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There can be no purpose of eternity. It is process all. The most sublime result, if it appeared as the ultimatum, would go stale in an hour—it could not be endured.

—BENJAMIN PAUL BLOOD.

The Fear of God.

If the fear of God is not the beginning of wisdom, it is at least the beginning of religion. According to the Roman poet it was fear that first created gods in the world, and the same view is expressed by the English poet Shelley, who sings of "Almighty Fear, the Friend-God." It is no less true that fear is generally, if not invariably, commensurate with ignorance. Man trembles before the unknown. His want of knowledge makes him the slave of his imagination. A danger which is understood loses half its terror, while a danger which is shrouded in mystery is so magnified by fancy as to paralyse the faculties. Under this glamor the bravest sink into cowards. If a couple of hardened duellists had to fight a duel in a darkened room, it is doubtful if either would have the courage to begin the engagement. Now savages, among whom religion originates, are always fighting in the dark against the forces of nature. Hence they are frightened in situations in which the civilised man preserves his composure. When, for instance, the lightning flashes and the thunder roars, they crouch in abject terror, precisely as a herd of cows will huddle together in a storm. But the civilised man understands the phenomena, he is acquainted with their causes, he knows the infinitesimal danger there is to himself, and sometimes, instead of being alarmed, his whole being dilates with the tempest, and he revels in the enjoyment of a magnificent spectacle.

The difference in this respect between the savage and the civilisee is the difference between ignorance and knowledge, or religion and science. The poor victim of superstition—and religion is only the superstition that is in fashion—is smitten upon his knees or even upon his face. The votary of science stands erect and unalarmed. The one trembles, the other is serene; the one prays, the other observes; the one worships, the other reflects.

Out of the terror of ignorance sprang the first gods of superstition. The earliest cultus is the worship of malignant powers. A benevolent God is the growth of a later age. But even then the ritual of religion bears traces of the older strata of belief and sentiment. While prayer against plague, pestilence, and famine, battle, murder, and sudden death, survives in the Church liturgy, we have visible evidence that religion retains relics enough of its older form to indicate to students the ideas in which it originated and the essential character of its influence.

A Christian divine has called it a compliment to religion to say that it originated in fear. "Fear," he said, "in its essential nature is something peculiar to man, something which marks out man from the beast of the field." We believe this assertion will astonish those who have any acquaintance with the lower animals. Nothing is more animal than the human expression of fear. We differ from the lower orders of life far more in the expression of our joy. And the explanation is obvious. Joy, unless it be

excessive, stimulates us; it heightens our vitality, and gives free play to our faculties. But fear represses and disorders. It strikes reason torpid and paralyses the will, it throws us back upon the law of self-preservation, and leaves us to the mere instincts of our animal nature.

The same theologian argued that "human fear is a divine thing"—an evidence of unseen spiritual powers, and a presentiment of futurity. God planted it in human nature antecedent to experience. Why, else, does a child cry in the dark? Or why does an infant so often cry when lifted by a stranger? Thus the Christian divine argued. But the indisputable fact that fear is antecedent to experience needs no supernatural explanation. It is explained by natural selection and the law of heredity. In the long struggle for existence, through which evolution has operated, a confiding disposition would have made its possessor an easy victim to his enemies. The rule of safety was to regard every other being as a foe until he proved himself a friend. It was thus inevitable that suspicion of strangers should be inbred.

The theologian in question went on to argue that fear was the beginning of moral culture. "You can only teach a child love," he said, "through the revelation of fear." He meant, we presume, that punishment is the first stage of moral discipline. But we deny this. Punishment is a legacy of folly and brutality from the savage past. Repression is not education. Policemen may prevent burglary, but they will not moralise burglars. Prisons may deter from crime, but they do not foster virtue. When punishment makes men moral, strait-waistcoats will make lunatics sane. The law of moral ascent is that, as the powers of life flow in the direction of good, evil weakens and finally atrophies from disuse. When this truth is understood the whole system of supernatural ethics is seen to be false and mischievous. The fear of God is recognised as a relic of ignorance and barbarity, which serves nothing but the ends of priestcraft. Heaven is a bribe for fools and Hell is a threat for slaves. Moral causation and the science of character take the place of those fictions, and man treads the path of progress in the sunlight of truth.

Theologians explain conscience as born of the fear of God, just as some jurists explain it as the residuum of the law. But a wiser man than any theologian or lawyer tells us that "Conscience is born of love." A great poet like Shakespeare not only flies higher, but digs deeper, than the so-called philosophers. He understands human nature better because he has more of it within him.

Evolution explains conscience as easily as it explains fear. Conscience is a product of social life; it is unintelligible in solitude where fear might be supreme. Moreover, it is now a well-established truth that fear of the gods had at first no connection whatever with morality; nor has it any real connection of that kind now,—for virtue is not the dread of a tribunal, but a spontaneous impulse flowing from the natural affections of a sympathetic heart. Such is the teaching of Secularism. But theological ethics is very different. It begins with a child's mistrust of strangers and dread of the dark, and ends with the fear of God, who is at once accuser, witness, judge, and executioner.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Ideal of Truth.

AMONG the many subsidiary superstitions accepted and promulgated by Christians is that of the purity—moral and otherwise—of primitive Christians and primitive Christianity. Considered in the light of what is really known of the very early history of the Christian creed, this is as far removed from the truth as it is possible for a belief of this character to be. Primitive Christianity is only pure in the sense that it is uncorrupted by a number of factors that make it tolerable to mankind at large. From this point of view the verbal paradox that Christianity became purer as it became more corrupt expresses a literal and important truth. At no period of its history was Christianity—as preached—morally and intellectually purer than it is to-day; and this is precisely because at no period of its history has it been so corrupted by non-Christian elements. Had Christianity remained uncorrupted it would have long since passed from the face of the earth.

This superstition of the moral purity of primitive Christians is too favorite a plea with Christians for it to be easily discarded. Here and there a little of the truth is let out, but this does not usually prevent the same writers repeating the myth alluded to. Thus the late Dean Farrar says in his *Early Days of Christianity* that—

"To represent the Christian Church as ideally pure, or stainlessly perfect, would be altogether a mistake..... Hatred and party spirit, rancor and misrepresentation, treachery and superstition, innovating audacity and unspiritual retrogression were known among them as among us."

This, to all who know the more esoteric side of primitive Christianity, will appear as a mild statement of the less objectionable features of primitive Christian belief. Something considerably stronger could be said of the strange religious manifestations of early Christianity. But having said even this much, Dean Farrar remarks, only three pages further on:—

"When we turn from the annals of the world at this epoch to the annals of the Church, we pass at once from an atmosphere heavy with misery and corruption into a pure and pellucid air."

Well, a "pure and pellucid air" in which "hatred and party spirit, rancor and misrepresentation, treachery and superstition" flourish does seem to leave something to be desired in the shape of moral atmosphere.

Sometimes this idealisation of past generations of religious believers does not go back so far as the times of primitive Christianity. In the Protestant world the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are favorite times. And by repeating this kind of statement Protestants have not only imposed upon themselves, but upon many others who are not of their religious views. Mr. John Morley—or Lord Morley, to give him his full title—voices this superstition in his famous book, *On Compromise*—that Frankenstein of his earlier years. In one of the chapters of that book the author is dealing with the effect of politics on the intellectual life. With truth—a truth illustrated by his own after career—he points out that political life is fatal to devotion to principle and to intellectual rectitude. It dulls the "sharp sense of personal reasonableness either to a god or to society, or to a man's own conscience and intellectual self-respect." And he then contrasts with this the superiority of the old religious type in the following passage:—

"Men were then devoutly persuaded that their eternal salvation depended on their having true beliefs. Any slackness in finding out which beliefs are the true ones would have to be answered for before the throne of Almighty God, at the sure risk and peril of eternal damnation. To what quarter in the large historic firmament can we turn our eyes with such certainty of being stirred or elevated, of thinking better of human life and the worth of those who have been most deeply penetrated by its seriousness, as to the annals of the

intrepid spirits whom the Protestant doctrine of indefeasible personal responsibility brought to the front in Germany in the sixteenth century, and in England and Scotland in the seventeenth? It is not their fanaticism, still less is it their theology, which makes the great Puritan chiefs of England and the stern Covenanters of Scotland so heroic in our sight. It is the fact that they sought truth and ensued it, not thinking of the practicable nor cautiously counting majorities and minorities, but each man pondering and searching so 'as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye.'"

Historical superstitions are notoriously hard to kill, and this of the nature of the sixteenth and seventeenth century Protestants is peculiarly tenacious of life. Yet the evidence against it is overwhelming to all who consider it. However much may be developed by other or after generations from an expressed principle, we have clearly no justification for crediting those who express it with more than they understand it to mean. And all that sixteenth and seventeenth century Protestants—whether in Germany, Scotland, or England—understood by the right of private judgment was the right to dissent from the Church of Rome. Beyond that they were quite at one with the Roman Church in suppressing by force opinions in conflict with their own. Indeed, a professed Catholic like Erasmus had a far greater appreciation of what we now mean by the right of private judgment than had any of the Protestant leaders. All of these latter recognised, nay insisted, upon the right of the State to suppress heretical opinion. Persecution became a distinct doctrine, elaborated in special works, and practised with a fervor and a ferocity as great as was ever manifested by the Roman Church.

