

THE Freethinker

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By putting intention behind what men called good, God was produced. By putting intention behind what men called bad, the Devil was created. Leave this "intention" out, and gods and devils fade away.

—INGERSOLL.

Church versus State.

LORD HALIFAX and many other High Churchmen have been declaring, at the annual picnic known as the Church Congress, that the State has no right to dictate to the Church in spiritual matters. They might just as well declare that a gentleman has no right to dictate to a head servant. It was not the Church that established the State; it was the State that established the Church. The old Catholic Church may have been in a different position; we have neither the time nor the space to argue that question now; but it is perfectly clear that it was the State that broke, destroyed, and despoiled the old Catholic Church, and used some of the property of which it was thus deprived to set up the existing Protestant Church upon its ruins; so that the Church of England is the absolute creature of the State in every conceivable respect.

Every new sovereign takes an oath to maintain the Protestant Church "as by law established." Could there be more decisive words than these? Everything pertaining to the Church came from the Crown and Parliament. It is really a branch of the Public Service. Every clergyman is as much a public official as a policeman is. He is, indeed, a spiritual policeman, paid by the State to inculcate obedience to the authorities. Theoretically, he teaches the way to heaven; practically, he teaches the multitude to keep their hands from picking and stealing (especially what has been stolen from them), to remain content in their various stations of life, and to order themselves lowly and reverently to all their betters. If you want to know the real object of the Church of England, shut the Bible and open the Prayer Book.

The High Church party talk great nonsense about there having always been a Church of England since the days of Augustine. What existed in this country prior to the Reformation was the English Branch of the Roman Catholic Church. It was not a separate house of business, but a branch of the great firm whose head office was at Rome. That head office regulated its doctrine and ritual, appointed or sanctioned the appointment of its directors, and even controlled its revenues. A complete change took place under the Tudors. The old English branch of the Roman Catholic Church was abolished, and the modern Church of England established in its stead. It makes no difference that a good deal of the old material was used in the new structure. The bricks or stones of an old house may be used in building a new one, but that does not make the two identical.

Henry VIII.—the man of six wives—was the principal breaker-up of the old English Branch of the Roman Catholic Church. He and his greedy gang of aristocratic abettors took away the property of the small monasteries in 1535, and that of the large monasteries in 1539. The plunder was immense. Half the peerage owe their estates to that spoliation. Yet most of the plunderers were Catholics. It was

just the same in Scotland. The people were fooled with religious fanaticism, while the aristocracy laughed in their sleeves and appropriated the Church lands and revenues.

The people were ignorant and superstitious. They were so used to religion that they could not do without it. There would have been a general rebellion if ministers had not been provided to officiate in the churches. The clergy who would not acknowledge the King's supremacy in spiritual as well as in temporal matters were weeded out, and provision was made for those who remained. Under the King's successor, Edward VI., it was found necessary to draw up an official collection of doctrines, prayers, rites, and ceremonies. This was done, and the result is known as the Prayer Book,—which, by the way, has been amended several times since this, and by the very same authority to which it owed its origination. The men who drew up the original Prayer Book were appointed by the King, and their work was approved and accepted by Parliament. It was alleged to conduce to the "great comfort and quietness of mind" of King Edward, who was then *eleven years of age*. It was also alleged to have been done "by the aid of the Holy Ghost." Not long afterwards, for Edward was but a boy when he died, the very men who were responsible for these allegations helped Queen Mary to kick the Prayer Book out again, and declared that the Holy Ghost had nothing whatever to do with it. Soon afterwards again, when Mary died and was succeeded by Elizabeth, they helped her to bring the Prayer Book back; they repeated the old lie about the Holy Ghost, and that lie and the Prayer Book have gone hand-in-hand ever since.

This Prayer Book, which is the source of all the doctrine and ceremonial, and most of the discipline, of the Church of England—matters in which Lord Halifax repudiates the authority of the State—was forced into the Church and upon the people by the King and Parliament. The Act which did it was "for the Uniformity of Service and Administration of Sacraments throughout the Realm." It provided that if any rector, vicar, perpetual curate, or other priest, with benefice, did not use the Prayer Book, he should forfeit to the King one year's revenue of his benefice, and be imprisoned for six months. If he repeated the offence, he was to be deprived of his benefice altogether, and imprisoned for one whole year. If the clergyman had no benefice, he was to be imprisoned for six months for the first offence; and, in the case of a second offence, he was to be imprisoned for his natural life. Penalties were also proclaimed against the laity. Anyone who said anything "in derogation, depraving, or despising the said Book of Common Prayer" was to be visited with fine and imprisonment; the final penalty being the forfeiture of his property, and imprisonment for life.

That is how the Prayer Book was forced upon the clergy and the people. It was all done by the King and the Parliament. The revenues of the Church were secured by law, and by law its doctrines, prayers, rites, and ceremonies were established. Yet in the face of all this the High Church party deny the spiritual authority of the State. Was there ever greater impudence? And can it be cured by anything short of disestablishment and disendowment?

G. W. FOOTE.

Our Medicine Men.

THERE is an impression abroad that the Church of England clings to its position as an Established Church because of the privileges, preferences, and profits derived from its connection with the State. People observe how Churchmen fight for the front place; they note how they have resented every attempt to remove taxation for the Church from the shoulders of non-Church members; they see how a large portion of the Church's income is derived from tithes, rents, mining royalties, etc.; and they feel themselves justified in the conclusion. But, according to the Archbishop of York, this is quite an error. The Church has no such sordid or interested motive. "The Church to-day values its established connection with the State, not because of the privileges which it gives, but because of the opportunities of serving the nation which it opens out." For the moment we stand corrected.

Now I do not believe for a moment that the clergy of the Church of England are, as a body, all rogues, or that they are all fools. They undoubtedly include some of each variety; but what proportion each class bears to the total no one can say, because no one can tell. But the man himself would be either a rogue or fool who denied that, taking the clergy as a whole, that order contains at least as many of each variety as can be found in any other educated class of the community in proportion to size. They *may* not contain more; they certainly do not contain less. Nor am I under the impression that many of the clergy do not honestly believe what they preach, or that others do not preach what they believe—which is a distinction with a very important difference. But, again, a man would be more than usually unobservant who did not feel convinced that a fairly large number of the clergy are either not preaching what they believe to be true, or they are doing so and suggesting false impressions by holding a great deal of what they know to be true from their congregations. I am quite willing to admit that in a general way the clergy will present the same amount of moral and intellectual light and shade that is to be found in every other class of the community. I say in a general way because, in certain special directions, they compare rather unfavorably with other classes. This is notorious in their dealings with those who do not accept their religious views as presented by either Church or Chapel. Then they seem somehow to be absolved from the ordinary rules of fair play, and the pressure of what they call "moral restraints."

The question is not whether the clergy as *citizens* do not contribute to the social wellbeing. Lawyers, doctors, men of letters, and others in less distinguished positions, all serve the State within the measure of their opportunities and their inclination. Every man and woman who does his or her day's work fairly and honestly, in whatever position they are placed, is serving the State, even though he or she may be never conscious of it. And if they are they do not cry their services aloud, nor do they demand from the State to be placed in some privileged and subsidised position. The clergy alone do this; and therefore their service should be one they cannot discharge in the capacity of ordinary citizens, but only as members of a select and privileged order. And it should be a work of extraordinary value to warrant the money spent on their maintenance and the position they hold.

Now if the clergy do discharge a service of this character, the average layman seems quite oblivious of the fact. There is often a complaint that we need more policemen, or postmen, or soldiers, or sailors; but I never remember hearing a complaint from the public of the scarcity of parsons. People do sometimes complain of the quality of the clergy, but never, I think, of the quantity. The public puts up with what it has, but it betrays no burning desire for more. The cry that we need more parsons comes invariably from the parsons themselves. And the

less desirous people are for any increase in the number of the clergy, the louder is the pulpit cry for their production. And the reason for this is obvious. People *can* do without the clergy, and the fewer the clergy in proportion to population the more clearly this is realised. Therefore the way to make people believe that the clergy are indispensable is to keep them well to the front, and to allow them to actively interfere in as many matters as possible. Leave people alone, and they will not only get on without the clergy—they will wonder why on earth they ever put up with them. It is like the superstitious man who fears to sit thirteen at table, but, once having broken the rule, laughs at his own folly for ever having observed it.

What, now, are the services that the State establishment of religion enables the clergy to render to the nation? It is a touching picture, this, of the Church clergy fighting to maintain their privilege because of the good they do to others, and one would be only too glad to believe in its truth. But the actual truth is that no one looks to the clergy, as clergy, for advice or leadership on any subject of practical importance or of positive knowledge. A man is not counted a greater authority in politics, in sociology, in art, in science, or in literature because he is a clergyman. He may, of course, have much to say that is worth listening to on any of these topics; but that has nothing whatever to do with his special function as a clergyman. A doctor may be an authority on golf, or a politician on poodles, but no one imagines that a medical training has any direct connection with the one, or a political life with the other. A clergyman may, again, do a considerable amount of good in the shape of helping or advising those who are in need of his assistance. I should be the last to deny this to be the case; but as other people—most people, in fact—do the same to some extent, this, too, is not his special function. To assume otherwise is to imply that a clergyman is lacking in the ordinary feelings of compassion that characterise average humanity.

But while clergymen may share in the good qualities manifested by others, it is generally recognised that their function as clergymen has a disturbing, and not generally healthy, influence on their character as citizens. For instance, if a clergyman takes up with scientific matters, his professional opinions on religion are likely to have a distorting influence on the conclusions he draws from scientific facts. Either he will shrink from the conclusion to which the facts point and remain silent, or he will force a result in harmony with his religious beliefs. If he takes up with politics he will be likely to view political questions more or less from the standpoint of his Church, and settle questions of the moment by reference to what "our Lord" taught, or by some other quite irrelevant canon. If he is placed in a position of civil power, his appointment of candidate to office will be partly determined by the soundness of his views on religion, and a man's opinions on the three persons of the "Blessed Trinity" may determine whether he shall be empowered to inspect our drains. If he is entrusted with the distribution of charitable funds, their destination will again be determined by the religious opinions of applicants. In all directions his serviceableness as a citizen will be weakened by his function as a clergyman.

