

THE Freethinker

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Regard not much who is for thee, or against thee; but mind what thou art about.—THOMAS A KEMPIS.

Views and Opinions.

SOME of our readers, we hope, will remember Mr. Frederick Bonte, who died on November 27 last year. He had been a Catholic priest, and as he had never formally resigned his priesthood or been excommunicated, and was to the last the recipient of a pension as ex-chaplain of Kirkdale Prison, the Probate Office insisted on his being described as "the Rev. Frederick Bonte." But this did not alter the fact that he developed from Catholicism into Atheism, that he wrote an account of this development under the title of *From Fiction to Fact*, that his name often appeared in the *Freethinker*, that he was a great admirer of this paper and its editor, and that he left the residue of his small estate, after the payment of slender legacies, to the Secular Society, Limited. Naturally his remains would have been cremated, but that was prevented by a curious chapter of accidents, which may some day fill a page in our Autobiography. Mr. Bonte's remains were buried in West Kirby Churchyard, and the Board of the Secular Society, Limited, authorised us to arrange for a modest erection over his grave. When the inscription on the headstone was required we drew up the following:—

FREDERICK BONTE
Died November 27, 1909
Aged 72 years.
A FRIEND OF MAN.

The vicar of West Kirby church, however, objected to the last line of this simple inscription. He declined to allow it, and his word is law on the matter. Any part of the inscription not merely formal would have to be a quotation from the Bible or the Hymn Book. That rule must have been made by the vicar himself; it was not laid down by parliament, and it does not follow from the nature of things. And it seems to us that the reverend gentleman was ill-advised to keep to such a rule in this particular case. He knew that Mr. Bonte was not a Christian and was not buried as a Christian, and it is difficult to see anything shockingly irreligious in "A Friend of Man." We hope the vicar does not think that such a tribute to a dead man would be offensive to God.

After all, perhaps, it is intelligible that a clergyman should instinctively shrink from a record of virtue, without any reference to religion, on a tombstone in his own parish churchyard. If morality can exist without theology, what is the use of clergymen? And how can you expect a man to be indifferent to the interests of his own profession? Mr. Bonte himself would not have been angry at the vicar's refusal. He would have indulged in one of his wise benevolent smiles. For he was the incarnation of good nature, and no one could be more tolerant to human weakness.

Turning to a very different matter, it is a curious thing that in our lecture at Glasgow on Sunday, October 2, we had occasion to say, with regard to Charles Bradlaugh's political ideas, that Republican-

ism was under a cloud at present in England, but England was not exactly the world. "It will not be so surprising," we said, "if there is a Republic in Spain within ten years, and a Republic in Portugal within five years." That five years soon rolled by. It took something like forty-eight hours. The Republic has been proclaimed in Portugal, and the King and his mother are fugitives, and we believe they will never return. Thus a Freethinker can be as good a prophet as any Old Testament prognosticator.

It was the brutal and cowardly murder of Dr. Bombarda by a royalist officer that precipitated the Lisbon revolution. The assassin was (of course) a Catholic. The victim was (of course) a Freethinker. This was a signal for the revolutionists to begin business, in order that Portugal might not go from bad to worse. Christian superstition and clericalism were the main source of the nation's evils. Freethinkers, as the boldest and most active Republicans are, could not help recognising that. They knew they must strike at the hydra's head. The feeble young monarch and his pious mother fled without being pursued. The real enemy remained behind—the Catholic priests and especially the Jesuits. No wonder the new Government is instituting civil marriage and disestablishing the Church. The expulsion of the illegal religious orders is a logical part of the same policy. The Catholic priests who simply minister to the "religious needs" of the people in the various parishes will not be molested. The Republic is not going to inaugurate a *régime* of intolerance. Liberty of thought and liberty of worship will be respected.

Successful and relatively bloodless revolutions are the work of Freethinkers. This was true of Brazil, and true of Turkey, and it is now true of Portugal. The chief of the Young Turks was a Positivist, a devotee of the Religion of Humanity. Senhor Theophilo Braga, the new President of the Republic in Portugal, is also a Positivist. He has been a great figure in the work of intellectual and moral preparation, and his colleagues, in placing him at the head of affairs, recognise him as a great spiritual deliverer. There was a most touching interview with his aged wife reported in Tuesday's *Daily Mail*. It took place at the long one-storey building on a cliff overlooking the Tagas, where the President and his wife have lived for the last twenty years, and in a modestly furnished room overlooking the blue waters. The sweet-faced old lady would not say that she was not proud of her husband's new dignity. "Above all," she said, "I regret the interruption of forty-three years of peaceful domestic happiness." They still mourned the loss of their son and daughter, who died twenty years ago. "But we found comfort," she added; "my husband in his books, and I in my household work near him." But the best of her wifely confessions is to come. "We married for love," she said; "we have always been poor, and —" Well, what? Poor and miserable? Oh dear no! "We have always been poor, and always happy with one another." It is well to see a nation taking man out of a home like that for its chief. "For strength," as Meredith sings, "is of the plain root virtues born."

G. W. FOOTE.

Some Religious Fallacies.

THE field of religious belief produces, among civilised people, so prolific a crop of contradictions, that their existence excites comparatively little notice. We may object to a dog barking, but we are not surprised, and we pass the fact of barking without comment. In politics, even, we demand some little consistency and some coherence in the views advocated. In religion we are comparatively indifferent to both. Two theories may be advocated, one of which contradicts the other, and we are not surprised at finding both championed by the same person. Opinions may be expressed that are at plain variance with facts, and we express no surprise. So long as we are dealing with religion we all—believer and unbeliever alike—seem to recognise that we are in a region where contradiction and incoherence reign in virtue of hereditary right.

For example, we are not surprised when people express a conviction that religion keeps people moral. We know, on reflection, that it does nothing of the kind. We observe that the bad man is at least as often religious as non-religious. We see that business men are not, in their daily transactions, imposed on by it. One might as successfully try to get credit in the City on the strength of a belief in Diana of the Ephesians as on a belief in transubstantiation. Yet we express no surprise at the claim that religion is a great moral force! So, again, with the question of the belief in God. We are told that the existence of God is suggested by all reflection and by all experience, while a growing multitude of people fail to find any such suggestion in either direction. We hear, time after time, that it is one of humanity's inexpugnable convictions that God exists, when we see millions of civilised people who achieve the impossible feat of getting rid of the inexpugnable, and without being a penny the worse for the performance. Or we are informed that the existence of God is a self-evident truth, and find that all through the higher phases of civilisation a large body of men have been trying to prove the truth of that which is self-evident, and with a decreasing measure of success.

Under these circumstances one may welcome the attempt of a theologian like the Rev. Dr. Warschauer to "bring a little light into the haze, and order into the confusion, which possess so many modern minds in dealing with this momentous subject." Unfortunately, the haze and confusion that Dr. Warschauer desires to remove is not that of his fellow-religionists, but of unbelievers. He is also good enough to point out that there are "multitudes of men and women" who dare hardly assert that God exists, and "still larger numbers" who, while professing a belief in some "power behind phenomena," are inclined to regard it as "blind and impersonal." Either the last class might have been enlarged so as to include those who have not the rudimentary religious emotions indicated by Dr. Warschauer, or another class might have been named still more hostile to the belief in God. At any rate, the existence of "multitudes of men and women" who practically reject a belief that has so much extrinsic force behind it is a phenomenon to which attention might profitably be devoted. For they are not drawn from any one class in society, so that one is precluded from attributing their unbelief to class influence, or to a deficiency or super-abundance of intellectualism. Nor are they the least serious or the least cultured, or the least intelligent of the class to which they happen to belong. On the contrary, their interest in life and its problems, and their conception of their duty as citizens, favorably compares with any religious class in the community. Looseness of morals and weakness of intellect *used* to be the favorite religious explanation of the cause of unbelief, but that was an explanation safe in the using only so long as religion was socially strong enough to keep the avowed unbeliever a comparatively rare person.

Dr. Warschauer's conception of the unbeliever is not a very cheerful one. He does not believe he is bad or frivolous, but he is a doleful kind of a person. "The keynote of genuine Agnosticism," he says, "is not the denial of God's being, but the mournful affirmation that we can know nothing about him." And he concludes that if there is nothing but matter and force, all that is left is to do our work "sadly and soberly in the dry light of reason." Now that Dr. Warschauer has given up the crude religious conception of the unbeliever as a moral or mental imbecile, it is time he recognised the notion of the unbeliever "mournfully" confessing his ignorance of God, and going about the business of life in a spirit of sober sadness, is equally wide of the truth. There is nothing at all depressing to the unbeliever in an absence of belief in deity. On the contrary; to him there would be rather reason for depression in the belief that there existed a deity, wise and capable enough to abolish all the evil in the world, but who chose to permit its existence while he played the part of spectator in a huge gladiatorial exhibition. Nor does the unbeliever set about his duty in any spirit of sadness. So long as his efforts produce their anticipated influence on human life he has every incentive to persevere, and even though his ardor may, at times, be damped by failure, it is as often intensified by success. Besides, as a mere matter of fact, pessimism is far more characteristic of the Christian than of the non-religious frame of mind. Doubtless, in the absence of picturing the Freethinker as an inferior person, to depict him as a mournful one is a serviceable substitute, and though it may lack versimilitude it is useful as a bogey for religious people.

One curious remark by Dr. Warschauer is that, "broadly speaking, the intellectual uncertainty which is represented by present day Agnosticism is due, in nine cases out of ten, to the collapse of one dogma, viz., the infallibility of the Bible." Of course, if the infallibility of the Bible could be established, it would settle Agnosticism and all other forms of religious disbelief. But to represent unbelief as being due to this is almost absurd. In the mass, people do not believe in a God, and they do not believe in a soul, because the influence of a large part of their intellectual environment is against both these beliefs. The idea of the *character* of God was modified by people who had not ceased to believe in deity, and without any direct reference to the Bible. It would be nearer the truth to say that the discarding of the dogma of Biblical infallibility was more a symptom than a cause, and that it was discarded because intellectual conditions made it impossible to retain it. Present day unbelief simply rejects the traditional view of the Bible along with a whole family of allied beliefs, and for a reason that substantially covers all. In the case of the belief in God, it sees how incoherent it is in itself, it sees how useless it is as an explanation of any single thing under the sun, and above all, it knows the whole pedigree of this belief, and, therefore, how baseless it is.