Of course they were convinced that their "eternal salvation depended on their having true beliefs," and in that respect they may compare favorably with many politicians whose expressed beliefs are determined by possible majorities. But this does not mean what Lord Morley's statement would make it mean—a devotion to principle combined with a perception of the duty of examination and respect for difference of opinion. All Christians—Catholic and Protestant alike—have been convinced of the importance of "true belief," but all have held that they possessed the only true belief, and that therefore further examination was unnecessary, while toleration of conflicting beliefs was a distinct evil. To talk of Christians as ever regarding it as important to find out true beliefs is—so long as we use words in their proper sense—nonsense. Such a statement implies that earlier generations of Christians regarded the duty of examination, of research, of verification, as imperative. And these are precisely the duties that the Christian has always ignored most completely. The Christian tolerated no examination of his beliefs; his main object was to force them upon other people by all means—legitimate and illegitimate. Nor were their own beliefs reached by any process of examination and comparison worthy of the name. Their whole attitude was essentially unscientific; and of all duties that of the culture of the intellect was the most neglected.

There is a world of difference between the advocacy of the truth and the impartial search for truth. The Christian has talked very much about the benefits of the former, but it has been the truth as he possessed it, and none other was tolerated or deemed possible. For a sense of devotion to truth as a principle, and apart from all sectarian interests, one has to leave religion altogether. Our great teachers in this direction have not been Protestant leaders of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, nor religious leaders of any century. The impulse here has come mainly from pure science. For sheer love of truth for truth's sake, for a tenacious holding to the principle that all other considerations are as naught compared with the acquisition of knowledge, the history of science is without a rival. True, religious men have fought and died for their religious truth—a fact that loses some of its force by the consideration that they were equally ready to kill in its defence. But at best there was an obviously selfish

motive for their heroism. Eternal damnation or salvation depended upon their conduct, and with a strong conviction of the truth of their religion the motive was obvious. But scientific workers have had no such inducement. They have faced punishment and privation, contempt and misunderstanding, in a strength derived from a conviction of the value of knowledge considered as an end in itself. Those who have died in the interests of human knowledge, or in the cause of human progress, have not usually had monuments raised to their memory, and there have existed no powerful institutions interested in keeping their sacrifice before the world. But in the total of forces that eventuate in civilisation, and which express themselves in a higher human life, their work counts for infinitely more than the spectacular outbursts of fanatical religionists.

One cannot avoid the suspicion that underlying the laudation of earlier centuries on account of an assumed greater earnestness and integrity of mind, is a confusion between a desire for truth and a desire to force one's opinions upon others. That the latter desire existed in a more vigorous form in past times than it does to-day is most likely the case. But there is this much that might be urged in defence of the modern mind. First, we are losing—with cultured people it is already lost—the belief that right conduct is vitally affected by religious theories of an after life. We are realising that the great and essential functions of life are determined by ascertainable secular forces, and that these are not to be seriously disturbed by the advocacy, by any individual, of this or that theory of an after life. We are gaining a clearer conception of the right of any person to hold whatever opinion he chooses on this and other matters; and this inevitably dismisses dogmatism in all directions.

Next, a broadening of the mind necessarily leads to a greater tolerance of error. A Protestant may rave himself almost into hysterics over the Mass or some other Roman Catholic superstition. But that is because his own mind and creed is filled with beliefs and practices that are much upon the same level intellectually. A Freethinker is forced to smile where the Christian raves, because the whole thing is to him supremely ridiculous. When it is perceived that an error is not embraced with a consciousness of its being an error, but as the result of temperament, education, hereditary influence, and so forth, the existence of error is faced in a different spirit from that shown while it is believed that because a thing is true to me, therefore, it must be true to others. A knowledge of human nature begets toleration, and toleration develops, not indifference to the value of truth, but what some people are inclined to take as such. There is really a far greater enthusiasm for truth, as truth, to-day than has ever been manifested in the whole course of Christian history. But instead of taking the shape of fanatical assaults on the liberties of people, it takes that of attempting, by sounder educational methods, by better physical surroundings, and by the creation of a healthier intellectual environment, to abolish the conditions that lead to distorted and misleading views of nature and of man. And they do not value truth least who recognise at once its many sidedness, and the inevitability of error in its pursuit.

C. COHEN.

“The Present Crisis of the Christian Religion.”

It is somewhat surprising to come across a Christian minister who is sufficiently honest and courageous to confess in public that Christianity is at present passing through the fires of scientific criticism, in which it is in imminent danger of being utterly consumed. As a rule, the clergy haughtily assert that no attack, however powerful, can inflict any permanent injury upon their Divinely given and Divinely protected religion; that the Gospel of Jesus

Christ is an absolutely impregnable rock upon which the heaviest artillery of unbelief has never made even the slightest impression; or that the Bible and the Church combined are more than a match for all conceivable forces of opposition, both being to-day in a safer and more secure position than at any former period. The Rev. Ambrose W. Vernon, D.D., of America, is, however, an exception to this rule. In an interesting article, under the title that heads this article, which appears in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*, this divine frankly admits that the Christian religion is just now confronted by very formidable adversaries, who are gradually convincing the world that its ministrations, so far from being indispensable, are, in reality, a serious hindrance to genuine human progress. He is of opinion that three of “the primal Christian forces, namely, what Jesus took for granted, what Jesus taught, and what Jesus was, have been attacked with a vigor, a skill, and an effectiveness never before known in the history of Christianity.”

Dr. Vernon avers that most of what Jesus took for granted is no longer tenable. Of Jesus as a theologian, he writes thus:—

“The God Jesus took for granted created the world in six days, and blew his breath into the nostrils of a curious body of clay that he had prepared for that purpose. He was the Lord of lightnings and thunder, not only sending his sun and rain on the evil and the good, but renewing the jar of meal and cruse of oil for the widow of Zarephath, cleansing Naaman the Syrian, engaging in a continual but triumphant conflict with the demons of which the world was full, and having at his beck legions of angels with which to defend his own. The God Jesus took for granted was in no sense identical with Nature nor bound by its laws. He was a Sovereign, and he was taken for granted to such an extent that one of his disciples could say that whosoever cometh to God must believe that he is. It appears to me that, no matter how poetic we make many of the utterances of Jesus, it is quite evident that he believed in a God who was the Creator and Upholder of the earth with its attendant stars and sun, and the Succorer, at his own free will, of the men whom he loved best.”

We must bear in mind that Dr. Vernon is by profession a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and yet this is what he has to say about the God Jesus took for granted:—

“This conception of God is no longer universal. It is no longer regnant in scientific or perhaps not even in university circles. If Jesus took it for granted and built up from it, we, I think, may not.”

That is perfectly true, although there is a highly tragical element in it when it comes from a Christian teacher. Dr. Vernon is sufficiently candid to own that the present trend in large scientific circles is decidedly away from the Theism of Jesus. We are told how Darwin gradually lost all faith in a Creator, and wrote himself down an Agnostic; how Haeckel “delights in the word Atheism,” and says that “Materialism alone gives us a real explanation of the works of Nature”; and how, “when we realise that this monistic movement (Haeckel's) is spreading among the working-classes, as well as among scientists, by great leaps, when we note that several thousand men in Berlin alone have renounced the Christian faith publicly in one year, we may understand something of the impossibility of taking for granted what Jesus took for granted.”

Freethinkers have been violently abused for saying precisely what Dr. Vernon says in the last extract; but some Christians may pause and think when it issues from the pen of a distinguished theologian.

Coming to what Jesus taught, we find that Dr. Vernon is equally frank. Naturally, those who are obliged to renounce the God Jesus took for granted cannot accept as true what he says about our duties toward that God. According to the teaching ascribed to Jesus, “life consists in love to God and man, and in exterminating all that weakens either.” It is impossible to love the Deity Jesus took for granted, because of his partiality for the Jews and his culpable neglect of all other nations, and also because of the horrible cruelties and murders attributed to him. Indeed, the teaching of Jesus generally is

being discredited to-day. "The names of Nietzsche and Naumann—one violently attacking, the other reluctantly dissenting—are sufficient to remind us that what Jesus taught from his own experience has shared the fate of what Jesus received from the experience of others." Naumann was once an orthodox theologian, and his "defection from the Church, and his earnest and sorrowful *Letters on Religion*, are still lamented by many a German Christian as the sharpest blow Christianity has received in recent years." Even Wilhelm Herrmann, who is reputed to be the greatest theologian in the Protestant world, undertakes to show that "certain of the precepts of Jesus concerning care, the accumulation of riches, and the obligations of non-resentment are to be deliberately set aside by Christians of the present day, because they are opposed to the free utterance of personality upon which Jesus insisted, and because they sprang from a view of the Universe and of human government which cannot be maintained to-day." Then Dr. Vernon adds:—

"The teaching of Jesus, therefore, is attacked to-day by those who revile him on moral grounds, by those who are forced reluctantly to separate from his company, and by those who still walk humbly after the glory of his person."