Of course, it may be said that in anything that touches a corporate interest, doctors, lawyers, or others might act in a similar manner. And this, I agree, is true, but not so true as in the case of the clergy. For a doctor or a lawyer would be at least ashamed to be detected sacrificing his duty to the community to his interests as a member of a class. If he did so, it would be done surreptitiously. He would not do so as an act of moral obligation; he would not make a public parade of it—as clergymen often boast that the claims of religion on them are first—nor does he denounce as moral delinquents those who act from another and a more social point of view. It is the peculiar vice of religion in relation

to life that it clothes with righteousness the expression of feelings that, apart from religion, are deprecated by all educated people. You can often make a politician feel ashamed of unfairness to opponents, you can make a scientific man feel ashamed of declining to examine views in opposition to his own, you can make a lawyer ashamed of sacrificing the interests of the community to that of his class. With a clergyman you can do none of these things. That other people do not agree with his religion is implicitly or explicitly taken as a sufficient justification for the treatment they get. Not to examine opposite opinions is a proof of the purity of his own religious nature; to sacrifice all other interests to that of religion is a proof of his loyalty to God. In all these matters the clergy remain, by their very office, the most intellectually barbarous amongst the educated of a nation. They still measure life by a primitive, animistic standard.

We are, in spite of our boasted development, hypnotised by the pulpit. An estimate of the value of the clergy is given us by the clergy themselves, and we go on repeating it as though it were the product of our own experience and our own uninvited testimony. We know that the clergy are not conspicuous either for ability, for character, or industry; that at most they constitute a body of very ordinary men, with all the characteristics of ordinary men. Yet it is on this class that the State spends some millions a year on salaries, and many more millions on the upkeep of their buildings. Some people have made merry over the political constitution of Great Britain, which allows for the existence of an official opposition with the avowed function of obstructing the government in power. Well, here is an instance where we actually pay a large body of men who can be shown to represent a retrogressive in our national life!

There really is only one reason for maintaining a national Church and a national clergy—indeed, there is only one reason for maintaining any church and any clergy. The real function of a priest is that of a mediator between man and his God. He is one who, in virtue of his greater power over or with the supernatural, places his services at the disposal of men—for a consideration. The primitive medicine-man is the original priest, the modern parson is his living representative, lingering on in the body politic much as linger rudimentary structures in the human organism. Both are reminiscent of a pre-civilised state. This profession of superior influence with the supernatural is the essential characteristic of all priests. Without it they cease to be clergymen and become men. We can see this feature strongly marked in the Roman Catholic clergy, who are endowed strongly in the established clergy, at their ordination—and we can see it also in the dissenting clergy, with their pretence to special "spiritual" development and "calls" to assume the ministry. From beginning to end the species is the same, the function is the same. If we believe in the supernatural, and in the supernatural power of a selected body of men, if we believe that this body can protect society from the anger of the gods, or gain their goodwill, there is, then, some reason for our burdening ourselves with the maintenance of a priesthood. But if we do not believe this, and our whole life proves that we do not, then it is time that we abolished an essentially animistic institution—with the exception, perhaps, of a few specimens that might serve to decorate a much-needed anthropological institute. C. COHEN.

The Things that Matter.

THE supreme reality in the Universe, we are told by Christian ministers, is the mind of Christ. Dr. Pollock, the Bishop of Norwich, preaching at the opening of the Church Congress at Cambridge, said:—

"The mind of Christ will impress itself in different ways upon successive generations, and each will follow

its own line in its efforts to realise that mind. But it is the mind itself that is unchanging and eternal; and we are wise not to allow ourselves to be so wholly engrossed with our own efforts to translate it into life in our own way as to omit to win the inspiration and refreshment which is offered by returning again and again to the Lord himself for a fresh vision, renewed, and renewed to cheer us, to chasten us, to keep us really true to him, constantly faithful to the archetype, without degeneration, without accretion."

That passage is commonplace enough, and the only object in quoting it is to call attention to the vagueness, sloppiness, and vacuity of the conventional language of religious devotion. What the mind of Christ is, how it becomes known, and in what way it can be realised, the good Bishop does not tell us, nor could he, if he tried. The phrase is Paul's; and it is now quite impossible to ascertain in what sense the apostle used it. In Cor. ii. 16 we find these words: "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he should instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ." The commentators have been puzzling their heads and eloquently slating one another concerning the true interpretation of that verse ever since it first saw the light. Paul was a mystic, and Christ was to him a mystical personage, the knowledge of whom came alone by revelation. But if Christ was mystical, so must have been his mind; and surely a mystical mind, a mind that baffles understanding, can be of no benefit to anybody. When a man says "I have the mind of Christ," or, "I enjoy incessant fellowship with the Lord," he merely juggles with the words, or plays the hypocrite to himself.

Bishop Pollock declares that "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ makes it possible for us to think aright and to work aright." That this is nothing but a vain boast is proved by the incontestable fact that Christians have never been either better or worse, on the average, than non-Christians. The grace of Christ, like his mind, is indefinable, visionary, a dream of the imagination. What the Bishop really understands by it does not appear. It is an inward something that shows itself outwardly, as light, beauty, and charm. It is a something which literary and historical criticism is powerless to discredit and shatter. The limitations of criticism are such as to prevent it from touching this ghostly, evasive substance. This is the great, central point in Dr. Pollock's sermon. He contends that there are things which can be seen only with "the eyes of our inmost heart," and that they are the things that matter. Some of the things in the Bible, for example, are of the earth earthy, and in its treatment of these science may have full scope. It has permission to do what it likes with them. "How much we have gained," he exclaims, "by this scientific criticism in the last fifty years. But how much we may lose in the next fifty if we allow ourselves to be so possessed by it that we compel into its range things that should lie beyond its reach." As his lordship reminds us, in advancing this contention he is simply following apostolic example:—

"St. Paul has told us that he set a very slight value on just the things that our scientific temper leads us to value most or exclusively. He had no wish to know Christ after the flesh; he emphatically tells us so. For him such knowledge was only the frame of the real living picture. Yet in full view of St. Paul's life and of his letters, with the Lord's own words in our ears, 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' we doubt St. Paul's authority and hesitate to follow his lead; we question *in limine* his power to interpret his Master's mind, and we make so much of the few words of Christ which, sifted and sifted again by a most exacting standard of evidence, survive the test, that we look almost with disfavor on St. Paul's large faith which includes more, and on his sympathetic attitude which reached further."

This is the new conception of inspiration and of Christianity which is said to have brought to a final end the old conflict between religion and science. It is not science that has come to terms with religion; it is religion that has disarmed science by disowning, and throwing off as non-essential, every dogma that lay open to scientific attack. The

Archbishop of York and Principal Griffith-Jones were entirely mistaken when they both declared, a few weeks ago, that science is less Atheistical or Agnostic to-day than it was fifty years ago. It is Sir Edwin Ray Lankester who correctly represents the facts by the assertion that the newer conceptions in science "are not destructive of our previous conceptions, but rather elaborations and developments of the simpler views." But the theology of to-day is fundamentally different from the theology of fifty years ago; so totally at variance with it, indeed, that the few who still hold the older views denounce the newer doctrines as utterly subversive of the Gospel of Christ. Men like the Rev. Archibald Brown, Mr. William Olney, and Sir Robert Anderson, are truly justified in affirming that the advocates of Biblical criticism are enemies of the Holy Cross. These argue, with beautiful consistency, that if the first three chapters of Genesis are not true, if man was not created perfect, and then by a foolish act of disobedience became a sinner doomed to die, there was no need for the incarnation and sacrificial death and resurrection of the Son of God. It was the fall in Eden alone that created the necessity for redemption through the blood of the Lamb.

Now the question arises, Has Christianity, by the surrender of so-called non-essential tenets, safeguarded its own future? It is true, as the Bishop observes, that science takes no cognisance of the supernatural, and can neither prove, nor yet disprove, its reality. But it is not true that we should not "try to gauge heavenly things by standards of the earth." The fact is that we possess no other standards by which to judge and gauge. We are earthly beings, children of the soil, and all our faculties are purely natural, and capable of dealing only with natural problems. So far as we know, we are the highest species of animals which Nature has as yet produced. Whenever, therefore, we come across people who believe in the existence of supernatural beings and powers, we have a right to demand some definite demonstration of the truth of their beliefs. "You are free to harbor whatever beliefs you please," we say to them, "but you have no right to condemn us because we do not share them, or to attempt our conversion unless you are prepared to set before us some distinct verification." "Oh," they will retort, "you wish us to verify every step by a verification that is really irrelevant; we must not try to gauge heavenly things by standards of the earth." That is an ingenious theological subterfuge, the object of which is to evade a difficult question; but he must be a very stupid person who does not see through it. No verification of anything can be irrelevant. What the preachers claim is, that if they *could* supply the verification asked for it would be irrelevant—that is, it would not be a verification. This they aver in the consciousness of their inability to adduce it. All we ask for is a verification that will satisfy our intelligence, and this is not forthcoming. *We hold that no verification is possible.*

The Bishop of Norwich will not face the facts. He knows that they are altogether against him, and so he takes refuge in cheap pietistic platitudes—platitudes that have done service for two thousand years. Here is a sample:—

"We hear much now about the service of men and the brotherhood of humanity; and then we use some external organisation to bring them about before we have taught men that only in Christ is the brotherhood of men possible, that those who wish for it must come to him to find it, and that system and legislation cannot introduce it, and can only negatively clear some obstacles from the way. For the service of men, we need devoted men whose hearts are fired by the example of him who went about doing good."

The only fault with that pious sentiment is that it is absolutely false. It is well known that all Christians profess to be in Christ, but how much brotherhood is there among them? A convenient test may be successfully applied within a small area in London. We have Westminster Cathedral (Catholic), Westminster Abbey (Anglican), and Westminster Chapel

(Congregationalist), and the amount of Christian brotherhood existing between them is exemplified in the fact that they have absolutely no intercourse with one another as Churches of Christ. There is no love lost between them, and this after two thousand years of Christ, in whom alone human brotherhood is said to be possible. Does not the Bishop of Norwich sometimes think of these things when he pronounces his wild eulogiums upon Christ? Does it never occur to him to wonder whether the failure of Christ is not an exceedingly *relevant* verification of his non-existence? Is he not aware that the Church has hitherto completely neglected the things that really matter, and wrangled and fought over things of absolutely no moment? It is not the world to come, it is the world that now is, that supremely matters; and the Churches turn their attention to the latter only in proportion as they lose faith in the former.

Christianity, whether in its fully Pauline and orthodox form or as modified under the pressure of scientific knowledge, stands utterly condemned. As a supernatural system it is as irrational and absurd as any Pagan religion that ever existed, and as a power for the redemption and uplifting of humanity it has been a stupendous failure from the first. And the worst of it is that it cumbers the ground and prevents the things that matter from coming to the front.

J. T. LLOYD.

Pseudo-Criticism.