In common with all Christians, Dr. Warschauer is fond of speaking of the universe as being, on the Materialist theory, the outcome of "blind chance," or of its being brought into existence by some "blind accident." Each of these words is totally irrelevant, and seem to be introduced for no other purpose than that of arousing prejudice. To speak of the universe as "blind" is as meaningless as to speak of a stone as being without sight. The conception of a stone does not involve the conception of its possessing an organ of vision, and blindness in connection therewith is quite out of place. The suggestion here is that of helplessness, and helplessness is suggested of the universe to prejudice the mind in favor of the Theistic theory. Whether the universe of matter and force is capable or not of producing its own phenomena is, of course, the very question at issue. And in passing I would point out to Dr. Warschauer that unless material forces did possess the capacity of producing the phenomena around us, it is incon-

ceivable how these phenomena could be produced at all. This is so obvious a truth that Theists who are blessed with a fair appreciation of the force of scientific reasoning have discarded the old position of assuming that material forces could not produce the world as we see it, and are falling back upon an identity of God and the universe, or arguing for the existence of an agency that will "direct" forces in the required direction.

So also with such words as "chance" and "accident." Dr. Warschauer must be well aware of the fact that in a materialistic or a scientific view of the world there is no such thing as "accident." What does occur must occur, in the sense that without the operation of some extra natural power all that is is the result of all that has been. "Accident" to the Materialist can have reference to our want of knowledge or prevision only. When we say that something occurred by accident, all that we mean is that something transpired that was not allowed for in our calculation, or that we had omitted—from want of knowledge or from some other cause—to take into account all the forces operating at a given time or place. So also with "chance." In science there is no such thing. The only sense in which the word is ever used is in that expressed by Darwin, the production of a phenomenon through unknown causes. But the Materialist does not commit the blunder of making his own mental imperfections the measure of the universe. This is a vice that is peculiarly characteristic of godites. In science "chance" is not the antithesis of law, but a statement that we do not know the law under which the phenomenon is to be classed.

Dr. Warschauer offers several arguments for God, none of which present any new features, and most of which are discarded by many prominent Theists. At present I have only space and inclination to deal with one. He asks: "Are the processes of nature chaotic, incalculable, varying from day to day? Are not all our activities based on the assurance of the steadfastness of nature?" And from this is drawn the expected conclusion that the invariable character of natural processes implies the existence of an arranging and directive control. But, far from seeing any force in this conclusion, it is precisely this invariableness of nature that constitutes the chief ground of a philosophic Atheism. Existence, whether it be called matter, or force, or by any other name, is not a subject of dispute between Atheism and Theism. Both assume it, as indeed all discussion assumes it. And starting with existence as a datum, we are forced to assume that it manifests certain properties by which we know it. Given, then, the existence of something possessing definite properties, the problem becomes—Under what conditions should we be forced to assume the existence of a directive or an arranging power? Clearly, the properties of existence, being what they are, will remain what they are so long as they remain unaffected by any additional influence. Thus, acetic acid and oxide of lead produce sugar of lead, and we say it is the properties of the two in combination that produce the properties of the product. But suppose that on some occasion they gave rise to an entirely different product. What then? Well, a scientific man would at once assume that some force or condition was operating in the second instance that was not present in the first. But so long as the properties of matter remain constant, any scientist will tell Dr. Warschauer that there is no logical necessity to look beyond for the explanation of phenomena.

What is true of part of nature is true of nature as a whole. If the processes of nature were chaotic, if they did vary incalculably from day to day, then, indeed, should we be driven to look beyond nature for the cause of this variability. To put it somewhat paradoxically, natural disorder, being the equivalent of an intelligent coercion of the properties of matter, would imply arrangement. Natural order, being the equivalent of an uninterrupted expression of the properties of matter, implies, so far as it

implies anything, the absence of anything beyond nature. Dr. Warschauer, like many other religionists in the same predicament, simply commits suicide to save himself from slaughter.

C. COHEN.

What is Truth?

IN the Fourth Gospel Jesus is represented as saying, "Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice," and as claiming that he himself was the truth. What the term, as used by him, was supposed to mean, is a mystery. Alford says, in his Commentary, that Jesus "declares the unity and outward reality of Truth, and that Truth must come from above, and must come through a Person sent by God, and that that Person was himself." According to this statement, Truth has an objective existence and is a unity; but what it is we are not told. Pilate is said to have formally asked, "What is truth?" But no answer is on record. It was the great question of the age, and had been of many previous ages, especially from Plato's time. Plato believed that truth really existed, but sorrowfully confessed that we cannot discover it as long as the soul is degraded and enfeebled through its union with the body. Aristotle held that truth is being, and falsity non-being. Arcesilaus maintained that we can know nothing—not even this itself, that we know nothing. Carneades taught that truth is completely beyond our reach, neither our intellect nor our senses being able to supply the criterion of it. Is it any wonder, then, that Pilate asked, "What is truth?" And yet, simply because he asked such a question, the theologians assert that he "had no ear for truth." Alford declares that "his celebrated question is perhaps more the result of indifferentism than of scepticism; that it expresses, not without scoff and irony, a conviction that truth can never be found; and is an apt representative of the state of the polite Gentile mind at the time of the Lord's coming." Then he characteristically adds: "It was rather an inability than an unwillingness to find the truth."

Now that for which philosophy has always been earnestly seeking, religion claims to have found. Jesus boasted that he was the only one who possessed, and could impart, the truth. He was its sole agent. The truth as it was in him, or which he was, was the only saving power in the world. Salvation consists in the knowledge of the truth. A Christian is a person whom the truth has made free, and who has the truth within him. Sometimes Christianity is described as the truth of God revealed, and at other times we read about the truths of the Christian religion. Pilate, because he was a Gentile, "had no ear for truth"; and to this day, non-Christians are said to be without the truth that saves. "Everyone that is of the truth," said Jesus—that is, according to the commentators, "everyone who is a true dealer with his own heart, who has an ear to hear, heareth my voice"—that is, "is my disciple." The Jews, who would have none of him, and were thirsting for his blood, are, for that reason alone, called "haters of the truth."

Such has always been, and is, the orthodox position. We are fully convinced, however, that it is a wholly untenable position, and is no longer held by the most enlightened divines. The Rev. Dr. Orchard, of Enfield, for example, in a very clever article in the *Christian Commonwealth* for October 5, admits that "truth is a conception of the mind to which we can only approximate," and that "intellectually we are more sure of things being untrue than we are of their being true." This gentleman is bold enough to announce that "we have no infallible standard of what is true—at least, none that can satisfy beyond all possibility of objection." What a marvellous concession for a minister, who has subscribed the Westminster Confession of Faith, to make! It is a thoroughly sensible concession, but it is virtually equivalent to a denial of the Christian

religion. It is all very well to hint that truth may be "a reality which is only reached by love, and only becomes clear in so far as we are willing to be truth," but the fact remains that, according to the New Testament, the knowledge of the truth comes through faith in Christ. Believers are knowers. In 1 John ii. 20, 21 we read: "Ye have an anointing from the Holy One, and ye know all things. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and because no lie is of the truth." Dr. Orchard ignores all such passages because they do not tally with his philosophy.

It is clear that by the truth St. John understands his own teaching about God in Christ, and the way of salvation by faith in the blood of the Cross. To reject the Incarnation is to be a liar. "Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, even he that denieth the Father and the Son." No language could be more explicit. Now, what evidence is there that the Biblical doctrines of God, Christ, and salvation are true? Absolutely none. Even the existence of a god is a wholly gratuitous assumption. What the Rev. Dr. Warschauer regards as the argument for God is based on a wretched misrepresentation. These are his words:—

"Well, now, here are certain millions of atoms—carbon and hydrogen, iron and calcium, sulphur and phosphorus, oxygen and nitrogen, sodium and potassium, forming that familiar combination which we call an egg. These atoms are subjected to gentle warmth, and, lo and behold, they change their structure and position, becoming the tissues and organs, the bones and beak, the eyes and feathers of a bird. 'The arrangements and combinations of these atoms must be infinite; yet every single one of them must go to its right place, for eventually every one is used, and rightly used, and the very same atoms which made the soft structureless egg are now built up' into organic animal life with its needs and faculties. Now, has all this taken place by accident? Queer accident, I say, which repeats the self-same inexplicable process with unflinching regularity."

Is it possible that Dr. Warschauer is ignorant of the fact that "accident," or "chance," is a factor never recognised by scientists? They all maintain that, in the reverend gentleman's sense, there is no such thing as chance. Every process reaches its culmination in obedience to laws that never make a mistake. Dr. Warschauer sarcastically asks, referring to the evolution of a bird, "Do you suggest that it happened by necessity?" and answers, "But that's only a word—who imposed that necessity? 'Oh,' you say, 'Natural law.' But such an explanation does not explain anything—it is a mere verbal juggle." Is it not the reverend gentleman himself who is guilty of indulging in mere verbal jugglery? Can he adduce a single instance showing that the forces of Nature have ever worked erratically? Has there ever been a single departure from the regular sequences of which we are witnesses? If not, how does Dr. Warschauer know that there is no "must" about it, or that the forces of Nature would not work as they do unless they were guided and controlled by a personal, conscious will? To make any such assertions is to transcend the sphere of knowledge and deal in blind dogmatism. Dr. Warschauer plays to the gallery with a vengeance when he employs the false analogy of a number of letters so arranging and combining themselves as to form an exquisite poem by chance. The fact that Nature works in a comparatively orderly fashion furnishes no proof whatever that it works intelligently and teleologically. So far as we know it performs its functions in this manner because it cannot do otherwise.

It is true that the various processes of Nature are full of mystery; but it is also true that the laws under which they take place are being gradually discovered. We are gradually discovering the truth about the Universe. Astronomers are able to explain the movements of the heavenly bodies without any reference whatever to supernatural guidance or control. The law under which they occur is such that they could not happen otherwise. They are the only possible movements. The same thing is true of

organic processes. There is nothing to show that, when the first living thing appeared, the end in view was the production of the human race, although it may be perfectly true that the emergence of mankind was from that moment inevitable. It is in this sense only that we are justified in saying that Nature works blindly. We are in the habit of referring to man as the masterpiece of the evolutionary process; but in Nature's eye a man is of no greater value than a gnat, and both receive, as is well known, precisely the same treatment. The truth about man is that he is the last known link in the long chain of living things. That he came in fulfilment of any intelligible purpose is a baseless assumption. What conceivable purpose does he serve in the cosmos? When we read in the Shorter Catechism that "man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever," we are conscious that we are repeating a fairy tale which, like all fairy tales, is objectively false.

