has not responded to the invitation publicly given him to state when and where he lectured on behalf of "infidelity." Do any of our London readers know of the present whereabouts of this reverend gentleman? We should like an opportunity of pressing the invitation upon him. It is wonderful how taciturn these loquacious men of God become when they are asked a pertinent question.

The Rev. John Watson (Ian Maclaren) writes a very mournful article in the *British Weekly* on the position of Christianity. He says: "The attendance on public worship is steadily decreasing, the grasp of spiritual realities is consciously relaxing, the enthusiasm for Christ's cross is fading, and the light of hope and triumph is dying from the brow of faith." Which being interpreted means that so far as Christianity as a system of conviction is concerned, the game is nearly over. But we have no doubt that it will still be played with all the accustomed gravity by all those whose interest prompts them to keep the solemn farce of Christianity going.

Mr. Watson is hoping for a revival in the future—it is always allowable to hope—but he clearly does not expect much from professional evangelists. The following looks like a dig at Messrs. Torrey and Alexander, although we hope that it is not prompted by professional jealousy. "As everyone knows the evangelist of to day depends upon the regular ministry for securing him an audience, and it is simply the most religious people from our congregations whom he addresses; withdraw from him the people who have been trained week by week, by their ministers in faith and good works, and leave him to obtain his audience from the regions beyond and he would have an empty hall.....The evangelist, I submit, is a spent force, and his peculiar methods are obsolete. Special services were held recently for a whole winter in Glasgow without any marked effect. The Free Church Council of England organised a mission over the whole country, but without any national result."

This is plain speaking, and we believe it is substantially true. Only in the light of this statement what is the value of all the stories we hear of the wonderful results of these same evangelistic enterprises? The Free Church National Mission, to which Mr. Watson refers, was boomed in all the religious papers, and many others of the *Daily News* type; day by day we read of the remarkable results, the fresh energy put into the churches, the thousands converted, and now the cat is let out of the bag by one of the leading Free Church ministers, who tells us that it was all without result, and the evangelist, of the Dr. Torrey type, is obsolete, and useless except for tickling the palates of a section of church and chapel attendants. Evidently there has been some mighty tall "lying for God's sake" somewhere or the other.

Mr. Watson's conclusion is that we need "a repetition of that movement which passed over the Roman world in the first century and saved society from dissolution." Mr. Watson's reading of history is, to say the least of it, peculiar. To say that Christianity saved the Roman world from dissolution is downright nonsense. For the Roman world was obviously *not* saved from dissolution, although it might have been had not Christianity gained power. If Mr. Watson is correct, Gibbon's masterpiece is an elaborate piece of fiction, and writers on Roman history are all at sea. There was no decline and no fall of the Roman world; it was saved by Christianity—at least, so says Mr. Watson. But Mr. Watson, besides being a preacher, is a writer of fiction; and in this instance he has got the two vocations mixed—or it would, perhaps, be correct to say *more* mixed than usual.

The truth is that Roman civilisation was damned past all redemption once Christianity had got the upper hand—damned morally, mentally and politically. Its decay was more rapid under Christian, than Pagan, rulers. There is not a single Christian ruler of Rome that can compare with Marcus Aurelius or even Julian. Certainly the mental and social life of the Romans under Christianity was infinitely

lower than under Paganism. And, as to morality, we can safely challenge Mr. Watson to show that any improvement worth talking about took place. Many circumstances combined to break up the Roman civilisation, but not the least powerful of these was the absorption of the national energies on religious subjects, and the consequent growth of the Christian Church.

Evangelistic methods are pooh-poohed in the New York *Christian Advocate*. One Methodist Church had a lot of special discourses delivered on "The Devil's Game," "Get off the Porch," "Some Fellows Who Had Snakes," "A Costly Plate of Beans," "God's Locomotives," &c.; but not a soul was converted, and nobody joined the church.

A writer in the September *Parish Magazine* of All Saints', Margaret-street, says: "The majority of worshippers read scarcely any religious books at home." This is frank; and, seeing the immense number of religious publications, it is surprising. But a little reflection shows its truth. A large proportion of religious books are Bibles, prayer-books, and hymn-books; theological works only circulate among the clergy, and, as every purchaser of second-hand books knows, remain untouched for hundreds of years; even the first editions of Coleenso's works can be bought unopened for a few pence. Get a colporteur to show you his stock, and you discover, besides one or two Bibles and hymn-books, it consists of gaudily-bound single-volume novels, which are sold to servants for "Sunday reading." Even the *War Cry* has to scream secular news. A serial story and a column of jokes! And we are heartily glad of it. It won't be able to keep up the war-whoop while it is telling funny jokes and taraddles "to be continued in our next."

The "reclaimed" Freethinker turns out to be Mr. Henry Maitland, secretary of the defunct Regent's Park Freethought Society. He is an erratic person, whose open avowal of Christianity will be a distinct gain to Secularism. The wonder is merely that he has waited so long to do so. As the secretary of a Freethought Society, his method of procedure was to use the platform of his society to collect a good audience in Hyde Park, and, when its attention was well fixed, to suddenly burst out with "I am a Christian" or "I believe in religion," then fire off a panegyric of Jesus or of Christianity, and give the whole Freethought movement away. His favorite witticism was to declare that he did not wonder at men being parsons for a good salary—that for that matter he would turn minister himself if he could get anyone to pay him, and he has been heard to fix £200 a year as the sum.

The individual Communion cup is growing in favor—like the separate shaving mugs in barbers' shops. Christians are demanding the Blood of Christ as pure as possible. It has many wonderful virtues, but it is not a disinfectant.