But not only what Jesus took for granted, not only what Jesus taught, but also what Jesus was—"the glory of his person"—is being attacked to-day. "The outer breastworks had long ago fallen. The inner breastworks, which we have been considering, are at least pretty thoroughly riddled, and the enemy has attacked this holy of holies that has been for centuries regarded not only as impregnable, but as unapproachable." Dr. Vernon tells us that even as a boy he used to shrink from the words: "Ye are from beneath, I am from above." "Ye are of your father, the Devil," and all those sentences of give and take recorded in the earlier chapters of the Fourth Gospel, and that he also quailed before his words to his mother: "Woman, what have I to do with thee? my hour has not yet come," and before his open and unhesitating claim to moral impeccability: "Which of you convicteth me of sin?" The critics have now discovered that the Fourth Gospel is historically untrue. Having referred to the charge of normal human error and consciousness of guilt, implicitly confessed by Jesus in advancing to the baptism in the Jordan for the remission of sins, and in his explicit declaration, "Why callest thou me good? none is good but one, that is God," Dr. Vernon says:—

"There are at least two specific charges against Jesus as authoritative leader of mankind. The first is that he believed in the particularism of the Jew, that he sent his disciples and held himself as sent only 'to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' that the few verses which open the door of hope to the Gentiles are of uncertain origin and could be omitted from the parables wherein they appear without marring their unity, that his words to the Syro-Phœnician woman, bearing the hallmarks of historicity, best expresses his mind on the position of the Jew among the races: 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.' A man who cherished disdain for the larger part of men cannot be their pattern or their Lord—certainly not the incarnation of the spirit of love and tenderness. The second charge is even more serious. It is that Jesus, while certainly not an impostor, is either a fanatic or an ecstatic."

The value of that extract, and of the preceding ones, lies in the fact that they were written by a clergyman, by a professional teacher of Christianity, who is forced to "believe the situation to be most serious," and who anxiously asks, "Is there any way out of our crisis? Can we hold our citadel?" He thinks they can, though only with the skin of their teeth.

He speaks of three plans of defence, and of separating their forces into three companies. The first company attempts "the rehabilitation of the theistic breastwork"; the second, the explanation of the teaching of Jesus; and the third, "the relentless extirpation of the eschatological attack." Now, the rehabilitation of Theism is declared to be an almost hopeless task, and the explanation of the words of

Jesus wellnigh as impossible. We agree with Dr. Vernon so far as he goes, only we go farther and pronounce both tasks to be quite impossible of performance. Despite all the labors of the theologians and the preachers, Theism is dying out. And while the critics are discussing and quarrelling over the teaching of Jesus the masses coolly ignore it. Dr. Vernon himself seeks refuge where the critics cannot touch him—in a visionary castle. "I believe," he says, "that no one can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost." Here is mysticism in all its audacity. "I believe," he continues, "that the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus are identical terms. I believe that the way out of this spiritual crisis is by possessing for one's self the Spirit of Jesus." What delightfully vague, illogical, illusive language. "It seems to me," he adds, "that the task of theologians is to differentiate the Spirit of Jesus from what Jesus took for granted, from what he taught, and from what he was." We have now reached the high watermark of theological imbecility. The idea of differentiating the Spirit of Jesus from all Jesus believed and taught and did and was, and, then, of calling belief in that impossible Spirit "the essence of Christianity," is beyond all description rich. Yes, Dr. Vernon is quite right in saying that "the situation is most serious." It could not possibly be more accurate, but his way out of it only leads him deeper into it. "Come unto me," the Gospel Jesus says. Dr. Vernon's Jesus says: "Come unto my Spirit, rely upon and commune with my Spirit, which is something radically different from Me, which shall be with you and comfort you, when criticism shall have completely robbed you of Me." Dr. Vernon has played beautifully into the hands of his adversaries, who thank him for much assistance unwittingly rendered.

J. T. LLOYD.

Freethought and the New Portuguese Regime.

THE outbreak of the revolution in Portugal is an event of more than ordinary importance to Freethinkers. In this case we see that even as the assassination of Ferrer, less than a twelvemonth before, was the occasion of an unprecedented explosion of reprobation which shook the moral credit of the Spanish monarchy and that of the Papal imbecile at the Vatican to their foundations, so, too, the wanton murder of another Freethinker, Dr. Bombarda, by the hands of a Clericalist fanatic, has shaken the throne and altar in Portugal, driven the King into exile, and brought a new Government and a liberated people into open conflict with the priests, the monastic orders, and the Mother Church itself.

It would almost appear as if the gods, in order to destroy religion in the affections of the Latin peoples, had afflicted the Pope and the College of Cardinals, and all the other repositories of "wisdom from on high," with madness. In Spain their dark conspiracy against Ferrer, and the cynicism with which they hounded him to death and afterwards gloated over his destruction, has made them a byword of loathing in the minds of the Spanish people. In Portugal the action of the priest, who was thrown into the docks after abusing the murdered Dr. Bombarda, precipitated the popular rising and brought the revolutionary movement to its culminating triumph. And now the Jesuits are braving an elated people with bombs, and have necessitated the shelling of one of their convents in order to silence their murderous discharge of death upon the people and the soldiery. This circumstance will serve as an "eye-opener" to the world as to the character of these holy retreats in the lands made sacred by the achievements of the Holy Inquisition. Readers of the *Freethinker* may perhaps recall an article which I wrote in this journal in reference to

the mysterious series of bomb outrages in Barcelona, in which, I think, I made it clear that many of these crimes were hatched in the monasteries and carried out by the priests, in connivance with the authorities, in order to injure the reputation of the Radicals and Freethinkers of the Condal city. We know that during the insurrection week in July, 1909, the priests were caught, arms in hand, acting as *agents provocateurs*, and now we have the proofs, patent to all the world, that the "church militant" in Portugal—*semper eadem* in Spain and elsewhere—are employing their sacred retreats as arsenals, and emptying therefrom showers of bombs upon people and soldiery. In all this we can see both cause and effect of the following items which appear as part of the program which the new Provisional Government pledges itself to press forward:—

- "Abolition of the monks and nuns.
- Closing of the Congregational (*i.e.*, Roman Catholic) schools.
- Compulsory civil registration of births, deaths, and marriages.
- Separation of Church and State.
- Lay instruction."

No wonder the turn which events have taken has caused consternation at the Vatican, and that the Pope and Cardinal Merry del Val, no longer able to doubt the success of the Republicans, are very downcast. The Rome correspondent of the *Daily Mail* declares that the Pope and Cardinals are convinced that the Republican *régime* will show itself hostile towards the Vatican, and that one of its first acts will be to suppress the Portuguese Embassy at the Vatican. The dread is father to the thought.

That hostility has already been manifested. As I write, a decree has been issued ordering the dissolution of all religious congregations, the members of which will be compelled to leave the country within twenty-four hours from the date when the decree becomes law. In the meantime, the clergy are ordered not to show themselves in the streets in clerical garments in order to avoid the possibility of disturbances, and troops are watching the religious establishments day by day in order to prevent attacks by the people. Such a temper of the popular mind may be deplorable, but the excesses, crimes, and extortions of the clergy are responsible for its existence.

All the world now knows that the new President of the Republic, Theophilo Braga, is a distinguished Freethinker. Over two years ago I gave a sketch of his work for Freethought in the columns of this journal. I stated that he took a leading and enthusiastic part in the proceedings of the first national Freethought Congress at Lisbon in April, 1908. Speaking of the condition of affairs in Portugal, he said that the dawning twentieth century is dominated by two terrible scourges—"the systematised folly of religion and the legalised folly of dynastic monarchy." He went on to say that—

"the fiction of religion which sets against the rational notions of science the absurdities of old myths which are no longer even poetic, for they only present to the inquiring mind a number of common-place allegories, imposes its authority upon us by the perfidy of the priests, who carry on their intrigues in the bosom of our families and intimidate the basely empirical and reactionary governments that rule over us."

Braga, who has completed his monumental history of Portugal in twenty volumes, will doubtless add, by his statesmanship, an important chapter to the history of his country. It is not a little remarkable that Portugal's leading historian, Braga, and her leading poet, Guerra Junqueiro, are both Freethinkers and Republicans, as is Galdós, Spain's leading *littérateur*. Even the *Daily Mail* (citing the *Matin*) has to tell us that Braga "is considered an enemy by the Conservative classes because he is a Republican in politics, a Freethinker, and, as regards philosophy, introduced Positivism in Portugal. That suffices to make him detested."

Dr. Magalhães Lima, who has done so much to pave the way for the republic by his brilliant journalistic labors at home and abroad, is a well-known figure in the Freethought movement in Portugal. He is one of the shining lights at all International Freethought Congresses, and an ardent worker in favor of international peace and arbitration. His valiant Freethought journal, *A Vanguardia*, of which he is proprietor and editor, has kept the glorious flag of Freethought flying at Lisbon for over twenty years. *A Vanguardia* hides no light under a hypocritical bushel. It calls itself "a republican organ of Freethought," and attacks Christianity, root, branch, and blossom, every week; and I find its pages, to which I look forward every Wednesday morning, stimulating and deeply instructive. Magalhães Lima was one of the principal speakers at the recent International Freethought Congress at Brussels. If he spoke for Freethought it is not because there is no need for it in Portugal. He told us that you can get sent to prison in that (late) happy hunting ground of fat priests if you do not uncover your head when a religious procession passes. A blacksmith was condemned to two months' imprisonment for not giving the customary salutation. A working man received the same punishment for refusal to give money at a collection, declaring that as the saints were made of wood they had no need of food. An advocate, Senhor Braga, was imprisoned for not having saluted the Holy Sacrament, and twenty-two months of imprisonment were doled out to a journalist who, in an article, denied the divinity of Christ.*

The next National Freethought Congress was to take place at Lisbon on October 13 this year, the first anniversary of the murder of Ferrer. I cannot say whether, in the circumstances, this assembly did take place on the date named. Certainly there is no country where the murder of Ferrer has more vividly aroused the national indignation than Portugal. One of the ablest books on Ferrer is that written by my friend Coelho. It gives the fullest account I know of the doctrines of Ferrer and of the teachings of the remarkable series of books issued by the *Escola Moderna*.† I am glad to indicate this unique study of Ferrer to those who want to learn more of the great twentieth century martyr to Freethought.