Let us return, for a moment, to Dr. Orchard's article. God is depicted as the Absolute Being; but, as the Doctor puts it, "we can know nothing of the Absolute, since all our conceptions are relative." Of course, the reverend gentleman assumes the actual existence of God; but he warns his readers not to identify their "idea of God with what God actually is." In the following sentence he seems to give the whole case for Theism away: "For instance, we cannot believe that there ever was a being who answered to the idea of Yahve as held by early Hebrew writers." He feels that the prophets and psalmists got nearer to the truth, and that we are nearer still to-day. Yet God as he actually is is still unknown. What people worship is not God, but their own ideas of him. It follows from this that the objective existence of God is a rash and fallacious inference from imperfectly understood natural facts. What men worship is an imaginary projection of themselves, or what may be regarded as the ideal of what they ought to be. The overthrow of Theism necessarily involves that of Christianity. The New Testament truth thus turns out to be nothing but a series of groundless surmises. "What is truth?" is an impossible question. There is no such thing as truth in the metaphysical acceptance of the term. The only truth that concerns us is the truth about Nature, and about ourselves as part and parcel of Nature, and about the manner of life incumbent upon us as such.

J. T. LLOYD.

Pseudo-Criticism.—II.

(Continued from p. 645.)

CONTINUING his criticism of Dr. Driver's statements respecting the Cosmogony of Genesis, Sir Robert Anderson says:—

"The question is not whether the Cosmogony teaches science, which no one asserts, but whether it is discredited by science, which no one has proved. And not even the testimony of such a scientist as Dana in its defence will weigh as much with men of the world as the fact that such a scientist as Huxley entered the lists to prove it in error, and failed."

The italics in the foregoing extract are mine. Upon the points italicised Mr. Anderson is hopelessly in error; his Christian Evidence friends have sadly misled him. That the cosmogony of Genesis is discredited by Science is a fact that has been proved over and over again. I will even go so far as to say that there is but one statement in the whole chapter which does not conflict with Science. This fortunate guess at the primitive history of the globe is to the effect that the appearance of Man upon the earth was later than that of all the other species of the Animal kingdom. Upon every other subject with which it deals, the cosmogony of Genesis is shown by Science to be erroneous and absurd. Mr. Anderson is evidently not a reader of Freethought literature, otherwise he could scarcely have made such an incorrect statement; but, if my memory serves me,

the fictitious and anti-scientific character of the Bible cosmogony was clearly shown, many years ago, by the clear-headed Bishop of Natal.

Next, as to "the testimony of such a scientist as Dana" in defence of the ridiculous cosmogony of Genesis, the following statement made by that scientist, as cited by Mr. Anderson (p. 19), is sufficient in itself to prove that Dana is deficient in sound judgment and ordinary common sense, and therefore not qualified to give an opinion on the subject: "I believe that the first chapter of Genesis and Science are in accord." This "testimony," it can easily be seen, is not given as an unbiased scientist, but as an orthodox Christian advocate. There is no "accord" between Genesis and Science, save in the single item I have named.

With regard to Professor Huxley, Mr. Anderson further says (p. 18):—

"As for the 'Mosaic Cosmogony' if the Gladstone-Huxley tournament upon that question in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century* has failed to silence the silly cuckoo-cry about 'the conflict between Science and Genesis,' all discussion is idle. Mr. Gladstone's thesis was that Science is perfectly in accord with Genesis as to the order in which life appeared upon our globe. Upon one point only did Professor Huxley attempt to upset this, and that point depended on interpreting 'creeping things' in Genesis i. by the use of the word in Leviticus xi. 29-31."

Here we are as good as told that if we do not agree with Sir Robert Anderson's apologetic views of the Bible, "all discussion is idle"; that the debate between Mr. Gladstone and Professor Huxley, twenty-five years ago, settled the question once and for all; or it ought to have done so—for there can be nothing more to say upon the subject; that in the course of that protracted debate the Grand Old Superstitionist carried all before him, while poor Huxley, who could find nothing to question in the Genesis account save the late date assigned to the appearance of "creeping things," had to hide his diminished head.

Well, I have not access just now to the *Nineteenth Century* numbers for 1885 and 1886, but I find in an old notebook an extract from one of Huxley's replies. It will be remembered that it is stated in Genesis that "Fishes" and "Winged Fowl" were created on the fifth "day" (or age), and that "Beasts" and "creeping things" were called into existence on the "day" (or age) following. Upon this subject Professor Huxley said:—

"It is not true that the species composing any one of the three populations [i.e., water population, air population, and land population] originated during any one of the three successive periods of time, and not at any other of these.....The great majority, if not the whole, of the primordial species of each division have long since died out, and have been replaced by a vast succession of new forms.....If the species of animals have all been separately created, then it follows that hundreds of thousands of acts of creative energy have occurred at intervals throughout the whole time recorded by the fossiliferous rocks; and during the greater part of that time the 'creation' of the members of the water, land, and air populations must have gone on contemporaneously."

Our knowledge of the events in the past history of the earth, here referred to, has been revealed to us by Geology. And, needless to say, the revelations made by that science have completely discredited the Genesis account of the creative work of the fifth and sixth "days"—to which may be added that of the third "day." Instead of the special creation of the Animal and Vegetable kingdoms, once for all, upon three successive "days" (as narrated in Genesis), Science tells us that, in the Animal and Vegetable kingdoms alike, there was a steady and continuous evolution from the simplest forms to the most perfect and complex, and that this process went on in both kingdoms contemporaneously during hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of years. To make this matter perfectly clear, and to render the reply of Professor Huxley more intelligible, it will be necessary here to give a very brief outline of this

evolution from the earliest fossiliferous period to the present age:—

AGE.	FAUNA.	FLORA.
1.	Zoophytes (lowest animal life).	(None).
2.	Small Mollusca.	Seaweed, etc.
3.	New Mollusca; small Fishes.	Club-mosses, etc.
4.	New Mollusca, Fishes, Flies.	Ferns and coniferous plants.
5.	New Mollusca, Fishes, Insects; Reptiles, Gigantic lizards.	Forests of tree ferns and cone-bearing trees.
6.	New genera of same order as last; oyster and sturgeon.	New land and marine plants.
7.	New Mollusca, Fishes, Reptiles; tortoises, small marsupials.	Flora similar to preceding age.
8.	New Mollusca, Fishes, Insects, Reptiles, and Mammals.	Pines, cypresses, yews, etc.
9.	New Mollusca, Fishes, Reptiles and Mammals; Wading Birds.	Corn-bearing plants; Trees as in preceding age.
10.	New Mollusca, Fishes, Reptiles, Mammals and Birds.	Oaks, beeches, elms, palms, etc.
11.	New Mollusca, Fishes, Reptiles, Mammals, Birds.	Fruit trees (plum, walnut, the vine, etc.).
12.	Same as last, but allied to existing fauna.	Apple, pear, cherry, peach, raspberry, strawberry, etc.
13.	Animal kingdom evolved nearly into their present form.	
14.	Primitive Man—though may have lived at earlier period.	

The geological ages in the foregoing sketch are:

(1) Laurentian; (2) Cambrian; (3) Silurian; (4) Devonian; (5) Carboniferous; (6) Permian; (7) Triassic; (8) Jurassic; (9) Cretaceous; (10) Eocene; (11) Miocene; (12) Pliocene; (13) Quaternary; (14) Recent. All the fauna named in the table are new species. Many representatives of the older forms also lived in each period, but after appearing for an age or two they ultimately became extinct. Hence, according to the "special creation" theory, there must have been new creations in every division of the Animal kingdom during all the geological periods named, save the first.

We have now to compare the historical facts revealed by Geology with the following Bible statements:—

1. That all vegetation, from grass and herbs to fruit-bearing trees, was called into existence on the Third day (or age) of creation (Gen. i. 11-12).
2. That the sun, moon, and stars were created on the Fourth day (or age) of creation (Gen. i. 14-19).
3. That all the water population and all the air population—Fishes and "Winged fowl" were created simultaneously on the Fifth day (or age) of creation (Gen. i. 21).
4. That all the land population—"Beasts" and "cattle," and "creeping things"—were created on the Sixth day (or age) of creation (Gen. i. 24-25).

A very important point upon which the Genesis account conflicts with Science is the creation or formation of the earth and its inhabitants in six solar days, each day being of twenty-four hours and having "an evening and a morning." This view was held to be correct by everyone until Geology proved it to be erroneous and untenable. Then some ingenious Christian conceived the idea of harmonising the two by asserting that the "creative day" meant an age or epoch. This new interpretation was immediately adopted by all Christian advocates and apologists; but, as we shall see, Genesis still remains irremediably in conflict with Science.

Comparing, now, the Bible account with the facts established by Geology and Paleontology, we find the Genesis story to be completely discredited in every statement made. Assuming, for the moment, the word "day" to mean an age or epoch, we find:—

1. There was no period or age, prior to the creation of the sun, when all kinds of vegetation came into existence, as stated in Genesis.
2. There was no period or age, prior to the creation of the Animal kingdom, when all kinds of vegetation were called into existence, as stated in Genesis.
3. There was no one period or age in which all the water population were brought into existence, as stated in Genesis.
4. There was no one period or age in which all the "Winged fowl" were called into existence, as stated in Genesis.

5. There was no period or *age* in which the water population and the "Winged fowl" were the only living creatures on the earth, as stated in Genesis.
6. There was no period or *age* in which all the land animals—"Beasts" and "cattle," and "creeping things"—sprang suddenly into existence upon the earth, as stated in Genesis.

Thus, without troubling about what the writer of Genesis i. may have meant by "creeping things"—upon which Professor Huxley is said to have made a blunder—the Genesis Creation Story (as far as I have noticed it) is shown to be destitute of any historical foundation whatever. Bearing this fact in mind, what are we to think of Sir Robert Anderson's derisive remark respecting "the silly cuckoo-cry about 'the conflict between Science and Genesis'"? He it is, and not the critics he sneers at, who sets up such a cry, and that, too, upon matters with which he has but a passing acquaintance. ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

A French Professor on Atheism.