The *Daily Telegraph*, in a brief review of Professor Franz Cumont's work on *The Mysteries of Mithra*, makes the following important admission:—"The extraordinary parallels between Christianity and Buddhism are fairly well known; Professor Cumont brings to light similar extraordinary resemblances between Christianity and Mithraism, including a communion of the 'Last Supper' before Mithra ascended to heaven in a chariot."

The civilising influence of religion is illustrated by the fact that the writer of "Insurance and Thrift Notes" in the *Daily News* thinks it necessary to argue with "some persons who object on religious grounds to insure their lives," believing that "a man is justified in leaving to a Higher Power the care of his wife and children should he prematurely die."

A poor woman who drowned herself in the Serpentine wrote on a scrap of paper which was found in her pocket, "No father, no mother, no work. I hope the Lord will forgive me for what I have done this night." How these poor creatures cling to their belief in the Lord—or how it clings to them! This bit of social wreckage, with no food, no friend, and no hope, committed suicide within easy distance of many millionaires. And she and they were alike children of "Our Father which art in heaven." Our Father! Our Father! What a farce!

The *Manchester Guardian* reports a faith-healing case at Chorlton-on-Menlock. The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children prosecuted Frank Knowles Butterworth, a master printer, for neglecting his child Elizabeth, aged ten years. The child fell down some stone steps and hurt her arm. Her mother wanted to take her to a surgeon, but the father said "We will pray for her." This was more pious, and cheaper, but it didn't work out the right

way. The child got worse, and the father cabled to Old Dowie, of Chicago, asking *him* to pray for her. Finally, the father was arrested, and the child was taken to the hospital, where it was found that she was suffering from a fractured collar-bone, and that her life was in danger. Butterworth was committed for trial at the Sessions, bail being allowed. He is said to have called the doctors "maimers and thieves" and to have professed himself a Zionist. No doubt he has acted on Biblical lines—although the secretary of the Society that is prosecuting him is a reverend gentleman.

Rupert Macaulay, Catholic priest of Hucknall, protests against sceptical letters from "Fair Play" and others that have appeared in the local *Dispatch and Mercury*. He begs that paper not to print what may "prove hurtful to the unlettered and simple," and not to be "made the medium of an insidious, an anti-Christian, and pernicious propaganda." Poor man of God! What a way he is in because the opposite side gets a little hearing!

A "Bradlaugh yarn" has lately been told by the Rev. T. L. Withington, of Keighley. In his sermon on Sunday morning, September 20, the reverend gentleman declared that Bradlaugh was caught in a storm while going to the Channel Islands to deliver a series of Freethought lectures, and when the captain said the ship was in danger Bradlaugh cried out "Oh my God." Whereupon the captain told him to go down below, for he was no better than the rest; and the great Iconoclast sneaked ignominiously away.

Mr. H. C. Shackleton, a local Freethinker, ventured to ask the reverend gentleman for particulars. His reply was that the incident was related to him by "a leading seaman who was on the bridge at the time and heard the conversation." That was all. No wonder Mr. Shackleton sent back a stinging answer. Bradlaugh visited Jersey, we believe, some forty years ago; nothing was heard about the "storm" then, but after the lapse of more than a generation this trumpery story creeps into the light of day—or rather into the dim religious light of a Christian church.

How old is Mr. Withington, by the way? We should also like to know when the "leading seaman"—with no name or address—told him that Bradlaugh story.

A Remarkable Criminal.

A REMARKABLE and interesting psychological study is furnished by the man Fischer, of Riverside, who deliberately killed his affectionate wife by chloroforming her, pouring gasoline over her, and then setting her on fire, says the *Los Angeles Times*. He is, to all ordinary intents and purposes, a sane man—as sane as many thousands of people who walk the streets—yet some of his statements are difficult to interpret on any other ground than that of dangerous dementia. He was a member of a church, and claimed to have killed his wife to save her soul, because she had threatened to commit suicide if he left her, and he believed that if she did so she would go to hell. This is certainly a peculiar line of argument, and savors more of devilry than of theology, although some of the theological problems in regard to sacrifice and substitution, and so forth, are also rather hard nuts to crack. Fischer declared, among other things, that he never drank or smoked or swore. He evidently regarded himself as rather a model young man. This leads to the suggestion that there are some things even worse than drinking and smoking and swearing and card-playing and dancing, even worse things than going to a baseball game on the first day of the week. It also suggests the idea whether those who undertake the training of our young people in the churches and Sunday-schools and elsewhere are not sometimes inclined to attach too much importance to the minor indiscretions, or foibles, or whatever they may be called, and too little to the general building up of a sterling moral character. A man may be a member in a church of good standing, may never touch a drop of alcoholic liquor, may abhor the smell or taste of tobacco, may shun profanity, and may yet be an exceedingly bad man. This is no imaginary case. We see examples of it all around us. It does not follow, of course, that young people should be permitted or encouraged to practice the undesirable habits referred to, but it does mean undoubtedly that more good might be accomplished by the churches if they would pay greater attention to the building up of men and women who are sound and clean within rather than to the whitewashing of the outside of the sepulchre, that within may be full of corruption.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

