

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXVIII.—No. 36

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1908

PRICE TWOPENCE

Among all the fooleries which men have combined in their ideas of a deity, can there be a greater than that gods and mortals have a separate sense of right and wrong?—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

The Great Detective.

WHEN I was a little boy—never mind how many years ago—I was taught that the eye of God was always looking at me. I believed then in the One Above, and frequently thought of him as a great optic looking down at me (and other people too, for that matter) from the heavens. It was a lidless eye, always gazing and never tired; never closing day or night, and seeing everything I did, just as well in the darkness as in the daylight. It was a solitary eye. It had no companion, as either of my own eyes had; neither was it connected with a nose, a mouth, a head, or any other part of the human anatomy. It was the eye of the Great Detective.

I cannot say that this all-seeing eye made me any better. It used to frighten me, but when I wanted very badly to do anything forbidden I used to cheat myself into fancying that the One Above would not see what I was doing on that occasion. There was "the will to believe" this within me, and I believed it. And I have lived long enough, and observed enough, and reflected enough, to be satisfied that the vast majority of grown-up people who believe in God cheat themselves just as easily and conveniently. The great eye is winking, or looking away, at the critical moment. Even if it does see what is going on, there is another way out of the difficulty; it is possible to repent and purge one's contempt of court; or, as Molière put it, there are always accommodations with Heaven.

Self-deception is not an arduous task. It is really easier to deceive oneself than to deceive others. No man is a thorough-going liar, as Carlyle said, until he believes his own lie; then he becomes a fervid missionary and often propagates his lie with wonderful success. Few of us, if any, realise that very questionable wish of Robert Burns's about seeing ourselves as others see us—which in a vast number of cases would be humiliating and distressing, and sometimes positively disgusting. Nature leads us all on with what philosophers call the illusion of hope. She also surrounds us with a comfortable padding of self-deception which breaks the force of a thousand shocks to our pride and vanity. To quarrel with this is to quarrel with what is apparently one of the fundamental conditions of human existence. A certain measure of self-respect is necessary to the continuous life of even the greatest criminals. This is why they generally consider themselves as more sinned against than sinning.

No thinker will ever be astonished at the way in which men and women—and perhaps men more than women—play their little game of hide-and-seek with the One Above. To believe one thing, and to practise another, is one of the commonest forms of self-deception. People who never indulge in self-criticism, which is one of the rarest of luxuries, are quite honest in this contradiction between faith and fact. "Sir," said Dr. Johnson, "two contradictions cannot

both be true, but they may both inhere in the same individual." Both! Why, man—and certainly woman—is capable of far more than that simple achievement. He (and she) is a bundle of contradictions. As we sometimes find gladly—when, if the gentleman turns out a cad, the blackguard turns out a hero.

But if these contradictions inhere in human nature, it is well to thin them down, as we do weeds, lest they overrun the field. And if self-criticism is the rarest of luxuries, the world would be all the better if it were more common. That it will ever be too common is an idle apprehension. The very dice of nature are loaded against that contingency.

The large majority of the people of England—that is, the professing Christians—believe in the Great Detective, as I have called their Deity. They believe that his eye beholds all that goes on in this world, not to mention others; that the One Above is aware of every vice as well as every virtue, and sees every crime as well as every good deed. Yet they never think of asking why he does not assist the police—why he allows society to be cursed with the presence of undetected murderers, who may actually be sitting next to any one of us at a theatre, a concert, or a restaurant—in an omnibus, a tramcar, or a train. Why the One Above does not prevent murders and other heinous crimes is a further question, with which we are not at present concerned.

Just at this moment the whole of England is agitated by the Sevenoaks murder. Who was it that shot the poor lady in such a mysterious and tragic manner? The police are at their wits' end. Not one of their clues has led to anything. Scotland Yard and the County Police are both baffled. The murderer seems to have covered his traces most effectually. It is a splendid opportunity for the Great Detective. He knows all about the murder; he saw it committed; he can spot the murderer at any moment. Why does he not do so?

Theologians will say anything. They will give all sorts of answers to this question. They will reply that God looks after his own business and leaves us to look after ours,—which, if there be a God, certainly looks a good deal like the truth; that he does not interfere with the established order of nature, or at least not frequently; that if he managed all our business for us we should become poor helpless creatures; and that, after all, the murder of Mrs. Luard was a commonplace crime, best left in the hands of ordinary detectives. All these replies, however, and others of the same character, are practically a denial of the truth of miracles and the efficacy of prayer.

It is easy to call the Sevenoaks murder a commonplace crime, but can the same be said of the two awful murders of little girls at Islington and Liverpool? Here you have two criminal madmen at large, with an insane taste for outraging and murdering female children. They may be luring other victims to their doom at this very moment. And what a doom! Imagine the terrible feelings of the poor little things as the kind gentleman discloses himself in his true colors! Surely it would not be asking too much of God that he should interfere to protect such helpless innocents. Any human father would do so, and why not "our Father which art in heaven"?

G. W. FOOTE.

Good and Evil.

"LET us pray for the poor Devil," once suggested a sympathetic soul at a prayer meeting, after the usual topics had been exhausted. It is not recorded how the suggestion was received, or whether it was ever acted on, but it was a noteworthy thought all the same. It suggested that the worse one is the more need for help, and that no one is bad enough to be beyond aid. It also suggested the reflection that we owe a duty to the unfortunate ones of the earth, and that the good fortune of the one and the bad fortune of another may not be quite so unconnected as appears at first sight. If all things serve a useful purpose, the bad people must render a service to the world as real, if not as obvious, as that rendered by the good ones.

Why should not Christians pray for the Devil? Whether he be a symbol or an actual reality, he is the real cause of the Christian plan of salvation. And the world's obligation to him is exactly that of its obligation to Christianity. It is true that—speaking theologically—it would never have done for our first parents to have remained in the state of innocence in which they were placed originally. (In that case, in fact, they would never have been first parents at all.) They might have remained in the Garden of Eden physically, but then, also, would they have remained there mentally and morally? Knowledge comes from repeated efforts to overcome obstacles; character is, say the theologians, purified by suffering, and suffering is the result of sin. The temptation to eat of the tree of knowledge was the beginning of the story of civilisation. All hail, then, to the Devil! the first real progressive in the (theological) history of the world. Let us pray for him, or, if we do not pray, let us feel thankful to him.

If orthodox theology be accepted, the Devil has undoubtedly been the cause of much good in the world. Yet no one has ever suggested a monument to him; nor would an appeal for funds for that purpose be likely to meet with any very hearty response. True, in one sense, all the churches and chapels are so many monuments to him and his doings. Without him they would never have existed. It was his power and his name that really inspired the saints of old, and the rich men who paid heavy premiums to the Church in order to purchase a fire insurance policy. Much as the churches may to-day disown the Devil, the historic fact remains. Heine suggested that the cause of Jewish tribulation was that God could not forgive the Jews reminding him, in their weekly prayers, that he was only the Deity of a small tribe. And one may suspect that if the Devil ever gets hold of these liberalising Christians he will give them an extra warm corner because of their ingratitude to him for past services. It is little short of a scandal that in the whole of Christendom there is not a single monument or building honestly erected to his greatness. The nearest the clergy have come to this is to assert that every undesirable character is a testimony to his power.

In a way, the clergy, in their treatment of the Devil, reflect a characteristic of human nature in general. For the truth is, that we are all ill-appreciative of the goodness or the utility of bad people and bad things in this world. We derive pleasure and benefit from them, and are slow to make acknowledgment. Consider what a tame place the world would be if everything were as some people think things ought to be, or as they would have others think they believe things ought to be. It is not that there would be nothing to do—people can get along with doing very little—it is that there would be lacking the satisfaction derived from the contemplation of other people's deficiencies. Of course, everybody, or nearly everybody, will disown any such satisfaction, yet it is there all the time. The strong, healthy man usually feels all the stronger and shows a keener appreciation of his own strength when he contemplates the weakness of other people. The man with a good pair of lungs will draw deep breaths

of satisfaction while listening to the hacking cough of the consumptive. He is not, of course, glad that they are as they are; but their being as they are, makes him feel the more pleased for being as he is.

The pride of intellect is notorious. The keen witted man feels elated at his own mental strength, but how much of this satisfaction is, sub-consciously perhaps, due to his clear perception of the folly of other people. One's pleasure of solving a difficult problem may be greatly intensified by the knowledge that others have tackled it in vain. The folly of some is the background that throws into relief the wisdom of others. The half-pitying expression "How simple some folks are!" is very often only one aspect of "How clever, mentally, I am!"

In morals, this principle is still more manifest. With many adults, half the pleasure of feeling good is derived from the feeling that others are worse. Listen to the average religious person dwelling upon the evil of human nature, and one cannot help the suspicion that there is a latent feeling of thankfulness that things are so, if only because it sets out his own superior morality in a stronger light. With many religious moralists, while the existence of evil is explicitly condemned, it is dwelt upon with such constancy and so great zest, that one feels pretty confident that considerable satisfaction is derived from its existence. The evil in other people forms, too, an almost endless topic of conversation and interest to a certain class. Not only an interesting topic, but a convenient one. The grocer who has strengthened his sense of the supremacy of the moral law by denouncing the surreptitious use of cardboard in boots, may, with a much clearer conscience, place sand in his sugar. The judge on the bench, after lecturing a poor offender on the crime of stealing a shoulder of mutton or a few shillings, feels his own moral character strengthened thereby, and may with an easier conscience commit offences that are as much beyond the reach of the offender he has just sentenced as the offender's faults are removed from his own circle of temptations. In the political world, each party is busy with the glorification of its own virtues, qualities that have hardly any other basis than the faults of the party to which it is opposed. Were it not for the contemplation of other people's faults, our own might appear to us in more striking perspective. Let us, therefore, be duly thankful that other people are worse than we are, or, at least, that we think they are. And let us not grudge them the satisfaction of reversing the positions in the moral scale.

In yet another way one may illustrate the truth that vice has its virtue as virtues have their vice. What is it, or who is it, that causes the bulk of the trouble in the world? Not the rogues, surely. This cannot be, for the simple reason that the majority of people are not rogues, but good, simple, blundering people, who are far more dangerous. The thief, the murderer, the dangerous brute, these represent stray specimens of humankind. And from such stray specimens society may be easily protected. Nothing is more absurd than to listen to a judge lecturing a criminal as though the stoppage of burglary or pocket-picking was one of the most important tasks before the community. One might suppress every offence of this kind and still leave the greatest untouched. The trouble is really caused by the people who are so impressed by their own goodness that the desire to fashion all in the same mould becomes a perfect obsession. They interfere here, and they legislate there; their energy is so great, and their knowledge of affairs so limited, that their very goodness becomes a greater source of evil than the actions of any criminal who is marched from the dock with a judge's denunciations ringing in his ears. The great historic evils of the world, the enduring wrongs to mankind, have been perpetrated by "good" people out of the very quality of their goodness. Good men kept the Inquisition alive; good men kept in existence burning for witchcraft; good men created the English Sunday, than which no single thing has done more to demoralise the people; good men opposed with force

scientific discoveries and philosophic speculations; good men have hurried us into ill-advised legislation that has often inflicted more harm than it has removed. Heaven preserve us from the "good" people; the bad ones we can safely take our chances with.