THE compound substantive which heads this article is the title of a work of a polemical character by Sir Robert Anderson, who firmly dissents from what he ironically calls "the assured results" of modern Biblical criticism. "This book," the author explains in his Preface, "is an exposure of a false system of Biblical criticism, by which 'the Higher Criticism' has been discredited and almost supplanted." Sir Robert has nothing to say against Textual criticism; what he objects to is "a presentation of the opinions and theories and dicta of foreign scholars who treat the Bible on Rationalistic principles." As an illustration of this pseudo-criticism he cites the following statement of Professor Driver, describing the character of the narratives in Genesis:—

"We have found that, while there is no sufficient reason for doubting the existence and *general* historical character of the biographies of the patriarchs; nevertheless much uncertainty must be allowed to attach to *details* of the narrative" (*Book of Genesis*, p. lxi.).

This critical statement is really far more favorable to the traditional view than the character of the narratives in Genesis warrants. To say that the legendary stories of the patriarchs in that book are "generally historical" shows either a great lack of judgment on the part of Dr. Driver, or else a very strong theological bias towards orthodoxy. Mr. Anderson, as a Christian, ought to be satisfied; but he is not thankful for small mercies. Like a well-known character in one of Charles Dickens' works, he "asks for more." He says of Canon Driver's very one-sided statement:—

"—which means that though the Rationalists have failed to discover any grounds for challenging the truth of the narrative, the Christian has no sufficient warrant for accepting it."

This, no doubt, is what the majority of Christian readers will naturally infer from the statement; but, as a matter of fact, there are good and sufficient grounds for challenging the truth of nearly every paragraph in the book of Genesis. Of this very awkward fact Mr. Anderson appears to be in blissful ignorance, for he goes on to say:—

"Although, according to the writers whose views Dr. Driver adopts, Genesis is mainly a compilation of myths and legends, traceable ultimately to Pagan sources, he earnestly insists upon the inspiration of its authors. This may satisfy a scholar among his books, but it will not do with sensible men of the world."

With the latter statement all Freethinkers will agree. The book of Genesis is nothing more nor less than a compilation of ancient myths and legends; consequently, how or where the inspiration comes in is more than "sensible men of the world" are ever likely to find out. We might, however, call the narratives "inspired fiction." This would serve to distinguish Bible fiction from all other fiction—ancient or modern.

Sir Robert Anderson says, again:—

"Professor Driver's note on the Cosmogony (pp. 19-33) is typical of the 'Critical' methods. He proves clearly that Genesis i. may be construed in such a way as to discredit it.....To take a single illustrative instance, Professor Driver reads into the chapter the figment of 'the creation of the sun, moon, and stars after the earth' (p. 24); whereas nothing whatever is said about the 'creation' of the heavenly bodies, save as they are included in the first verse. The word used in verse 16 is of the broadest meaning and widest application, and is never translated by 'create' in the English Bible. Of course, it is easy in this way to make Genesis clash with science."

Here Sir Robert, like all Christian apologists, construes the Bible narrative in a way which makes it appear less in conflict with science than is actually the case. Verse 1—"In the beginning God created (*bara*) the heaven and the earth"—is interpreted as meaning that "in the beginning" the whole Universe (including the sun, moon, and stars) was "created"; after which, at some unstated period, came the six days' work of creation, the latter being explained as merely the forming and fashioning of material called into existence "in the beginning." Hence, when in verse 16 it is stated that "God made (*asah*) the two great lights.....the stars also," this work of the fourth day is said to have been merely the placing of those luminaries in the position they now occupy above or away from the earth.

In support of this apologetic interpretation, Mr. Anderson says that the word *asah* in verse 16 "is of the broadest meaning and widest application, and is never translated by 'create' in the English Bible." The latter statement is correct; the Hebrew words *bara* and *asah* are translated respectively "created" and "made." But there is one small circumstance which tends to neutralise this faithful and consistent translation. The Hebrew writer of Genesis i., in common with other Hebrew sacred writers, employs the words *bara* and *asah* interchangeably. Witness the following:—

Gen. i. 1.—"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

Psalm cxxi. 2.—"the Lord which made heaven and earth."

Gen. i. 16.—"And God made the two great lights..... the stars also."

Psalm cxlviii. 3-5.—"Praise ye him, sun and moon; praise him, all ye stars of light.....for he commanded, and they were created."

Gen. i. 21.—"And God created the great sea-monsters and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly."

Psalm cxlvi. 6.—"which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is."

Gen. i. 27.—"And God created man in his own image."

Gen. ix. 6.—"In the image of God made he man."

Gen. ii. 7.—"And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground."

Gen. v. 1.—"In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him."

Amos iv. 13.—"He that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind.....that maketh the morning darkness."

Isaiah xliii. 1.—"Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel."

The last passage is an example of Hebrew parallelism, in which "the Lord," "created," and "Jacob" in the first part of the sentence are given as synonymous with "he," "formed," and "Israel" in the concluding portion. Thus, no "sensible man of the world" can have the smallest doubt as to the meaning which the writer of the Genesis creation story intended to convey. The first verse is simply

a short statement, like the heading of a chapter, of what the writer was about to relate in detail in the narrative which follows. The story of the Creation really commences in verse 2—"And the earth was waste and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep," etc. There was no creation of the earth or water, merely a separation of the two, and a refashioning. The Hebrew narrator could not imagine a time when no earth of any kind was in existence; neither could he conceive of a god possessing the power to produce miles upon miles of solid matter and immense seas of water—all out of nothing. Only a modern Christian apologist or a Bible commentator could imagine such nonsense. But such small objects as the sun and moon, the little twinkling stars, and the land and water animals—these the writer of Genesis naturally presumed to be within the ability of a god to make or fashion; but even in the latter cases some kind of material was deemed necessary (Gen. ii. 7, 19, 22).

Every cosmogony known to us presupposes the earth as existent; that of the Hebrews is no exception. Moreover, there is no word in the Hebrew language that denotes "to produce something out of nothing." The word *bara* (translated "to create") properly means to cut or carve; hence, to form or make. The word *asah* (translated "to make") properly means to feel or press; hence, to handle and form as a potter. The word *yatsar* (translated "to form") properly means to cut; hence, to form or fashion as a wood carver. It is only in the case of *bara*, and when God is stated to be the agent, that a new meaning is read into the word—the production of something out of nothing.

We are now in a position to properly consider Sir Robert Anderson's "illustrative instance" of Professor Driver's alleged pseudo-criticism; namely, that that critic "reads into Genesis i. the figment of 'the creation of the sun, moon, and stars upon the earth.'" In this instance it is scarcely necessary to say that Dr. Driver is perfectly correct. According to the writer of Genesis i., not only was the earth existent before the creation of the sun—from which it undoubtedly originated—but the whole vegetable kingdom also came into existence before the sun—whose light and heat gave it birth. Upon these two points, without noticing any others, the cosmogony of Genesis does "clash with science."

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

God and King in Germany—and Other Places.

THE roots of the alliance can be traced clearly enough through all periods of history, but they reach far back to the dim age of prehistoric superstition. Even in the Roman Republic, after the word *rex* had become, in other respects, odious to every citizen, the term survived in the priestly title, *rex sacrificulus*—the name applied to the official that performed certain religious rites performed previously by the king as father of the people. On the break-up of the Republic, from the very day on which Augustus assumed supreme power in the State, he made it his special aim to re-establish religion on a firm basis, introducing again the elaborate ritual that had been associated with the old worship. As Jupiter ruled in heaven, so the personal will of the Emperor ruled on earth. The titles by which some of the Emperors were addressed showed the kingship of the two conceptions. From the time of Aurelian, the Emperor was Lord and God, *dominus et deus*; he was most holy (*sanctissimus*), and his person was inviolable (*sacrosanctus*). He was the sole embodiment on earth of the divine unconditioned power. His subjects honored him by bending the knee and by kissing his garments—a display of grovel not altogether foreign to some European countries in our own enlightened times.

The supra-mundane Lord of the Roman Empire, like so many other Pagan institutions, finds a large place in mediæval Catholicism. He is the ideal of human greatness and splendor. This universal monarch seems to have hovered before Dante in his poetical visions, and to have animated some of the leading spirits of the early Renaissance. But long previously, Augustin, in his *De Civitate Dei*, had, in his own mystic phraseology, dwelt upon the possible advent of a glorious and mighty peace-bringer, who should hold from God all power on earth. A picture of this kind has always had an attractiveness for certain minds, but strip the mystic or poetic veil from the face of it and look at its nakedness. There is nothing beautiful about it. To this, as to everything else that grows out of superstition, there adheres a permanent sub-structure of ugliness. For the man who holds all power from God can be *respectable only to God*. It is an easy transition from such a doctrine to the pure Absolutism of Macchiavelli, whose Prince does not stand under the law at all, or to the "sovereignty" of Hobbes, whose Leviathan "swallows up individual rights." Richelieu represented kings as "God's living images." "I am the State," are the words which Louis XIV. is said to have hurled at a refractory Parliament. Whether he actually used the words or not, they expressed his idea of kingship. "He who gave kings to men," he proclaimed, "has wished that men should honor them as advisers appointed by him, for he alone reserves the right to test their conduct." Texts in support of the doctrine were found in abundance in the Scriptures.

We know that there is at least one king in Europe who does not owe his position to the accident of birth. The German Emperor has just told us again that he rules by the grace of God. Though his last utterance, the Königsberg speech, seems to have caused more than usual stir, it must not be forgotten that he has been saying exactly the same thing ever since he succeeded his father as head of the oligarchy that rules in Wilhelmstrasse. Twenty years ago, and in the very same place, he expressed similar views of divine right and of the relationship in which the Hohenzollerns stand to the Almighty. And at Bremen, in 1897, he was quite clear:—

"If we have been able to accomplish what has been accomplished, it is due above all things to the fact that our House holds a tradition by virtue of which we consider that we have been appointed by God to preserve and direct, with a view to their welfare, the people over whom he has given us power."

In the same year, at Kiel, Prince Henry of Prussia thus graciously confirmed his Majesty's claim:—

"I am actuated by one single motive—to declare to the nations the gospel of your Majesty's sacred person, and to preach that gospel alike to those who will listen and to those who will not."

The Emperor's faithful henchman, Bethmann-Hollweg, said, at the beginning of this year, that Prussia would not allow herself to be "towed into the waters of parliamentary government"; and on February 10, a leading Conservative, von Richthofen, declared in the Prussian House of Representatives:—

"We can only support a system of electoral reform that will guarantee the continuance in Prussia of a Parliament based on the principles of Prussian rule, a Parliament which will continue the monarch in his present strong position as the wearer of the German Imperial Crown, not the semblance of a monarch, but one dependent upon no Party and no Parliament, one dependent upon something higher, the King of all kings."