October 11, Glasgow; 18, Camberwell.
November 1, Birmingham.
December 6, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton. Oct. 4, Glasgow; 5, Paisley; 11, Camberwell; 25, Leicester.
- W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always welcome.
- W. THORNE.—Yes, we saw the announcement of a new Life of Bruno, and mean to give it our attention as soon as possible.
- A. G. LYE.—The *Freethinker* subscription for the United States is the same as for England—10s. 6d. per year, the postage being precisely the same in both cases.
- A. NOTLEY.—Copies of the *Pioneer* sent as requested. We note your wish to see Mr. Derfel's articles on Immortality in pamphlet form. We are surprised to hear, at this time of day, that a woman after childbirth in your locality is not allowed to be visited by other women until she is "churched" by some Church parson or Nonconformist minister praying over her and reading a chapter of the Bible. Superstition dies very hard.
- F. S.—Accept our thanks. We are always glad to receive cuttings, etc., on which we can find paragraphs.
- ARMY PENSIONER.—Pleased to hear from you. Undoubtedly there are a great many people, like yourself, that have found it very difficult to obtain the *Freethinker*. The paper you refer to, *El Libre Pensamiento*, is the organ of La Liga de Librepensadores del Perú; its address is, Casilla de Correo N. 286, Lima, Peru.
- F. CAMLEY.—*Freethinker* and *Pioneer* shall be sent as requested. See paragraph in this week's "Sugar Plums."
- W. SAUNDERS.—Too late for the present number; shall appear in our next. Pleased to hear from you as a thirteen years' subscriber. Thanks for your good wishes.
- F. DOUGHTY.—Shall make use of it. Thanks.
- A. E. S.—The workmanship of the verses is not all that could be desired, and the subject is rather trite.
- J. E. BATTEN.—Pleased to hear from you, and glad to know you have been helped by the *Freethinker*. We can well believe that you are happier as a *Freethinker* than you were as a Christian. That you found the passage a time of great trial only shows that you were sincere and earnest: a life's convictions are not changed like a suit of clothes. Accept our best wishes for your success. We will try to find room for the enclosure.
- E. H.—See "Acid Drops." The difficulty is to find a Christian scholar who *does* believe that the Gospels were written by the men whose names they bear. With regard to Matthew and John, at any rate, there is little room for doubt. Bishop Gore himself practically gave them up in *Luc Mundt*. You will find a good deal of the information you seek in our *Book of God and Is the Bible Inspired?*
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—E. M. Vance, secretary, acknowledges 8s. from the Bethnal Green Branch.
- J. G. FINLAY (Krugersdorp)—Thanks for your letter, &c., which Miss Vance has handed over to us. Mr. Foote is "fit" again, and busily at work "evangelising the heathen," as you put it.
- J. K. MAAGAARD.—We are generally overset for the *Freethinker*, and often contributions, which we should like to see inserted at once, have to stand over for want of space.
- J. G. STUART.—Always pleased to hear from you, but regret we cannot increase our burden of work.
- E. P.—Thanks, though the stuff is too silly for criticism.
- A. W. SNOW.—We prefer a Republic to a Monarchy, but we have no itch for prying into the private concerns of royal personages. What is made public property is another matter.
- C. A. M. BAILEY.—Why do you mix up "Anti-vivisection" and "Christianity"?
- H. PORTER.—*Freethinkers* do the cause great service by contributing readable and opportune letters to the local press.
- LITCHWOOD.—Writers are not always the best judges of their own compositions. The "Ode" you now send is rather out of our way.
- W. S.—Thanks for the Glasgow *Express*. We will look through the Rev. J. H. Dickie's lecture and see whether it calls for an answer in our columns. It seems to be mainly a reply to Mr. Blatchford.
- L. D. HEWITT.—We know nothing, and want to know nothing, of the "Mr. Harris, of Wimbledon" who says that "Charles Bradlaugh confessed with tears running down his cheeks that Atheism gave him no comfort or satisfaction, and that he was never so happy in his life as when he was a Sunday-school teacher." "Mr. Harris, of Wimbledon," is evidently a fluent liar.
- G. J.—Do you suppose the propaganda of religion is all pure disinterestedness?
- The correspondent who sends us "The Parson's Religion" is informed that we printed it as a "*Freethinker* Tract" nearly twenty years ago.
- A. J. YOUNG.—It was good of you to write to the man. Did you receive a reply?

H. SILVERSTEIN.—It is pleasant to be appreciated, though we fear you are too flattering.

G. BATH.—Thanks for the parcel your friend left. The Spencer volume we already had; the other little volume is a peculiar one. We will look through it.

RECEIVED.—Two Worlds—Truthseeker (New York)—Crescent—Old Moore's Almanack—Boston Investigator—Public Opinion (New York).

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.

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

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

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

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*, which are most useful in the *Freethought Publishing Company's* business.

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

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

The Cohen Presentation.

THIS matter has been in abeyance during the holiday season, with a promise that it would be reopened in the autumn. I said I should reopen it this week, and I do so, although not precisely in the way I intended.

I came back from Manchester a bit tired, but had to pitch into the *Pioneer* immediately, as it was going to press; and the general crush of my work was such that Mr. Cohen felt it advisable to offer me a little help with this number of the *Freethinker*. I gladly accepted it, and critics may try to trace his hand in some of the "Acid Drops."

Unfortunately, in the whirl, I have mislaid a memorandum of a few fresh acknowledgments. No doubt it will turn up before next week, when the figures will be given right up to date.

I wanted to start the reopening of the Fund with some *éclat*, so I mentioned it at the last meeting of the National Secular Society's Executive, and a donation of £25 was voted unanimously, as a mark of appreciation of Mr. Cohen's steady, unostentatious, and valuable service to the movement, and in the hope that he might long continue in the same noble path; which, by the way, I have not the slightest doubt he will do, if he only keeps his health and strength.

This brings the total of the Fund across the line of the first £100. The exact figures, as I said, will be printed next week.

For my part, I should like to see this £100 doubled. While the thing is being done it may as well be done properly. Many must have been holding back. Some have overlooked it. Some will think I have overlooked it myself. So I did at the start, for I forgot to put myself down for a subscription—like the man who forgets himself in counting the number of people in a room. I ought to have been *first*; as it is, I will be *last*; I must "get the pull" somehow.

Those who know me are perfectly aware that I am none the less serious for a jocular expression. They will believe me when I say that I am much in earnest about this matter. Mr. George Payne, of Manchester, in sending a cheque for £3 3s., says: "Mr. Cohen has rendered ungrudging and invaluable service to the *Freethought* cause for many years past, and I can only hope that the testimonial to him will yet be largely augmented." I earnestly hope so too.