I have ample reasons for stating that Freethought in Portugal is not a weakly plant. According to the *Lanterne*, the triumph of the Revolution is owing to the numerous Freethought societies and Freemason lodges which, twenty in number, propagate the doctrines of Freethought. Portugal has about a hundred Freethought societies with 15,000 members. Dr. Bombarda, recently murdered, and the late Admiral dos Reis, who led the fighting that won the Revolution, were both declared Freethinkers. The curious reader who needs to know the facts as they stood two years ago should consult my aforementioned article on Portuguese Freethought. In addition, I may state that the feminist movement in Portugal is practically a branch of Freethought propaganda. In the very last issue of *A Vanguardia* there is a notice of the review *A Mulher e a Criança* (The Woman and Child), the organ of the Republican League of Portuguese Women, containing a letter from Dr. Bombarda. All these things are signs of bad times for religion in Portugal.

There is much work for Freethought in Portugal—a country 78 per cent. of whose people are illiterate, a land infested with 18,000 monks and nuns. More power to the elbow of the new Government in order to remove this ignorance and clear out these ignorami.

WM. BEAFORD.

A Paraphrase on Job we see
By Young: it loads the shelf;
He who can read one-half must be
Patient as Job himself.

—Landor.

* See Lima's speech in *Le Congrès de Bruxelles* (10 centimes. 350 Chaussée de Boendael, Brussels).

† *Quem é Ferrer?* 2d. edição (Guinaraes & Co., 63 Rua de S. Roque, 70, Lisboa; 98 pp., 1fr. 20).

* *Freethinker*, June 7, 1908.

Acid Drops.

Mr. Winston Churchill is taking a step backward in receiving General Booth's advances. The Pope of the Salvation Army should not be taken into partnership with the Home Secretary in the carrying on of the prison system of this country. The Salvation Army is a religious body, and the treatment of criminals is a purely secular business, which should belong entirely to the State. All the Salvation Army can do for criminals is to dose them with religion; and what is the use of *that* when they were nearly all dosed with it in their childhood? —

General Booth blows his own trumpet lustily. Nobody beats him at that game. In reply to all criticism he exclaims, Look at the number of my officers, look at the number of my stations, look at the number of countries in which my flag is flying! Mere size is everything to him. He is becoming a positive megalomaniac. That is how he carried on at a recent show night at the Congress Hall, Clapton. He actually said that 190 new halls had been added to the Salvation Army's new buildings during the last four years. But he forgot to say how many old buildings had been closed, or how many of them were nearly empty; for the Boothites cut a very poor figure in the *Daily News* census of Sunday attendance at places of worship. General Booth further said that "The movement could not be destroyed by man because it was not made by man, but by heaven." But this is only more megalomania. Only one step further on that road is possible. There are people in asylums who believe themselves to be God.

Mr. Bernard Shaw has not yet got rid of his weakness for talking about "God." He is reported by the *Christian Commonwealth* as saying, in his late Memorial Hall speech: "Any man who has any religious belief will have the dream that it is not only possible to die with his country in his debt, but with God in his debt also." This sort of thing tickles the New Theology people immensely, and Mr. Shaw may account that a gain. But he really ought to explain as soon as possible what he means by "religious" and what he means by "God." At present, it looks as if he were putting his tongue in his cheek at those who are helping him to a "respectable" character. —

The Rev. G. Bernard Shaw as a comic figure is amusing enough; but the Rev. G. Bernard Shaw as a serious figure is quite distressing—one might say tragic. —

We gave the *Christian Commonwealth* a lesson in English once before. It used to advertise that Mr. Snowden contributed an "exclusive article" weekly to its columns, and we pointed out that what it meant was that Mr. Snowden's article was contributed "exclusively" to the *C. C.* After a while, it adopted our correction, without a word of thanks; but poets and moralists have always lamented the prevalence of ingratitude. We have now to give the *C. C.* another lesson in English. Speaking of the Glastonbury Cup, our pious contemporary says that "antiquarians declare that it is by no means 2,000 years old." Do they? But what are "antiquarians"? The *C. C.* must mean "antiquaries." Scott used the word rightly, as might have been expected, in the title of one of his novels. —

In revolutions someone is pretty certain to get hurt, and in such cases little surprise need be caused if, in the turmoil, some injustice is unconsciously inflicted. It is worthy of note, however, that in Portugal, as in Turkey, the revolution has been brought about in a comparatively peaceful manner. Would this have been the case had religion had charge of affairs? —

Rev. Dr. Tudor Jones, writing in the *Christian Commonwealth*, says that in Portugal "the writings of Herbert Spencer are known; important translations of French and German books on sociology and philosophy have been disseminated, and have given the people a vision of an inheritance greater and nobler than anything the Church could offer." There is not much room for doubt as to the nature of the writings that have helped to educate the Portuguese people, and if in place of "Church" we read "Christianity" we shall be getting very near the truth. Freethought and tyranny, Freethought and corruption, cannot live for long together on good terms. Christianity can do so, and does do so. Which is the reason why those who have wished to keep the people in mental and physical slavery have always been interested in keeping the people properly religious.

The Bishop of Manchester says the difficulty about miracles is not a matter of historical evidence, but of mental attitude. This strikes us a distinction that is *almost* without a difference. For the mental attitude is substantially a question of history as represented by the developing intelligence of man. At one stage of mental development we find the belief in miracles universal. At another stage it is almost as universally absent. Of course, the time order does not synchronise in all nations, nor even with all persons in one nation. One nation is mediæval while another is modern, and one man is a few hundred years behind his time while another is up to date. But all pass through these stages sooner or later. People who reject miracles to-day have not done so, in the mass, because they saw the evidence for their occurrence was weak, nor did people accept miracles in the past because they saw the evidence was strong. In the one case the general ignorance of people, the immaturity of science, gave every encouragement to belief in the miraculous. In the other case a wider and truer knowledge made the acceptance of miracles impossible to all thoughtful and educated people. They see it belongs to the same phase of mental development as the belief in witches and fairies, and therefore it is not even argued about. It is contemptuously rejected. This is, of course, unpleasant for the clergy; but they, too, belong properly to the past. Their existence to-day is proof only that there are rudimentary organs attached to the body social as well as to the individual organism. —

Professor Gilbert Murray's article on "Hellenistic Philosophy" in the new *Hibbert Journal* is very interesting and beautifully written. The passage translated from Diogenes, a gentle old Epicurean who lived about A.D. 200, is very applicable to the mob of mankind still. "The most of men," the old philosopher said, "lie sick, as it were of a pestilence, in their false beliefs about the world, and the tale of them increases; for by imitation they take the disease from one another, like sheep." He therefore wrote a book to disabuse them and help them to the truth. But the people of his time and neighborhood thought he must have some bad motive; they understood mysteries and revelations, magic and curses, but they were puzzled by a message which "only told them to use their reason and their sympathy and not be terrified of death and evil spirits." How natural it all sounds! The mob of men were very much then what they are now. —

A great translator like Professor Gilbert Murray "despairs of translating the last two sentences" of a noble bit of old Greek teaching. But how fine they are as they stand in his rendering. Here is the whole passage:—"There is nothing to fear in God. There is nothing to feel in Death. That which man desires can be attained. That which man dreads can be endured." It is worthy of being inscribed in gold in every public institution; ay, and in every home. "Thus taught the kings of old philosophy," as Shelley said, "who reigned before religion drove men mad." What on earth has Christianity added to the wisdom and dignity of the ancient philosophy? —

Professor Murray's own words on the Epicurean philosophy are worth quoting:—

"There are doubtless truths more complete and faiths more inspiring than those taught by Epicurus and the various thinkers who have trod in his footsteps from that age to the present. Yet these doctrines and the attitude of mind they engender have done for mankind work of priceless value. They have been a steady corrective of the cruelty and madness that have always haunted the outskirts of supernatural religion, and a tonic of the mind to those who would flinch from the conflict with reality to comfort themselves in dreams."

We suspect that the first sentence was meant to be taken with some grains of salt. It is probably ironical. —

There is an article in the *Hibbert Journal* on the World's Missionary Conference, in which the following passage occurs:—

"It was made quite evident that the vice and squalor of Christendom is a great obstacle to the missionary cause. In the bazaars of India, in the schools of China and Japan, the sorry inequalities of privilege and opportunity that exist among us are becoming a subject of criticism. Our competition for wealth is known, our unneighborliness is known—how the well-to-do amongst us pass comfortably on the roadway of life, while our neighbor, robbed by poverty, wounded by vice, lies on the roadside. The Oriental sociologist has at present a good right to say that if ours is a Christian civilisation he desires a better religion."