And what about our own royal George, whose merits both as a man and a heaven-sent ruler were proclaimed from John o' Groats to Land's End, particularly by the clerics, even before his father's remains were taken away from Buckingham Palace? What about the prayers for the royal family in the churches and the hogwash of our "glorious free press," including a special effort from the more pious section of it? I have before me a sixpence with the

"image and superscription" of the late lamented English King, and I read:—

"Edwardus VII., dei gratia Britanniarum omnium rex, fidei defensor, Indiæ imperator." (Edward VII., by the grace of God King of all the Britains, defender of the faith, Emperor of India.)

What an amazing advance we have all made since Augustus and Diocletian! But "wait and see." William and his Chancellor are holding on by the grace of God, but by the grace of God also the German Socialists have been scoring heavily at the recent by-elections.

J. D. MCLAREN.

Acid Drops.

People are outgrowing Christianity everywhere. There has been a good deal of excision of old-fashioned verse from modern hymn-books, some of it brutal and some of it ridiculous. It is now reported that the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States, is advised by its Hymnal Commission to get rid of a number of hymns that are generally held to be "dear to the Christian heart." "Greenland's Icy Mountains" is among the proposed outcasts. One verse is really diabolical:—

"What though the spicy breezes
Blow soft o'er Ceylon's isle,
Where every prospect pleases
And only man is vile?"

That is how the egotistic Protestant used to go about the world, holding (to borrow a phrase from George Meredith) a review of his Maker's grotesques. The people of Ceylon happen to be quite as good-looking, and quite as good morally, as the English people.

When the Hymn-Book is brought up to date a start ought to be made on the Bible—which is totally unfit for general reading, or even for general publication. What do the revisionists say to this timely proposal?

Whether the Deity inspired the translators of the Bible or not is a controverted question. That the printers were not inspired is obvious. According to the "Breeches Bible" (1560) Adam and Eve "sewed figleaves together and made themselves breeches." The "Placemaker's Bible" (1562) had "blessed are the placemakers." The "Vinegar Bible" (1716) had "the parable of the vinegar"—for vineyard. The "Wicked Bible" (1653) had "thou shalt commit adultery." A good many Christians have acted on that translation.

The Church of England is hastening to its own destruction. The State allows divorced persons to marry again. It also allows marriage with a deceased wife's sister. And the Church Congress has resolved unanimously to ostracise everybody who does either the one or the other. After this display of imbecility, the Congress passed a resolution declaring that the State had no authority to dictate the terms of admission to Holy Communion in the Church of England, and that any such claim must be resisted. The sole business of the State, according to these gentlemen, is to secure them livings. They themselves will attend to all the rest. It reminds us of a servants' congress in the kitchen, passing resolutions about the people upstairs. Such resolutions are easily passed, but when it comes to carrying them out we know who is going to win.

The Church Congress at Cambridge naturally devoted some of its time to the question of religious instruction in schools, one paper being read by the Headmaster of Marlborough. He complained of the neglect of Bible teaching at home, and plaintively asked: "If a boy had not been taught at home that the Bible contained secrets of infinite importance for his life, how could teachers get his interest when they tried to help him to discover them?" Well, teachers do awaken the interest of children in subjects on which their minds have not been prepared at home, and why should they not be as successful with the Bible? Mr. Fletcher's complaint seems to amount to little more than a confession that, in the game of bamboozling the child's mind, parent and teacher, home and school, must combine, or it will come to nought. And in that we are willing to admit there is a great deal of truth.

Here are a couple more items from the Congress proceedings. The Rev. Professor Kennet said that "for twenty-three years he had had experience of young men who came

to Cambridge to take Holy Orders, and generally speaking the ignorance among them of the Bible was perfectly appalling." We can sympathise with the Rev. Professor. We have often been appalled at the ignorance of those who have taken Holy Orders, and as he has been appalled at them beforehand, taking Orders does not seem to have effected much in the way of improvement. Perhaps the explanation is that they took Holy Orders because they were unable to take anything else.

The Bishop of Ely gravely repeated the venerable chestnut that Christians to-day have a clearer view of the spiritual nature of the Bible than previous generations had. So far as we are aware, Christians have been having clearer views of the Bible any time during the past 150 years. And this has meant, when genuine, only recognising as true teachings those they have up to that point been denouncing as heresies. The Bishop added that "Old Testament difficulties of which we were dimly conscious as children have been removed." This may be true; but again, so far as it is true, it only means that Christians have had their difficulties removed by throwing overboard the beliefs about which the difficulties were raised. One day we expect to see *all* the difficulties connected with religion removed in much the same fashion—by religion being rejected by all truly educated and cultured minds.

We see that in an answer to a question at the close of an address on "The Perils of Secular Education." Professor Michael Sadler said he would give special facilities in the schools to both Christian Scientists and Atheists. Well, we would not. Atheism, in any formal or instructional sense, is not a subject that should be permitted in the schools, any more than Theism should be permitted. Both are subjects that should be left until children are old enough to understand what it is they are asked to believe. Our duty to the children is not to force upon them our ideas because they are ours, but to limit their instruction to matters of positive knowledge, and to so train them that they will bring a properly developed intelligence to Atheism, Theism, and all such subjects. It does not make an injustice to children less of an injustice because you multiply the number of those who inflict it and the forms in which it is inflicted. It is time that Professor Sadler began to think more of the children and less of the sectarian interests involved.

The Bishop of Birmingham rode the high horse with a vengeance at the Church Congress the other day. A few had expressed the opinion that episcopacy was not essential, and that non-episcopally ordained ministers might effectively celebrate the sacraments. This brought Dr. Gore to his feet. He confessed that in a weak moment he had consented to take part in the World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh, and he thanked God for it, because he came back from it "as adamantine a stickler for the most rigid sacerdotal exclusiveness as ever." "Why," he cried out excitedly, "the Holy Communion would certainly be rent in twain on the day in which any non-episcopally ordained minister was formally allowed within their Communion to celebrate the Eucharist." A bishop looks upon himself as a walking storehouse of priestly virtues and powers, which Christ has authorised him, and him alone, to impart, in due measure, to those who have the honor to receive ministerial ordination at his magical hands, and to them only. No other Holy Orders possess any validity whatever. What consummate tomfoolery! What ineffable stupidity! Shall the odious arrogance of antiquated and exploded superstition never have an end?

Bishop Gore's nonsense about the Virgin Birth of Christ is none the better for being relished by "a crowded congregation." He has been boasting that some of the references in "Luke" are historical, although they were not thought to be so—which is a point we cannot stop to discuss—and he argues therefore that "St. Luke's accuracy" is good enough to cover the story of Mary's miraculous maternity. He might just as well say that the historical fact that Queen Anne lived and died proves that she cured people suffering from King's Evil (scrofula) by touching them. The natural and the supernatural require very different evidence. Bishop Gore sees that himself when he is asked to accept modern Catholic miracles.

Anything is good enough that will bring grist to the mill. The Bishop of Bristol has discovered a "spiritual" value in motor cars. Speaking at a Church Defence Society meeting, he said that motor cars had opened up facilities for travel, and made motorists realise the "unsurpassed" attractiveness of our ancient churches. He thought that they would all be sorry if anything were to happen to ruin these structures. Well, we also should be sorry to see many old

churches destroyed, and we think there is enough love of architectural beauty to preserve any that are worth preserving, no matter what fate befalls the Church. But if the Bishop really wishes to secure the whole-hearted support of motorists, we would suggest his advocating every church, during week-days, as a free garage, with free teas for the chauffeurs. Then, if the curates could be turned on to clean the machines during stops, we feel convinced that motorists would be still more sorry to see anything happen to the Church.

On the other hand, 10,000 cottage women have presented a petition to the Queen declaring that motors have made their lives a misery. They say: "Our things are ruined by dust, our children are always in danger, and our rest is spoiled by the noise at night." They ask the Queen to use her influence to mitigate the nuisance. They should take heart. Their children may be in danger, and their cocks and hens destroyed. They may be choked with dust and disturbed with noise. But, reflect, the motorists are awakened to the beauty of the village church, and may subscribe to the funds of the Church Defence Association. Thus doth the Lord bring good out of evil, and bend the machinations of man to his own glory.

According to the *Church Times*, the Pope is intending to make it an article of faith that it is an historical fact that the actual body of Jesus was miraculously removed from the tomb and transferred to heaven. Why not? It is a fair reading of the New Testament that this actually occurred, and an overwhelming proportion of Christians—until very recent times—have believed it. Besides, if it was not a bodily resurrection, what was the significance of the empty tomb? Of course, it is a stupid belief; but that is not our concern. And we admit, from the point of view of liberal apologists, it is perhaps bad tactics to emphasise a stupid teaching at a time when the world is rapidly getting sick of the whole affair. On the other hand, the Pope may feel that, at the rate Christians are going, giving away a bit of their creed here and a bit of their creed there, soon there will be nothing left worth retaining. And if the Pope does take that view, we agree with him.

Some of our readers will have heard of the medical authority who declared that an absence of offspring was hereditary in some families. We are reminded of this story by the Bishop of Ripon's speech at the Church Congress on the declining birth-rate. He said that the proportion of young men to old in England was decreasing. And he asked, "At what date will the country become a country of old men?" We give it up. Our imagination is quite inadequate to picture a country of old men. We have heard some men described as "old women," but we do not think that this was intended for a physiological analogy. Still, if ever England does become a country of old men there will be a chance for the Christian deity. In one case, he produced a son without a father. This prospective state of affairs will give him the opportunity of producing children without mothers. And what will the sceptics say then?

The Bishop of Ripon also said that it was our duty to plant populations abroad, where populations were needed. This is religious jingoism run mad. It is our duty to do nothing of the kind. On what compulsion ought Great Britain to act as a breeding-ground for the universe? Our duty is not to breed a population for exportation, but for home consumption, and to see that we are breeding men and women of whom a country may be legitimately proud. Theologians have been long enough before they said anything on the question of population; and, now they have commenced talking, one wishes they had maintained silence a while longer.

Mr. Smith, of the Wood Green N. S. S. Branch, gave an address, by invitation, to the Men's Adult School on "Christianity and Secularism," and was answered by Mr. A. E. Goodwin. According to the *Enfield Observer*, Mr. Smith stated the arguments against Christianity "clearly and forcefully." Mr. Goodwin argued that Mr. Smith had not attacked Christianity, but only exploded dogmas and churches; Mr. Smith, indeed, had "a fine conception of true Christianity." This is one of those back-handed compliments that Christians are apt to pay Freethinkers whom they cannot reply to.

Rev. J. E. Rattenbury says that "God's time is now." With the history of the world before our mind's eye, we beg to suggest that God's time is never. Yesterday was the priests' time. To-day the parson's time is almost up, and he is slowly retiring, while the scientist's time is at the spring. To-morrow God and the priest will have had their time, and

the scientist will reign supreme; and ere long we shall be able to exclaim, "Now is Man's time!"