Further subscriptions should be sent in as promptly as possible. They will all be acknowledged in these columns. It is intended to make the presentation to Mr. Cohen at the Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant on the second Tuesday in January.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The Manchester Secular Hall, having lately been repaired and redecorated, looked very fresh and trim at the reopening on Sunday, when Mr. Foote delivered two special lectures. There was an excellent audience in the afternoon, and a crowded meeting in the evening, every form and chair in the building being pressed into service, and every inch of standing room occupied. Mr. Pegg, who presided at both lectures, said how glad they all were in Manchester to see and hear Mr. Foote in his old form again. There was no mistaking the warmth, the enthusiasm of his reception. During the day good collections were taken up on behalf of the decoration fund. We are glad to hear that one member, whose name we are not authorised to mention, kindly undertook to defray the cost of the outside repairs. If some other member would pay the balance due on the inside work, it would indeed be a case of "all's well that ends well," and a great relief to a few officers (like Mr. and Mrs. Pegg) who are now bearing all the responsibility.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures at Glasgow on October 11, and will doubtless have crowded meetings there. This evening (Oct. 4) he goes to the Queen's Hall, London, to take the chair at the last of the special course of lectures and introduce Mr. John Lloyd to the Freethought party. Mr. Lloyd is the gentleman who has lately been telling in the *Freethinker*, under the pen-name of Richard Trevor, the story of his journey from the Christian pulpit to the Secular platform. London Freethinkers should rally in strong force on this occasion, and give Mr. Lloyd a generous welcome. He has done a bold thing, from a worldly point of view, in throwing in his lot with an unpopular, tabooed movement like ours. He knows quite well that he is far from facing a new life of ease and opulence. But he has counted the cost, and we do not believe he will turn back.

Mr. John Lloyd's story of his conversion from Christianity to Secularism is being reprinted in pamphlet form for general circulation. A large number of copies will be sent round to the press, and otherwise freely distributed.

Mr. Cohen took the third of the Queen's Hall lectures on Sunday evening. He had a good and attentive audience, and we are informed that he delivered a very able and interesting address, which was followed (for a wonder) by some interesting discussion. Mr. Cohen is due at Glasgow to-day (Oct. 4), where he is to lecture in the Secular Hall, and is sure to meet with a hearty reception.

South London Freethinkers should note that a special course of three lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, is fixed for Sunday evenings, October 11, 18, and 25, in the Secular Hall, Camberwell. The lecturers are Mr. Cohen, Mr. Foote, and Mr. John Lloyd. There will be no free admission at these meetings. The prices of admission are one shilling, sixpence, and threepence. Handbills of the lectures can be obtained at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. We hope the local "saints" will get them widely distributed.

The Executive of the National Secular Society has voted a donation of £25 to the Cohen Presentation Fund.

At the last meeting of the Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Limited, a grant of £20 was voted to the Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society.

Mr. Foote is seeing through the press, on behalf of the Freethought Publishing Company, an Ingersoll pamphlet which has never before been printed in England. Ingersoll wound up his Talmage Interviews with a Catechism, in which he put all his objections to Talmage's theology in the form of question and answer. It is one of the most brilliant and racy of Ingersoll's productions. Under the title of *A Christian Catechism* it should find a large sale. The price (it is a large pamphlet) will be sixpence.

The *Humane Review* (quarterly) for October contains some interesting articles. One is a paper on "Crime and Criminals" by Clarence S. Darrow, which was actually read to the prisoners in Chicago County Jail. Aylmer Maude writes on "Non-Resistance," without quite subscribing to Tolstoy's views, which are impracticable in the present world. John M. Robertson writes ably, of course, on "The

Philosophy of Vivisection," chiefly in criticism of Mr. Stephen Paget's statement of the vivisector's case. He winds up, however, with a plea against stopping vivisection by law—which seems a lame and impotent conclusion. There are two replies, by George Forester and Ellen Tighe Hopkins, to Monsignor Vaughan's teaching as to the rights (or rather no-rights) of animals under Catholic theology. C. F. Sixsmith writes on "The Democratic Ideal in Literature," and Joseph Collinson on "The War Against the Sparrow." The number includes some excellent Reviews.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie's study at Skibo Castle, the *Free Lance* says, is adorned with the following lines, which are executed in large letters over the mantelpiece:

He that cannot think is a fool;
He that will not is a bigot;
He that dare not is a slave.

These "lines," as some of our readers may recollect, are from the Introduction to Sir William Drummond's *Academical Questions*—a book nearly a hundred years old. The original text is as follows:—"Philosophy, wisdom, and liberty, support each other; he, who will not reason, is a bigot; he, who cannot, is a fool; and he, who dares not, is a slave." "Reason" means something more than merely to "think."

The *Hawick Express* prints a good Freethought letter from "Senex." There is a slight mistake at the end, however. The little book called *The Unknown God* was written by Sir Henry Thompson, not by Sir James Stephen.

We have just had a surprise. Someone has sent us a copy of the *Whetstone*, a monthly periodical issued by the Educational Department of the Portsea Island Co-operative Society, Ltd. In the middle of it we find an appreciative article on James Thomson ("B.V.") by a writer who signs himself "Pax." Whoever this writer is, he deserves praise for his sympathy and honesty; and it needed some courage, also, to say so much in favor of Thomson in such a publication. Naturally the emphasis is not laid on Thomson's atheism. With regard to his pessimism, there is the following passage: "While there is no necessity for thinking that truth is entirely on his side, he certainly destroys the cheerfulness that comes from merely shutting one's eyes to what is unpleasant. Rather than such cheap happiness let us have Thomson's creed, with its fearlessness of truth."