The world is not short of "good" people; it never has been, and it is never likely to be. It is not deficient in moral counsel, either. There has always been a plethora of this article. If a man with the toothache took all the remedies suggested by solicitous friends, he would probably be dead in a week. And if a man carried out—or tried to—all the moral advice he is favored with, life would be intolerable. There is only one thing that makes the capacity of some people to give moral advice bearable, and that is the capacity of other people for ignoring it. The world is in far greater need of intelligent perception of humanity's problems than it is of moral fervor. And if we were all quite honest, we should admit that the character with a smack of evil about it is the most attractive. Not too much, of course, but enough to give it variety. It takes all sorts to make a world, as the shrewd Scotchman observed, and let us not forget that in the make-up of the "all sorts" every sort has its value. That there may be evil in all things good, as well as good in all things evil, are two aspects of the same thing, although it is a truth that is often overlooked.

C. COHEN.

The Desperate Hunt for God.

WE are all aware that man is by nature a hunter. He can rarely sit down in an easy-chair and, with folded arms, thoroughly enjoy himself. Possession soon palls upon his senses, unless he is ever kept busy adding to the pile. His happiest moments are those spent in hot pursuit of the exhilarating art of acquisition. As the poet says, man never is, but always hopes to be, blessed. He lives alone by ambition, be it "the pitiful ambition of possessing five or six thousand more acres," or the nobler ambition of augmenting his intellectual and moral worth to the community. The outstanding fact about him is that he is constitutionally unable to feel satisfied with his present acquirements, however numerous and valuable they may be, but is irresistibly driven by an inward impulse to attempt fresh conquests on life's battlefield. There is within him a subtle, strenuous restlessness, which renders it impossible for him to rest on his oars even for a second, except for the purpose of renewing his strength for more vigorous pulling. His one motto is Onwards, upwards.

Now, it is this ambitious, restless nature of man upon which the theologians have played, throughout the ages, with such enormous success, and to which they still make their supreme appeal. This restlessness, "these struggling aims," these unfulfilled desires, they argue, prove the existence of God, in whom alone rest and satisfaction can be obtained. Several of Browning's characters are made to adopt that argument. The lover in "Pauline," addressing the Deity, says:—

"Even from myself
I need thee, and I feel thee, and I love thee;
I do not plead my rapture in thy works
For love of thee—or that I feel as one
Who cannot die—but there is that in me
Which turns to thee, which loves, or which should love."

This same lover had already exclaimed:—

"And what is that I hunger for but God?
My God, my God! let me for once look on thee
As tho' nought else existed: we alone."

Innumerable times have those passionate lines been quoted in the pulpit in illustration and proof of the statement that the human soul cannot find peace until it finds God, who is its peace. Another quotation in high favor in the pulpit is from St. Augustine's *Confessions*: "Thou hast created us

unto thyself, and our heart finds no rest until it rests in thee." This idea finds its best expression, perhaps, in Psalm xlii. 1, 2: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?" But the argument involves a misinterpretation of a fact of human nature, which fact is capable of a satisfactory explanation, without any reference whatever to supernatural considerations. Unsatisfied desires, or unrealised ambitions, are but so many incentives to wholesome and joy-giving exertion. Hunger is a challenge to action, without which there can be neither health nor happiness. Ambition is a stimulant to prevent or cure torpidity. Restlessness is an essential condition of enjoyment. Life is a form of motion, and dissatisfaction is the indispensable motive-power. So far from being an argument for the existence of a supernatural Being and a future life, man's craving for what he has not is only a law of his life here and now. The theological diagnosis of it is fundamentally erroneous, because it treats it as pathological, whereas it is simply a natural stimulus. It may be true that "diagnosis is an essential part of the cure," but then the divines take as a disease what is in reality but one of the symptoms of health.

To find in God and immortality the satisfying solution of all earth's problems is to introduce into human life distracting and enfeebling elements, whose only influence is to retard all true progress. Supernatural solutions of natural problems do but complicate them all the more. As the Book of Job abundantly shows us, the thought of God only lands us in deeper mystery and much greater difficulties. Instead of endeavoring to understand what human life and its laws really are, theologians waste their time in the effort to discover how to relate them to their idea of a Supreme Being, or, rather, how to relate a God of love and justice, in whom they believe, to the facts of life. Their everlasting hunt is for a conception of Deity which can be reconciled with the existing state of things, and which justifies the hope for improvement in some other sphere. But all this is so much labor lost, because the God searched for is not findable. You remember Job's heart-broken cry, "O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat." Then he started on a long and painful quest, and his report of it is most interesting:—

"Behold I go foward, but he is not there;
And backward, but I cannot perceive him;
On the left hand, when he doth work, but I cannot behold him:
He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him."

In the fine drama, Job believed that he was everywhere, east and west, north and south, but frankly confessed that he had failed to see him anywhere. We are told that "the reader who has absorbed the Book of Job is so much nearer the cross of Christ"; but in what sense or way? He who has not succeeded in coming across God in his own life, is not likely to meet with him in a heathen cross made Christian. To say that Christ "came to deal with the last facts and the last analysis of human life," is to utter a falsehood, because with the problem of suffering, as such, Jesus did not attempt to deal at all, either directly or indirectly, while his Cross only shows how the world usually treats its unpopular iconoclasts. The Cross was much older than Jesus, and it is still the symbol of the doom meted out to the heretic. In any other sense, the Cross is the creation of the theologians; and it signifies different things to different schools of divinity.

God is always speaking, we are told. He is perpetually giving clues to himself. He never ceases to unravel his thoughts. History is the gradual unfoldment of his mind. In reality, however, this turns out to be the baseless fabric of a dream. Taking the Jesus of the Four Gospels and the Epistles as our guide, we learn that God chose the Church as the place of his abode and his organ of speech to the world. The Church has been, and is, the custodian of his mind and the exponent of his will. Whatever she says he says, and whatever she does he does.

Such is the Biblical and only orthodox conception of the Church, and such is the claim made on her behalf by an overwhelming majority of Christians to-day. Readers of this journal need not be told how completely it has been falsified by the facts of history. But the Rev. E. Shillito, writing in the *British Congregationalist* for August 27, ranks Galileo, Newton, and Columbus with God's spokesmen. He says that these men were thinkers who regarded "the obstinate Fact as a Divine Signal." To them "it [the obstinate Fact?] was a call to a new plane. It was a Divine clue. It was a Word of God to them." Well, take Galileo, and you find that his message was in direct antagonism to the message of God through the Church. Thus you have two God's spokesmen contradicting each other, and the stronger of the two punishing the weaker, and characterising his utterance as a Devil's Word. Now, Galileo was a patient student of Nature, who made scientific observations and experiments, and who, in consequence, stumbled upon a great truth. He did not even pretend to speak in God's name, but only in that of Science; and the Spirit-led and guided Church condemned him as a dangerous heretic. We know that the "body of Christ," the "Temple of the Holy Ghost," and God's official spokesmen, was in hopeless error, and that Galileo, the natural philosopher, exposed many fallacies which the former fondly cherished. We claim, then, that "God's Word" is, in both cases, an exploded myth, that the Church taught falsehoods through sheer ignorance, and that Galileo and others like him discovered truths as the reward of patient and laborious investigation, God, in both instances, being conspicuous only by his absence.

We maintain, therefore, that the hunt for God, in all generations, should have written across it, in large letters, the one word, FAILURE. Mr. Shillito gives expression to an important truth when he says that "the wilderness of Agnosticism may, perhaps, be sometimes nearer the Promised Land of Truth than the dull and lifeless land of tradition." As Mr. Shillito himself knows, it is the Church, God's official spokesman, that has always dwelt in "the dull and lifeless land of tradition," while "the wilderness of Agnosticism" has been inhabited by the arduous workers whose reverence for the "obstinate Fact" is notorious, and whose grand reward has been partial admission into the Kingdom of Truth. It is the honest, persistent study of Nature alone, not alleged Divine guidance, that leads into the knowledge of the facts. Whatever truths the Church possesses she has received from Science, and whatever errors she has renounced she has been compelled to surrender at the bidding of her enemy. Furthermore, whatever moral virtues she champions are thousands of years older than herself, and were originally expounded, not as Divinely revealed and supernatural verities, but as indispensable elements of character in society. There is nothing superhuman attaching to them, nor can they be described as any other than essential conditions of social welfare, discovered to be such by long observation and experience.

With the solutions of the problems of human life we are not now concerned. We will only state that, after nineteen hundred years of the Christian Church, they are still unsolved. Mr. Shillito admits that, as yet, they are not even "finally stated"; and we venture to add that, on theological lines, they never will, or can be "finally stated," much less finally solved. Our only hope lies in the spread of scientific knowledge, and the consequent abandonment of supernatural beliefs. Mr. Shillito differs from us because he is a supernatural believer and a seeker for a "Divine meaning in the enlarged vision of the world given to our generation"; but we beg to remind him that "the restatement of old problems in new terms," to which he looks, is being made possible, not by ecclesiastics and theologians, but by the people who mostly dwell in "the wilderness of Agnosticism."

J. T. LLOYD.

The Foreknowledge of Jesus.—III.

(Continued from p. 550.)

THE second coming of Jesus Christ to judge the world was to take place, according to the Gospels, "immediately after the tribulation of those days"—that is to say, "immediately after" the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. That Savior and judge having failed to appear, his words had to be explained away. This was not by any means an easy task; but it had to be done—somehow. First, we are told that the two predictions—the destruction of Jerusalem and the second coming—are "blended together." Next, we are told that "immediately" does not mean "immediately." Neither of these apologetic representations being found, as was fondly hoped, incontrovertible, a third had to be excogitated.

According to this third method of reconciliation, we are asked to interpret "the tribulation of those days" as extending from the siege of Jerusalem, through all the ages, down to the present day, including all future time to the end of the world; the words to be taken as referring to the persecution and humiliation of the Jewish people as long as that people remain a separate race. This explanation, though apparently seriously offered, will not stand examination for a single moment; for Jesus (or the Gospel writer) has, in the same chapter, made such an interpretation untenable.

After predicting his second coming with his holy angels to judge the world, the Gospel Savior says (Matt. xxiv. 34-35):—

"Verily I say unto you, *This generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.*"

That generation "passed away" before the end of the first century, and the last survivor could not have lived far into the second; yet more than eighteen centuries have elapsed, and neither Jesus nor his promised judgment has appeared. His sacred "words," therefore, have "passed away"—that is, so far as truth is concerned—and his oft repeated formula, "Verily I say unto you," is shown to be an introduction to a silly and gratuitous falsehood. As a simple matter of fact, the sayings of the Gospel Jesus are of a more unreliable character than those of any other historical personage known to us.