The writer of this sad confession is a Christian himself. —

The writer of the Fourth Gospel winds up by declaring that if all the things that Jesus did were recorded "the

world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Christian writers of later ages have been industriously filling up the vacancy. We see a new Commentary advertised; it is to be in two volumes, and the first contains over 1,000,000 words.

The price of that Commentary is twenty shillings per volume. What a light this throws on the value of revelation! God (the Bible God) reveals himself to his creatures, and it takes two million words at the price of two pounds to explain his meaning—even after two thousand years of inquiry and discussion.

It has been often pointed out that the interest of the Churches in philanthropic work was mainly professional. It served the same purpose in church life that giving away articles of domestic utility does in the grocery business. Unconsciously, this truth was illustrated by Mr. Silvester Horne in his address before the Congregational Union. Mr. Horne pointed out that the secular power of the Church was to-day only the mere shadow of what it had once been. But more than that, the growing power of the State was taking from the Churches the care of the aged, the sick, and the poor. In these circumstances, Mr. Horne begged his brother ministers not to be downhearted, but to rely upon their spiritual function for success. Well, if the clergy had sincerely desired the betterment of the helpless, they would have hailed with joy the task being undertaken in a more effective manner by the State. What they are really troubled about is that when the essentials of religion are separated from its accidentals, and the secular power comes to its own, people will discover how worthless religion is. The truth is, that the Christian Churches have been all along living by an exploitation of the social qualities, and by a partial monopoly of social functions. And seeing things as they are is, for the Christian Churches, the beginning of the end.

A good commentary on Mr. Horne's speech is offered in the following description of Church methods in one of our religious newspapers:—

"There is, for one thing, an almost blatant touting for adherents. We might be purveyors of coals soliciting orders. Our buildings tend to get plastered over with posters loudly proclaiming the attractions we have to offer, if only the dear, wayward, worldly people will turn aside from their wickedness and frivolity and come along with us. We scatter our handbills like ashes. If our minister happens to have personal attractions, we play them for all we are worth. We run entertainments of all kinds, from whist drives to fruit banquets, not for the sake of giving a roomful of people a good time—this would be a most happy and legitimate thing—but, bluntly and frankly, for the sake of getting people to our organisation, and to keep them from joining another. We offer our patrons all kinds of advantages, and try and give them something for nothing, or as near to nothing as we can get—lectures, concerts, training classes, and, lower down the scale, coals and clothes and book prizes. Come and gather around our tub; as many draws as you like for a seat-rent. No blanks!"

No one who has paid any attention to the tactics adopted nowadays will consider this picture overdrawn. And all the time they talk of the inextinguishable spiritual cravings of the human mind.

A Brighton lady, of foreign extraction, left £300 to the Very Rev. Father Bernard Vaughan, in order that he may have masses said for the repose of her soul. We hope the reverend gentleman will earn the money by hurrying her through purgatory as fast as possible. It wouldn't do, of course, to suppose the possibility of her having gone further.

Another lady, Miss Isabella Hamilton Syngé, of Sheringham, left in her will that—"If any legatee of my will belongs to the Roman Catholic Church the legacy becomes null and void. Not a penny of my estate shall be in the hands of a Roman Catholic." What an amiable thing religion is, to be sure!

The Synod of Glasgow and Ayr of the Church of Scotland is greatly concerned over the growth of "Sunday Pleasure." Naturally so. Fancy, pleasure on Sunday! And in Scotland! One speaker dwelt on the demoralisation caused by the opening of ice-cream shops. Other speakers were much troubled over the growth of Sunday steamers, Sunday golf, and Sunday exhibitions. Now if they could only limit the selling of ice-cream on Sunday to parsons, and engage others of that fraternity to offer prayers before and after a game of golf, or a picture exhibition, we fancy the outcry against them would be greatly diminished. But we think that the high-water mark of religious humbug was reached by the speaker who protested against labor meetings on Sunday. He called the attention of the promoters of such meetings to

the fact that they involved extra labor on the part of those who looked after the meetings, and of reporters who reported the speeches. Presumably church services need no stewards or deacons or collectors, and the reports of the sermons that appear on Monday are miraculously delivered at the newspaper offices.

Sir William Stephenson, a very pious Newcastle gentleman, has been entertaining Sir Ernest Shackleton, the explorer of the Antarctic. Sir William says that what pleased him most about his guest was the way in which he acknowledged the guiding and protecting hand of God in his Antarctic wanderings. We did not see any clear evidence of this guidance and protection in Sir Ernest Shackleton's account of his travels, and presumably the only evidence is that the explorer returned to civilisation. And one wonders why the same guidance and protection was not forthcoming on behalf of other men who have lost their lives on similar expeditions. It is strange how seldom a man can touch religion without appearing egotistical and manifesting stupidity!

Bishop Welldon's professional talk about the moral failure of Secular Education was well answered by Richard S. Thomas in the local *Daily Dispatch*. Where is the Bishop's evidence? "Has secular education made man murder man? Has it ever advocated the slaughter of witches? Has it approved of slavery? Has it justified the torture of man for a mere difference of opinion? Has it opposed truth and humanity? Has it taught the subjection of women and the doctrine of eternal pain? Has it slain the greatest benefactors of the human race?" Bishop Welldon will probably leave these questions unanswered.

It is astonishing how many critics go chopping nowadays on the great Shakespeare block. They make little, if any, impression upon it; not nearly as much as the sand makes on the face of the Sphinx. Some of these critics are so small that the noise they make is like the buzz of a fly around a marble statue. It advertises them, however, and that is what they want. Even the bigger critics, such as Bernard Shaw and Frank Harris, are too fond of courting notoriety by spitting at the incommensurable Master. But a far greater writer than either of them—the incomparable Heine—knew Shakespeare's supreme greatness in a way that they never could know it. In one of his letters, after the death of Byron, Heine said: "I have always been glad of Byron's company as that of a thorough comrade in arms and an equal. But I am not happy in Shakespeare's company: I only feel too well that I am not his equal. He is the omnipotent minister, and I am a mere councillor; and it is as though he could depose me at any instant." Heine knew.

Professor Denney, of Glasgow, is rightly looked upon as one of the ablest and most stalwart defenders of the orthodox Christian faith. It is well known that the late Professor Henry Sidgwick became an unbeliever as soon as he realised that Jesus did not keep his word about his immediate Second Coming. If Jesus misled his disciples on so important a subject, he cannot be worthy of the world's confidence. Referring to this at the recent Church Congress, the Bishop of Birmingham made an exceedingly lame attempt to prove that Professor Sidgwick misunderstood the meaning of Christ's promise, the promise really being not of a literal, immediate coming, but of a gradual advent in the progress of the centuries. Professor Denney, however, in a finely written article in the *British Weekly* for October 13, states that the Bishop is wrong, that Sidgwick's interpretation was correct, and that Jesus himself was mistaken, and so misled his disciples. This is a marvellous concession from an orthodox divine, and he is to be congratulated upon the courage shown in making it.

What Dr. Denney maintains, however, is that this one blunder made by Jesus should not weaken confidence in him. In the main, he argues, Jesus was right. "The kingdom of God has triumphed, as he predicted, and as 'all history' abundantly testifies. Will Dr. Denney be good enough to inform us where, in what country, it has triumphed, and what are the signs of its triumph? Has it triumphed in France, and what are the exact signs of its triumph in Spain, in Portugal, in Italy, or even in Great Britain?"

From the Chair of the Congregational Union, the Rev. Silvester Horne dramatically declared that "no resolutions of Parliament and no well-organised effort of State authorities can make one sinful soul to cry, 'What must I do to be saved?'" Then he exclaimed: "Here art is powerless and science impotent; here the legislator resigns his pretensions and the social reformer confesses the limits of his

mission." Every word here quoted is profoundly true, and we heartily endorse the truth so vigorously stated. But the failure described is due, not to any inherent weakness in the agencies mentioned, but to the fact, which is becoming more palpable every day, that man is *not* lost, is *not* sinful, and is *not* dependent upon any supernatural beings or forces. Man is simply a very slowly growing, developing, or evolving animal, who often slips backwards, and blunders through ignorance and inexperience, and whose one need is the education of his whole nature on wholly rational lines, which education the Church has hitherto done its utmost to withhold from him.

Prophet Baxter left a big fortune of £56 000 behind him. The reason was that he could not carry it with him—and perhaps it would have melted if he had.

Baxter's religion did not prevent his being one of the greatest impostors of his time. It is idle to talk about his sincerity. He must have known that he was lying. How on earth could an honest man go on for fifty years prophesying the "end of the world," and moving the date forward time after time when the year, the month, and the day arrived, and nothing happened? Baxter simply coined money out of the bump of wonder. He knew very well what he was doing. And he got his reward. It consisted of plenty of money—and the contempt of honest and sensible people. That such a poor creature—for his intelligence was of the meanest order—could amass a fortune in the prophetic business shows the sublime effect of Christianity on the popular mind.

Old Baxter's "Antichrists" were a wonderful lot. His first book was entitled *Louis Napoleon the Destined Monarch of the World*. That was his first Antichrist. But this one died without arriving, and Baxter had to find another. He selected Napoleon the Third's son, who went out to South Africa and fell beneath Zulu assegais. Baxter had to find another. This time he fixed on Prince Napoleon, who also died; in fact, it seemed fatal to be selected by Baxter. Baxter had once more to find another. This time he fixed on Gambetta—and Gambetta died. Afterwards he fixed on General Boulanger—and he died. We have not time to follow Baxter's subsequent selections. He had a new Antichrist every four or five years. Last of all Baxter died also. And the "end of the world" is as far off as ever.