Mr. J. W. de Caux had a strong and decisive letter in the last number of the *Yarmouth Mercury*. While noticing some of the side issues raised by his controversial opponents, he points out that not one of them has answered, or attempted to answer, his original question, "From what do I need to be saved?" Not even the Rev. C. Lloyd Engström has tried to oblige the truth-seeking Freethinker with a reply to this pertinent question. Mr. de Caux has done great good by initiating, and carrying on his own side of, this discussion in the *Yarmouth Mercury*; and the editor is to be congratulated on his impartial liberality.

We note a letter on "The Barton School Question" in the *Hull Times* by "Esau Reason." It has some sensible observations from a Secular standpoint on the struggle between Church and Nonconformity.

We appeal to our friends in all parts of the country to do their best to place the *Freethinker* in the hands of persons they know or meet who are likely to read it—at least to the extent of seeing what it is really like. This is the most effective form of advertising, and the least costly. We have often received communications from persons who were thus introduced to the *Freethinker*, and who count it one of the luckiest incidents in their lives. Here is a letter that has just reached us from Lancashire: "A friend of mine has been kind enough to furnish me with two or three copies of the *Freethinker*, and I have had much pleasure in perusing its pages. In my humble opinion, your journal is written by exceptionally able men. I have come to the conclusion that it is the freest paper in England from cant and hypocrisy. I have handed my copies to a Sunday-school teacher, and he has come to know for the first time in his life that he has a brain of his own. Keep on, Mr. Editor, in your good work."

The September number of the *Pioneer* is on sale. Its contents are varied and, we believe, interesting. We hope our friends will circulate as many copies as possible amongst their acquaintances.

If a Man Die, Shall He Live Again?

(Concluded from page 620.)

SUPPOSING, for the sake of argument, that the universe is made up of two different and separate things, matter and spirit, and both created by the same God; by what process of thought is it possible to prove that a spirit is superior to matter? Of matter we know a little—we can see it, measure and weigh some of it, and we live on it and by it; but what do we know about a spirit? The usual definition of spirit is a negation of all the attributes of matter, which makes it nothing—which most probably it is. You say a spirit is immortal, but you cannot prove it by demonstration; therefore the assertion is a mere fancy guess. But science can demonstrate the conservation of substance and the indestructibility of matter, thereby proving, in the language of theologians, that matter is immortal. You say a spirit is full of wonder. If there is a spirit, it is bound to be wonderful. But no man has yet managed to catch a whole spirit, or even a part of a spirit, to subject it to analysis; and therefore all that is said about it is nothing more than a mental speculation. But matter can be seen and analysed; and all of it—not only in the bulk of an universe, but also in the smallest atom—is full of overwhelming marvels. An immortal spirit would be no greater wonder than a mortal life. It is not possible to think of anything more astonishing than the material nature, organic and inorganic, in which we live. What there is in matter—that is, in nature—we have not yet a full knowledge, and most likely never will have. But every new discovery makes us wonder more and more at the astounding marvels stored up all around us. Even if it could be proved that there is some mysterious thing which is called an immortal spirit, that would not prove that it is immaterial. Analogy and all the knowledge we possess would lead us to suppose that the mysterious something is a very refined matter not yet tested by science, and not something immaterial.

It is an error to suppose that sceptics have any objection to the doctrine of immortality of the soul, if there were any evidence that it was true. Doubters reject or suspend acceptance on account of the difficulties in the doctrine, the improbability around it, and the absence of any evidence of its truth. If any evidence that can be tested and repeated in the same way as all other scientific truths turns up anywhere, unbelievers would receive it with the same enthusiasm and gladness that they give to all other scientific discoveries.

The belief in, and a desire for, immortality is not as general as supposed by Christians. Without reckoning the two hundred millions or more of Buddhists, who have no belief in a personal individual immortality, there are many, even in Christian countries, who neither believe in it or desire to have it. There are a great number, and apparently an increasing number, who are so tired of life here that they commit suicide to get rid of it. Some of these suicides leave letters behind them indicating a belief in a life after death, but such a belief cannot be sincere and real, for a real belief would have prevented them killing themselves. In addition to the actual self-murderers, there are a much greater number who are suicides in thought, and who would rid themselves of life if they had sufficient courage to do it. Looking at the conditions, trials, and sufferings of the masses, owing to the social wrongs they have to bear, it is a wonder to me that suicides or political murderers are not far more numerous than they are.

Personally, my feelings regarding immortality are somewhat mixed and changeable. Nurtured in the doctrine in a Puritan family, a semi-attachment to it clung to me long after doubt and conviction had possessed my mind. Even now, a lingering shadow of my former faith fleets across my mental sky just for a moment, now and then. Sometimes, under the

influence of the ups-and-downs of life, smarting under losses and disappointments, meeting with accidents and calamities, losing kin and friends, and often suffering from disease, I feel there is not much in life, as it is to many of us, to make one desire a continuation of it in another world. If a life after death is to be similar to the life of most before death, many would hesitate to accept it if they had a choice in the matter. The promise of a heaven to a few, where life is to be full of joy, is not of any great assurance, as it offers no security that it will be fulfilled. If there is a god who controls the destiny of man and the universe, we have no evidence that he will treat us better in another world than he does in this. The only convincing evidence of a heaven hereafter would be a present heaven now on earth. If God makes, or permits the world to be a hell for us here, the probability, if not the certainty, is, that he will deal with us the same in another world. Thus, the supposed comfort of the doctrine disappears completely under the force of analyses and argument.