Of course, now that time has demonstrated the last statement quoted to be false, the words there ascribed to Jesus must either be explained away, or the falsehood admitted. Needless to say, the former is the course adopted by all Christian advocates and commentators. The following is a sample of how this is done:—

"It seems to have been sufficiently proved that the word here translated 'generation' is used at times to signify a *race* or *people*: we may therefore interpret our Lord's words as meaning that the Jewish race or people would not pass away till the end. Their city was to be destroyed, their power broken down, and themselves scattered into all lands. This has come to pass: yet they remain a distinct and separate race still."

Thus, what Jesus did *not* predict—that the Hebrew nation should be "scattered into all lands" has come to pass. What he *did* predict—that he would come with his angels as a judge "immediately after" the destruction of Jerusalem and before that generation had passed away—has *not* come to pass. Furthermore, it is interesting to notice the apologetic words employed: "It seems to have been sufficiently proved"—"is used at times to signify," etc.

The meaning of the word "generation" (Greek, *genea*) in the First Gospel, will be most readily perceived by its plain and obvious signification in the following passages, written by the same evangelist:—

Matt. xii. 39, 41, 42, 45. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign.....The men of Nineveh shall stand up in judgment with *this generation*, and

shall condemn it.....The queen of the South shall rise up in the judgment with *this generation*, and shall condemn it.....Even so shall it be also unto this evil generation."

Matt. i. 17. "So all the *generations* from Abraham unto David are fourteen *generations*; and from David unto the carrying away to Babylon fourteen *generations*; and from the carrying away to Babylon unto Christ fourteen *generations*."

From the foregoing examples it will be seen that the word "generation" means one succession of people in natural descent, or the period during which the majority of any succession lived; say forty or fifty years. It is only by a wilful and unscrupulous perversion of language that the word "generation" can be made to signify the whole race or nation for all succeeding generations.

To put the question, however, beyond all possible doubt, we have but to turn to another passage in the same Gospel, in which the "second coming" is again predicted. In Matt. xvi. 27-28, Jesus is represented as saying:—

"For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then shall he render unto every man according to his deeds. Verily I say unto you, *there be some of them that stand here*, which shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Here it is plainly stated, in other words, that that generation should not pass away until Jesus had come to judge the nations. There can be no uncertainty as to the meaning of this passage, nor as to the unveracity of the words "Verily I say unto you." But, as might be expected, this Gospel statement, being unquestionably at variance with fact, has to be explained away like the others. I will not trouble the reader by giving Christian commentators' methods of doing this: enough, that they all do it. As a simple matter of fact, the exposition of many of the sayings attributed to Jesus in the Gospels is nothing less than a task of misrepresentation and invention. The following alleged utterances of Jesus, which either assert or imply that his second coming would be before that generation had passed away, are all in a similar manner apologetically explained away: Mark viii. 38—ix. 1; Matt. x. 23; John v. 25-29; i. 50-51; xvi. 28, 16. In these cases, also, it would be sheer waste of time to notice the absurd explanations offered.

All the early Christians—those of the first century, and many who lived to about the middle of the second century—firmly believed that the second advent of Jesus, and the final judgment and end of the world, were close at hand, and might be expected at any moment. But as the years rolled on, and Jesus failed to appear, excuses had to be made for the non-fulfilment of the Savior's promises. As an example, a second century teacher, whose epistle was afterwards ascribed to the apostle Peter, says to the dispirited Christians of his day (2 Peter iii. 2-4, 8-10, 14):—

"Ye should remember the words spoken before by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior through your apostles.....that in the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, *Where is the promise of his coming?* for, from the days that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.....But forget not this one thing, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some count slackness; but is long suffering to you-ward, not wishing that any should perish.....But the Lord will come as a thief; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, etc.....Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for these things, give diligence that ye may be found in peace, without spot and blameless in his sight.*"

The foregoing passage, if it stood alone, is evidence both of the promise of a speedy coming of Jesus, and of how that promise had been understood by the Christians up to the time of the writing of the so-called "Second Epistle of Peter." At that period the Church contained many doubters, who were continually worrying the more credulous

believers by asking, Of what value were the promises of Jesus? seeing that he had not kept the most important of all—the one relating to his second coming to judge the world. The only answer to this question which believers could think of was that Jesus would certainly keep his promise; but that days, months, and years were as nothing to him. Did not the inspired writer of Psalm xc. say that a thousand years in God's sight "are but as yesterday" or "as a watch in the night"? Besides, "the Lord" had a good reason for not coming too soon: he was of great mercy, and desired to save as many people as possible, and the longer he delayed the more there would be to save.

This specious style of reasoning might perhaps be convincing in the second century; but it will not do now. The same pertinent question may be asked with far more force and reason to-day. What, then, are the promises of the Gospel Jesus worth? The answer is, of course, "Nothing—absolutely nothing." By whomsoever the promises were originally made, they are every one of them false: and the wonder is that there are still thousands upon thousands, not to say millions, of ignorant and uncritical Christians who continue to repose faith in all the absurd and misleading Gospel utterances.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be concluded)

The *Church Times* for August 28 devotes its second leading article to a discussion and condemnation of "Salvation Army Methods." This is a highly-encouraging sign. Hitherto the religious press, especially of late years, has been lavishing fulsome praise on General Booth and his Army. Having referred to Mr. Manson's now famous book, the *Church Times* speaks boldly out thus:—

"Let these chapters be circulated as they deserve, and General Booth's ostrich-like policy will be possible no longer. Either he must provide a full and adequate answer, or his organisation must stand hopelessly discredited in the eyes of every reasonable man. And by a full and adequate answer we mean something vastly different from those airy utterances which the officials have thought sufficient to meet criticism."

Such scathing terms, issuing from such a quarter, ought to open people's eyes to the true character of this gigantic autonomy.

The Rev. G. A. Johnston Ross, of Cambridge, declares that it is rude, vulgar, and unmannerly not to give Christ "a reverent hearing," and that "behind the rudeness there is a coarser grain than mere boorishness betokens." Will Mr. Ross kindly tell us where Christ can be heard? If in the pulpit, to which of the multitudinous Christs that are alleged to be speaking there are we to listen? If in the Gospels, which of the many conflicting commentaries on those documents are we to follow? In view of the impossibility of getting at the real Christ, even on the assumption that he exists, is it not vulgar, and rude, and unmannerly on Mr. Ross's part to denounce those who cannot accept *his* Christ, in the coarse language herein quoted?

Furthermore, how can unbelievers in Christ conscientiously give him "a reverent hearing"? It is absurd to expect them to do such a thing. It is flatly impossible to revere that in which one does not believe. Nothing is clearer than that Mr. Ross forgets his manners when he charges those who will not listen to Christ with "baseness of soul," and asserts that it is "self-indulgence that makes men rude to God." Atheists cannot be rude to God; such a thing is a natural impossibility, only Mr. Ross seems to be so totally blinded by prejudice that he cannot see it. This man of God evidently ignores one of the most important texts in his own Bible, namely, "Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."

In the Pastoral Address of the Wesleyan Conference it is stated that "the world is hungering for Christ," and that "it has begun to discern in him the helper who never fails, the Savior whose grace sustains in all trials." Does not President Scott-Lidgett see that such a statement is complimentary neither to Christ nor to the world? Indeed, to Christ, whom the Wesleyan Church adores as almighty to save and to help, it is positively dishonoring and insulting—a virtual confession that he is not, and never has been, what his followers have always declared him to be.

Acid Drops.

We do not know enough of the dispute between the police and the Salvationists at Dartford to be able to express a certain opinion on the matter; but we know quite enough of the impudence of the Salvationists in inflicting themselves upon the long-suffering British public, with street meetings altogether out of proportion to their numbers, and in absolute disregard of the convenience or comfort of other people—to satisfy us that they ought to be moved on a great deal more frequently than they are. At any rate, it is sheer clap-trap on the part of the Dartford Salvationists, when one of their number has to do seven days' "hard" as the alternative of non-payment of a fine, to bring out a banner with "Seven days for preaching Christ" upon it. They are not molested for preaching Christ, but for "obstruction" by holding meetings at a spot which the police say is unsuitable. The dispute has no more to do with Christ than it has with Krishna. But these Blood-and-Fire fanatics never lose an opportunity of "blaspheming." They, and other Christians, only object to "blasphemy" when a Freethinker infringes their monopoly.

The Catholic Church is stirring up the working men belonging to its fold to protest against the principle of Secular Education being incorporated in the program of Trade Unionism, in accordance with the overwhelming vote of Trade Union Congresses. The *Catholic Times* pretends that Trade Unionism is "identifying itself with secularist aims." But it is doing nothing of the kind. The Trade Union Congress has not declared against religious education, but only against religious education in State elementary schools, which are paid for by men of all religious denominations, and men of none. We venture to think that the Trade Union Congress vote will stand.

It is a curious thing that the followers of the Prince of Peace are the champion fighters of this planet, while the followers of the "heathen" Confucius are the most peaceable of mankind. Mr. Li Sum Ling, managing editor of the *Chinese Mail*, of Hong Kong, being on a visit to London, and interviewed by the *Daily Chronicle*, was asked, What about the foreign politics of China? "Well," he replied, "you must remember we are a peace-loving and law-abiding nation—there is not a policeman in all the interior of China." Fancy! Policemen are only required in China at exterior points where the Chinese come in contact with Europeans. Could anything more conclusively show how absurd are the regulations Christian boasts of moral superiority over the "heathen"?

Mr. Li Sum Ling had some interesting things to say about English literature in China. The average Englishman—bless his pious thick skull!—knows nothing of what the Chinese think and feel now, or of what they ever thought and felt in the past. The English language is being taught in Chinese schools "right away to the interior." "In my newspaper," this gentleman said, "we print daily an instalment of some serial story by a well-known English author. *Sherlock Holmes* is a great favorite, and at the present time I am translating *East Lynne* for my readers. There is no need for me to do the same for Scott, Dickens, Carlyle, Ruskin, and your standard histories and essays, as they are already published in Chinese." Just think of it! All that trouble taken by the "poor heathen" to read the best writers in the English language, while the average Englishman doesn't so much as know that China has any writers at all! And we, and not the Chinese, are the go-ahead people!

The Catholic Bishops of Lombardy have issued a joint pastoral to the clergy and people of their various dioceses against the "bad press" in Italy. The "bad press" includes, of course, all periodicals that say anything against the Faith. Priests may be trusted to know what is "bad"—for them. Nature has endowed all animals with the instinct of self-preservation.

For a wonder, the *British Weekly* for August 20, in the leading article, entitled "John Morley—Viscount Morley of Blackburn," candidly admits that this great writer "was in his day one of the fiercest assailants of Christianity." Of course, Dr. Robertson Nicoll could not refrain from indulging in this impertinent aside: "We confess that to us Mr. Morley has never seemed to understand Christianity." In the estimation of its professional champions, no opponent ever does understand it. Dr. Nicoll falls into another error when he observes that he acknowledges "deep religious elements in Mr. Morley's mind." On examination, we find that the "deep religious elements" specified are not "religious" at

all, in the Christian sense, but purely ethical. But Lord Morley, being admittedly a good man as well as a writer of distinction, must be claimed as, in some vital sense, a true Christian.