The man of God charges Atheists with hypocrisy. "You pretend to be what you are not," he says to them; "there are no Atheists." He is the only competent judge of what men are. He always knows others far better than they know themselves. This is not at all surprising in a man who professes to know and to speak for God. Such an one is capable of any folly under the sun. It is he who pretends to be what he is not. He is the arch-hypocrite.

"Look at the man who grumbles at Providence," cries an eminent divine; "there is no gladness in his life." We agree. Anyone who verily believes in Providence, if he keeps his eyes open, is bound to grumble at it. If this divine were to make the acquaintance of a thousand Atheists he would not find one grumbler among them. They take Nature as they find her, and they know that if they do not make the most of her they have only themselves to blame. Recognising that there is no one to look after them, they realise that they must look after themselves and one another, or suffer the consequences of neglect. There is nothing to grumble at in Nature.

Rev. J. E. Roberts, of Manchester, is very anxious to save people from the "tragic blunder" of saying, as a consequence of the Higher Criticism, that they no longer believe in the Bible. His plan is simplicity itself. First, the truth of the Bible "must not be identified with the historical or scientific accuracy of all its statements." Well, but when a book professes to relate something that is historical or scientific, such accounts must be either true or false. If a man writes a book to prove that the earth is flat, and it is shown that it is round or elliptoid, no one but a lunatic would say that at least the earth is a fact, and it has a shape, and therefore, as the writer deals with both earth and shape, the book is true, although its statements need revising in the light of our modern knowledge. Yet this is substantially all that Mr. Roberts's argument amounts to. His next defence is that Biblical criticism only shows that some theories about the Bible are untrue. Quite so; but the theories about the Bible that are shown to be untrue are precisely those on which Christianity has based itself. No one assumes that criticism has wiped the Bible, as a mere collection of reading matter, off the face of the earth. But as criticism has shown that Bible science and Bible history are wrong, that Bible ethics leaves much to be desired, that miracles do not happen and that the supernatural is a myth, it strikes one that criticism has come about as near as possible to destroying the *Christian* theory of the Bible. And nothing else is of any very material consequence.

A very amusing book could be written on the unconscious satire and sarcasm of religious people on their religious views. The clerical protestor against P. S. A. meetings, who fervently exclaimed, "Thank God there has never been a pleasant Sunday afternoon in my church!" has now become a classic. Dr. Robertson Nicoll supplies a companion, in the course of an article in the *British Weekly*, in the sentence, "No Christian can think of pain without thinking of heaven"—which contains a much deeper and different kind of truth than the writer intended. Again, at the Church Congress one speaker, wishing to prove that poor people did not want divorce, told a story of his experience. He asked one of an ill-matched couple—the woman—whether she desired a separation. The reply was "No!" She did not want that because separation meant divorce, and divorce was indecent. "But," she added, "last night I threw a flat-iron at him, and nearly killed him!" So that to flat-iron one's husband is pious and respectable; to separate is irreligious and disreputable. This is not the moral the speaker drew, but we quite fail to detect any other.

Rev. C. L. Drawbridge told the Church Congress that he had spent years fighting Atheists in the parks. We believe this to be true, although we are not aware that Mr. Drawbridge's onslaughts have had any effect in diminishing the number of Atheists. We fancy the result has been of quite an opposite description. But his experience had evidently taught Mr. Drawbridge a lesson, and that he handed on to the Congress. He said: "The bulk of the working-classes were violently hostile to Christianity." We gladly record the confession, and congratulate the rev. gentleman on his frankness—on this occasion, at least.

The Kidderminster, Stourport, and Bewdley Free Church Council reports an increase in Sunday-school scholars and a

decrease in membership. Evidently the roping in of the "kids" isn't as effectual as it used to be. The Council also deplores the "increased tendency to Sabbath desecration"—that is, to people pleasing themselves on Sunday instead of obeying the sky-pilots' orders. The Council expresses a hope that this wicked tendency will soon be checked by "legislation." That's it! The pious are all Protectionists in their own business.

Professional interest will crop out. At Bath, what the *Church Times* describes as a "large and representative" meeting, was held protesting against Sunday cinematograph shows. There was not the slightest suggestion of anything improper being presented, nor was it hinted that they had any evil effect on the life of the city. The complaint was wholly professional. The cinematograph exhibitions were filled, and the churches and chapels were empty. It was also pointed out that young people were attracted to these places in such numbers that the Sunday-schools were being emptied. Out of 9,000 scholars at least 2,500 were absent. So the clergy are distressed, and the religion that human nature craves for, and which satisfies humanity's deepest instincts, is being knocked into smithereens by a cinematograph film.

Cholera in Italy naturally brings out the superstition of the multitude who hate sanitary arrangements and prefer to rely upon the Mother of God and the saints. This is particularly the case at Naples. The following is from the *Morning Leader's* special correspondent there:—

"Recently, on the occasion of the annual pilgrimage to the Virgin at Montevergine, the faithful crowded the church, and many crawled on all fours from the door to the altar, licking the pavement with their tongues, convinced that by so doing the Virgin would preserve them from the scourge."

How religion elevates its devotees!

Mr. Mark H. Judge, honorary secretary of the Sunday Society, is always correcting the figures of Dr. Peake, of the Lord's Day Observance Society. Dr. Peake has been giving some figures to show that the Sunday opening of museums is a failure. Mr. Judge points out that his figures are all wrong. The Sunday afternoon attendances at the Art and Science Museums (Victoria and Albert) were 102,968 in 1907, and 154,245 in 1909. "With such attendances as these," Mr. Judge says, "after an experience of fourteen years, it is futile for Dr. Peake to speak of Sunday Opening as a decadent movement."

The Church Congress has been discussing heredity and the multiplication of the unfit. The parsons are always a long way behind laymen. They bring up the rear of the procession of progress. Some would say that they are the rear.

Rev. J. A. Douglas and Rev. Tom C. Collins have signed a petition in favor of boxing being allowed at the Camberwell Baths. They regard it as a manly exercise. Can anyone imagine a set-to between Jesus Christ and "Pete"? We can't—except in a quarrel.

In the course of the debate on this matter at a meeting of the Camberwell Borough Council, Alderman Edward Laurence, chairman of the Public Health Committee, sided strongly with the clergy who were in favor of boxing instead of those who were against it. He said that football was doing more good for the people than "all your blessed churches and chapels." He would rather trust fighting-men than "half the vicars he had met."

General Booth has got a fine new testimonial. It is from that peculiar person, Mr. E. G. Stafford, of Liverpool, and is gravely reported in the local *Evening Express*, as if it were of immeasurable value—which in one sense it undoubtedly is. We did not think the Salvation Army had sunk quite so low as this.

The *Wood Green Sentinel* reports some striking utterances by the Rev. E. W. Shephard Walwyn, of the Imperial Sunday Alliance. They are striking—but are they true? One of them is that Voltaire said "If you would destroy this Christianity, you must first kill Sunday." We invite the reverend gentleman to state where in Voltaire's writings this passage may be found. Another of them is that "Darwin confessed at the close of his life, 'I have neglected to let God in, and now I cannot.'" We do not ask for the reference to this. We know it cannot be given. Darwin never said anything of the kind. Mr. Shephard Walwyn may not be an original liar, but the only point in doubt is his originality.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 9, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester: at 3, "The True Heaven and Hell"; at 6.30, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

October 16, Queen's Hall; 23, Leicester; 30, Birmingham.

November 6, Shoreditch Town Hall; 13, Liverpool; 27, Shoreditch Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 9, Glasgow; 10, Falkirk; 11, Paisley; 30, Queen's Hall, London. November 6, Birmingham; 13, Canning Town; 17 and 18, Debate at St. Pancras Public Baths; 20, Shoreditch Town Hall. December 4, Manchester; 11, Liverpool.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 9, Queen's Hall, London; 16, Glasgow; 23, Queen's Hall, London. November 6, Fulham; 13, Shoreditch Town Hall; 20, Manchester; 27, Leicester. December 4, Holloway; 18, West Ham.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1910.—Previously acknowledged: £250 4s. 7d. Received since:—G. L. Alward, £1 1s.; John Robinson, 2s. 6d.; Greevz Fysher, 9s. 6d.

G. V.—Mr. Foote cannot take tea with the "saints" between afternoon and evening lectures. He is obliged to rest during the interval, and keep quiet, which means being alone. Those who do not lecture themselves have no idea of the mental and bodily work Mr. Foote puts into his lectures; besides, it is justice to his audience, his subjects, and himself, that a lecturer should walk on the platform in the best possible condition.

G. ALWARD.—We are sure that you and Mrs. Alward would have enjoyed the "Bradlaugh" evening at Queen's Hall. Your good wishes are heartily reciprocated.

A. STORER.—A man's body is constantly being renewed, by waste and repair, but so is every other animal's body. Why make a special fuss about the process in man's case? It is a very gradual one, and does not affect form and character. Human society is renewed in the same way, through the waste of death and the repair of birth; but that process is also very gradual, and does not affect the nation's identity.

JOHN ROBINSON.—The photographs you ask about are not on sale at present. Thanks for appreciation and good wishes.

T. FRANKLAND.—It reminds us of what Ruskin said in one of the Notes to *A Joy For Ever*:—"Your mean man, though he will spit and scratch spiritedly at the public, while it does not attend to him, will bow to it for its clap in any direction, and say anything when he has got its ear, which he thinks will bring him another clap; and thus he and it go on smoothly together."

MARK MELFORD, who was amongst the outside crowd at Queen's Hall on the "Bradlaugh" night, writes us: "Never was a door slammed in my face the occasion of such satisfaction."

M. GREEN.—Thanks for cuttings and good wishes. Both the items you enclose have appeared in the *Freethinker* already. We printed the verses, under the title of "The Parson's Idol," as a tract many years ago.

G. R. BALLARD.—We have written you as the case seemed urgent.

MARY FLEMING (Belfast).—Glad to hear you say "to us the *Freethinker* is a real boon." We don't know whether Mr. Cohen would entertain the idea of running his lecture on "The Logic of Life" through our columns. He will see your suggestion.

H. W. MATHEWS.—Pleased to learn that you have just gained us three new subscribers, making eight in all since January, 1909. If all our readers would go and do likewise we should soon be relieved from financial anxieties and the drudgery that eats away so much of the time and energy we ought to be devoting to better things.

J. F. PAGE.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. CABRUTHERS.—Thanks for cuttings, though Tuesday morning is late.

H. SMALLWOOD.—We have no copies of the "Bradlaugh" number left for such a purpose. Many thanks, all the same. Thanks also for what you say about our Birmingham lectures. Freethinkers ought to try to fill their own halls by bringing other folk to hear the lectures, without trusting so much to the ordinary advertising agencies.