Besides, what consolation can there be in a doctrine that consigns the great majority of mankind to an eternal hell? The doctrine is a horrible one. It is so horrible and unreasonable that many of the churches are getting ashamed of it. A new combined catechism of the Free Churches has no hell in it. But if there is no hell there is no heaven, as one is the complement of the other. Any argument for the existence of heaven, is also an argument for hell, and as far as the New Testament is concerned, hell is quite as conspicuous as heaven in its pages. But hell is going, and ere long heaven will follow, and the churches will manage to get along without them, and without even a god, as long as the loaves and fishes will be secure for the priests.

I have no objection to immortality of a kind. I love life, though it has been to me a very mixed one, but happiness on the whole has been greater than misery. If I had a choice, and an eternal life was offered to me, not any worse than the life I have had, I think, sometimes, that I would accept it. But all speculation about immortality will not make any difference. As I have pointed out in another part of this article, our discussions and speculations will not alter facts. If there is no immortality, an affirmation that there is will not make one, and if it is a fact, a denial will not abolish it, and unbelievers equally with believers will be inheritors of it.

R. J. DERFEL.

The Tabernacle of the Congregation.—VI.

SOLOMON, it is recorded, spent seven and a-half years in building a grand temple for the service of Yahveh, or, more correctly, in honor of Yahveh, for sacrifices were offered in the old "high places" after, just the same as before, this sacred edifice was built. When the new "house of the Lord" was completed, the Lord's "ark of wood" was removed from the tent which David had caused to be made for it in Jerusalem to the temple, and placed in the inner chamber—the Oracle or Most Holy place. Here the search for the great Mosaic tabernacle and its attendant army of priests and Levites ends. In the account, however, of this removal we find another priestly interpolation, which it becomes necessary to notice. This later addition to the original record I have placed within brackets in the following paragraph:—

1 Kings viii. 1-6.—"Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel.....to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion..... And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. [And they brought up the ark of the Lord, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle; even these did the priests and the Levites bring up].....And the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the Lord unto its place, into the oracle of the house, to the most holy place."

That the words within brackets are a later addition

to the paragraph in Kings can easily be perceived. In the first place, if the paragraph be read, omitting these words, the narration will be seen to be complete without them; whereas if the interpolated passage be included in the paragraph, we have it twice stated that the priests brought up (or took up) the ark. In the next place, there is no mention of any Levites engaged in the service of Yahveh in the reigns of Saul, David, or Solomon; where, then, did these Levites come from? If we compare the following parallel passages, we shall see the source of the interpolation:—

1 Kings viii. 3.—“And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark.” (Then follows the interpolated passage.)	2 Chron. v. 4.—“And all the elders of Israel came, and the Levites took up the ark.” (Then follows the passage within brackets in Kings.)
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It is perfectly clear from the foregoing that the words interpolated in the paragraph in 1 Kings viii. were simply copied from the Chronicles, whose compilers have introduced Levites, as well as the Mosaic tabernacle, in many long paragraphs which have no place in the more historical books of Samuel and Kings. Furthermore, it is implied in the interpolated passage that Solomon transferred “all the holy vessels that were in the tabernacle” to the temple. These are stated to have been “brought up”—of course, for that purpose. Now, the only “holy vessels” in the tabernacle described in Exodus (besides the ark) were the golden altar of incense, the table of shewbread, and the seven-branched candlestick. These, supposing they ever existed, were certainly not used again in the temple; for Solomon caused every article of furniture required for that building to be made anew:—

1 Kings vii. 48, 49.—“And Solomon made *all the vessels* that were in the house of the Lord; the golden altar, and the table, whereupon the shewbread was, of gold; and the candlesticks, five on the right side, and five on the left, before the oracle, of pure gold.”

Solomon was, of course, unaware of the existence of these “holy vessels” in his time, otherwise he would not have made new ones. Similarly, he did not cause a new ark to be made, for everyone knew there was one in the land already—in a tent in Jerusalem. These imaginary vessels, and the tabernacle that was supposed to contain them, were known only to the mendacious writer of the Chronicles. This mythical tabernacle was never seen or heard of prior to the erection of Solomon’s temple, and after that event no one even pretends that it was ever seen by anyone. In short, there cannot be the slightest doubt that the accounts in the “books of Moses” of the grand Tabernacle of the Congregation, with its army of priests and Levites, are pure fiction: no such tabernacle existed in Canaan before the building of Solomon’s temple, and no Levitical priesthood was known before the exile.

We come now to the question, How does this very obvious fact affect the alleged Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch? Well, it proves as a starting-point that all the narrative portions of those writings in which Moses and the Israelites figure are simply a mass of fable. Moses received no instructions from the god Yahveh respecting the shape, materials, and dimensions of the tabernacle and its furniture (as recorded in Exodus xxv.-xxvii.); nor with respect to the dress of the high priest (as related in Exodus xxviii.); nor with regard to ritual connected with the tabernacle (as narrated in Exodus xxix., xxx.). The long and detailed account of the making of the tabernacle and its “holy vessels” (Exod. xxxv.-xxxix.) is nothing but pure fiction, as is also the narrative of the setting up of that imaginary building when all its parts had been completed (Exodus xl.). Assuming, for the moment, that a man named Moses led some tribes of Israelites from some unknown country to the borders of Canaan, we have but to ask whether it is likely that this leader, having written a fictitious account of the journey, full of all kinds of imaginary events which every man among the tribes knew to be false, would have the audacity

to present this fabulous history to his fellow tribesmen as a genuine historical record? “Take this big book of lies, my children, and preserve it carefully; it took a considerable time to invent and write. Make copies of it for future generations, and teach your children and children’s children that it is a faithful record of fact.” Would, again, the men of these tribes be likely to unite in a conspiracy to get this book of fables received by future generations as a historical narration of events of which they had all been witnesses?