The *Christian World* comes to the conclusion that God, though omnipotent, is not independent of human co-operation in the government of the world. That is to say, his omnipotence is limited and conditioned. He cannot act according to his will unless man gives his consent and assistance. In the long run, it will be seen by all that this is equivalent to a denial of the Divine Existence. Our contemporary refers to Mr. Bernard Shaw's "brilliant" exposition of this modern doctrine; but all who are familiar with Mr. Shaw's deliverances on the subject know that, from the Christian point of view, they are distinctly atheistic. Even the *Christian World*, on this occasion, has assumed a semi-atheistical attitude.

The Rev. J. W. Tuffley, the new Congregational minister at Castleford, is of a commercial turn of mind. In his opening sermon he told his people that he is resolved to sink some capital in their midst, in the hope of getting ample returns. His capital is God, of whom he is going to "invest" more and more "in human life." We wonder who will appropriate the profits, the congregation or the minister; or is it a profit-sharing concern?

The Rev. Dr. Campbell Morgan says that "the social ideals of Jesus are recognised in all their grandeur." We rub our eyes in amazement, and ask, where, and by whom? The social ideals of Jesus, as embodied in the Four Gospels, have never yet been put into practice, and that for the good reason that they are essentially impracticable. Dr. Morgan himself and his great congregation, while enthusiastically singing their praises in church, leave them severely alone in their daily life in the world. Their "grandeur" is a thing of words.

The Rev. W. A. Cooke, M.A., informs us that Jesus "distinctly resisted evil on occasion, and with equal clearness instructed his disciples to do the same." Then he either disobeyed his own commandment, "Resist not evil," or was insincere when he laid it down as one of the laws of his kingdom. Mr. Cooke tells us that "Resist not evil" was only intended to be taken as a paradox, in which case it is utterly worthless as a rule of conduct. In any case, the words of Jesus possess no moral value even for those who profess to follow him in everything. What an infinite sham the profession of faith in, and imitation of Christ is!

The Rev. J. H. Jowett maintains that Christ chooses his disciples, which implies that there are some whom he rejects. Fancy the Redeemer of the world selecting those whom he will save! And, judging by the number of the "saved" in any age, we must conclude that hell is a fearfully crowded place. And yet we are told that the Sovereign of the Universe is a loving Father!

Here is a gem of the purest water: "The letter of the Bible is judged by its spirit rather than the spirit by the letter." How on earth can you get at the spirit of a book except by means of its letters? The Bible has no spirit whatever apart from its letter, and its spirit is just exactly what the letter expresses. This is perfectly clear to all except blind Bible-worshippers, who have taken leave of their reason.

The *Church Times*, in reviewing Mr. R. H. Benson's new book, *St. Thomas of Canterbury*, falls foul of the sneer it contains "at the obscurity which envelops a modern Archbishop of Canterbury." But surely our contemporary must be aware that the "obscurity" is a well-established fact. Except officially, on State occasions, and in the matter of salary, his Grace counts for less than nothing in the lives of the people of England.

The Pope had a cold. The doctors ordered him to rest. God's vicegerent on earth has to take medical orders like a sick woman.

The Rev. J. P. Perkins is a bit of an Atheist, in spite of his ordination vows. He makes high fun of the nonsense about "God doing his own work, and doing it in his own way." Without his people, God is absolutely powerless, Mr. Perkins assures us. The old saying ascribed to Jesus, "Without me ye can do nothing," is now out of date, the modern maxim being addressed by Christians to their Lord, "Without us Thou canst do nothing." Mr. Perkins' contention is fully borne out by the facts. The Church is progres-

sing. Her Lord God is already in the background, invisible and quiescent. By-and-bye she will drop him altogether, and openly rely exclusively on her own resources. She is thus slowly evolving into a Secular Society, and when that consummation has been reached Freethought shall have come into its own.

Mrs. Howard, the wife of a Woodford baker, belongs, with her husband, to the Christian Israelites—which sounds very much like Gentile Jews. She also, on her own account, resolved to "make Abraham's sacrifice"—that is, to live with her husband as his sister. This did not suit the views of Daniel Howard, and the trouble eventuated in his appearance at the Stratford Police-court on a charge of assault. But as he was only bound over to keep the peace, he is likely to appear before the "beak" again—unless the Lord inspires him to accept "Abraham's sacrifice" too.

The "wicked Frenchman" theory dies hard, but it is dying, and in time the very silliest of Christian apologists will cease to talk of the "immorality of infidel France." Here is the Rev. W. Kingscote Greenland, editor of the highly-respectable and pious *Young Man*, writing as follows in the September number of that magazine:—

"I wish that people, especially men, would cease to speak of Paris as the capital of sensual vice. Man for man, the Englishman is more immoral than the Frenchman, and the wickedest city on earth, without a doubt, is London. For pleasure, for wastefulness, for contempt for humanity, for sensual sin, and for selfishness and individualism, no city can compete with our Metropolis. No man need cross the Straits of Dover to break God's laws. There is no city that offers more facilities for breaking them than the city on the Thames."

There is nothing in Paris like Piccadilly at night. Moreover, a large part of the vice of Paris is due to visitors from England, Scotland, and other Christian countries, who break away from home restraints when they go to a place where they are not known, and indulge in what they call "seeing life"—which is, after all, only seeing the way to death.

Sunday-school scholars are in a woeful plight to-day, the story of King Saul's suicide, as related in 1 Sam. xxxi., being the rich fare piously dished out to them. Aware that this portion of God's Word "does not make a very suitable motive for a Sunday-school Lesson," the New Theologians recommend the teachers to draw freely upon 2 Sam. i., which contains David's Lament over Saul. Unfortunately, however, the critics assure us that this elegy is a "late interpolation," and that it is not possible to establish its genuineness. Of two things there can be no manner of doubt: King David could not have composed the poem, and the author of the poem could not have been King David. But of all this the rising generation represented at Sunday-schools will hear nothing to-day.

How marvellously the Word of God contradicts itself just here. In 1 Sam xxxi. we read, "Saul took his sword and fell upon it," while in 2 Sam. i. 10 we are told that an Amalekite "stood beside him, and slew him." In 2 Sam i. 15 David is represented as commanding one of his young men to kill the messenger who brought the news of Saul's death, but in iv. 10 he is reported to have taken hold of him and slain him himself. And yet the young people will be instructed to believe that this book is the inspired Word of God!

Selfishness is absolutely inescapable. Why is honesty the best policy? Because it pays best. "What is that," asks the Rev. F. R. Swan, "but the lowest motive of undiluted selfishness?" Then the reverend gentleman gives what he considers the true rule of conduct: "'Be ye perfect,' said Jesus. Why? 'Because your Father is perfect.'" "What is that," we ask, "but the lowest motive of undiluted selfishness?" Every man pleases himself, *after his kind*, but the true man only in working for the welfare of society.

Now we understand the whole thing. The mystery has vanished. The Rev. W. Pierce, of Northampton, tells us that, though "Christ thought men worth dying for," and though "the Cross expresses his expectation of their redemption," yet that in an evil or weak moment "he left the reconciliation of the world to God in the hands of a few simple and unlettered men." How very remiss on Christ's part! This explains the non-reconciliation of the world to God, but it shows both God and Christ in an exceptionally bad light. Mr. Pierce is evidently in the know, but he ought not to have split on his employers.

The Rev. J. H. Jowett agrees with the prophet Malachi.

He does not believe in a tender-hearted, loving God, who treats all men as his children, but in a stern, cruel, relentless tyrant, who will make his enemies, his own children who do not believe in and worship him, "contemptible and base before all the people." No, the spirit of persecution is not dead. Intolerance is still as fierce as ever, only it lacks the power to express itself in the ancient effective way. What a pity that we are living in the twentieth century!

Another man of God says there is no "beautiful savage life," that savages are sunk in "beastiality, rapine, and murder." Of course, when savages become Christians, their life is full of beauty and charm. The reverend gentleman does not know what he is talking about. We have known so-called "raw" savages who lived truly beautiful, charming lives, in spite of their lack of the varnish of civilisation, and who would have shamed many of our civilised Christians.

The Rev. T. Rhondda Williams has written to the *Christian Commonwealth* concerning his alleged references to Mr. Blatchford's conversion. He denies having said that Mr. Blatchford had "recanted," or that he had "renounced his Agnosticism." He adds that he never used the words, nor did he intend to convey their meaning. So far, the matter is satisfactory; and it now rests between Mr. Williams and his reporter, the Rev. Dr. Warschauer. The rest of Mr. Williams' communication is not so satisfactory. He says: "I refused to judge Mr. Blatchford entirely by the articles on religion in the 'Clarion.'" But why not? The articles on religion in the *Clarion* were deliberately written with a view to putting the writer's opinions before his public. These opinions were stated, not in a paragraph or two dashed off in a hasty moment, but in a series of articles that gave time for the fullest reflection. It is surely little short of insulting for anyone to say that he refuses to take them as data upon which to base a judgment of the writer. Had a man jumped up in a meeting and expressed his conversion to Christianity, Mr. Williams, we presume, would readily have accepted his testimony as conclusive. When a man, after long reflection, states his opinions soberly in print, Mr. Williams plays the superior person and refuses to accept these opinions as a true statement of the writer's position. Such is the Christian conception of intellectual fairness and charity.

Mr. Williams' *apologia* is more than foolish—it borders upon impertinence. He does not accept the *Clarion* articles, he explains, as properly representing the writer's position, because he read, from the same pen, a review of the "Little Flowers of St. Francis," than which he had "never read anything more beautiful." He also says: "Mr. Blatchford's love for little children reminded me of Jesus Christ." Finally, Mr. Blatchford spoke somewhere of "the Father's gifts to his children." So Mr. Williams concludes: "There is a richer and deeper Blatchford than the man who wrote 'God and My Neighbor.'" Now this is simply apologising for an alleged misstatement with impertinence. Either Mr. Williams means that a Freethinker, as a Freethinker, cannot appreciate the human side of one of the "saints," and cannot properly love little children, or his expressions are quite without meaning. One is thus driven to write down Mr. Williams' apology as consisting of either folly or impudence. Curiously, too, the letter appears in the same journal that complained of our folly in taking a statement concerning "materialists" as reflecting upon the character of Freethinkers. The writer also, it may be noted, belongs to the same school as those who complained of our note upon the subject. The offensiveness is continued in the remark that there is a "richer and deeper Blatchford" than the one who attacked Christianity. In only less objectionable language we have the old Christian notion that the unbeliever is, of necessity, an inferior moral being to the Christian, and that his rejection of Christianity proceeds from a more or less warped moral nature. How the idea is expressed matters little—in fact, we prefer of the two the old, straightforward way of stating the position. It was religious blackguardism, but it was, at least, straight blackguardism. To say to a Freethinker, in effect, "You are really a good fellow, and only attack Christianity when your moral perceptions become temporarily blunted or obscured," is to prove that the old spirit is still alive even though the old courage and straightforwardness are lacking. Once more we repeat that Old and New Theologians are, so far as their essential religious relations to the world are concerned, indistinguishable, and we thank the Rev. Rhondda Williams for the proof he has all unconsciously furnished.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer has been encouraging the people of South Africa on the commercial depression they are now experiencing. His conclusion was that God was grinding

down the South Africans in order that they might serve an apprenticeship to hard work, and that the boys would become strong men. "My father," said Mr. Meyer, "once rich, lost all, but it was then that God made me a man." One or two things seem to be overlooked by Mr. Meyer. In the first place, it is not clear that rich South Africans will become poor so that their sons may benefit. The probability is that it will be the people who always work hard who will suffer most, and who will experience short-commons while the depression lasts. And in the next place, it is just probable that "God" will not pay the same attention to everybody else that he paid to Mr. Meyer. Evidently God does not make a man of all people, and if he paid this special attention to Mr. Meyer it must have been because the recipient of this favor was far, far above ordinary mortals. And it must be pleasing to "God" to know that Mr. Meyer thinks the special care devoted to making him a man was not labor thrown away.