BY GEORGE MACDONALD.

WITH the reasonable expectation that we might have something to say in reply, a number of watchful readers have sent us an argument on the "Penalties and Limitations of Unbelief," by Felix Le Dantec, Professor of Embryology at the Sorbonne (University of Paris), contributed to, or copied by, the *New York World*. The Professor's manner of treating the subject would irritate almost any fair-minded person into utterance by way of protest.

The Sorbonne embryologist opens by remarking that "The idea of a Supreme Being has played so important a rôle in human events that whosoever possesses no belief in the existence of a Creator nowadays ought to be considered a monster by the majority of men."

It is assumed that Professor Le Dantec uses the word "monster" in a scientific sense, and not as descriptive of something depraved, ferocious, or cruel. By the men of science any organised form of life made up of inconsistent parts or characters, or one that is abnormal, whether repulsive or not, is a monster. Huxley, speaking scientifically, applied the term to the Catholic Church. Therefore, the French Professor, we may charitably conclude, meant to say that the Atheist ought to be classed as abnormal or odd. He argues, in his next sentence, that "even if such a being should be a man of the highest type of virtue his attitude of mind stultifies him and leaves him a living paradox." But men of the "highest type of virtue" cannot be looked upon as monsters in the sense in which "the majority of men" will interpret Professor Le Dantec. He should have been less technical and used some word not likely to be generally misunderstood.

Having defined the Atheist as a "monster" and a "living paradox," the learned man reduces him to the next thing to a myth or impossibility. "I ask," he says, "are there really many logical Atheists, that is to say, men who of conviction in their hearts declare there is no God?" Why not? The elimination of the gods has marked the mental progress of the race. According to the ancient belief of mankind there was a god back of almost every natural object. Gradually men acquired the scepticism and the courage to take a look behind the rock or the tree or the stump, with the result that the gods disappeared, and those who still retained a belief in deities were obliged to locate them in inaccessible places, the last site chosen being somewhere beyond and above the atmosphere. In denying that the clouds, any more than the rock, the tree, or the stump, conceal a deity, the Atheist may be wrong, but in view of the experience of mankind in searching for gods, no one could be more logical.

We are told that if the Atheist were logical "he would extract from that Atheism a very important

simplification of the matters and difficulties of life. His conscience, for instance, would soon cease to give him its orders. On the contrary, it would simply indicate 'the easiest way,' and force him to ignore the actual laws of human society." The argument has a very familiar sound. Half the Christian world tell us that if they did not believe in God and the rules of conduct he has imposed they would embark at once on a career of vice and crime. A minister assured the late Hugh O. Pentecost that except for his belief in the Deity and his laws he would start for the Tenderloin. Pentecost replied that if such was his propensity he already had a Tenderloin mind, and this being his mental and moral state he was as guilty as though he had followed his inclinations; therefore he might as well run along to the White Way and the flaring lamps. His belief had not made him good, but only gave him the appearance of being so.

The French Professor does not see clearly, and never will, nor will anybody else, so long as the notion of a "conscience" as something inherent and vocal has possession of the mind. All of a man's education goes to the formation of what is called conscience, and it has no other origin. The laws of a society of which Professor Le Dantec speaks form a part of this education; the Atheist learning and obeying them as readily as the Deist. As the Deist does not hold that these laws are revealed, their binding force is not weakened if he becomes an Atheist. The conscience which indicates the "easiest way" is a safe guide, for the Bible speaks one truth if no other when it describes "the way of transgressors" as "hard." The man who supposes that ignoring the laws of society and living the loose life is the easiest way is in need of elementary education.

Proceeding in his illogical manner, the Professor asserts that "the logical Atheist [it seems he has found the thing whose existence he questions] is disarmed in the secular conflict; if he has the conviction that there is no God then he cannot admit laws founded in a divine intelligence; he cannot therefore claim any rights." What are "rights"? Leaving aside "divine" rights, which the Atheist waives and denies, they are claims founded on justice, custom, and other secular principles regardless of religious belief. They are realised in proportion to our persistency in asserting, and our ability in maintaining, them. They are natural, moral, and political, and their enjoyment under the laws of society is wholly reconcilable with disbelief in the theory of creation held by goddists. The doctrine of evolution, generally held by Atheists, has given rise to the ennobling conception of the rights, even of animals.

Instead of being a "living paradox," the Atheist may be of all men most in harmony with the world as it is known. Aiming to discover and obey the laws of nature, and banishing miracle from the natural world, he holds no beliefs which bring him into conflict with fact; and recognising and respecting the laws of society as an outgrowth of human relations, and holding that these laws are those upon which the welfare of the race depends, all his energies will be devoted to their improvement. He is the most free, mentally, of all men, because he is not deluded with the belief that things, as they are, are founded in "divine intelligence," and therefore not to be changed without flying in the face of Providence. The Atheist has rights, and he does not invoke bad logic to demonstrate that those who disagree with him have none.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

A Catholic is in favor of enough education to make a Catholic out of a savage, and the Protestant is in favor of enough education to make a Protestant out of a Catholic, but both are opposed to the education that makes free and manly men.—*Ingersoll*.

Acid Drops.

"Parson Plaford," who had a chapter to himself in Mr. Foote's *Prisoner for Blasphemy*, was chaplain of Holloway Gaol during the twelve months that the editor of the *Freethinker* spent there in 1883-1884. He was a little man with a bellowing voice. He possessed an extremely commonplace mind, and was very imperfectly educated. We understand that he had been a Scripture Reader, and had been promoted to the chaplaincy of Holloway Gaol through the influence of Lord Shaftesbury. His salary was about £1 a day, with a fine house rent free, and gas and coals on the same easy condition. His summer holiday, which was a long one, was supplemented by several absences from duty on account of ill health. He roared so in the pulpit that his throat was always out of order. The poor little man cherished a hope that the Lord had chosen him to bring Mr. Foote back to the Christian faith, but he went and heard the wicked blasphemers' speech to the jury before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, and concluded that he was hopelessly lost. In due course "Parson Plaford" retired on a satisfactory pension. We see by the papers that he died on September 30, and was buried at Highgate Cemetery. We never wished him any harm, and we are pretty certain he is out of harm's way now.

Gabrielle Deslys, the beautiful French actress, whose name had been coupled with King Manuel's, admits her friendship with the young ex-sovereign, but denies everything else. She gives him an excellent character. "He is such a good boy," she told a *Daily Chronicle* interviewer, "so intelligent, and most religious." This testimonial ought to be illuminated and framed. When the Portuguese see it they are sure to have their runaway monarch back.

There is a natural nemesis in human affairs. It was the dastardly assassination of Professor Bombarda by an Army officer that precipitated the revolution in Portugal. Professor Bombarda was one of the Deputies for Lisbon, and Governor of Lisbon Asylum—and a Freethinker, of course. His assassin was a Catholic. The people put the two facts together, and all the world knows the result.

"Mother's religion" has not been of much value to King Manuel. It has cost him the throne of Portugal.

A Lisbon correspondent of the *Daily News* (Oct 6), assigning various causes for the revolutionary outbreak in Portugal, does not overlook the clerical influence:—

"The clerical question has also been a cause of acute discontent. There are not in Portugal, as in Spain, many monks and nuns, but the authority of the village priest over purely civil matters is much too great. A law was passed in the thirties of last century, on the overthrow of the absolutist, King Dom Miguel, making civil registration of births, marriages, and deaths, compulsory. It has never been enforced, however, largely owing to the influence of the priests, who would thereby lose the small addition they at present get to their more than meagre stipends. On the other hand, the village schoolmaster, who has to eke out a livelihood on 1s. 8d. a day, would find his services more in demand."

It is just the same in Spain. The Church is enormously wealthy, while schoolmasters often get no more than £20 a year.

The Spanish government has still much to learn in the matter of freedom. It allows demonstrations against the death penalty in Catalonia on October 13, demonstrations in favor of liberty of conscience, and demonstrations in favor of the revolution in Portugal, but it forbids demonstrations in honor of Francisco Ferrer. Honoring liberty of conscience, and refusing honor to one of its principal martyrs, is a sorry spectacle.

"Colonel Roosevelt and a party of friends, riding in an automobile from Oyster Bay to Riverhead, Long Island, where Mr. Roosevelt was to speak at the Suffolk County Fair, were held up by a motorcycle policeman for exceeding the speed laws. The press dispatch says the party was allowed to proceed when the policeman discovered that Mr. Roosevelt was in the automobile. The policeman failed to do his duty. The dispatch further says that the Colonel was accompanied by Fathers York and Sherman of Huntington, and Father Powers of Oyster Bay, and that upon their arrival at Riverhead Mr. Roosevelt and party proceeded to the rectory of St. John's Roman Catholic Church, where they were entertained as the guests of Father William C. Reilly. This is a straw that shows which way the political

wind is blowing. Watch the Catholics from now until after the next presidential election. The Unitarian must walk the plank to oblivion, notwithstanding his favoritism to the Catholics in the Philippine matter. The priests in America will overlook Roosevelt's affront to the Pope as long as they can use him."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Two more poor Christites. Rev. David Jones Davies, of North Benfleet Rectory, Wickford, Essex, left £10,667. Rev. John Wild, of Ticehurst, Sussex, left £51,086. Where are those parsons now? If the gospel be true, the answer is easy.

Another poor Christite was the Very Rev. Edward Charles Wickham, Dean of Lincoln, who died in August, and left estate valued at £39,852 net. "Woe unto you rich" never troubled him. He smiled—and piled up his thousands.

As Mr. R. J. Campbell does not lack hearers, he continues to talk arrant nonsense. On a recent Sunday he spoke thus: "You are all in possession of a priceless treasure—your own life. What are you doing with it? Are you letting it run to waste, or are you using it for God?" Does this preacher really believe that, no matter how faithfully and efficiently a man may serve his fellow-men, if he does not live for God, he is letting his life run to waste? Has he the audacity to assert that Charles Darwin, Thomas Huxley, Herbert Spencer, John Tyndall, Charles Bradlaugh, Algernon Swinburne, and George Meredith were all guilty of the heinous crime of letting their lives run to waste, simply because they did not use them for God, nor even believe that there was a God to use them for?