A. F. S.—Will use it next week. Thanks.

G. D.—Must defer till next week, owing to the time consumed by our Glasgow visit.

T. DOBSON.—In our next. No help for it.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

W. DODD.—We have given him a small pill.

W. SEDDEN.—Blackburn and Darwin friends will find the Secular Hall in Rusholme-road, Manchester, very near All Saints Church, which is a well-known landmark.

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.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

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.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote lectures in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road Manchester, to-day (Oct. 9). His afternoon subject will be "The True Heaven and Hell." This should attract a crowded audience. There is sure to be a crowded audience at night, when the subject is, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years." Manchester friends are requested to note that the Branch committee have decided to discontinue the threepenny seats. They have always been a source of more or less trouble, and they have a constant tendency to encroach on the space designed for the other seats; and it takes so many hundreds of them merely to pay the bare local expenses that a change of some kind has long been inevitable. It should be borne in mind, too, that Mr. Foote's work on the *Freethinker* brings him in nothing, and that he has likewise to pay a considerable loss out of his own pocket—that is, of course, out of the Honorarium Fund. He must touch remuneration at some stage of his varied labors or collapse altogether. And, after all, sixpence is not a vast deal of money to pay for a lecture by a man of Mr. Foote's position and experience. Sixpence has for some time been the lowest price of seats at our West-End lectures in London. The same is true of Liverpool and we believe Glasgow.

South Lancashire "saints" are apprised that tea will be provided at the Manchester Secular Hall between Mr. Foote's afternoon and evening lectures, for the convenience of visitors coming from a distance, at the very moderate price of sixpence.

Mr. Foote had grand audiences at Glasgow on Sunday, in spite of many counter attractions in the city. Readers of the *Freethinker* came from all parts of South Scotland to hear him; and, owing to the Sabbatarianism which still prevails, a considerable number of them had a good deal of difficulty in getting there. Some of them had to make a week-end trip of it. But all who shook hands with Mr. Foote after one or the other of the lectures expressed the highest satisfaction at having attended the meetings. Both audiences were very enthusiastic. Prior to the evening lecture Mr. Foote was pressed into giving a recitation of Hamlet's soliloquy—"Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave," which was greatly applauded. Several questions followed the lecture, and one auditor offered ten minutes' criticism. The lecturer's replies kept the crowded meeting lively to the very last. It should be added that a good "retiring collection" was taken up for the district propaganda; that is, for lectures organised by the Glasgow Branch in neighboring towns.

Mr. Cohen follows Mr. Foote at Glasgow, lecturing there to-day (Oct. 9) both morning and evening. He is sure to have good audiences, but we should like to hear that they were very good. The local "saints" should try to bring their more orthodox friends or acquaintances along to hear him.

Mr. Cohen delivered a capital lecture at Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evening to the best audience he has had yet in West London. Mr. H. Cescinsky, the chairman, appealed so persuasively for discussion that two opponents came forward with criticism, which Mr. Cohen answered to the great satisfaction of the meeting. This evening (Oct. 9) the Queen's Hall platform will be occupied by Mr. Lloyd. Once more we appeal to the "saints" to secure a good audience. They can do so, not only by attending themselves, but also by giving publicity to the lecture amongst their friends and acquaintances.

The author of that very able and useful book, *The Churches and Modern Thought*, writes us: "I have been perusing with keen appreciation both your article on

Toleration and Cohen's 'Militarism and Christianity.'" "It gave me great pleasure," he adds, "to make the acquaintance of two members of your staff, Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd, at the Freethought Congress at Brussels. I have so often read their articles with relish."

Open-air lectures are being carried on, by the Wood Green Branch, at the Green, Edmonton. On Sunday last, after Mr. Ramsey's lecture, a dozen people handed in their names as ready to join in forming an Edmonton Branch. Mr. Ramsey lectures again to-day (Oct. 9), and local Freethinkers are invited to be present. Also to join.

A small but important meeting was held on Tuesday evening (Sept. 27) for the purpose of reorganising the once very successful Camberwell Branch. A new committee was appointed, of which the secretary is H. Saill, 11 Burton Houses, Brief-street, Camberwell, S.E., who will be glad to receive additions to the new membership and also particulars of any suitable hall for Sunday evening meetings.

Old readers of the *Freethinker* and members of the N. S. S. will be interested in learning that Miss Agnes Shore, daughter of Thomas Shore, having won through the stiff examination of the Oxford Senior Local, has been awarded a scholarship for three years at King's College (Women's Department) in the new and somewhat important subject of Home Science. As might be expected from the record of her father as a militant anti-everything, her school experience has been somewhat chequered, and she has been the centre of a small storm on the question of vaccination. Under the powers given to local bodies by a somewhat cowardly Government, of which the supreme educational authority does not demand vaccination, the local bodies are allowed to make an imperative demand that vaccination shall be a condition precedent to employment. Two years ago, Miss Shore won a junior scholarship and then a bursary grant. The vaccination test was set up to bar her progress; but after calling in the assistance of the National Anti-Vaccination League, the Surrey Educational Committee allowed the student to complete the term of the scholarship, but have, up to now, declined to pay the bursary grant. She has now fully justified the fight made in opposition to the medical superstition by her further success, and is taking a new step in the application of modern science to daily life.

Truth, like murder, will out (sometimes) even in the *Daily Mail*. Monday's issue of that journal contained a telegraph letter from its New York correspondent, which we venture to reproduce:—

"In a remarkable interview, Mr. Edison proclaims himself an absolute disbeliever in immortality, the soul, or a future life. He denies the individuality of a human being, declaring that each man is merely a collection of cells, just as a city is a collection of human beings.

"Will New York City go to heaven?" the inventor asked his interviewer, adding, "I cannot see any use of a future life. There is no more reason to suppose the human brain—what you call a soul—to be immortal than there is to think that one of my phonographic cylinders is immortal.

The brain is a recording office where records are made and stored. It is a mere machine." Mr. Edison explained the will power which drives the brain as possibly a form of electricity, and declared "whatever it is, it is material."

What does Sir Oliver Lodge say to this?

A lady who was at Mr. Foote's "Bradlaugh" lecture at Queen's Hall with her husband, sends us a most interesting and encouraging letter. After stating that it was "a wonderful evening" which she can never forget, and that she and her husband were proud to have shaken hands with the President, she continues:—

"Your lectures have taught us the way to live. We have only been married fourteen months, but had crushed hopes of ever being able to do so until we studied your lectures, books, etc. The *Freethinker* is the light of our home. We can only look back on our former lives and see how we wasted them on superstition. But never mind. We found out in time, and so shall help others to do the same."

The lady hopes we shall not regard her letter as "a liberty." We are so far from doing so that we should be glad to have twenty such letters every week.

Mr. Cohen's report of the Brussels Congress is reproduced, with acknowledgment, of course, in the New York *Truth-seeker* from our columns.

Ministers say that they teach charity. This is natural. They live on alms. All beggars teach that others should give.—*Ingersoll*.

False Guides.

"I first learned to study the Bible from D. L. Moody's writings. He wrote a tract called *How to Study the Bible*; and anyone just beginning to look for help to the old chart of life could do much worse than commence with this little help from that eminently practical, human, Christian man.Of all commentaries, none, to my mind, approaches Matthew Henry's. I fully endorse Charles Spurgeon's remark that any Biblical student who has not got that book should sell his coat and buy it."—Dr. W. T. GREENFELD (quoted in *British Weekly*, September 1).

THE *British Weekly* has always a queer assortment of articles, paragraphs, and snippets. I have read this organ of Nonconformity for the last ten years, and one thing has always forced itself upon me, and that is, the tremendous contradiction between the letters of "Claudius Clear" and the editorials. Yet both are from the same pen. In an editorial you will find a strong current of Evangelicalism, with stern words of condemnation on heretics and broad thinkers; while in the thoughtful, broad-minded, beautifully-written essays of "Claudius Clear," dealing perhaps with Charlotte Brontë or "The Art of Living," there is nothing of that priggishness begat by Evangelicalism. Yet Humanitarianism and Evangelicalism are poles apart. To attempt to keep a foot on each is to fall between them. To profess adherence to both is to play at contradiction. He who adheres to the narrow puritanical faith of Calvinism, with its crudity and severity, is, at least, trying to be consistent. Humanitarian thought is the natural expression of the man; Evangelicalism is the artificial.

In the above quotation we have one of those snippets which—like the curious column contributed by Professor David Smith—is inserted to suit the taste of that extreme section of readers who are ready to grumble if too much is said about Higher Criticism or on the lines of broad Mysticism. No section of Protestants are so cranky as the extreme Evangelicals: and no section is more intolerant, more ignorant, and more full of conceit. Give them Moody on "Faith," Spurgeon on "Grace," Torrey on "Hell," Talmage on "Heaven," and they are shouting "Hallelujah!" But talk about Plato's *Republic*, Omar Khayyam, Thoreau's *Walden*, and they look puzzled, and perhaps a little contemptuous. For what did Plato know about "justification by faith," and what has Thoreau said on the "bliss of sanctification"?

So this well-known missionary advises Bible students to read Moody. Fancy recommending Moody as a guide to the study of Hebrew literature, and Spurgeon as a guide to the commentaries! Matthew Henry is an old-fashioned, prolific, prosy writer who expounds on devotional lines, with a tendency to a fantastic interpretation which finds favor with this school. Spurgeon, in his *Commenting and Commentaries*, took great care to advise his readers against the "dangerous" writings of Dean Stanley, F. W. Robertson, Charles Kingsley; and for "Socinians," he had nothing but denunciation. But for "rare old John Trapp," Matthew Poole, William Law, and all who could write with the unction and dogmatism which was in line with his own thought, Spurgeon had nothing but praise. It was against Dean Stanley's "Poetical Interpretations" that Keith's *Evidences of Prophecy* was written. To-day, Stanley's books have become famous, while you can get Keith for twopence at any second-hand bookshop.

As for Moody, he had nothing of the eloquence of Spurgeon, nor his knowledge of Christian literature; but their sense of humor was about equal. In the official life of the American evangelist—a clumsily planned and badly written book by his son—a Moody story is told with great gusto. Moody was once travelling on the railroad when a bookstall boy passed, selling and shouting, as he walked up the car, "Ingersoll on Hell." Moody called the lad up to him and gave him a copy of his addresses on "Heaven," and great was his delight on hearing the lad go up through the cars shouting out the names

of the pamphlets as he went. He was too dense to realise that Ingersoll, with his incisive eloquence, was exploding the idea of Hell with all its terrifying and debasing power over the minds of men, while he was simply an empty prater, puffing up the idea of a blissful Never-never land in sweet Nowhere. Any weak mind can spin out the gossamer thread of shallow orthodox twaddle, but it takes a mind of unusual force and calibre to break down the shams of tradition. Moody swam with the tide of popular belief and superstition; Ingersoll swam against the stream. Paine, Hume, Ingersoll, Holyoake, and Bradlaugh, and all such pioneers of Freethought, were men who thought deeply over their convictions, and were prepared to risk all for them. And who, but the followers of him who said, "Do unto others even as ye would that others should do unto you," have heaped calumny and ignomy on these honest thinkers?