Someone has been good enough to send us a small volume of lectures—one might say with equal correctness, a volume of *small lectures*—by a Mr. Vallance Cook. The lectures are directed against "Modern Scepticism," and the production is now in its third edition, so that Heine's opinion that Englishmen, even the most intelligent, are always stupid in matters of religion, still retains its point. We have glanced through the volume, but the arresting and illuminating sentence is in the Preface. This is a quotation endorsed by Mr. Cook, to the effect that unbelief in general and the New Theology in particular might do very well for certain people, "but it would not be safe for people of weak ethical instincts." We trust that Christians will appreciate the quality of this defence. It must be gratifying to Christians to learn that the great argument for the defence of the faith is the "weak ethical instincts of believers."

"What sort of sermons do lawyers like?" was a question discussed at a Boston Baptist Meeting. We suspect they have a weakness for preparations marked "Brief."

Mr. Philip Thomas has sent us a published lecture of his delivered in Epping Forest on Sunday, July 12, on "Shakespeare and Ethicalism," copies of which can be obtained from the author (price 2d.) at Rusham-gate, Balham, London, S.W. The lecture was worth printing, but we have one fault to find with it. Mr. Thomas remarks that orthodoxy—by which, we presume, he means Christianity—makes "ordinary human birth a sin and a stigma," but he rejoices that "Ethical Religion comes to annul that curse and remove the ban." Indeed! We thought the annulling of that curse and the removing of that ban had been going on for generations—we might say centuries—before Ethical Religion was heard of. We really wish the Ethical Religionists would take themselves a little less seriously. A sense of humor would be a valuable adjunct to their mental outfit. But perhaps, if they had it, they would not call themselves Ethical Religionists at all. For it is plain enough to any intelligence clarified by a sense of humor that Ethics is one thing and Religion is another.

Mr. Charles McEvoy's new comedy, *When the Devil was Ill*, is to be played next week at the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester. It must have been a good while ago that the Devil was in that condition. We understand that he has been dead a long while. It must be seventy or eighty years since Béranger sang "Le Diable est Mort"—and we never heard of his resurrection.

We read in the *August Review of Reviews* of a supernatural or subliminal constable, of whom the writer says:—

"I know an officer in our police force who has told me many times when off duty and on his way home in the evening, there comes to him such a vivid and vital realisation of his oneness with this Infinite Power, and this Spirit of Peace so takes hold of him that it seems as though his feet could hardly keep to the pavement, so buoyant and so exhilarated does he become by reason of this inflowing tide."

Of course this constable is a thoroughly sober citizen, but the gentleman who writes about him uses painfully suggestive language. When these curious experiences have to wait until the officer is off duty, when he becomes so elevated by the inflowing tide that he can hardly keep his feet to the pavement, one would suspect, if one did not know otherwise, that his walk home in the evening took him past a good many licensed premises.

Mr. Belfort Bax raises a protest in *Justice* against the expulsion of "comrade Gott" from the Social Democratic Party for selling a pamphlet by Mr. Wishart criticising Mr. Philip Snowden's utterances about Jesus Christ being a

Socialist and Christianity being practically Socialism. Mr. Gott sold this pamphlet *outside* the hall where the S. D. P. was holding its Conference. He was ordered to desist, and refused, whereupon he was expelled. Mr. Bax calls this tyrannical. For our part, we do not care to express an opinion, as the matter really lies between the S. D. P. and its own members. We wish to point out, however, that, incidentally, this case shows the truth of what we have been saying in the *Freethinker* that, within the ranks of Socialism, as elsewhere, the Christians claim unlimited right to chatter about Christ, and at the same time call upon Freethinkers to be silent on that subject.

"Education without religion," says a lady novelist, "will rear its Christ-less human brutes of the next generation." Need we say that the lady novelist is Marie Corelli, whose new romance, *Holy Orders*, suggests to us that she might herself adorn a pulpit? She has the necessary assurance and flow of words, and her capacity for glibly lying about "infidels" is proved by her last Christmas article with its imaginary account of one of Mr. Foote's meetings in the Birmingham Town Hall.

In an account of the late Ira David Sankey, the singing evangelist, in the *People's Journal*, it is said that—"Five years ago he was stricken with blindness, and another sorrow came later when his eldest son went mad, railing at religion as a fraud and at professors of religion as impostors." If that was the only sign of the son's "madness," he was probably the sanest member of the family.

A preacher denominated "great" informed any doubters who might be in his congregation at St Paul's the other Sunday, that if they wished to know that Jesus is God all they had to do was to "read the Scriptures in the light of Christ's countenance." That is to say, whatever a man wants to find in the Bible he must put there himself, and then believe it was there before, only he had no eyes to see it. It is in this way that every school of theology justifies itself from the Scriptures. There are ever so many Christs, and each of them with a countenance of his own, and God's Book is differently read in the light of each.

A well-known preacher talks glibly about "the vision of the conquering Christ." He even waxes eloquent over "the radiance of a vision of the Lord Jesus as supreme conqueror over the powers of evil." The world has been hearing about that vision for nineteen hundred years, and it is nothing more than a vision still. And as one reads and listens to glowing descriptions of its transcendent glory, one cannot help exclaiming in Shakespeare's word,—

"The baseless fabric of this vision!"

Baby His "Burden of Sin."

An extraordinary incident occurred last night during the progress of a mission meeting in Chicago, says a *Mail* correspondent.

A certain preacher had been known for years for his zeal in relieving the poor and in making converts. Last night he stood before an immense congregation and exhorted sinners to come forward, and "to lay down their burden of sin" in order that they might be forgiven.

Among the penitents was a young woman. The preacher did not notice her until he heard her exclaim, "Here's your little burden of sin." As she spoke she placed a bundle at his feet. He gazed at her in terror as from the bundle came the pathetic wail of an infant. "Here is your child," the woman said; "you would not support it, and I cannot support it any longer."

Indescribable confusion overcame the meeting. The women present raised the baby, to whose clothes was pinned the following note:—"The father of this infant is one of the leading men in your work. I love my baby better than life itself and have tried to keep it, but cannot. The father refuses to help me. What can I do?" A signature followed.

While the note was being read the mother disappeared. The preacher turned to the dispersing congregation. "The woman tempted me," he quoted, "and I fell. I have been a backslider, but am whole again, and have returned to the Christian life." But the congregation streamed out with nothing but looks of scorn for the man to whom they had listened so devoutly a short while before.

—*Bristol Evening Times.*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, September 6, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W., at 7.30, "Bradlaugh's Recantation."

September 13, 20, 27, Queen's (Minor) Hall.

October 4, Glasgow; 11, Leicester; 18, Manchester; 25, Stanley Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

THE PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: Previously acknowledged. Annual Subscriptions, £221 10s. Received since.—David Watt, 5s.

CONSTANT READER (Penarth).—Thanks for the cutting. H. B. Dobbs' letter is a good one. Freethinkers should make more use of the press than they do, and the latest lie about Bradlaugh should be nailed down in letters to the local newspapers. Without such a correction, the lie will circulate throughout the country, and probably for years, as gospel truth.

H. W. ELEY.—Write to the secretary of the Birmingham N. S. S. Branch—Mr. J. Partridge, 183 Vauxhall-road. Glad you liked our "splendid exposure of the humbug of the Nonconformist stalwart, Dr. Clifford."

E. C. CORNETT.—Our readers do not cause us "inconvenience" by writing to us or sending us newspaper cuttings. Quite the contrary.

WATCHFUL.—The silliest part of Parson Weller's lie about Bradlaugh was his statement that the great Atheist "dared" not accept his challenge. What a hopeless fool the man must be who could look at Bradlaugh's face, even in a photograph, and assume he was deficient in *daring*.

ARTHUR BRADLAUGH FEE.—You are quite right. Bradlaugh never in his life said "There is no God." You will have seen, by our last week's "Acid Drops," that the Rev. J. Weller had, on his own showing, simply found a mare's nest.

H. R. WIGNALL.—The matter of the badge is in the secretary's hands—not in ours. An announcement will doubtless be made in due course, by authorisation of the executive.

W. W. ROBINSON.—Pleased to hear you have read the *Freethinker* for some years and still find it "very instructive and of great help" to you.

W. WICKHAM.—The ordinary newspapers jump at any story that they think will damage Freethought, and when they find a useful lie they don't mind dressing it up a bit themselves for the public (orthodox) taste.

JOSEPH BRYCE.—Thanks for good wishes. Proof in due course. What were the particulars of the reverend gentleman's sharp practice?

R. J. HENDERSON.—Pleased to get your cuttings.

DAVID WATT.—Mere education is little. The man behind it is the main thing. We value your appreciation.

DONALD McLEAN.—See paragraph. Thanks.

MR. FOOTE is anxious to hear from the *Freethinker* in the engineering business who spoke to him about his son at the last Annual Dinner at the Holborn Restaurant. A note to this effect appeared in our columns a fortnight ago, but the "saint" referred to might have been holidaying then, and the note is repeated in the hope that it will catch his eye now.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for valued cuttings.

E. B.—In our next.

J. W. WHITE.—It is an old game—lying for the glory of God. Glad to have your warm appreciation.

J. BRYNE.—We don't suppose you will receive a reply, but you might let us know if you do.

CLIFFORD WILLIAMS.—Yes, the President is "fit for the winter campaign."

A. MOLL.—You would expect those who lie about great Freethinkers to be cowardly as well as malicious.

A. G. ROYSTON.—Pleased to have your good wishes in what you call our "noble fight."

W. R. DAWSON.—See paragraph. Thanks.

CALANUS.—Mr. Foote is keeping well. We did not know there was a letter (or letters) of Voltaire's at Hagley Hall, Worcestershire. It lends distinction to the place.