To each of these queries there is but one answer—a most emphatic negative. The Bible accounts of the imaginary Tabernacle of the Congregation, of the mythical priests and Levites engaged in its service, and of the festivals and sacrifices appointed in connection therewith—that is to say, the whole of the Priestly code—these fictions could neither have been written by Moses nor have been known to contemporaries of Moses. On the other hand, to the Jews who returned to Palestine after the Exile the books ascribed to Moses could easily have been presented as ancient records of the Hebrew nation (as was actually done)—and, as a matter of fact, we find that they were received as such by all. But amongst the Israelites who were contemporary with Moses—assuming that mythical leader to be historical—such a mass of known falsehoods could never have been received as history, much less handed down to posterity as historical records of fact. In the case of the tabernacle, priests, and Levites, such a fraud could not go long undetected, for the first generation after Moses would want to know when and for what reason these divine institutions had ceased to exist. Such conjectures are, however, beside the question. There can be no doubt whatever that the so-called “books of Moses” were not handed down from early times, nor were any of them known to the Israelites before the eighteenth year of Josiah, when Deuteronomy, the first written of the five, was “found” in the temple. We thus arrive at the same conclusion in the case of the mythical tabernacle as in those of the other matters we have examined: the five books of the Pentateuch were not written by Moses, nor for many centuries after the time of Moses. And in this undoubted and fully proved fact we have conclusive evidence of the ignorance and unreliability of the New Testament writers, whose statements upon this subject it may be well to recapitulate.

The author of the Fourth Gospel, for instance, says that “the law was given by Moses” (i. 17), and he makes Jesus talk to the Jews of the “writings” of Moses and the “law of Moses” (v. 47; vii. 23). Mark and Luke represent Jesus as saying “Have ye not read in *the book of Moses*, in the place concerning the bush,” etc. (Mark xii. 26; Luke xx. 37). On the question of divorce Mark further represents Jesus as asking the Jews, “What did Moses command you?” and, upon receiving their reply, as saying, “For your hardness of heart *he wrote you this commandment*” (x. 3-5). According to Luke, Jesus in a certain parable says that the Jews “have Moses and the prophets” (xvi. 29), and later on tells his disciples that “all things must needs be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms” (xxiv. 44). According to the same writer, the apostle Peter in an address to the Jews after the alleged healing of a cripple quoted Deut. xviii. 15 as written by Moses (Acts iii. 22), as did also the martyr Stephen on another occasion (Acts viii. 37). In the same veracious history the apostle James is represented as saying that “Moses from generations of old hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath” (Acts xv. 21); while Paul, in this legendary history, refers to “what the prophets and Moses did say should come” (Acts xxvi. 22). Paul, also, in his own writings quotes two passages from the Pentateuch, Lev. xviii. 5 and Deut. xxxii. 21, as written by Moses (Rom. x. 5, 19), and says, again, “But unto this day, whensoever Moses is read, a veil lieth upon their heart” (2 Cor. iii. 15). The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews

(who was *not* Paul) refers to "Moses' law," and says "For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people," etc. (x. 28; ix. 19). This writer also speaks of the tabernacle made by Moses "according to the pattern that was shewed him in the mount" (viii. 5), and in the next chapter describes that imaginary building and its furniture. This mythical structure is likewise referred to by Stephen, who says "Our fathers had the tabernacle of the testimony in the wilderness," etc. (Acts vii. 44-45).

To sum up, all the New Testament writers believed that the first five books in the Bible had been written by an ancient law-giver named Moses, before the Israelites entered Canaan, and that all the events narrated in those books are historical. The Jesus delineated in the Gospels was also of the same opinion, a fact that could not well be otherwise, for characters in a work of fiction can have no ideas save those which the author is pleased to ascribe to them. Hence, Jesus knew only what the Gospel-writers knew; power to discriminate in literary matters was possessed by neither—consequently Moses wrote the books attributed to him. And it is upon the unattested narratives of these ignorant and uncritical writers that we are asked to believe all the legendary tales and silly wonders related of Jesus in the Gospels, who, to crown all, was himself as ignorant and superstitious as his so-called biographers. Yet these credulous and uncritical Gospel-writers are alleged to have written under the direct inspiration of God (a Being who is supposed to have had a perfect knowledge of the great fraud perpetrated by the authors of the Pentateuch), and the Jesus they portray is actually said to be the "Son of God," and to have had the same knowledge as his father as to the authorship of the Pentateuch.

Thus, without taking into account all the improbabilities, impossibilities, and flat contradictions that stamp the Gospel narratives as unadulterated fiction, we have in the references to Moses and the Pentateuch the clearest proof that both the Gospel-writers and the Jesus they depict were very ordinary and fallible men, whose ideas differed in no respect from those of other credulous people who lived in that uncritical and superstitious age.

ABRACADABRA.

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Had you not suggested in your current number (p. 598) my dealing with one special point, I should not have thought of intruding further on your space, which you afforded me so liberally in your September 13 issue.

You write: "On the other hand, if sinlessness is something else than wickedness, we invite Mr. Engström to explain it." I must assume "sinlessness" stands for "sinfulness," and is due to a clerical error (if it does not, kindly tear this up).

In my point of view, which I believe to be the ordinary Christian one, sinfulness includes all that is commonly meant by "wickedness"; but its connotation has both greater extensiveness and intensiveness, much in the same way as wickedness means more than crime. There are endless moral offences to which the criminal law can say nothing: so, it seems to us, that Secularism, by its own avowed limitations, deadens the sensitiveness to endless actions and feelings, which, though comparatively hidden, may be the ruin of all that is most aspiring and inspiring in human nature.

I conclude with trying to make two points clearer. (1) I had no thought of perfect sinlessness when speaking of the ten millions in every generation who were regarded "with feelings of veneration" by those who knew them most intimately. (2) The Christian is not less culpable, but more, for any commission or omission as regards wickedness, in the ordinary sense of the word. There, as everywhere, he ought to be judged by the most rigid standard of elevated morality.