The Rev. Harry Bisseker has had another try at answering an "Agnostic." In the *Methodist Times* for October 6, he says that the reason demands an explanation of the origin of mind and moral capacity. In reality, the reason does nothing of the sort. The reason simply investigates all the ascertainable facts, and forms its conclusion under their guidance. One thing that is certain is that it does not regard the Christian explanation as adequate. Mr. Bisseker is clearly mistaken on this point. It is not true that he "who rules out a Personal Creator has to be content with large assumptions." Does he not know that "a Personal Creator" is the largest of all assumptions? And it is certainly disingenuous to refer to a sentence at the end of the *Origin of Species* as proof that Darwin believed in God. Every reader of Darwin's *Life* by his son knows that the more the great man studied Nature the weaker grew his belief in a Creator, and that towards the end he did not believe at all.

The *Daily Mail* had an article lately on "Some Dangers of Making People Think." In another column of the same paper the revolutionary spirit is spoken of as "subtle poison." There is no danger in the pap for intellectual infants issued from Carmelite House.

One of our readers sends us the following extract from a letter written from the far East by his sister, who is (unfortunately, in his opinion) a Christian missionary:—

"It would seem that China has more than fulfilled her share of the bargain with India in regard to the suppression of the cultivation of the opium. One wonders what further steps the British Government will take later in regard to the export of opium from India. They ought to increase the rate of diminution accordingly; it would be just, fair, and right.

In Kien-ning we have now a police system on modern lines. Rather raw chaps they are, too; but I suppose, or hope, they will develop. I saw one tying up a man by his queue to a pole in the street the other day—not suspending him by it, but tying him so it was impossible for him to move his head, and tying his hands tight to the pole behind him. I suppose he had been caught thieving, and was to remain there till the relief guard came. It is a marvellous thing that up till now there were no police in this city, and they were not needed apparently; there was never any row or trouble. The Chinese are a wonderfully peaceable, law-abiding people. One never sees the disgraceful scenes here that one sees in Western countries, as the result of alcohol, etc."

The last point is very interesting—the absence of police. It is a remarkable fact that there has been no police, and no need for them, through the whole interior of China. They are only needed when the Chinese come into constant contact with Europeans.

We have often spoken of Spurgeon as "the last of the Calvinists." That there was truth in the remark is shown by the fact that *The Baptist*, the publication most closely

identified with the well-known preacher's ideas, has just stopped publication.

The editor of the *Animals' Friend* states that one institution alone received 14,000 cats off the streets during last year. These poor creatures were "outcasts"—abandoned by their thoughtless or callous owners. Christian England!

Dr. Paget, Bishop of Stepney, at the concluding meeting of the Church Congress at Cambridge, spoke of "the dreary land of the freak." Judging by the Bible, the Holy Land holds the record for freaks.

"The Deemster," in the *Essex Weekly News*, has some caustic remarks on the Kensitites in the issue for Sept. 30. He says:—

"The Kensit Preachers are religious reactionaries, who keep alive the spirit of bigotry which still survives like a legacy of hate from far-off evil days, and for that reason I have never hesitated to oppose them and their works."

In a recent issue of *The Two Worlds* a "spirit" communication from Colonel Ingersoll was printed. Judging from the communication, "Bob" must have had softening of the brain in the interval since his death.

According to the religious papers, Christianity is "looking up." When a man is on the flat of his back he does look up.

Archdeacon Burrows (Birmingham) thinks that revision of the Prayer Book is inevitable, but he dreads the idea of "having the Prayer Book thrown like an apple of discord before Parliament, and their sacred things discussed and voted upon by Roman Catholics, Nonconformists, Jews, and those who openly disowned the name of Christian." Sad, no doubt; but what is the remedy? There doesn't seem much in the Archdeacon's proposal that the Church should "rely on the Holy Ghost within her." That won't take her far nowadays.

Rev. Edmund Christopher Hudson has been found guilty by the Consistory Court of the charges of "immorality," and the Bishop is being duly informed of the fact with a view to passing sentence upon the culprit. Mr. Hudson's wife separated from him five years ago, and he has been living in what he considers Christian marriage with another lady. As a man, his case calls for a certain sympathy; as a clergyman, he is a shocking fool.

The secretary of the new Lincoln Branch of the National Secular Society was discharged from his employment within a few days of the Branch's formation. Tom Hood sang of "the rarity of Christian charity." He couldn't have meant the sort displayed in this instance.

Walmer (Kent) Urban Council is astonished. Two shillings came in a letter from "A Christian" as the value of a street lamp which he had wilfully broken. Was the Council astonished, we wonder, at a Christian's breaking a lamp or at his paying for it?

Mr. Russell, a Unitarian minister, has been lecturing in the open air at Shotts on the Bible and Science, and stirring up the sleepy minds of the inhabitants. He appears to be a very good Freethinker as far as he goes. A reply to him has been issued by the Rev. Walter L. Territt, of the local Congregational Church. It is one of the most muddle-headed productions we ever saw. Take the question of inspiration, for instance. Mr. Territt makes his personal feelings the criterion of truth. "The Bible is inspired," he says, "because it inspires me." He makes one inspiration the proof of another. And he ought to tell us how other people are to know that Mr. Territt is inspired. Perhaps he will also explain what he means by being inspired. We don't see any traces of it, from any point of view, in this pamphlet.

The following headline speaks for itself:—"Bishop Welldon Condemns Secular Education." Of course he does. Who on earth (or elsewhere) expects him to do otherwise? All Protectionists condemn Free Trade.

The Bishop of St. Asaph has been preaching against "poisonous literature." Yet he recommended the Bible—unexpurgated. His lordship's most shining virtue is not consistency.

A Mission, with the approval of the Bishop, is to start on October 16 at Holy Trinity Church, Burnley. Three missionaries from London are to carry it through. They are very anxious, of course, to make it successful; and they have deluged the town with copies of a circular letter begging the citizens of Burnley to come along and get saved. Their principal hook-and-bait is the story of an old man in Kent, who declined to attend a Mission, and being told that "he was afraid he would be converted" replied, "Well, perhaps I am." How such a lure as this is going to fill Holy Trinity Church passes our comprehension. The Burnley folk are rather likely to form their own opinion of the cautious addendum: "The doctor has died since then, we do not know whether the old man is alive or dead." Of course not. Who would expect them to?

Dean Lefroy is a brave man. He is not ready to face discussion yet, but he is going to preach on "Is there a God?" and "Is the Bible true?" and other straight questions in the Norwich Cathedral, and he permits anyone who has a query to put to him to send it in a letter. A brave man indeed! His salary ought to be doubled in recognition of his courage.

According to the *Daily Dispatch*, a Churchman, Mr. Henry Holt, of Ashton-under-Lyne, one of the speakers at the Manchester Diocesan Conference at Manchester, uttered the following jeremiad:—

"He could not but be saddened, he said, by the ignorance displayed by their men, even regular church attenders, of the essential facts of their faith. Many men had never decided what it was they really did believe. The religious belief of a large number of their men was a poor, flimsy fabric, built upon the sandy foundation of habit and custom, and not upon the solid rock of personal conviction. In the mills and workshops smart young sceptics found an easy prey among their uninstructed Church working men."

We are glad to hear this, although it was ill news to the speaker's audience. Mr. Holt wound up by saying that "The crying need of the Church at present was to increase its hold upon the working men." Very likely. But how is it to be done? The proverb says that before you can dress a bear's skin you must kill the bear. We suggest to Mr. Holt that the proverb has a message for him.

Mr. Marshall Hall, K.C. and M.P., is a good special pleader, but a poor statesman. One would think that some of the people he has defended would have cured him of the prejudice that religion is a guarantee of morality. But he has been telling an East Toxteth audience that "the real preventive of such crimes" as deliberate murder "is sound education, especially religious education." It is well to remind him—or to inform him, if he does not already know it—that ninety-five per cent. of the criminals in English prisons have been Sunday-school scholars. When he talks of the "desolation" that has come over France in consequence of her "throwing over religion" he is uttering contemptible nonsense. Anything, however, goes down with the sort of audiences that Mr. Marshall Hall addresses.

A priest has been arrested at Pegomas, near Nice, and charged with causing several fires and attacking people at night with a revolver. So many of the Lord's friends get into trouble nowadays.

Mr. Henry Brooks Broadhurst, the Cumberland magistrate who committed suicide at the house of Dr. Tuckey, Park-street, Grosvenor-square, London, left a letter for his wife, in which he said: "I feel God will not be hard with me. I have done many kind actions in Christ's name." Well, well! Atheists, as Talmage and Torrey say, are always committing suicide.

The licensing magistrates have refused to let the Jewish Working Men's Club, Cheetham, Manchester, continue its Sunday evening concert. The Jews must keep their own Sabbath and the Christians' too. Such is Christian justice—to say nothing of Christian charity.

Miss Jenny Leatham, a septuagenarian spinster of Lurgan, North Armagh, was found burnt almost to a cinder in her little shop. She had fallen asleep while reading the Bible, and an overturned candle explains the rest. Christians should make the most of this clear case of "Providence."

Miss Marie Corelli has always displayed an intimate acquaintance with the Devil. She has just been writing about his motor-car. Oh, Marie, Marie! Does it just hold two?

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 16, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W.: at 7.30, "The Eye of Faith: and What It Sees."

October 23, Leicester; 30, Birmingham.

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

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 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 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: £251 17s. 7d. Received since:—H. Boll, 5s.; T. Hibbott (2nd sub.), 2s. 6d.

HORACE DAWSON writes: "I wish the *Freethinker* could be better circulated. I kept my new year promise of taking two copies this year—generally three. A month ago I sent my son a copy at Sheffield. He wrote back that he has taken it weekly for six months, and would not miss it. I get absolutely hungry for it; it is truly more than ever an educational force."

H. BOLL.—Sorry the acknowledgment was delayed.

W. CROMACK says: "I was very pleased with the *Freethinker* for September 25. I got six extra copies and I gave them away. I gave one to a young man, and he was so pleased with it that he paid me for it. I did not want the money, but he made me take it. He said it was the first time he had seen the paper." We wish more of our readers would engage in such missionary work.

J. MUIRHEAD, who cycled thirty miles to hear Mr. Foote at Glasgow, writes: "I wish to let you know that I was exceedingly delighted to hear you on Sunday in Glasgow. I have never on any occasion had the privilege of hearing such a masterly and eloquent discourse as the one you delivered at night. It was the one desire of my life to hear you speak." Something better than that follows. "Your discourse," he says, "gave me fresh courage to be a man." That is what we like to hear.