G. BRADFIELD.—We dealt with it in last week's issue, which you have seen since writing to us.

H. TUCKER.—No doubt you were glad to see our "Acid Drops" on the subject.

J. TULLIN.—Pleased to see your letter on the Bradlaugh matter in the *Sunderland Echo*.

V. PAGE.—Glad to hear the Freethought meetings are keeping up so at Nelson. Let us know directly you find a hall suitable for lectures by Mr. Foote.

W. HUNTER.—We dealt with it in last week's "Acid Drops." Thanks, all the same.

G. WOLLEN.—Sorry to hear of Mr. Roleff's illness, and hope he will soon recover. We note that the Liverpool Branch has no lectures to-day, but goes on picnic to West Kirby.

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

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S 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.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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

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

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.

Sugar Plums.

This evening (Sept. 6) at the Queen's (Minor) Hall the first of a special course of Sunday Freethought lectures will be delivered by Mr. Foote. These lectures are under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, and it is hoped that the London "saints" will do their utmost to secure large audiences. They can do this by circulating small printed announcements, which can be obtained of Miss Vance, or by advertising the lectures by word of mouth amongst their friends and acquaintances. Mr. Foote's subjects are all up to date. They will be found in an advertisement on the last page of this week's *Freethinker*. It must be understood, however, that they will be subject to change, if anything should occur to make it advisable, but in that case due notice will be given through this journal and the weekly newspapers in which the Society's lecture-notices are inserted.

Mr. Foote's first Queen's Hall lecture is on "Bradlaugh's Recantation." The matter has assumed a fresh development since our last week's paragraphs were written, and Mr. Foote will deal with it thoroughly, besides explaining (and defending) Bradlaugh's Atheism.

Mr. A. E. Fletcher, reviewing the Rev. R. J. Campbell's new volume of Sermons in last week's *Clarion*, quoted a strong passage about the orthodox God, and remarked that—

"For writing in a similar strain to this, Mr. Foote, a few years ago, was convicted on a charge of blasphemy, and sent to prison. The new theologians are rather shabby in their reticence with regard to their indebtedness to the old 'atheists.' Shelley, Carlyle, Owen, Holyoake, Bradlaugh, Watts, Foote, and other militant Agnostics paved the way along which Mr. Campbell and his friends now travel in safety."

This is quite true, and somebody outside the *Freethinker* staff ought to say it. Mr. Fletcher has said it, and we thank him on behalf of the dead Freethinkers in his list, as well as on our own behalf.

Something more may have to be said on this subject before very long. The New Theologians, so far from acknowledging their indebtedness to the Freethought pioneers—some of whose thunder they have stolen—are showing a disposition to let the cause of Secular Education suffer rather than co-operate publicly with a well-known Atheist. They bitterly resented Mr. Foote's speaking—and what is worse, being enthusiastically applauded—at the Memorial Hall demonstration in favor of Secular Education last November; and they appear to be much of the same mind still—for the Secular Education League, so far as we know, has never held a public meeting since.

Some time ago we exposed a very dirty trick of the Christian Evidence Society's lecturers in London. They went about declaring that the Secularists had a hymn in praise of whiskey. We got to the bottom of this falsehood, and were able to turn the tables in the most complete manner upon the Christian slanderers. Our exposure, with slight additions, has been printed by the National Secular Society as a four-page tract, and is being freely distributed at open-air meetings. Copies can be obtained of the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, at the rate of 4s. per 1,000. Address, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

The Liverpool Branch has another excursion to-day (Sept. 6) to West Kirby, on the invitation of Mr. F. Bonte. The party leaves Wayside Ferry at 11 a.m. Mr. Bonte has

provided everything, including a drive, which we hope will be favored by fine weather.

In view of the great difficulties under which the Birmingham N. S. S. Branch labors, the Secular Society, Ltd., has decided to take the full financial responsibility of the four courses of Sunday lectures arranged for in the great Town Hall during the winter. The Directors, at their last meeting, also voted a generous assistance to the Liverpool N. S. S. Branch, which also has great difficulties to encounter.

The Manchester N. S. S. Branch has written to us asking for a financial appeal to be made on its behalf in our columns. We appreciate the effort the Branch has made to keep open the Secular Hall, but we do not think an appeal in our columns is the best way to deal with the present emergency. We have advised the secretary (Mrs. Pegg) to make an application to the Secular Society, Ltd. No doubt such an application would be carefully and even generously considered.

The *Blackburn Times* of August 22 contained some interesting matter under the heading of "Clergyman v. Freethinker." It appears that the Rev. Roderick Kedward, of London, was conducting mission services on Sunday, August 16, in the "Palace." After the afternoon service Mr. Kedward passed a crowd in the Market-place, "where a Freethinker was attempting to make converts." A little discussion ensued, and it was arranged that a set debate should take place there after the evening service. The Palace crowd, estimated at 3,000 people, gathered round the two speakers, and listened to their debate on the deity of Jesus Christ. Both speakers had sympathisers. The *Times* adds that "the Freethinker was perfectly fair in arguments, and more than once he appealed to the crowd to give his opponent a fair hearing." But the *Times* does not give the Freethinker's name—which is curious. We understand it was Mr. Joseph McClellan.

Mr. Foote will have something special to say next week about the future of the *Freethinker*. Meanwhile, he wishes to say that he is being personally taxed to meet expenses at the office; and as he can only do this by means of the President's Honorarium Fund, he begs those who intend to subscribe to do so at once. Too heavy a burden ought not to rest on one man's back.

The Missionary Boom.—II.

(Concluded from p. 556.)

BUT the imposition of clothes has not only ruined the health of the natives; it has ruined their morals. As this is not generally known, and the discussion of such a subject is tabooed by our canting, pharisaic press, we shall treat the subject in some detail.

To cover any part with special care is to draw special attention to it, and what parts may be exposed and what covered is purely a matter of habit and custom. The British matron is horrified at the nudity of the savage. The Japanese are disgusted by the same ladies' low-necked dresses in an English ballroom. The Breton fisher-girl exposes her limbs with perfect unconcern, but if her hair escapes from its covering and falls down she is covered with shame. A Mohammedan woman on the banks of the Nile or the Euphrates, if surprised by a man in a state of nudity, will hasten to cover her face, heedless of whatever else remains exposed.* Westermarck, whose great work on *Human Marriage* is recognised as the great authority on the subject, contains many other examples of similar customs and habits. Clothes were first adopted, not from a sense of shame, but for warmth and ornament. As Westermarck points out, "It is not the feeling of shame that has provoked the covering, but the covering has provoked the feeling of shame" (p. 208). "Young men erroneously suppose," writes Mr. Winwood Reade, "that there is something voluptuous in the excessive *deshabille* of an Equatorial girl. On the contrary, nothing is so moral and repulsive as nakedness. Dress must have been the invention of some

clever woman to ensnare the passions of men." Professor Alfred R. Wallace, in his *Travels on the Amazon* (p. 296) declares: "There is far more immodesty in the transparent and flesh-colored garments of our stage-dancers than in the perfect nudity of these daughters of the desert." There is nothing indecent in naked statuary and painting if treated with due delicacy, except to those whose minds are already in a diseased and unhealthy condition. As Westermarck truly observes:—

"True modesty lies in the entire absence of thought upon the subject. Among medical students and artists the nude causes no extraordinary emotion; indeed, Flaxman asserted that the students in entering the academy seemed to hang up their passions along with their hats."†

Familiarity breeds apathy as well as contempt. Winwood Reade declares: "I can say, what will astonish a good many, that during the whole time which I passed in Africa, I never saw so much as one indecent gesture pass between a man and a woman."‡

It is an absolute fact, acknowledged by all competent authorities, and by those who have lived among wild tribes, that the less clothes they wear the more virtuous they are. To clothe the naked savage is to degrade and vitiate him. Professor Ratzel, the anthropologist, observes:—

"It has been correctly said that among negroes as elsewhere morality seems to stand in inverse ratio to the quantity of clothing; so that those tribes which go naked are, so long as they remain untouched by foreign influence, the most chaste; those who are best clothed, the least so."§

Major Austin emphatically declares that:—

"After travelling many thousand miles in Africa I have come to the conclusion that *absolute nudity is a true indication of the purity and innocence of a tribe*. Where these conditions prevail, the morality of the women could never be questioned."||

Mr. Winston Churchill, in his account of his recent travels in Africa, supplies similar evidence. He observes:—

"The Kavirondo are naked and unashamed. Both sexes are accustomed to walk about in the primitive simplicity of nature. Their nudity is based not upon mere ignorance, but reasoned policy. They have a very strong prejudice against the wearing of clothes, which they declare lead to immorality; and no Kavirondo woman can attire herself even in the most exiguous raiment without sully her reputation. They are said to be the most moral of all the tribes dwelling on the lake shore."¶

We may note in passing that the Annual Report on the East Africa Protectorate, 1905-6 (p. 60), observes of this race:—

"As civilisation progresses the required inducement for more exertion on the part of the native will probably be found in a desire for cotton goods, but at present there are certain prejudices to be overcome. For instance, the Kavirondo, a record race for Africa, prefer to go naked, and, curiously enough, connect clothing, so far as their women are concerned, with immorality. Here time and the advance of trade and civilisation will work their own results."

Doubtless they will; and the results will be death and degradation. The Juggernaut car of colonial expansion, loaded with Manchester goods, will crush the poor Kavirondo; they are a doomed race. Note the simplicity of the writer's "curiously enough." He is quite surprised that they connect clothing with

* *Savage Africa*, p. 546. Mr. Julian Thomas says: "A traveller in the Pacific, however, soon becomes accustomed to look on nude women as on a picture or a statue. There are not such prurient suggestions in these brown figures, naked and not ashamed, as in a crowded ballroom amongst the full undress of modern society," and adds, they "often reminded me so much of apes, I wished they would wear clothes" (*Cannibals and Convicts*, 1887; pp. 336-7). He also notices that wearing of European clothes "has been a fruitful source of consumption" among the islanders of New Caledonia (p. 97).

† *Human Marriage*, p. 194.

‡ *Savage Africa*, p. 546.

§ *History of Mankind*, 1897, vol. 2, p. 325.

|| *Among Swamps and Giants in Equatorial Africa*, 1902; p. 31.

¶ *Strand Magazine*, June, 1908.

* See a valuable article on "Shame and Modesty," by R. Bruce Boswell, in the *Free Review*, July, 1895, to which we make acknowledgments.

immorality, and that they should constitute a "record race" without being clothed.

These are the men the Government employ to govern our colonies! This official is evidently one of those people referred to by Professor Haddon:—

"Very many good people confused clothing with morality. But the experience of all travellers was that there was absolutely no connection between the quantity of clothes and the degree of virtue. If we wanted to extend the markets for our cotton goods let us do so honestly, and not under pretence of advancing religion and morality. The adoption of European clothing by savage peoples often brought grave, physical, as well as moral, evils in its train.....To try and make lower races conform to our usages was simply attended with the result of degrading and exterminating them."