Rev. Henry Thornhill Morgan, of St. Margaret's Vicarage, Lincoln, left £36,751 net, "Blessed be ye poor!"

The dear *Daily News* has made a discovery. Its "own correspondent" telegraphed from Sunderland on Sunday that a colored gentleman, Dr. O'Neale, had been making some "remarkable statements" there in an address at the Co-operative Hall. He made the startling announcement that criminals were the victims of bad heredity, and that "they should not be punished, but should be restrained for the sake of themselves and society." Wonderful! The *Daily News* will be discovering America shortly. We presume it is aware of the death of Queen Anne. But you never can tell.

Rev. E. F. Murnane, rector of the Roman Catholic Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Dockhead, Bermondsey, had a rare old pantomime in his establishment on Sunday evening. He invited all the crippled and sick Roman Catholics of the district to attend a special "Lourdes" service, and the place was filled with such people, some of them being wheeled in bath chairs. Most of them held lighted candles in their hands. Some cried out, "Lord, that I may see"—others "Lord, that I may walk," and so on, but no cures were recorded. One little girl, full of excitement, tried to get out of her bath chair, but she fell back again, crying at her failure. It was cruel to bring the poor child there at all. Catholic priests, even, know quite well that "the age of miracles is past."

The *Ayrshire Post* of October 14 contains a long account of the trial, and sentence to eighteen months' imprisonment with hard labor, of an immoral and thievish adventurer who has been working the religious dodge with great acceptance under the assumed name and dignity of the Rev. T. H. Clifford, B.A. The fellow seems to be a bad lot altogether, but he imposed himself easily on the pious folk of Ayr. Hundreds attended his evangelistic meetings, and delighted in his denunciation of "infidels." He was specially withering on the subject of Thomas Paine's "immoralities."

Truth says that religious periodicals are "much favored by trick advertisers," because "they are chiefly read by a

class of people on whom it is easy to prey." To add anything to this would be to spoil it.

Rev. R. J. Campbell still delivers himself of long-winded prayers to the Almighty, and prints them afterwards for the edification of the British public. He really ought to take God, and himself, more seriously. If he did, he would avoid this comic-opera performance.

Rev. R. J. Campbell has been letting the cat out of the bag. Why was the Progressive League changed to the Liberal Christian League? Mr. Campbell explained it in the course of his sermon at the City Temple on Sunday evening. He was reported as follows in Monday's *Daily News*:—

"Another miscalculation—an absolute mistake—which they made was that of making their basis so wide as to include persons who had no real sympathy with the spirit of their movement. None of them ever anticipated that persons would wish to join who neither had nor desired to have any religious faith. This, however, actually happened, and so great was the danger resulting therefrom that they were obliged to re-name the society in such a way that henceforth there could be no doubt as to its nature."

We know now. Unbelievers joined Mr. Campbell's League. They took him at his word. They thought he meant what he said. Hence all the trouble. Mr. Campbell doesn't want progress without Christianity. Plainly, he is afraid of being swamped by "infidels" in working for Humanity. Good without God, and salvation without Christ, don't suit his book. He has to consider his friends—and his salary.

Mr. Campbell seems to have cleared the Socialists as well as the unbelievers out of his League. He will soon be perfectly "respectable." The first thing he fired off at the recent annual meeting was a telegram from Mr. Balfour wishing "all success to your social service work," which "must appeal with equal force to men and women of all political parties and all varieties of religious conviction." Beautiful! Nobody equals Mr. Balfour at this sort of *blague*. He talks with his tongue in his cheek better than any other man in Great Britain—or Ireland. And after Mr. Balfour came Mr. Lloyd George, who delivered what the gushing sentimentalist of the City Temple pulpit called "an immortal speech." We read it carefully through with no convulsions of admiration. There is nothing of any good in it that was not a commonplace on Secularist platforms fifty years ago. It was far better said in Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man*, and by Robert Owen, and by George Jacob Holyoake, and by Charles Bradlaugh. Even "advanced" Christians only follow, at a long interval, the Freethinking pioneers.

Mr. Lloyd George spoke as a Christian, but he took care not to appeal to the New Testament. He denounced the great disparities of wealth and poverty, but he did not quote "Blessed be ye poor" or tell the rich to sell their property and give the price away to the destitute.

The forest fires in America have died down, and over and above the thousands of injured it is calculated that the death-roll will be between 800 and 1 000, and the material damage between £5,000,000 and £10,000,000. "He doeth all things well."

"Is the Lord among us or not?" asks the Rev. Ambrose Shepherd, of Glasgow. *Not*; decidedly *not*. The last part of the sixteenth chapter of Mark sets forth the signs that shall follow them that believe. They shall play with serpents and drink poison with impunity, besides healing the sick miraculously. When the good Christians can do these things the Lord is among them. We shall all know when he is there.

A FACER.

H. B. Warner, in *Alias Jimmy Valentine*, was sitting in a hotel one Sunday recently, peacefully reading his paper, when a long-haired gentleman entered distributing tracts. He approached Mr. Warner and flung one of the temperance tracts on the paper he was reading. Mr. Warner gazed at the tract and then looked up gently at the long-haired man.

"Are you a reformed drunkard?" he asked.

"No, sir, I'm not," cried the man, drawing back indignantly.

"Then why the h— don't you reform?" quietly asked Mr. Warner.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 23, Secular Hall, Humberston Gate, Leicester; at 6.30 p.m., "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

October 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 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: £252 5s. 1d. Received since:—X. Y. Z., £1; David Wild, 2s. 6d.; J. W. H. (Benoni, Transvaal), £1; W. H. B., 2s. 6d. Per E. Pinder:—Leicester "Saints," £22 7s.

H. FRANCIS.—Sent as requested. We wish you better luck. There is no "presumption" in looking upon us "almost as a personal friend." We wish our readers to look upon us in that way, and are glad to know that many of them do.

HORACE DAWSON.—There is no Freethinker's Concordance to the Bible. Our *Bible Handbook* is the nearest thing. Principal Donaldson's book might help you with regard to Christianity and Woman. You will find the bed-rock facts in our *Christianity and Progress* (1d.).

F. D.—See paragraph. Thanks.

ERNEST HATCHER.—We don't see how the joke is affected by the mistake in the preacher's name. The Christian paper we collected the facts from called the Dean of Norwich "Lefroy," and our memory of that gentleman's emigration from earth to God knows where was not vivid enough to correct the blunder. We note that the new Dean of Norwich is called Wakefield.

SIDNEY J. COOK.—We wish the Islington Branch all success.

DAVID WILD.—Glad to hear you went to Manchester on Oct. 9 and heard Mr. Foote, and are now looking forward to his next visit there.

LESWICHIAN.—You will see it has been dealt with. Thanks.

S. L.—It is in type, but cannot be fitted into the present number. Next week, we trust.

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

J. K. VERRER.—Ingersoll was both Agnostic and Atheist, for he maintained that both meant the same thing.

T. DAVIS.—Thanks. It is a bit "previous." Glad you have got some of your friends to take the *Freethinker*. If all our readers would try to do ditto our circulation, which slowly improves now, would double in twelve months, with great advantage to the movement in general as well as to those specially concerned.

W. T. NEWMAN.—Rather too slender a basis for much of a structure.

T. HARGREAVES.—Glad you find this journal "just the sort of paper" you have "been wanting for some time." Lectures are not published in the *Freethinker*, nor elsewhere. Our platform men don't write out their lectures, and good shorthand reports are expensive. The clergyman who talked seriously about "the likeness of a man's face in the moon" as some proof of God's existence is graduating for a lunatic asylum.

A. S. C.—(1) You are mistaken in supposing you have seen Secular Weddings announced in the *Freethinker*. Marriages can only be celebrated in registrar's offices or in places of worship licensed for such purpose. Of course the civil marriage which takes place at a registrar's office is secular in the sense that no religious ceremony or religious formula is used. (2) Whether an Atheist should marry a Christian is for the parties to decide for themselves. Harmony of conviction is, of course, a very desirable thing, if it can be secured.

W. OWEN.—Your note is dated Sunday, but the Glasgow postmark is Monday, and it reached us on Tuesday. We strain a point in the circumstances, but it is annoying that secretaries, and others, will not bear in mind our frequent statement that Tuesday is too late for such things.

H. ROTHERA.—See paragraph. Thanks.

A. E. KINSELY.—One of Mr. Foote's lectures at Birmingham will certainly be on Charles Bradlaugh, but the subject of the other is uncertain at the present moment. You were misinformed about the Bradlaugh meeting at Queen's Hall. No side door was opened to admit another fifty after the hall was declared to be full. There is no side door to open. We regret you could not obtain admission after travelling so far to hear the lecture, but nobody is to blame for the crush.

W. MCKELVIE.—Glad the Liverpool friends had a "Ferrer" night, but Tuesday is too late for paragraphs.

J. S. F.—Your long letter may be dealt with next week. Meanwhile we must observe that a writer's having done good in the past is no reason for not counteracting his influence when he goes wrong.