T. J. DINEEN.—(1) The letter would hardly be of interest to the general body of our readers, scattered all over the country, and indeed all over the world. (2) We know nothing of any "challenge" to Mr. Cohen or Mr. Lloyd from a Spiritist gentleman named Conolly. Why not write to them yourself? Provincial "saints" are too apt to fancy that all the leading Freethinkers in London live next door to each other.

G. ROLEFFS.—Thanks for cuttings.

G. BRADFELD.—Glad to see your excellent letter in the *Cheltenham Echo*. Dr. Clifford's silence is intelligible. He is not fond of answering what needs an answer. We wish our readers who are able to write letters to the press on the Freethought side would take more advantage of their local opportunities.

J. CARRUTHERS.—Sorry the Blackburn friends couldn't get over to Manchester owing to the bad train service. We note that it will be better for them to go to Liverpool in November. Thanks for cuttings.

J. G. BRIGGS.—The Birmingham Branch secretary is—J. Partidge, 183 Vauxhall-road.

J. BABBOUR.—Pleased to hear of the successful missionary work you are doing.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for your useful cuttings.

J. HEWER.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. H. O.—A milder edition of the *Freethinker*, with the "Acid Drops" left out, for the benefit of weak-stomached inquirers, is really out of the question. It would never take. The idea that mild doses of Freethought would be better patronised than strong ones is against all our own experience, and against the whole history of the movement. The religious mind has got to be ploughed up before the seeds of Freethought can be sown with much chance of fertilisation.

W. R. BLOOR.—You ought to be able to get our *Bible Romances* at the Secular Hall bookstall in Manchester. Glad you were so delighted with Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday.

S. L.—We propose to print your letter in next week's *Freethinker*, omitting your name and address, unless we hear from you that you prefer them included.

W. T. NEWMAN.—(1) Your Salvationist friend—but that is so natural—has no sense of humor. He tries to make us responsible for the want of strict accuracy in a Bible quotation in what is obviously an American story. Of course the quotation is not ours; it is part of the story, and such things are not written on affidavit. "And on the third day the whale spewed up Jonah" is, however, substantially correct; for the book of Jonah says that the whale "vomited" him up, and Jesus says that Jonah was in the whale's belly three days and nights. (2) Glad to hear the *Freethinker* is now taken regularly by a friend of yours to whom you sent it for a few weeks.

W. BINDON.—Such a question is not for this column; columns, pages, perhaps a whole book, would be necessary to answer it.

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 had fine audiences at Manchester on Sunday. The evening lecture on "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years" was followed with wonderful attention and immensely applauded. Many ladies were present at both meetings, and the number of young men (two of them doctors) who came up to shake hands with Mr. Foote was another gratifying feature. There was only one drawback to a very bright and encouraging day. Bradlaugh's portrait was not visible—as it ought to have been, at least in the evening. It was buried under the apparatus of a cinematograph show which is running in the hall on week evenings.

Freethinkers from all parts of South Lancashire and East Yorkshire came to Mr. Foote's lectures on Sunday. This is a pleasant phenomenon. It shows that devotion to the President is a constant tradition in the Secular movement.

Mr. Foote returns to Queen's (Minor) Hall this evening (Oct. 16), and lectures on a subject which is calculated to excite much curiosity—"The Eye of Faith: and What It Sees." This will be Mr. Foote's last lecture at Queen's Hall for the present. The Secular Society, Ltd., is willing to engage the place for two or three months, but the management can give no certain answer as yet.

We ought to state that the vocal and instrumental music is still continued before the lecture at Queen's Hall. There will also be a poetic or dramatic reading this evening (Oct. 16) given by Mr. Foote himself or by his daughter Florence, who gave the big audience a taste of her quality on the "Bradlaugh" night.

Mr. Lloyd delivered a fine lecture at Queen's Hall on Sunday. It was worthy of a much larger audience, although, as it was, the audience was an improvement on Mr. Lloyd's previous meetings in West London. That is something, of course, but it is not enough. London "saints" ought to get their friends and acquaintances to hear Mr. Lloyd. Orthodox bodies would make the most of a man of his capacity and eloquence.

Mr. Lloyd lectures for the Glasgow Branch to-day (Oct. 16), at the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street. His subjects should be attractive. We hope the district "saints" will give him the numerous and hearty greeting that he deserves. We hope to hear of better meetings than he has ever had before in Glasgow.

The next lecturer after Mr. Lloyd at Glasgow will be Miss Kough. It is her first visit to the commercial capital of Scotland. Miss Kough is an Irish lady, and it is an Englishman who asks the Scottish Freethinkers to give her a most cordial welcome. When they have heard her they can judge for themselves. Meanwhile, they can take our word for it that they ought to hear her; partly for her own sake, and partly because of the value (and the paucity) of lady lecturers in the Freethought movement. Either of these two reasons would be perfectly good without the other.

The Kingsland Branch, which has had a very successful open-air season this year, is prolonging the lectures through

October in order to advertise the November lectures at Shoreditch Town Hall. A good idea!

London "saints" will please note that another "social," under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, will take place at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, on Thursday evening, November 3. The program, as on the last occasion, will include music and a little dancing. Members of the N. S. S. are entitled to introduce a friend. Any reader of the *Freethinker* who wishes to attend, and is unable to get introduced in that way, can obtain a ticket of admission by applying to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C.

The Islington Branch reports a very successful open-air season from May 1 to September 25. Five meetings a week have been carried on—at Highbury Corner, Newington Green, Clerkenwell Green, and Finsbury Park; and all have been successful except those at the last-mentioned place. Saturday evening meetings at Highbury Corner have been the largest and most encouraging. Meetings at that spot will be continued throughout the winter. Messrs. Dobson, Rowney, King, Cook, and Darby have done the bulk of lecturing. No less than 489 copies of the *Freethinker* have been sold at the meetings, also a large number of books and pamphlets. It is to be wished that all Branches could show the same activity.

Secularists wonder, and Christians chortle, at the fact that a journal like the *Freethinker* makes such slow progress with its circulation. But the fact is perfectly natural. It is a foolish notion, and one marvels how it ever arose, that this journal is edited for illiterate working men. Certainly it has many working-class readers, but it has many other readers too—readers of all classes, from generals down to common soldiers, from country gentlemen and ladies down to agricultural laborers, from the high-placed to the humble, from university professors down to men and women who find it a great bother to write a letter. The *Freethinker* makes, and always has made, a serious intellectual appeal. It promises its readers no special advantage beyond the possession of the truth and the benefit it confers upon mankind in general. It aims at propagating certain principles; and in that sense, in spite of all its liveliness, and we hope its wit, which dull people mistake for frivolity, it is necessarily rather stiff reading. Its readers, therefore, are readers indeed. And there is never a big mob of that variety of the human species, nor do they belong to any one class of society. George Gissing, the novelist, in *Henry Ryecroft*, the book that reveals himself, expresses a very strong opinion on this point:—

"The public which reads, in any sense of the word worth considering, is very, very small; the public which would feel no lack if all book printing ceased to-morrow, is enormous. These learned works which strike one as so encouraging, are addressed, as a matter of fact, to a few thousand persons, scattered all over the English-speaking world. Many of the most valuable books slowly achieve the sale of a few hundred copies. Gather from all the ends of the British Empire the men and women who purchase grave literature as a matter of course, who habitually seek it in public libraries, in short, who regard it as a necessity of life, and I am much mistaken if they could not comfortably assemble in the Albert Hall."

This may not be absolutely true, but there is too much truth in it, and that truth is not affected by the big sale of all sorts of sixpenny reprints of books that have been talked about, or the cheap editions of more or less classical works that people with a little domestic taste think the right thing to have in a book-case or on a drawing-room table. People talk about books they have never read—and never will read. Yes, there is too much truth in George Gissing's opinion. Consequently, we may say for the present, that we shall be satisfied when we have an Albert-Hall-full of readers. We are moving gradually towards it. And we should reach it all the sooner if our readers of to-day would introduce the *Freethinker* to likely persons whom they may meet in the business and pleasure of life. This personal advertising is by far the most effective.

"Love and Death" is the beautiful and suggestive title of Mr. Mangasarian's initial lecture this season to the Independent Religious Society at Chicago. We deeply regret to hear that our American friend and colleague—for he is both in spite of the distance—has suffered a great bereavement in the loss of his wife. He devoted his summer holiday this year to nursing her back, if it were possible, to health and happiness. But it was not possible. The blow has fallen. We can imagine how he will feel it, but he is too much a Humanist to fancy that his private grief should hinder the world's growing good. Duty remains, and he will find its performance the best consolator. That he knows this at least as well as we do is proved by his first lecture and its title.

Moses and the Commandments.—II.

(Continued from p. 652.)

I WILL not labor the point. Everyone who has studied the Bible carefully must be convinced that the moral principles upon which the Ten Commandments are founded are the moral principles by which men were governed long before the Ten Commandments had been brought from the top of Mount Sinai by Moses.

The author of Numbers—and Ezra claims to be that author (Esdras xiv. 21, 22)—asserts that "Moses was very meek, above all men which were upon the face of the earth" (Num. xii. 3). But meek though he may have been, his meekness did not prevent him, when he had grown to be a man, from killing an Egyptian whom he caught smiting one of his (Moses) brethren. Before doing so, however, he was very careful to "look this way and that way; and when he saw that there was no other man near, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand" (Ex. ii. 12). Murder, however, will out, and when Moses learned that his crime was known—for it was a crime, punishable by the laws of Egypt—he "fled from the face of Pharaoh" (Ex. ii. 15). And he did so because Pharaoh "sought to slay" him.

Of course the Rabbis knew that it was necessary to whitewash Moses for having committed this crime, and so, according to tradition, they say that the deed was done under these mitigating circumstances: An Egyptian taskmaster was found concealed in a Hebrew's house for the purpose of debauching the Hebrew's wife; and, when Moses was appealed to as to what should be done in the matter, this meekest of men seized hold of a spade and at once struck the Egyptian dead with it. Before striking the blow, however, Moses consulted the Lord, who told him to smite and spare not; and when the spade descended the Egyptian fell dead, not from the blow, but at the sound of God's name.