The foregoing quotation is taken from a speech delivered to the Anthropological Section of the British Association meeting at Ipswich, 1895, during a discussion on "Interference with the Civilisation of Other Races"—"The discussion being confined to those who had had actual personal experience of uncivilised countries"; from which we learn that the facts we have cited are not peculiar to Africa. Dr. H. O. Forbes, the naturalist, testified that "The sartorial environment of those of the New Guinea tribes with which he was acquainted was of the most exiguous description, yet there was even less immorality than clothing amongst them." Mr. Ling Roth declared that "in Australia the missionaries really made energetic efforts to civilise the aboriginals, but they neutralised their efforts by insisting upon the natives wearing clothes." Mr. im Thurm, who has spent eighteen years in British Guiana, observed: "It was absurd to take our higher morality and suddenly graft, or rather force, it on a people on a lower plane. While not under-rating or despising missionary effort, he thought in very many cases it was misguided," and advised the missionaries to wait for the third or fourth generation "before striving to make religious proselytes of them." This may be termed "damning with faint praise." However, we are not in this article dealing with the character of the missionaries, but with the result of their work. Mr. Flinders Petrie—who has done so much to reveal ancient Egypt—presided over the discussion, and laid it down that "the civilisation of any race is not a system that can be changed at will"; it is "the growing product of a very complex set of conditions." He goes on to say:—

"And if the imposition of a foreign system is injurious, how miserable is the forcing of such a system as ours, which is the most complex, unnatural, and artificial that has been known; a system developed in a cold country, amid one of the hardest, least sympathetic, and most self-denying and calculating of all the peoples of the world. The result is death; we make a charnel-house and call it civilisation. Scarcely a single race can bear the contact and the burden. And then we talk complacently about the mysterious decay of savages before white men."

Even the Egyptian, who has a far higher standard of comfort and morality than the Negro or the Maori, cannot stand the burden.

"The Europeanised Egyptian is in most cases the mere blotting-paper of civilisation absorbing what is most superficial and undesirable. Yet some will say why not plant all we can? What can be the harm of raising the intellect in some cases if we cannot do it in all? The harm is that you manufacture idiots. Some of the peasantry are taught to read and write, and the result of this burden which their fathers bore not is that they become fools. I cannot say this too plainly; an Egyptian who has had reading and writing thrust on him is, in every case that I have met with, half-witted, silly, or incapable of taking care of himself. His intellect and his health have been undermined and crippled by the force of education."*

If the Egyptian cannot support the burden, how can the Negro, the Bushman, and the Maori be

expected to? Clothing ruins their health and their morals; education makes them imbeciles.

As to the quality of the converts made, Sir Richard Burton said that "The first thing an African convert does is to claim, like the modern English convict, a life of utter sloth."*

Sir H. H. Johnston says that, with a few very rare exceptions,

"those native African pastors, teachers, and catechists whom I have met have been all, more or less, bad men. They attempted to veil an unbridled morality with an unblushing hypocrisy and a profane display of mouth-religion which, to an honest mind, seemed even more disgusting than the immorality itself.....the spirit of sturdy manliness which was present in their savage forefathers found no place in their false, cowardly natures."†

This is borne out by Sir Richard Burton, who declared: "I have heard convert-women on the coast declare that their native catechists are holy men; that to offend with them is not the same as to sin with the laity."

Mr. Joseph Thompson, the African explorer, who writes "as one having the interests of Christianity deeply at heart," speaking of East Central Africa, noticed "a sort of veneer of Christianity, which made a good show and looked satisfactory only when described in a missionary magazine."‡

The missionary, when confronted with these facts, lays all the blame on the white traders who introduce gin and rum into the country. It is certainly a great evil, and the trade should be put down; but, as Sir Gilbert Carter—Governor of Lagos—points out, even if the traffic could be discontinued, the natives would manufacture intoxicants for themselves "quite equal in potency to the reviled gin." Mr. Joseph Thompson, who draws a lurid picture of the effect of the gin trade in Africa, declares that the only cure for it is Mohammedanism, which has spread over large parts of Africa "with a vigorous grip of the soil which nothing can destroy. The same cannot be said of Christian seed: it has ever been a delicate exotic, difficult to plant, more difficult to rear, and ever requiring outside support and watering."§ The same writer says "We stupify him with unthinkable dogmas about the Trinity and kindred topics," and then "groan over the hardness of heart and the ascendancy of the devil in the Negro, when in reality the fault is in ourselves and in our methods of procedure," and roundly declares:—

"I cannot help saying, better a good Muslim than a skin-deep Christian—a mere jackdaw tricked out in peacock's feathers. In reaching the sphere of European influence, Mohammedanism not only throws down its gage to Christianity, it also declares war upon our chief contribution to West Africa—the gin trade."||

Sir Gilbert Carter accuses Bishop Tugwell of exaggeration on the subject of the gin traffic, and says:—

"I have visited all the large towns in the Yoruba country, and do not hesitate to say that there is far less drunkenness amongst the general population than exists in the large manufacturing towns of this country..... Missionaries are, I fear, too apt to attribute to gin and its allied compounds their failure to impress the tenets of Christianity with sufficient force upon the natives of West Africa, forgetting the difficulties and drawbacks of the Christian religion itself from an African point of view. It is not surprising that the negro fails to comprehend; the phenomena of the Trinity; many cultivated Europeans admit the same difficulty."

He agrees with Joseph Thomson as to the remedy:—

"In spite of persistent effort, both by example and precept on the part of Christian missionaries, to impress upon the native mind the virtues of sobriety, the result is not encouraging. On the other hand the Mohammedan is naturally sober, it is part of his religion, and no one can fail to be struck with the difference this habit of sobriety makes in the man; there is a dignity

* The report of the speeches made at the "British Association" by Professor Haddon, Dr. Forbes, Mr. Ling Roth, Mr. im Thurm and Mr. Flinders Petrie is taken from the *Times*, September 13, 1895.

* *Mission to Gelele*, vol. i., p. 125.

† *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1887.

‡ *Contemporary Review*, December, 1886.

§ *Contemporary Review*, March, 1890.

|| *Contemporary Review*, December, 1886.

and self-respect about the Mohammedan negro which is looked for in vain in his Christian brother. Compare his neat turban and decent flowing robes with the stove-pipe hat and broad cloth of the semi-educated town native, labelled 'Christian' all over; and a very objectionable person this so-called Christian usually is.

It cannot be denied that Christianity and drink usually go together, and yet it is feared that the agents of the Church Missionary Society in West Africa would prefer to see Mohammedanism extinguished rather than the abolition of the traffic in spirits." (*The Times*, June 6, 1895.)

As for the polygamy of Mohammedanism, Sir Gilbert caustically observes:—

"We are able to contemplate with equanimity the midnight horrors of Piccadilly, but hold up our hands in pious dread at the thought of a system which gives every woman a protector, and has more successfully exorcised the demon of drink than any other human agency."

Sir Richard Burton takes the same view. He says Mohammedanism has improved the African; it is a congenial civilisation, and not like the Christian one, "imported from 1,500 miles of latitude, and sitting grotesquely upon the black mind, as the accompanying vestments upon the sable body"; and observes: "Were it not for the southward progress of El Islam, the slow and silent, but sure advance of the Perfect Cure, the future of negro Africa would not be bright."

Miss Mary Kingsley, in her account of her *Travels in West Africa*—which produced such a chorus of praise upon its publication in 1897—had the courage to tell the truth about the African Missions. She says:—

"The missionary-made man is the curse of the Coast, and you find him in European clothes and without, all the way down from Sierra Leone to Loanda. The pagans despise him, the whites hate him; still he thinks enough of himself to keep him comfortable..... Highly disgusted and pained at his pupils' goings-on, but absolutely convinced of the excellence of his own methods of instruction, and the spiritual equality, irrespective of color, of Christians; the missionary rises up, and says things one can understand him saying about the bad influence of the white traders; stating that they lure the pupils from the fold to destruction. These things are nevertheless not true. Then the white trader hears them and gets his back up and says things about the effect of missionary training on the African, which are true, but harsh, because it is not the missionaries' intent to turn forgers, and unmitigated liars, although they practically do so."†

Miss Kingsley points out that the drink traffic has been denounced "in an unjustifiable way by the missionary party, because they know the cry against alcohol is at present a popular one in England, and it has also the advantage of making the subscribers at home regard the African as an innocent creature who is led away by bad white men, and therefore still more interesting and more worthy, and in more need of subscriptions than ever." Miss Kingsley says she would rather "like to see the African lady or gentleman who could be 'led away'—all the leading I have seen on the Coast has been the other way about." And she emphatically declares:—

"I have no hesitation in saying that in the whole of West Africa, in one week, there is not one-quarter the amount of drunkenness you can see any Saturday night you choose in a couple of hours in the Vauxhall-road, and you will not find in a whole year's investigation on the Coast one seventieth part of the evil, degradation, and premature decay you can see any afternoon you choose to take a walk in the more densely-populated parts of any of our own towns" (p. 493-4).

And the most shameful part of the whole business is that, as Dr. Knighton remarked twenty years ago:—

"We spend millions of pounds in the vain endeavor to Christianise remote savages of all kinds, human

beings to whom the elements of Christianity are incomprehensible. We have millions of people in Europe in want of the necessaries of life, of education, and of all that makes life endurable."*

Canon Farrar says that Professor Huxley once described an East-end parish in which he spent some of his earliest years, and over which might have been written Dante's inscription over hell, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

"After speaking of its physical misery, its supernatural and perfectly astonishing deadness, he says that he embarked on a voyage round the world, and had the opportunity of seeing savage life in all conceivable conditions of savage degradation, and he assures us that he found 'nothing worse, nothing more degrading, nothing so hopeless, nothing nearly so intolerably dull and miserable as the life I had left behind me in the East-end of London.' He says that, were the alternative presented to him, he would deliberately prefer the life of the savage to that of those people in Christian London."†

The fact that one million and a half pounds is spent every year on Foreign Missions, which not only do no good, but positively do a great deal of harm, while a large part of our own people are sunk in the uttermost depths of misery and degradation to a degree quite unknown to any savage tribe on the face of the earth, requires the ferocious satire of a Swift to do it justice. Remember Voltaire's battle-cry, "Crush the Infamous!"

W. MANN.

Bishop Neligan and Paganism.

By SIR ROBERT STOUT.

(Formerly Attorney-General and Minister of Education in New Zealand.)

I HAVE been asked for my opinion on the criticisms supposed to have been made by Bishop Neligan on our secular system of education and the religious condition of our back blocks settlers. I suppose the fact that for the past 44 years I have been connected with education, as primary and secondary school teacher, University lecturer, member of school committees, High School Board, and College Councils, and University Senate may have led to this request being made.

The only report I have seen of Bishop Neligan's remarks appears in the *Herald's* special correspondent's letters. I have looked through some London newspapers, including the *Weekly Times*, and I have been unable to find any report of the sermon. In the report published in the *Herald* there are three statements to which exception may be taken. First: "There was," the Bishop is reported to have said, "real danger of the countryman becoming pagan." (Notice the phrase, not the townsman.) Second: The Bishop spoke of "the countryman in danger of relapsing into paganism." Third: It is reported, he said, "Why should there be any danger of relapsing into paganism? There were three reasons. The chief—and mark it well—was a State system of secular education. O, my God, if you could only see the heathenism which is the result of secularism..... If you could only live in the Dominion and see what I have seen."