M. I.—We cannot take notice of communications bearing no name and address.

J. CARRUTHERS (Blackburn).—Pleased to hear that Mr. Genever had such a large open-air audience at his "Ferrer" meeting on Sunday. Mr. Foote will be happy to visit Blackburn if you can get a good central hall.

R. HERBURN.—Free discussion is not at an end because you could not step between Mr. Lloyd and Mr. Germany. We have had no conversation with Mr. Lloyd on the subject. He judges for himself whether he is called upon to make a rejoinder. It is not for us to instruct him; still less for you.

W. H. B.—Sorry it was overlooked.

F. HALSTEAD.—They told you a falsehood. This paper has always been supplied to the trade on "sale or return." The shop in Lord-street, Liverpool, does not order of us direct now. You could have got your weekly copy at Smith & Son's in Dale-street.

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.

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.

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (Oct. 23), at the Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester. His subject is "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years." No doubt the hall will be crowded, especially as Freethinkers will be sure to come in (as usual when Mr. Foote visits Leicester) from several smaller towns and villages. We may remind such visitors that the chair will be taken, by Mr. Sydney A. Gimson on this occasion, at 6.30.

Mr. Foote had another fine meeting at Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evening, and it included a very gratifying proportion of ladies. Mr. A. B. Moss made an excellent chairman. Prior to the lecture Mr. Foote recited Mark Anthony's oration over the dead body of Cæsar. The greatest actor might have been proud of the deep silence followed by such stormy applause. Mr. Foote was in good voice and good form, and the lecture on "The Eye of Faith: and What It Sees" was followed with sustained interest for over an hour. It is difficult to conceive of a more live meeting. Several questions were asked and answered, and one lady offered opposition from the platform. She was an enthusiastic Christian, and very voluble, but without an elementary idea of discussion. The audience smiled (audibly) at her modest suggestion that she should hold a set public debate with Mr. Foote.

Mr. Lloyd occupies the Queen's Hall platform this evening (Oct. 23), and Mr. Cohen on the next Sunday evening, when the present course of lectures will come to an end. Unfortunately, owing to circumstances referred to in our last issue, it is still impossible to make a definite announcement with respect to further lectures at Queen's Hall in the new year.

A course of Sunday evening lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., will be delivered at the Shoreditch Town Hall during November. Mr. Foote opens the course (by special request) with his lecture on "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years." Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd follow, and Mr. Foote closes the course on the fourth Sunday. Shoreditch Town Hall is a big place that takes a lot of filling, but we hope to see it crowded.

Public debates are scarce nowadays, but one has been arranged between Mr. C. Cohen and the Rev. J. E. Gun. It is to take place on Thursday and Friday evenings, November 17 and 18, at the Public Hall, Prince of Wales-road, Kentish Town. Tickets, priced 1s. and 6d., may be obtained of Miss Vance at 2 Newcastle-street. The question for discussion is, "Theism or Atheism: Which is the more Reasonable?"

Mr. Cohen's recent audiences at Glasgow were the best he has ever had there. He had good audiences, too, at his week-night lectures in the district.

Miss Kough is the lecturer at the Secular Hall, Glasgow, to-day (Oct. 23). We once more invite the local and district "saints" to give her good meetings and a hearty welcome.

The last London "social" under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive was held at Anderton's Hotel early in April. The President was very ill and in great pain, but he said nothing to anyone, for what was the use of upsetting others when it could do him no good? He went home by the midnight train; the journey was an agony, and the next day he was in the doctor's hands, preparing for an operation. Happily he will (barring accidents) be all right for the next "social," which takes 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. can attend themselves and introduce a friend. Non-members who wish to attend, and cannot be so introduced, should apply for a ticket to Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

The Islington Branch opens its new Committee Room with a "social" this evening (Oct. 23) at 7 o'clock. During the winter it proposes to hold debating classes and social and musical evenings. Members will be welcome free; non-members can obtain tickets by applying to the Secretary, Mr. Sydney J. Cook, 46 Dame-street.

Ten thousand demonstrators marched through Rome last Sunday afternoon to the "Field of Flowers" and held a meeting under the statue of Giordano Bruno to commemorate the anniversary of Ferrer's execution and the founding of the Portuguese Republic. Strong anti-clerical speeches were delivered. The authorities thought it advisable to surround the Vatican with troops, but there was not the least disorder.

Demonstrations not being allowed, some two thousand sympathisers went separately to Ferrer's tomb and deposited wreaths. Forty wreaths were brought by a deputation from Valencia, headed by Senor Azate, a Spanish deputy. Ferrer's brother and nephews were amongst the visitors. The same afternoon (Oct. 13) the first Freethought Congress in Spain was opened. A telegram of sympathy and encouragement was sent by the President of the National Secular Society.

The latest number of the New York *Truthseeker* to hand, dated October 8, is a Ferrer number, and is valuable as well as interesting. One long item, by far the most enthralling account of Ferrer's last hours and death, is reproduced "from the Barcelona correspondent of the *Journal de Charleroi*." This is true, but not the whole truth. It was really reproduced from the *Freethinker*. We translated it into English—as we stated at the time. We took pains with it; it was a labor of love; and anybody who knows French, and writes English, may easily see that it is something very different from an ordinary piece of hack translation. Editor Macdonald is usually careful in the matter of acknowledgment, but he or his sub-editor, if he has one, has made a slip this time.

In response to several inquiries we beg to announce that Mr. Foote's lectures at Birmingham on Sunday, October 30, will be delivered in the Town Hall at 3 and 7 o'clock. All seats will be free (as a charge cannot be made), with a collection in aid of the expenses. Tea will be provided at a modest figure for visitors from a distance.

The Secular Society, Ltd., profits to the extent of £598 17s. 7d. by the will of the late Madame J. D'Louhy, who made the Society her residuary legatee. An obituary notice of Madame D'Louhy appeared, from the pen of Miss Vance, in the *Freethinker* some time ago. We may also state, in this connection, that the Secular Society, Ltd., has just received another cheque for £50 as a donation from Mr. George Payne, of Manchester, who thoroughly approves of the "forward policy" in Freethought. Mr. Payne grants our request to be allowed to mention this, much against his natural inclination, as a possible encouragement to others who may be able to imitate his example.

The President's Honorarium Fund has been languishing somewhat lately. It may be owing to the holidays, and perhaps intending subscribers will hurry up now with their donations. A Birmingham friend, who would like to see the full £300 made up forthwith, offers to subscribe one tenth of the deficit if nine others will do the same. We have pleasure in giving publicity to his kind suggestion. It should be borne in mind that Mr. Foote has still to devote a portion of the Honorarium Fund to sustaining the *Freethinker* and its adjuncts. The paper itself would be paying its way, but precautions have to be taken against its insecurity. To use a metaphor, Mr. Foote finds (and he cannot help it) that keeping a cow is more expensive than buying milk as you want it. Happily the circulation of the *Freethinker* keeps creeping forward, but the pace is too slow to make much difference yet.

Moses and the Commandments.—III.

(Concluded from p. 668.)

Commandment the Sixth.—"Thou shalt not kill" (Ex. xx. 13; Deut. v. 17).

To kill means to murder; therefore men should not murder one another. And yet the very God who is said to have given this Commandment commanded the Israelites to murder in cold blood even women and little children. "Go and smite Amalek," said he, "and utterly destroy all that they have; and spare them not; but slay both men and women, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. xv. 3). To say that this destroying and slaying was excusable and justifiable homicide—that it was lawful and legal, as is the execution of a criminal—is not only to beg the question, but also to state that which is utterly untrue. The inhabitants of Canaan had in no wise injured or offended the Israelites; yet the latter, at the command of their God, seized the possessions of the former, and mercilessly put men, women, and little children to the sword. Every natural and civil right was trodden under foot by the conquerors. The Commandment is "Thou shalt not kill—that is, murder; and yet here was warfare of the most savage and barbarous description—the warfare of wild beasts rather than of human beings. And if the killing in cold blood of innocent women and children was not murder, what was it? There can be no excuse for such wanton, such atrocious barbarity; and yet we are told it was done by the command of God! And this same God, we are told by another of his prophets, some nine hundred years afterwards, issued a similar command, though strange to say, in the latter case, the atrocities were to be committed upon, and not by, the Jews. "Go ye," said the Jewish God, "through the city, and smite. Let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity; slay utterly old and young, both maidens and little children and women" (Ezek. ix. 5, 6). What a picture! A picture that is a libel on the God who is said to have created the heaven and the earth.

Commandment the Seventh.—"Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Ex. xx. 14; Deut. v. 18).

And by the Levitical law the penalty attached to the breaking of this Commandment was "death" (Lev. xx. 10). Nevertheless, the Jewish God gave the Israelites permission to ravish any captive woman they pleased, and then to turn her adrift in the wide world; the only restriction on the ravisher being this: "Thou shalt not sell her at all for money, because thou hast humbled her" (Deut. xxi. 14).

This paraphrase of the passage in question is said by orthodox Christians—are there any others who are not orthodox?—to be a gross misrepresentation of it. Is it so? Let us see in what respect, if any, it is a misrepresentation. Here is the passage *in extenso*—

"When thou goest forth to war against thine enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive, and seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to wife; then thou shalt bring her home to thine house; and she shall shave her head, and pare her nails; and she shall put the raiment of her captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month; and after that thou shalt go in unto her, and be her husband, and she shall be thy wife. And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her, because thou hast humbled her" (Deut. xxi. 10-14).