It is not necessary for my purpose to follow minutely the subsequent career of Moses. All of you are familiar with what he is said to have done; how, at the command of God, he returned to Egypt, and there performed miracles which overshadow all the other miracles related in the Bible, with the exception of those performed by Joshua, at whose command the sun and moon stood still in the heavens. Also, how and when, and under what circumstances, he is said to have received the Ten Commandments from God.

The giving, or making, these Commandments is shrouded in mystery, and the statements respecting them bristle with contradictions and absurdities. Thus we read that Moses, when addressing "all Israel," said: "The Lord talked with you"—that is, with the people of Israel—"face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire" (Deut. v. 4). But in a subsequent portion of the same speech we are told that he said: "Ye"—that is, all the Israelites—"heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness" (Deut. v. 23).

We read: "And he [the Lord] said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship thee afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the Lord" (Ex. xxiv. 1, 2). But we likewise read: "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel" (Ex. xxiv. 9, 10).

Further we read: "The Lord spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex. xxxiii. 11). But we also read that the Lord said: "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live. Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock. And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by, and I will take away my hand, and thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen" (xxxiii. 20-23).

We read: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first; and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest" (Ex. xxxiv. 1). We also read: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Write thou these words" (Ex. xxxiv. 27). "And he [Moses] wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments" (Ex. xxxiv. 28).

We read that Moses "went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand" (Ex. xxxii. 15); that when he "saw the calf and the dancing his anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and break them beneath the mount" (Ex. xxxii. 19); that he "hewed two tables of stone like unto the first" one day, and early the next morning carried them to the top of Mount Sinai (Ex. xxxiv. 4); and that, after being forty days and forty nights in the mount, without eating bread or drinking water, he descended, carrying with him the two tables of stone (Ex. xxxiv. 28, 29). What a marvellous athlete this Moses must have been! And all this, be it remembered, must be taken as literal truth.

It is remarkable, but not more remarkable than true, that no penalties are attached to the breaking of any one of the Ten Commandments. These Commandments are quite apart from the Levitical laws, for Moses assures us that "these words the Lord spake in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, of spake in the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice; and he added no more" (Deut. v. 22). The Levitical laws, the injustice of which is only equalled by their obscenity, abounded with barbarous punishments, the principal punishment being that of "death" (Lev. xx. 9-16)—a devilish penalty had it ever been intended to enforce it, but which was simply a ludicrous bogey, seeing that no greater meaning was attached to it than was attached to the equally dreadful and barbarous threat "in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. ii. 17).

But, remarkable as this fact is, it is still more remarkable, and yet is as absolutely true, that these Commandments were rendered nugatory by the very Jewish god who, we are told, wrote or engraved them—which was it?—himself upon the two tables of stone (Ex. xxxi. 18; xxxii. 16; xxxiv. 1; Deut. iv. 13; v. 22; x. 4). Is it not so? Well, let us consider each Commandment by itself, and see with whom the truth rests.

Commandment the First.—"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Ex. xx. 3; Deut. v. 7).

These words are represented as being a faithful translation of the exact language used by the God himself. I say "the God," because it is evident that the God referred to was the Jewish God, and not the God who, we are told, "created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. i. 1). The Jewish God was simply a gigantic man, to whom the superstitious and ignorant multitude, misled by a crafty priesthood, ascribed supernatural powers. According to the Jewish writers, their God could be, and frequently was, swayed by human passions and feelings. It was possible even to make a bargain with him. Jacob—the smooth-tongued and crafty Jacob—did so; for are we not told that "Jacob vowed a vow, saying, If God will be with me, and will keep me in this way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then"—that is, not till then; not till these events had actually occurred—"shall the Lord be my God"? (Gen. xxviii. 20, 21). And when these events had occurred, we are told that "there wrestled a man with him until the break of day"; and Jacob said: "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. xxxii. 24-30). Here is another contradiction of the Lord's statement that "there shall no man see me and live."

It is childish to suppose that the Creator of the heaven and the earth—even if it be true that he ever condescended to address his creatures—would have referred to "other gods" as though it were possible that gods like unto himself could exist. St.

Paul says: "There is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many and lords many), to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things" (1 Cor. viii. 4-6). This Commandment, then, is mere verbiage—a Mosaic ventriloquial injunction which means nothing. No penalty is attached to the breaking of it, and consequently its observance or non-observance—if indeed there be anything to observe—is of no moment.

Commandment the Second.—"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments" (Ex. xx. 4-6; Deut. v. 8-10).

This is truly a Jewish utterance, the utterance of a mere man, and he a barbarian; for the Omniscient One could not possibly stultify himself, could not be jealous of those whom he had created, and could not be the unjust and merciless villain which the God of Israel here represents himself to be.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" is the command, and yet the Jewish God, when giving instructions for the making of the ceremonial ark, spoke thus: "And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; towards the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be" (Ex. xxv. 18, 20). Here was a stultification with a vengeance.

"Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." Mere bowing, or even prostration, is not worship. When one bows to a superior, or kneels to a king, one does not worship him. And when a man bows down before that which to him is a symbol or remembrance of his God, he does not worship the symbol which he sees, but the God whom he does not see, and of whom the symbol reminds him. Were it otherwise—did he worship the symbol believing it to be his God—it would not be sin, because sin can be the result only of an intelligent and wilful act. When Naaman went with his master, the king, to the house of the god Rimmon, and bowed himself there with his master, he did not worship Rimmon, and was not punished for the act (2 Kings v. 18). Ignorance is not sin; it is a misfortune to be sympathised with, not a fault that should be punished. Even according to the Levitical law mere ignorance was not to be punished (Numbers xv. 27, 28). And St. Paul, after describing himself as having been "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious," adds "but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief" (1 Tim. i. 13).

"I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God." This, of course, can only apply to the Jewish God, whose surname is Jealous. "The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Ex. xxxiv. 14). As to "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children," the Jewish God, through the mouth of one of his prophets, stultifies himself thus: "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Eze. xviii. 20). No penalty attaches to the breaking of this Commandment, which, moreover, can apply only to those who believe in the Jewish God.

Commandment the Third.—"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain" (Ex. xx. 7; Deut. v. 11).

It is difficult to understand why this Commandment was given; because, virtually, it is included in the Commandments already considered. But it is still more difficult to imagine how it can be broken; because, to be so, it must be knowingly and wilfully

broken by a believer in the God. No sane man would knowingly and wilfully traduce his own God; to take in vain the name of another man's God is quite a different matter. Christians are not at all chary as to how they speak of other men's Gods, although they bitterly resent any apparent disrespect of their own God. The men who most frequently invoke the Deity, or make use of his name, are almost invariably mere "hewers of wood and drawers of water" (Josh. ix. 21). They are men who have but the vaguest and most opaque notions of God; men to whom god-like thoughts are mere hieroglyphs, and to whom thinking is unknown. And such men, when they err, err ignorantly, as St. Paul did; and God, we are expressly told, "winks at ignorance" (Acts xvii. 30). Even the Jewish God can, at times, according to his prophets, act justly and mercifully. Thus we read: "Should not I spare Ninevah, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons that cannot discern their right hand and their left hand?" (Jonah iv. 11). But no penalty is attached to the Commandment; therefore no punishable offence can be committed.

Commandment the Fourth.—"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Ex. xx. 8). "Keep the Sabbath day to sanctify it" (Deut. v. 12).

These two sentences mean much the same thing, but still it is worthy of observation that Moses should not have quoted the Commandment correctly. Now, the heinousness of an offence is usually indicated by the penalty that is attached to its commission. Consequently, this Commandment should be one of the most important and most serious of all the Commandments, because the penalty attached to the breaking of it by the Levitical law was "death." "Whosoever doeth work therein shall be put to death" (Ex. xxxv. 2). And we are told that once—strange, is it not, that such a law should only have been enforced once?—at the command of the Lord himself, a man who had "gathered sticks on the Sabbath day was brought without the camp and stoned with stones by the congregation until he died" (Num. xv. 33-36). St. Paul—who was not only a Jew but also a Pharisee, and who "for two whole years in his own house" (Acts xxviii. 30) was continually engaged in teaching "both out of the law of Moses and out of the prophets" (Acts xxviii. 23)—looked upon this Commandment in a very different light, for has he not written: "Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days" (Col. ii. 16). And surely this interpretation of the Commandment must be that which has been adopted by those "preachers of The Word" who, every Sunday, are bodily carried to the scenes of their pulpit labors in luxurious coaches!

Commandment the Fifth.—"Honor thy father and thy mother" (Ex. xx. 12; Deut. v. 16).

The Jewish race must have been bad indeed for the Lord to have thought it necessary to give such a Commandment as this. Good parents generally have good children, for parental affection must precede filial love; brutal parents cannot expect their children to grow up kind and loving. This truth is recognised by the Proverb xxii. 6: "Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it."

But, strange to say, a reason is given why this commandment should be obeyed. The reason is "that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Ex. xx. 12). "That thy days may be prolonged, and that it may be well with thee in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The penalty, therefore, for not honoring one's father and mother is simply that one's days may be few, and not many, upon the earth—a penalty which is, in reality, no penalty at all; for no man can tell what the number of his days, or the days of any other man, will be.

There is grave irony in the phrase—"the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Deut. v. 16). These words, of course, apply only to the Jewish

race, and to the land of Canaan. They cannot apply to these twentieth century days; for, of the hundreds of millions of human beings now upon the earth, but few, comparatively speaking, will ever possess more land than is sufficient for those narrow beds in which they will take their last long sleep.

Moreover, in this matter, the Jewish God and the Christian God are at variance; for hath not Christ declared: "If any man come to me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, and his own life, he cannot be my disciple" (Luke xiv. 26). J. W. DE CAUX.

(To be concluded.)

A Licensed Jester.

The Ball and the Cross, by G. K. Chesterton; Wells, Gardner & Co.; 1910.

ATTIRED in motley and banging a bladder, Mr. G. K. Chesterton has for some years haunted the camp fires of the army of Liberty. Although identified with the enemy, his personality is so jolly, his quips and cranks so amusing, that he is always a welcome guest. In return, he often displays a quiet fondness for Freethought traditions, and in his writings his flights of fancy are often barbed with iconoclastic points which are as disconcerting to his own side as they are diverting to Freethinkers. In a recent work, *The Ball and the Cross*, Mr. Chesterton has introduced an Atheist as one of the principal characters. Of course, the author "wears his rue with a difference," and his Atheist is unlike the traditional iconoclast of orthodox publications. He is Chestertonian; but we think we recognise some of the lineaments as being borrowed from life.