I have read Moody and Spurgeon. I followed Spurgeon's advice and purchased his favorite commentaries. Yes, I foolishly spent many bright sovereigns on Christian theology. And now I regret it, for never was money worse spent. In fact, I staked my all on the Christ of the Creeds, and I lost. For—to use the language of the Turf—"he didn't run," and I did not even get my money back.

I have read a great deal of Evangelical theology, dipping into the writings of all schools of thought, from Calvinist to Mystic, trying to understand the point of view of many antagonistic sectaries. And I think that, if a student wishes to spend his time wisely, he will dispense entirely with Spurgeon's favorite commentaries. By all means let him read Kingsley, Stanley, and F. W. Robertson; Channing, Parker, and F. W. Newman. He will not regret reading Robertson Smith, Canon Driver, Percy Gardner, and Estlin Carpenter. He should not miss Professor Bonce's *Apologetics*, Cassel's *Supernatural Religion*, James on *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and other great contributions to Religion.

Let a man discover what the deepest students of Hebrew literature have to say, and what the men of science have to tell him; let him ransack the Treasure-house of Literature, and he will learn that the *Biblioi* are many, and that he "needeth not any man to teach" him. Let him sell his coat to purchase only the works of the great Masters—the poets, the thinkers, the philosophers, the dreamers. To sell his coat to buy Evangelical theology is to barter away his soul, and to pledge himself to Mr. Ignorance.

FELIX PONDERING.

Moses and the Commandments.

ACCORDING to the Bible, Moses received from God himself, on the top of Mount Sinai, the Ten Commandments, written by God himself on two tables of stone. And credulous Christian folk, believing that this is true, have inferred therefrom that, before this event happened, the rules and laws by which the conduct of men towards one another is regulated were unknown. That this is untrue is well known to those who have studied the question from the standpoint of reason and common sense; and before I conclude I shall show you, from the Bible itself, not only that this Christian belief is untrue, but that these Commandments have been abrogated and annulled by the very being who is supposed to have given them to man in the first instance, and that the moral principles which have governed human conduct for ages have been, and are, due simply to experience and inexorable necessity.

Here, in passing, let me remark that this gift of the two tables of stone with the Ten Commandments written thereon is treated as having been an absolute and undeniable fact; this, therefore, is a very cogent reason why the events recorded in the Bible should be treated literally—not as mere types or symbols, but as facts which have actually occurred.

Before proceeding to the consideration of the Ten Commandments it will be useful for us to inquire

who, and what sort of a man, Moses was; because, as very much depends on what he is said to have said, as well as on what he is said to have done, we ought to have a clear perception of his personality.

Now Moses was the most wonderful man of the many wonderful men who figure as actors in the Old Testament. His life, as it is written in the pages of the so-called "sacred volume," is a romance of the most fascinating description for those who are fond of fairy tales, and might be included in a new and improved edition of the *Arabian Nights*.

Moses was born in Egypt in the year 1571 B.C., at a time when a "king that knew not Joseph" (Ex. i. 8) reigned over it, and just after the terrible edict regarding the Israelites had been promulgated, to wit: "Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river, and every daughter ye shall save alive" (Ex. i. 22). His parents were pious Israelites named Amram and Jochebed, and, according to the Rabbis, Moses was born at three o'clock in the morning of the seventh day of the month Adar. Traditions vary as to the name which his parents gave him at his birth. According to some he was called by them Tobias, which means "God is good"; by others that the name given to him was Jokutiel, the meaning of which is "Hope in God." Clement of Alexandria asserts that he was named Joachim at his circumcision, and that in heaven he is known by the name of Melchi. Clement, however, in this as in many other matters, drew upon his imagination, because, in verses 12 and 30 of the sixth of Exodus, Moses expressly asserts that he had never been circumcised. Bishop Hall, in his *Contemplations*, indulges in the very natural reflection that it is a wonder Amram, being a very pious man, should not have abstained from procreating "when he knew he should beget children either to slavery or slaughter." But, like a good Christian, the bishop supposes that Amram "referred the sequel of his danger to God."

According to Josephus, Moses was a magnificent and most beautiful baby; no wonder, therefore, that his mother hid him from the officers of Pharaoh as long as she could. After three months she could hide him no longer, and then occurred an idyllic scene which appeals to the hearts of everyone. She made an ark of bulrushes, and, having daubed it with pitch so as to make it watertight, she put Moses therein, and then placed it amongst the rushes which were growing on the banks of the Nile. Now, as the river abounds, and then abounded, with crocodiles and alligators, this was a most dangerous proceeding; but "all's well that ends well," and, according to tradition, God ordered these voracious and merciless creatures to keep away from the spot, much in the same way that the Lord spake unto the "great fish which he had prepared to swallow up Jonah," and as he spake "when he ordered it to vomit him on the dry land" (Jonah i. 17; ii. 10).

Soon afterwards Thermutis, the daughter of King Pharaoh, came to the very spot to bathe, and seeing the ark, sent one of her maids to fetch it. Some persons may think that this was a most providential circumstance, but then in all fairy tales a princess always puts in an appearance at the right moment. According to Bishop Hall, "those times looked for no great state"; but in this he is greatly mistaken. Egypt was not only a mighty empire, but a highly civilised empire whose laws were the foundation of the Ten Commandments; its monarch was at once priest and king, and to suppose that his daughter—judging from the narrative it would seem to have been his only daughter—would come "down to wash herself in the river" (Ex. ii. 5) at a spot that was free to everyone, and where a Hebrew slave could watch her with impunity, is far too credulous for belief.

The ark having been brought to her, "she opened it and saw the child, and behold the babe wept" (Ex. ii. 6). She was touched with compassion, and at once determined to adopt it and to bring it up as her own. According to tradition, this princess was a married woman, her husband being Chenephras, prince of a territory near to Memphis. But she was

childless, and had long desired a son who might succeed her father on the throne of Egypt.

According to the Bible the woman who was employed by the princess to nurse the child was the child's mother. "And the woman took the child, and nursed it. And the child grew, and she brought him unto Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she called his name Moses, and she said, Because I drew him out of the water" (Ex. ii. 9, 10).

According to Josephus, the princess adopted Moses as "the heir to her kingdom." The Rabbis improve upon this by asserting that Thermutis, after she had found the child, pretended to be pregnant, went through a fictitious confinement, and palmed it off upon the Egyptian world as her own offspring. But the statements are absurd, for Egypt was a land of castes, and the princess had no more power to break through them than had the meanest of her father's subjects.

Respecting the word "Moses," learned men differ as to what language it belongs. Josephus says that "Thermutis imposed the name Mouses upon him, from what had happened when he was put in the river; for the Egyptians called water by the name of Mo, and such as were saved out of it by the name of Uses." The Abbé Renaudot, however, affirms that Moou signifies water, and Si to draw or take out.

Nothing is said in Exodus as to the manner in which Moses was brought up, but the author of the Acts (vii. 22) tells us that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."

The Rabbis relate that one day, when Moses was a boy, he kicked over in play the crown of Pharaoh and danced upon it; and that in consequence all the king's councillors cried out for his immediate execution. This was determined upon; but the angel Gabriel, assuming the form of an old man, advised Pharaoh to put before the young romp a bowl of precious stones and a bowl of live coals in order to test the ignorance of the boy. This was done, and Moses very naturally was going to take possession of the stones, when Gabriel, making himself invisible, pushed the boy's hand to the red-hot coals. Moses burned his fingers, and, putting them to his mouth, burnt also his lips and tongue. This is given as the reason why in after years Moses said to the Lord, "I am not eloquent. I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue" (Ex. iv. 10).

Here let me call attention to the state of Egypt at the time when Moses was supposed to have been the son of the Princess Thermutis. There is no doubt that at that time Egypt was the centre of a civilisation that almost rivals the civilisation of the present day—a civilisation which extended down both shores of the Mediterranean, and across Asia as far as the East Indies and China. The marvellous works which are still in existence in the land of Egypt prove that those descendants of Noah who looked upon the world

"when it was fresh and young,
And the great deluge still had left it green,"

were more highly civilised, and were possessed of far greater knowledge than is generally supposed. You have, I doubt not, read the clever *Address to a Mummy*, which was written by Horace Smith, and the equally happy reply. Some of the mutterings of the mummy which the poet hears in his fancy he thus translates:—

"Who'd think these rusty hams of mine were seated
At Dido's table, when the wondrous tale
Of Juno's hatred was so well repeated?
And ever and anon the Queen turned pale.
Meanwhile the brilliant gaslights hung above her
Cast a wild glare upon her shipwrecked lover.
Gaslights? Ay gaslights! We men of yore
Were versed in all the learning you can mention.
Who hath not heard of Egypt's peerless lore?
Her patient toil? Acuteness of invention?
Survey the proofs! The pyramids are thriving!
Old Memnon still looks young! And I'm surviving!
A land of arts and sciences prolific,
On blocks gigantic building up her fame!
Crowded with signs and letters hieroglyphic,
Temples and obelisks her skill proclaim!
Yet, though her art and toil unearthly seem,
Those blocks were brought on railroads and by steam!"

It may be that the poet's imagination has somewhat exaggerated the knowledge of those days; but we possess sufficient evidence of it to satisfy us that the civilisation of Egypt must have been great, and that men were ruled and governed, protected in their lives and property, punished for misdeeds and praised for virtues, even as they are now. And all this goes to prove beyond the shadow of a shade of doubt that the moral principles which are the basis of the Ten Commandments were the same moral principles by which the conduct of men one towards another was regulated, long before the Ten Commandments had been brought by Moses from the top of Mount Sinai.

That this is a truth can be proved from the Bible itself. The fact that Joseph was sold by his brethren to the Midianites for "twenty pieces of silver" (Gen. xxvii. 28) shows that coinage was at that time thoroughly understood; and coinage implies much more than a knowledge of the different metals, and how to work them. Indeed, the whole story of Joseph proves that the guilty actors in it were well versed in the laws of the land, that such laws were based upon long experience, and were the outcome of the moral principles which are the foundation of the Ten Commandments.