It is these assertions to which exception has been taken. With almost all the other statements of the Bishop as to the growth of New Zealand, and the formation of a new colonial type, etc., every thoughtful person will agree. Did the Bishop make these three assertions? I think the public might wait for some further proof. The reporter may have misunderstood him, and for these reasons.

First: They are a grave reflection on the late Bishop of Auckland and on the Auckland Diocesan Synod. Did the late Bishop know of heathenism, which was the result of secular education? If he did he would most assuredly have brought the matter before his Synod, and if the heathenism exists, the able men who are well acquainted with the Auckland district, and are members of the Synod, must have been aware of the "heathenism"; and, so far as I am aware, none of them have ever called attention to such "heathenism."

Second: If the heathenism does exist in the diocese, and amongst Anglicans, the gravest reflection is cast upon the Anglican Church and its overseers. What has that Church done to cope with the evil? And how is it that its efforts have failed? Can it be that an Episcopal Church is unsuited for our Dominion?

* *Mission to Gelele*, vol. ii., p. 192-210.

† *Travels in West Africa*, 1897 (second edition), pp. 490-1. Miss Kingsley's comparison with the "Suburban Agnostic" we pass over, it is not our battle. Probably it was inserted to show that she herself had no sympathy with "the infidels." As she was not opposed to Christianity her opinion should carry all the more weight with Christians.

* Dr. William Knighton, *Struggles for Life*, 1888; p. 13.
† Canon Farrar, *Contemporary Review*, September, 1889.

Third: It will be noted that the Bishop is reported to have talked about the back blocks settler "relapsing into paganism." This means that he has been pagan once, and is going back to paganism again. Unless the Bishop means this, "relapsing" is an inaccurate word to use. This also should make us doubt the correctness of the report.

Is it not, therefore, better to believe that the Bishop has been misreported? Of course, two out of the three statements are predictions. The Bishop, in making them—if he did make them—was clad in the prophet's mantle. They are not statements of fact. The Bishop sees real danger in the country becoming pagan. Well, Oliver Wendell Holmes said that the inhabitants of one valley in Georgia were all Calvinists, because they suffered from disordered liver. The physical state of a person has much to do with his pessimism or optimism, and who knows but a London fog may not be the "fons et origo" of the Bishop's pagan outlook. Or perhaps he and the Diocesan Synod may not have been seeing eye to eye on some ecclesiastical matters. And remembering past disappointments, and coming to London in damp, foggy February, after the bright sunshine of Auckland, the Bishop may have become exceedingly pessimistic when he contrasted the roadless North with the streets of Paddington and the slums of London. We must excuse pessimism under such circumstances.

There is, however, a direct statement, though it is of a vague kind. Our State system of secular education produces "heathenism." I say it is vague, for I do not know what the Bishop means by "heathenism." It may be only an opprobrious epithet, and no doubt it is often nothing more in the mouths of some ecclesiastics. Does it mean "non-Christian"? Would it be correct to say that Huxley and Spencer were "heathens"? If so, people need not be alarmed at the word "heathenism." Huxley and Spencer were very good men, and if all our back blocks settlers were as good as they were we might well feel gratified. And I suppose Socrates and Plato were also "heathens." Yet what possessor of the Chair of St. Augustine ever equalled such "heathens"? So far as I know, and I think I know the people of the Dominion as well as the Bishop, there is no "heathenism" in New Zealand such as is usually understood by that term. When we mention "heathenism" we think of the doings of uncivilised men in Darkest Africa. We have, no doubt, criminality and vice in our midst, but statistics show that we have less of these evils than almost any country in Europe, less certainly than in London, and less certainly than in those States of Europe where education is entirely under the control of a Christian Church. What, then, does the Bishop mean by "heathenism"? The only illustration he gives is that after he had examined forty-three children he found that only five of them knew the Lord's Prayer. He has not stated their ages nor where they were educated, nor whether they attended the Anglican Church. If they did attend an Anglican Church they must have had poor memories if they could not remember the prayer, as it is repeated at some services at least three times in less than an hour.

Further, it is a fact that relatively to population the Christian Churches that insist most on having Church schools have more persons in our prisons and in our charitable institutions than those Churches which are content with the non-denominational school. To such Churches the non-denominationalists may say, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for us, but weep for yourselves and your children." What does the State school system of education teach that can possibly lead to "heathenism"? The children are taught order, morality, and literature. Good behavior counts for much in our State schools. The scholars' whole reading and tuition are moral. I am in what is termed a back block district—namely, Whangaroa. I got some of the school books they use and the School Journal, and I have read them all to be certain that no "heathenism" is inculcated. I could find none. It is true I found Cato's "Soliloquy on Eternity," and he was a "heathen," I suppose, according to some ecclesiastics' definition; but the version is Addison's, and the children read:—

.....If there is a Power above,
(And that there is all Nature cries aloud
Through all her works), He must delight in virtue,
And that which He delights in must be happy."

But if there is heathenism, let it be plainly stated what it is, and then we may be able to know what the term means. What, then, can the Bishop mean by "heathenism"? If it means merely non-Anglicanism, then it is a mere name, a dyslogistic term, and, as Sheridan said when Mr. Rose called his son "William Pitt," "A Rose by any other name would smell as sweet." We know that some Anglican bishops do not consider the persons, who are in New Zealand sometimes erroneously called "Nonconformists," to be Christian Churchmen. The Primate, in referring to these Churches that are neither Roman Catholic nor

Anglican, called them "bodies," "associations," but did not use the term "Churches." And has not the Roman Archbishop contemptuously called the Nonconformist churches "conventicles"? The Bishop may mean "heathen" as a word not meaning more than non-Anglican, and if so, what does it matter? But even if this is so, I do not think that the State secular schools make "Anglican" children "Nonconformists." To prove the Bishop's assertion, if he made the statement, I would like to see a list of the children in our State secular schools that have become "heathens." Let us have their names, ages, and their residences. And if there are any in New Zealand who think the Bishop is right, let a list be at once published, so that the statement can be tested.

New Zealand is, considering the population, less criminal to-day than it was forty years ago. The general conduct of the people is no worse. I think it is much better than it was then. There is less alcoholic drinking, less brawls, and more consideration shown for our neighbors. I believe to our secular system this progress is due, and I know our children are better trained than they were under the denominational system, and I have been a teacher in a school where the Bible was read and a Church catechism was taught.

One word more. Reading the report of the sermon it would be gathered that the aim of the Bishop was either to get a good collection for home mission work among the back block settlers, or to rouse Churchmen to oppose the Imperial Government education proposals. If the report is correct we must allow for the excitement occasioned by his efforts. His calling upon the Deity shows his excitement. It is a pity that the Auckland Anglican Church is so poor that it has to seek aid from London. London has many social evils, and these surely need some missionary effort, but Paddington may be a wealthy district. As to the attack on the Imperial Government's educational efforts the sermon may be an aid in bringing about the secular system in England, for it is opposed to the proposed Government compromise. If this is so, all persons who desire to see England better educated should rejoice.

I have assumed in my comments that the report is correct. I hope, however, it will yet appear that it is much exaggerated. Perhaps the unconscious bias of a reporter may account for the "paganism" and "heathenism" to be found in the sermon as reported.

Correspondence.

THE GROWTH OF CHRISTENDOM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I point out that in the "Acid Drop" relating to the number of converts to Christianity, on p. 535 of your issue of August 23, the writer's conclusion that since "during the nineteenth century the world population increased by 500,000,000, the Christian population only by 800,000,000," therefore "the increase of Christians.....failed to keep pace with the growth of population by 200,000,000." is scarcely a correct one?

According to the figures quoted, in 1800, out of a world population of 1,000,000,000, there were 200,000,000 Christians—i.e., one-fifth of the world's population were Christians; whereas in 1896, out of a world population of 1,500,000,000, there were 500,000,000 Christians—i.e., one-third were Christians. Or, looking at the matter in another way, three-fifths of the increase in population during the nineteenth century were Christians.

Assuming the correctness of the figures quoted, there would thus seem to be an increase in the percentage of Christians in the world.

Whether this is better for the world is quite another matter.

J. A. TANKINS.

ICONOCLASTS' CRICKET CLUB ELEVENTH MATCH V. KENSINGTON PALACE CLUB.

Result: Iconoclasts lost by 18 runs. Scores: I. C. C., 85; Kensington Palace, 103. We were most unfortunate in losing this match, as we were really the stronger team. A shower came on while our opponents were batting, in consequence of which we had to bowl with a wet ball—a great disadvantage. Bad umpiring, too, also helped us to lose. Travis took 8 wickets for 37—a fine performance. Our batting was not up to the mark. Voigt made top score—23; but otherwise Minnett was the only other batsman to run into double figures.

H. E. VOIGT, Captain I. C. C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.
OUTDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL, Langham-place, London, W.: G. W. Foote, 7.30, "Bradlaugh's Recantation."
BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S.: Victoria Park (near the Fountain), G. A. Aldred, 3.15, "The World's Saviors"; 6, "Questions for God's Elect."
CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Station-road, 11.30, a Lecture. Brockwell Park, 3 and 6, C. Cohen.
KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S.: Ridley-road, 11.30, F. A. Davies, "Religion and Society."
NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Parliament Hill, 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture.
WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S.: Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, 7, F. A. Davies, "God and Woman."
WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S.: Hyde Park (near Marble Arch), 11.30, a Lecture.
WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S.: Beresford-square, 11.30, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Rationalists' Club, 12 Hill-square): Tuesdays and Thursdays, at 8, Bible Classes.

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN: 3 and 7, Mr. McClellan, Lectures.
BOSTON: Bargate Green (near the Cannons), 2.45, Joseph Bates, "Forty Years' Imposture: a Review of the Salvation Army and its Methods."
EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S.: The Meadows, 3, a Lecture; The Mound, 7, a Lecture.
LEEDS: Town Hall Square, Friday, September 4, at 7.30, Geo. Weir, "Eating God." Woodhouse Moor, Sunday, September 6, at 3, M. Collet, a Lecture.

H. S. WISHART'S LECTURES.

LEEDS: Saturday, September 5, Town Hall Square, at 7.30, "Christianism, Socialism, Secularism."
WIGAN: Sunday, September 6, Market Steps, at 11, "Fatalism, Determinism, and Rev. Dr. Warschauer's Ignorance"; Leigh Market, at 3, "The Fraud of the Salvation Army"; Lamberhead Green, Pemberton, at 6.30, "Why be a Christian?" Wednesday, September 9, Market, at 7.30, "Was St. Paul a Christian?"
BOLTON: Monday, September 7, at 7.30, "The Arrogant Ignorance of New Theology."
LEIGH: Tuesday, September 8, Market, at 7.30, "Conclusion of Salvation Army."
BRISTALL: Thursday, September 10, at 7.30, "The Uselessness of Christ."

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