The Ball and the Cross is concerned with the eternal conflict between reason and unreason, and is, in the last analysis, a series of dramatic arguments between the exponents of two points of view in the author's best manner. He pretends to take the chief combatants into the arena of life and surrounds them with some scenic effects; but it is only make-believe and the veriest child's play. Even the dialectic is only good up to a certain point. After that it becomes Shavian in its irrelevance and absurdity.

There are compensations, however, in the wealth of epigram put into the mouths of the chief characters, who are not unskillfully drawn. The representative of orthodoxy is a dour Scotch Catholic, Molan, with all the inherent mysticism of the Celt devoted to the Great Lying Catholic Church. His opponent, Turnbull, is a red-headed, brainy man, who is depicted as a Secularistic "Captain Kettle," with more than that ancient mariner's share of intellect and all his fighting spirit. Turnbull is described as the editor of the *Atheist*, with a shop in Ludgate-hill, and it is not difficult to recognise a partial portrait of a well-known Freethinker. A copy of the Freethought paper, with some caustic references to Christ, placed in the shop window, raises the Christian's bile and he smashes the glass and is dragged before the magistrate. He is fined by this unsympathetic official, and in the court the two rivals declare their intention of fighting to the death. They start measuring weapons in the yard of the shop where they have bought their swords; but the police interfere. They again try on Hampstead Heath; but a philosophic gentleman interferes. Chased into the country by the police, they are again disturbed by an argumentative Imperialist. They rescue a lady, and with her flee to the sea shore. The sea comes in and nearly drowns the Atheist, who is rescued by the Christian. Afterwards, they find themselves in a lunatic asylum—a delicious Chestertonian touch. Finally, in this hypnotic atmosphere, both combatants come to a better understanding of one another. The book ends with a melodramatic finale which is quite unconvincing. Fortunately, the fantasy has some good

points. The police-court scene, in which the wordy minded magistrate rides roughshod over the religious enthusiast, is admirable, and Mr. Chesterton makes full use of his opportunities of lashing both the Atheist and the magistrate impartially.

Curiously, Turnbull, the Atheist, is the only live character in the whole book. Mr. Chesterton has had a passing glimpse of a real Freethinker and something of this appears in his portrait of this iconoclastic editor, with his devotion to intellectual ideals. The author realises that the very depth and vehemence of the man's passion for principles accounts for an occasional abruptness of tone. The heart of the editor of the *Atheist* is heroic, as it needs must be, to ungrudgingly undergo years of unrewarded toil. Passion for truth is the driving power that makes this man an apostle.

Not for nothing is a man a glutton for work such as this, causing him to espouse an unpopular cause and endure the sacrifice. To do right because it is right, in the scorn of consequence is, in Renan's fine phrase, "to work at the looms of the future."

Because Mr. Chesterton has perceived these truths, his portrait of the Atheistic editor is so realistic. It matters little that at the close of the story the author turns on the limelight and finishes with a burst of transpontine bombast.

The book is full of good things, as:—

"The nice Jew is called Moses Solomon and the nasty Jew is called Thornton Percy."

"What is the good of words if they are not important enough to quarrel over."

"If you called a woman a chimpanzee instead of an angel, wouldn't there be a quarrel about a word?"

"France is one torrent of splendid scepticism, from Abelard to Anatole France."

"Massacre is wicked, even with a provocation."

Mr. Chesterton is so jolly a companion, so fond of comradeship, so full of laughter, the joy of living, and the lust of argument, that the reader is content. He forgives the cunning monologue for the inevitable epigram, knowing that when the author is most dogmatic he is most witty.

Mr. Chesterton simply cannot keep humanity out of his books. His big, breezy, jolly nature, refuses to be cribb'd, cabin'd, and confin'd within the narrow limits of ecclesiasticism. Let him write what he will, he is always sure of an audience. He is a licensed jester.

MIMNERMUS.

Correspondence.

ANOTHER CONVERTED INFIDEL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I don't know if you have ever heard of Mr. Harrison Jennings, or whether you may think him worthy of notice. But this gentleman was billed to give an address at the local Baptist "Men's Own Brotherhood" on his "Experiences Amongst Infidels." This, sounding an interesting topic, I paid a visit to church for once. The lecture was about as steep as anything I have ever heard in that line. The lecturer's memory extended many years back, and he remembered the time when it was quite the common thing to have Secularist tracts thrust upon one wherever one went, to the accompaniment of blasphemous threats and fists shaken in one's face; so that it needed considerable courage, in those days, to avow one's belief in Christianity. This was in the eighties. Once, he and a lady helper determined to hold a meeting outside the "very worst Secularist club in London," somewhere down Hoxton way. Directly the meeting started, the Secularists were furious and came trooping out of their club and induced all the East End roughs and hooligans to throw bottles, bricks, and stones at the Christians. It was a desperate moment; he (the lecturer) placed himself in front of the lady to shield her from the missiles. He modestly disclaimed any credit for personal bravery, however, assuring the audience that it was the spirit of God in him at work. Another Freethought lecturer, a well-known man, inveigled him, once, down a dark court, and bringing forth a large knife—a relation to a dagger—brandished it about in front of his face and breast, for the purpose of frightening him. Of course, the attempt was a failure. Altogether, his "Experiences Amongst the

Infidels" were much more terrible than the adventures of Mr. Roosevelt amongst the big game of Uganda.

The lecturer claimed quite a sporting acquaintance with such men as Bradlaugh and Holyoake, who, however keen the debates they had with him, always shook hands at the finish. He remembered well the tremendous crowd that followed the police-van to Pentonville Prison when Mr. Foote was imprisoned for blasphemy: cheering all the way as though he were a great hero or passive resister. This comparison was made quite seriously. An incident related was that he had read in the *Freethinker* one week, some years ago, a scornful article ridiculing the idea of hell and fire punishment, and the very next week the *Freethinker* office was burnt down, or nearly so, was one of the many minor trimmings with which the address was adorned.

Finally, and this is more important, we had our old friend the converted infidel trotted out. This time the story was very explicit. This man was the secretary of a local branch of the National Secular Society, and a man of great ability as speaker and organiser. If he saw any of his own children reading the Bible he would snatch it out of their hands and throw it behind the fire; if the dinner did not quite please him he would grab the table-cloth and send the whole lot flying across the room. He was a man of great ability, but that's the sort of man he was. The conversion of this picturesque individual commenced from the day that Mr. Jennings conducted an open-air service outside his house. Looking in wrath from his window, he (the infidel) noticed the Christian help his (the infidel's) little crippled child to a seat; and he was astounded that such a man could show an infidel's child a kindness. The preacher and the infidel became acquainted. Years passed, and one after another, the infidel's two children died, and he could find no consolation. There is no need to repeat the whole tedious story, but, of course, his conversion followed. I forget whether the lecturer said that the infidel was now dead; but, at any rate, he was receiving cordial and grateful messages from him until a few years ago.

A short silence followed the conclusion of the address, and there was a whispered consultation between chairman and lecturer. I may say that my presence had been marked by most of the "brothers," as I have some slight local notoriety as a street-corner tub-thumper on Socialism and kindred topics. It was obviously entirely in my honor that the chairman announced, that though it was not their usual practice, they would allow a question should any member of the audience like to ask one.

Well, of course, I asked for the name and details with regard to the converted N. S. S. secretary; and I got it, with a great show of circumstantial knowledge. It was given as: George Storey, 12 St. Swithin's-terrace, Norwich; he was secretary of the Norwich Branch of the National Secular Society; he was an enthusiastic member up to the year 1891 or 1892; and a keen follower of Charles Bradlaugh.

In conclusion, Sir, if you think this matter worth noticing, I should be glad if you can tell if there ever was a Norwich Branch, or any other information. Knowing many of the men in the audience, it might be worth doing if I could show that Mr. Harrison Jennings was somewhat in error, and I would certainly take it upon myself to carry the matter a stage further.

G. D.

[There was a Norwich Branch in 1886 and for a few years previous, but not since, and the "convert" could not have belonged to it in 1891 or 1892. The name of Storey is not in the list of secretaries.—EDITOR.]

Ye who adore God's Vicar while he saith,
Blessed be every lie that props the faith,
Draw ye from Peter's fish no purer oil
To feed your Lamp? In vain then do ye toil.

—Landor.

Obituary.

With the deepest regret I have to report the death of Mrs. R. G. Fathers on the 30th ult. Her death, through heart failure, was painfully sudden and came as a great surprise and shock to her many friends. She had undergone a slight operation, from which she had nearly recovered, when the tragic end came. She passed away in an instant as she was being helped from her bed. The funeral was at the Yardly Cemetery on Tuesday the 4th inst., the Secular Burial Service being read. The deceased was a Vice-President of the National Secular Society, also of the Birmingham Branch, and the latter has lost a hard working and devoted member. Much sympathy is felt for our esteemed President, Mr. R. G. Fathers, and the members of his family for the heavy blow which has so suddenly afflicted them.—J. PARTRIDGE.

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, G. W. Foote, "The Eye of Faith: and What It Sees."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Salvation By Faith."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, W. J. Rowney, "Let Us Pray."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. Yates, "Is the Bible the Word of God?"

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. Davidson, "The Holy Terror in Spain and Portugal."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 11.30 and 3.30, A. Hyatt and C. Saphin.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill, opposite Public Library): 11.30, a Lecture. The Green, Edmonton: 7, L. Dawson, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): J. T. Lloyd, 12 (noon), "Are We Responsible: If so, To Whom, or What?" 6.30, "The Law of Liberty in Morals."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. F. Green, "National Independence in a Federated World."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. M. Labouchere, "The Foundations of Europe."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Fred Morgan, Miscellaneous Dramatic Recital. Pianoforte selections.

RHONDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's, late Danix's, Temperance Bar, Dunraven-street, Tonypandy): 6, Sam Holman, "What is the Use of Religion?"

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N. S. S. (Blackburn Market Ground): Mr. Genever, 3, a Lecture; 7.30, "The Assassination of Francisco Ferrer."

Huddersfield and District Branch N. S. S. (Market Cross): Saturday, at 8, Geo. T. Whitehead, "The First Cattle-Boat: Its Captain and Crew."

BUSINESS CARDS.

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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.

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President: G. W. FOOTE.

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

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