C. LLOYD ENGSTRÖM.

SCHOOLS AND CRUELTY TO ANIMALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—From time to time protests have been made against the association of education with cruelty to animals. Yet, such is the state of public opinion on a matter of this kind, that whilst cruelty is condemned amongst boys attending elementary schools, it is condoned in certain high schools which claim to give the best religious and moral education.

Hitherto, Eton College only has enjoyed the disrepute of associating its moral and religious teaching with the cruelty of hare-hunting; but recently, Clayesmore School at Pangbourne, Berks, has risen to a like regrettable fame, and introduced the deplorable novelty of a miniature menagerie as well.

The contrast between the prospectus issued by the headmaster of Clayesmore School and the school journal is striking, and the current issue of *The Animals' Friend* has creditably drawn attention to the pitiable disparity between the two. In the former it is stated that, "The School must create strong moral wills," that "at Clayesmore the humanistic subjects naturally preponderate, as they are essential to the proper cultivation of the humane spirit," and that "The earnest aim of the school is to deepen the religious element in the minds of the boys, and to help them to become manly, God-fearing, and God-loving fellows." One is led to wonder how these high aims are to be effected by such scenes as that described in the following extract from the *Clayesmore School Journal*, under the heading, "The School Beagles":—

"The Master, believing 'puss' to have gone on, made a wide forward cast, and soon had the hounds on the line again. They then ran her round the farm, where she was viewed very beat. Hounds pushed her on to the wood, which is surrounded by high wire netting. She made several attempts to get over this, with the screaming pack only about eighty yards behind her, and at last got over a broken part of it, and hounds had to be whipped off. It was very hard lines, as they well deserved the blood, which they had made a very good bid for."

How far such a description, or the experience it relates, is likely to "create strong moral wills," to "elevate the religious element in the minds of the boys," and to "cultivate the humane spirit," may be safely left to your readers to conjecture.

ROBERT HENDERSON.

Ingersoll and His Father.

THE *Sunday Record-Herald* (Chicago) recently printed the following letter from a niece of the late Colonel Ingersoll:—

"To the Editor: An article recently printed in the *Record-Herald* gives a wrong impression, I think, of the father of the late Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll. The writer depicts him as having become a harsh, selfish, and narrow-minded man. Now this is entirely wrong. It is true that his ideas concerning the Bible and things spiritual were somewhat strict, as were those of many of the ministers of his time, but these underwent a radical change in his later years.

"For instance, he never believed nor preached the doctrine of eternal punishment for babes. He was a man whose 'honor was as stainless as a star,' and whose heart was kind and gentle in the extreme, as was shown by the love given him by his entire family. My father, the late Dr. John L. Ingersoll, was the eldest son of the Ingersoll family, and a hundred times have I heard from him of the great affection of my grandfather for his children. Indeed, my father's love and reverence for him and his memory amounted to a passion which endured all the days of his life. Children do not love a harsh parent in this fashion.

"I have in my possession a letter written many years ago by my Uncle Robert G. Ingersoll, announcing the death of his father to my father. Throughout it is expressive of heart-breaking sorrow and of tenderest love and regard for his honored parent. Children never write of a cold, austere parent in this manner.

"The theory that Colonel Ingersoll was driven into infidelity by the severe religion of his father is absolutely false. Robert G. Ingersoll was never driven anywhere by anyone or anything. He chose rather to follow the dictates of his own conscience and powers of reason. There are many people who are better than their creeds—and Rev. John Ingersoll was one of them.

MARY A. INGERSOLL.

Prospect, Wis.

FORCED TO DRAW THE LINE.—"It wasn't so much the coat with many colors," said Joseph's brethren, discussing the pit incident. "But when he showed up with red golf stockings, a pink hunting coat, and auto goggles, it was necessary to take severe measures."

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.

QUEEN'S (Minor) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 8, John Lloyd (ex-Presbyterian Minister), "Why I Have Given Up the Supernatural." Chairman, G. W. Foote.

CAMBERWELL SECULAR HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7.30, Conversazione.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, J. McCabe (late Father Antony, O.S.F.), "The Failure of the Churches."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road): 7, F. J. Gould, "Orthodox, Critical, and Ethical Spirits."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Dr. Stanton Coit, "The Duke of Wellington."

OUTDOOR

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, W. J. Ramsey; Brockwell Park, 3.15, W. J. Ramsey.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, G. Parsons, "The Christian God Dissected."

STRATFORD GROVE: 7, W. J. Ramsey, "Charles Bradlaugh as I Knew Him."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Brockwell Park): 11.15, F. Williams.

COUNTRY.

BRADFORD (Town Hall-square): 11, Ernest Pack, "The Bible God." Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, 5, 6, 7, Ernest Pack each evening at 7.

EDINBURGH SECULAR SOCIETY (Temperance Hall, 84 Leith-street): 6.30, W. D. Macgregor, "The Devil's Pulpit."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): C. Cohen, 12 noon, "The Discovery of the Future"; 6.30, "Is Christianity Worth Preserving?"

LEEDS (Vicar's Croft): Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, 8, 9, 10, Ernest Pack, 7.

LEEDS (Woodhouse Moor): Ernest Pack, 3, "The Origin of Species"; 6, "Christianity a Failure."

LIVERPOOL (Xandra Hall Islington-square): H. Percy Ward, 8, "Why Live a Moral Life?" 7, "Prisoner for Blasphemy." Monday, 5, at the Hall, at 8, Mr. Ward will lecture.

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Dr. Martin, Medical Officer of Health for Gorton, "The Principles of Christianity and Capitalism."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Ernest Evans, 3, "The Wonders of Plant Life"; 7, "The Production of Scenery" (with lantern illustrations). Tea at 5.

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

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