When the wife of Joseph's master "caught him by his garment, saying, Lie with me, and he left his garment in her hand and fled, and got him out" (Genesis xxxix. 12), that, and the subsequent punishment of Joseph, show that the Seventh Commandment was well understood.

When Joseph's cup was found in Benjamin's sack, the agony of mind displayed by Judah and his brethren shows that they fully comprehended what is meant by the Eighth Commandment, "Thou shalt not steal."

And, wonderful to tell, moneylending and even pawnbroking were not only well understood, but practised; for do we not read: "If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee, thou shalt not be to him as an usurer, neither shalt thou lay upon him usury. If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down" (Ex. xxii. 25, 26).

J. W. DE CAUX.

(To be continued.)

Atheism.

[Copy of a bill exposed in the workshop window of F. H. Shaw & Brother, Engineers, Leabrooks, near Alfreton, Derbyshire.]

The other day we were cycling through the beautiful lanes of Leicestershire; and, while musing on life with its joys and its pains, we were accosted by a passing cyclist.

As we were both going in the same direction, we cycled together; and, after talking in the usual conventional strain for a few minutes, we asked our friend if he believed in God.

We always avail ourselves of every opportunity for preaching Freethought, and so we were eager to get to business. Our friend was short, but candid, in his reply. He said: "Well, to tell you the truth, I have never given the subject serious thought; I think there is a God, but I do not know; and, what is more, I do not care!" And this is the answer you will receive from thousands of people to-day.

Now, Christians assert that there is a God, that he is the loving Father of the fatherless, the husband of the widow and the friend of the poor everywhere. They say, Does not God's Holy Word prove the existence of God? Did he not come down from heaven and live on earth for a number of years, and did he not preach love and kindness to men, and did he not heal the sick and give sight to the blind? Nay, they say, did he not raise the dead and thus prove his power over all the forces of nature, and establish, once for all, absolute proof of the truth of man's immortality?

And thousands of men are preaching this good God all over the world, and hundreds of millions of pounds are being spent on parsons and churches simply to teach that there is a good God.

Perhaps you, dear reader, have never seriously considered this subject. As a child, you were taught to believe in God; possibly you were instructed from the Bible and the Church Creeds; and, as you grew up, your religion grew up with you.

And now you think you are a Christian, and that some day you will pass out of this wicked and sinful world to take up your abode in that mythical paradise where you expect to meet millions of those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, while the infidel shall go down to the bottomless pit to consort with all those who preferred the pure water of reason to the foul blood of faith.

You have been told, perhaps, among other falsehoods, that Atheists are immoral, cruel, selfish, and everything that is vile; and, if so, we would ask you to read on.

If your God really exists, and if he is, as you profess, omnipotent, why did he not create a world wherein goodness should prevail? Indeed, why should he have allowed evil to exist at all? And how comes it about that on every hand, even among those who profess to worship God—nay, especially among Christians—there should be so much injustice, so much cruelty, so much damnable hypocrisy?

How is it that it is such a struggle to do right, and so easy to be vile? Why is disease contagious and not good health? And why, if your God be good and powerful, are there so many millions of people suffering in poverty and sickness, so many widows and orphans in dire distress?

You say your God is a father to the fatherless, a husband to the widow. His neglect is therefore disgraceful, and he is viler than the human brute who drowns himself in drink and allows his family to starve.

You feel sad when you think of all the awful agony of mankind, and in your own little way you do all you can to make life sweeter for those you daily come in contact with. But your power is limited, and when you have done all you can, and when all sympathetic men have done all they can, there still remains an ocean of suffering as vast as the mighty deep.

And then you pray to your God and tell him that which, if he really exists, he knows already, and you ask him to have mercy. But the heavens are pitiless, and no answer comes to your repeated cries; and only man helps man, and only man attempts to solve the riddle of life with its tragedy and to bring some measure of happiness out of the chaos of universal suffering.

And yet you believe in your God, and you lavish gold on his temples; you feed fat priests with wealth that you have dragged from the earth after much toil, and you close your eyes, if you can, to the suffering and misery, and with a self-deluding cry you exclaim, "God's in his heaven, all's right with the world!"

Fool, when will you learn to trust your reason, to profit by experience, and to increase your knowledge of the things which really count?

The Christian religion is false, its teachings idle fables. You say your Bible is the Word of your God. Have you ever read it? Did it take a God to write such a foolish fable as the Genesis account of the creation?

Is it fitting that a God should narrate the filthy stories of incest and rape that stain so many pages of your Bible? Were those horrible butchers, Moses and Joshua, really the chosen people of your omnipotent Jehovah? Did the Jesus you pretend to worship and obey really spring from such an impure source as the foul and adulterous murderer, David?

Read your Bible, with its terrible record of cruelty and rapine. Its pages are soaked in the blood of innocence, and yet you say it is the work of a God! Bah! the whole idea is preposterous and savors of imbecility!

We tell you flatly your Bible is a fraud, and if Humanity is to become really humane it must be freed from its present bondage to the Bible and its God.

We believe that slowly but surely man is throwing off the shackles which supernaturalism and priestcraft, in days gone by, forged around his ancestors, and as truth and science move onward, hand in hand, man is gradually learning to do right for right's sake and to apply reason to all his actions in life. The Rev. R. J. Campbell said the other day that people have lost sight of the Eternal in these days. He allows that men are becoming more kind, more just, more humane, and that man is beginning to realise that it is his duty to make life brighter for the poor and afflicted; but he regrets that man is getting away from God and that he neglects religion. And for this, of course, the paid preacher is sorry. Well, we are glad, because we believe that in the death of religion will be found the real life of mankind.

Believing, as we do, that man has evolved from a lower order of life, we can quite understand why men should still be cruel and untrustworthy. Through the long ages when our ancestors roamed the hills and valleys of our land, waging war with the other beasts and with nature for a precarious living, there were being developed in the human brain traits of selfishness and cruelty which, handed down from generation to generation, are still with us to-day. And we only progress towards humaneness and unselfishness on the dead bodies of those who have gone before, by learning from their shortcomings and their sufferings, and by applying to the problems of life the knowledge thus gained.

In the struggle of mind over matter may be traced the history of humanity's emergence from brute to human. The struggle is still a keen one, and it may be thousands of years before man shall be completely emancipated from the evils of his low origin.

And science shall ultimately prevail, and that antiquated hotch-potch, the Bible, with all its guesses and all its foolishnesses, shall no longer be palmed off on ignorance and youth as the true story of the cosmos and as the only guide to morality and good-living.

Instead, men shall be unselfish and humane for humanity and truth's sake, and not from fear of either God or Devil.

Though you revile us and persecute us, we are proud of our banner of Freethought, and we yet hope to see the day when the religion of the whole earth shall be, not Godism, but Atheism, and when peace and goodwill among men shall be a reality and not a mere mockery as it is to-day, after nearly two thousand years of Christian teaching.

Not Christ, but your neighbor, needs your love; not God, but Man!

THE LEABROOKS HUMANITARIAN SOCIETY.

"Ernst Haeckel, now in his seventy-seventh year, was present at the recent meeting in Jena of the Deutsche Monistenbund, where he expressed his opinion of the Kaiser. 'We must not forget,' he said in his address, 'what great disadvantages result to the progress of Freethought and a consistent interpretation of nature from the influential personality of our much admired Emperor. I am far from under-valuing his extraordinary gifts and his many sided knowledge. But the personal religious conviction of the Kaiser is specifically dogmatic, and his strong accentuation of orthodox Christianity must deter many from expressing an adverse opinion.' Speaking of his book, *Weltrathsel (Riddle of the Universe)* of which, perhaps, more copies have been sold in the last decade than of any other German publication, and which is the reverse of orthodox—Haeckel said that a sequel to it would soon appear, containing selections from the more than ten thousand letters written to him concerning that book. Most of these letters, he said, were written by teachers, physicians, engineers, and naturalists. Among them were some from teachers in Prussian schools, who expressed their full agreement with his views, but begged him not to mention their names, lest they lose their chances of promotion. Among the most interesting contributions, he added, were those from women who were interested in natural science. These, he said, 'show us that women in this case, as in many others, often think more lucidly and recognise the truth more easily than educated men, who are likely to be hampered by wrong notions instilled into them in the educational institutions.'"—*New York Evening Post*.

Be not in too great haste to dry
The tear that springs from sympathy.

—Landor.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON SEPT. 29

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Cohen, Cowell, Davey, Heaford, Leat, Moss, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Samuels, Silverstein, Shore, Thurlow, Wood, Charlton, Dobson, Lewis, and Rosetti.

The Monthly Cash Statement was read and adopted.

Forty-one new members were received into the Society and permission was granted for the formation of new branches at Lincoln and Stockport. The Wood Green delegate also reported the possibility of the formation of a new branch at Edmonton.

The Secretary reported receipt of grant from the Secular Society, Ltd., and the President handed in cheque for sums collected through the *Freethinker* towards the expenses of the Brussels Delegation.

Mr. Cohen, on behalf of the delegates, gave a brief report of the Brussels Congress, and said that much regret was expressed by the Congress at the absence of the President of the N. S. S., who had, however, promised to send M. Furnémont a report of the English movement for use in the Official Report of the Congress.

The Secretary received instructions to arrange for the Annual Dinner in January and for a Social Evening at the end of October at Anderton's Hotel.

The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

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.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (Minor) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The Logic of Life."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, Miss Kough, "Woman and Christianity."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. V. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, A. B. Moss, "Man and Evolution."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. Yates, "Science and Religion."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, S. J. Cook, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Kingsland): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "My Prison Life."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 11.30, Mr. Houchin, "Heroes of Freethought."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill, opposite Public Library): 11.30, Walter Bradford, "Jesus Christ of the Four Gospels." The Green, Edmonton: Mr. Ramsey, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Mrs. Bamber, "Freedom of Women."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): G. W. Foote, 3, "The True Heaven and Hell"; 6.30, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years." Tea at 5.

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's, late Danix's, Temperance Bar, Dunraven-street, Tonypany): 3, Morgan Jones, "Jesus Christ Our Savior."

OUTDOOR.

BLAKBURN BRANCH N. S. S. (Blackburn Market Ground): 3 and 7.30, Mr. Genever, Lectures.

HUDDERSFIELD AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Cross): Saturday, at 8, Geo. T. Whitehead, "J. C. and the Calendar."—Monthly Meeting, Friendly and Trades Hall, Thursday, Oct. 11, at 8.

BUSINESS CARDS.

Short advertisements are inserted under this heading at the rate of 2s. per half inch and 3s. 6d. per inch. No advertisement under this heading can be less than 2s. or extend beyond one inch. Special terms for several continuous insertions.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Hunting Skunks*, G. W. Foote; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

This Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: MISS E. M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st., London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

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Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

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Address.....

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