Now there is no need to read between the lines to see what all this means; the hideous transaction stands out in all its nakedness and horror. The woman was a captive and a slave, and *volens volens*—no matter whether she were maid, wife, or widow—she had to permit her master to "humble" her. And after he had "humbled" her—that is, when he had satisfied his lust and she had become distasteful

to him—he might let her go whither she would—that is, he might turn her out of doors, for she had no choice in the matter, but must not *sell* her. To rob such a one-sided, cold-blooded transaction by the use of the expression "husband" and "wife" is grossly to prostitute those words. In what way, then, can this paraphrastic version of the passage be said to be a "gross misrepresentation" of it?

But, wonderful to relate, another Jewish prophet declares that the God of Israel has said: "I will not punish your daughters when they commit whoredom, nor your spouses when they commit adultery" (Hosea iv. 14). What a changeable god this Jewish God must have been!

Commandment the Eighth.—"Thou shalt not steal" (Ex. xx. 15; Deut. v. 19).

And yet the Jewish God commanded the Israelites to rob the Egyptians of "jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment," under the pretence of *borrowing* such goods of them (Ex. xi. 2; xii. 35). The Revised Version of the Bible substitutes the verb "to ask" for the verb "to borrow." To ask what? To give or to lend? For it must have been one or the other, and all the circumstances of the case point to the latter meaning as being the true reading. The old translation, therefore, is the truthful one. The Egyptians did not give, but lent; and as the Israelites took without the intention of giving back again, they robbed—that is, they stole. Were this not so, how could the Israelites be said to have "spoiled the Egyptians"? (Ex. iii. 22). For it is not to be supposed that these primitive Egyptians practised the Christ-like precept, though not Christian virtue, to "do good and lend, hoping for nothing again" (Luke vi. 35).

According to the Levitical law, a thief was either "to make full restitution," or, if he had nothing, then to be "sold for his theft" (Ex. xxii. 3); unless, indeed, he stole simply for the purpose of satisfying his hunger. "Men do not despise a thief if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry" (Prov. vi. 30). It was not for this purpose that the Israelites robbed the Egyptians and the inhabitants of the land of Canaan; the latter, indeed, they murdered when they did not rob their victims. Joshua tells us that this was the case. "It came to pass," says he, "when the children of Israel were waxen strong, that they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out" (Joshua xvii. 13). "Tribute" is a pretty word to use, but it really means "black-mail."

Commandment the Ninth.—"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor" (Ex. xx. 16; Deut. v. 20).

And yet we are told by a prophet that the God of Israel employed a "lying spirit" to cajole Ahab, the King of Israel, even unto death. Here is a full, but shortened, account of the matter:—Ahab, the King of Israel, desiring to possess Ramoth Gilead—a strongly fortified city, standing in a mountain-pass between Israel and Judah—inquired of the prophets of the God of Israel—about four hundred men—if he should be successful in an effort to take it. The answer of the prophets was, "Go up, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king" (1 Kings xxi. 18). Now, although we are assured that "in the multitude of councillors there is safety" (Prov. xi. 14), this aphorism does not seem to apply to prophets of the Lord God. At all events, it did not in the eyes of Jehoshaphat, the King of Judah, who had undertaken to assist the King of Israel with horses and men in the contemplated siege. Doubt rested in his mind as to the prophetic ability or truthfulness of these four hundred prophets, for he asked: "Is there not here a prophet of the Lord besides, that we may inquire of him?" (1 Kings xxii. 7). There was one, Micaiah, the son of Imlah. But the King of Israel hated him because, said the king, "he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." However, Micaiah was sent for, and when he arrived, in answer to king he said: "Go and prosper, for the Lord shall deliver it into the hand of the king." But the king doubted him, and adjured him to tell the

truth. Then said Micaiah, "I saw all Israel scattered upon the hills as sheep that have not a shepherd." Said Israel to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell thee that he would prophecy no good concerning me, but evil?" Then spake Micaiah, "Hear thou, therefore, the word of the Lord. I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand, and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said on this manner, and another said on that manner. And there came forth a spirit and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And the Lord said, Thou shalt persuade, and prevail also; go forth and do so" (1 Kings xxii. 3-22).

Evil spirits and deceitful utterances seem to have been patronised largely by the Jewish God. Thus we read:—"The spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him" (1 Sam. xvi. 14). "Behold, this evil is of the Lord; what should I wait for the Lord any longer?" (2 Kings vi. 33). "O Lord thou hast deceived me" (Jer. xx. 7). "If the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet" (Ezek. xiv. 9). "Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" (Amos iii. 6). "Evil came down from the Lord unto the gate of Jerusalem" (Micah i. 12).

Commandment the Tenth.—"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's" (Ex. xx. 17; Deut. v. 1).

And yet the God who gave this Commandment for the edification and government of men was the God of the patriarch Jacob, who is the impersonation of deceit and covetousness; the God without whose assistance Jacob could not have defrauded his uncle Laban of his cattle (Gen. xxx. 31-43). This also was the God of David; for are we not told that "David was a man after God's own heart"? (1 Sam. xiii. 14; Acts xiii. 22). And David was not only a captain of robbers and cut-throats (1 Sam. xviii. 27; xxii. 1, 2; xxiii. 14; xxv. 21, 22; xxvii. 11), but was the murderer of the man whose wife he had debauched (2 Sam. xi. 2-21). Further, it was this Jewish God who, in his dealings with the Israelites and the Canaanites, consecrated if he did not institute

"the simple plan

That those should take who have the power
And those should keep who can."

A high-handed and unjust proceeding which, of course, commends itself to those who believe in the Christian dogma that "he that hath much, to him shall be given; and he that hath not much from him shall be taken even that which he hath" (Matt. xiii. 12; Mark iv. 25; Luke viii. 18).

In what light, then, ought we to view these Commandments—as having been given supernaturally, or as being mere human decrees? Most certainly the latter—as decrees resulting naturally from that social intercourse which necessarily took place "when men began to multiply upon the face of the earth" (Gen. vi. 1)—decrees, the inception and fashioning of which, were the outcome of experience and common sense. To believe otherwise one must assume that, before Moses, such Commandments, or rules for the conduct of men one towards another, were unknown; whereas it is a well-known historic fact that the very reverse is the case. Ages before the advent of Moses these or similar laws—or such of them as appertained to the wellbeing and progress of humanity—were known to, and practised by, the Egyptians, and at other great centres of civilisation. The story of Joseph proves this statement up to the hilt; as also does the fact that Moses, having murdered an Egyptian, fled to another country to escape punishment for his crime. It was murder! If it were not, why did Moses "hide the corpse in the sand"? (Ex. ii. 12). It was murder! If it were not, why was it that Moses "fled from the face of Pharaoh"? (Ex. ii. 15)—from Pharaoh, who, as chief of the State whose

laws Moses had broken, had a right to punish him. This fact alone enables the measure of divine affluence possessed by Moses to be correctly gauged.

But that the Bible statements respecting Moses are fairy tales is beyond all doubt. Here is the proof that they are so.

The Bible tells us that, in the year 2349 B. C., every living creature that was then upon the face of the earth was destroyed, by a flood that overtopped the highest mountains, with the exception of Noah, his wife, his sons and their wives, numbering in all eight persons. And not only was every living creature, with these few exceptions, destroyed, but "every living substance" (Gen. vii. 4)—that is, all vegetation—as well.

The Bible further tells us that, in the year 1799 B. C., Joseph was sold by his brethren to Midianitish merchants, who took him to Egypt. At that time, according to the Bible, Egypt was a great nation, and was surrounded by other important nations. It follows, then, if the Bible stories be true, that in the course of only 550 years these nations sprang from the eight persons who were saved from the flood. What man of common sense believes it?

J. W. DE CAUX.

Pseudo-Criticism.—III.

(Continued from p. 662.)

HAVING satisfactorily settled the question of the scientific character of the cosmogony of Genesis, Sir Robert Anderson next proceeds to examine "the assured results" of Biblical criticism as far as they affect the authorship and historicity of the Pentateuch. Some years back, he says, "it was held to be incredible that such a marvellous literature as the Mosaic books could have originated a thousand years before Herodotus." This, of course, is perfectly correct: it certainly was considered incredible by many critics that the so-called "Books of Moses" could have been written as early as 1491 to 1451 B. C.—the period, according to Bible chronology, during which Moses and the Israelites are stated to have been wandering in the wilderness. And, in my humble opinion, the very early date mentioned for the composition of the Pentateuch is just as incredible now, as then.

Mr. Anderson goes on to say:—

"To-day, however, history dates back to ages far remote, and it is known that a thousand years even before Moses, literature flourished. And we are told on high authority that 'In the century before the Exodus Palestine was a land of books and schools.' It had long enjoyed a high civilisation. But infidels care nothing for the discoveries of archaeology" (p. 17).

In his last statement Mr. Anderson is very much mistaken: "infidels" take quite as much interest in archaeological research as their more bumptious Christian brothers. They know perfectly well that more than a millennium before the time of Moses "literature flourished"; but that historical fact has no connection with the alleged Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The literature that "flourished" at the ancient date referred to was a *syllabic* form of writing derived from the hieroglyphic, the characters employed being the wedge-shaped or cuneiform. This is very different from a system of *alphabetic* writing in the Phœnician or Hebrew characters. The statement by a "high authority"—the Rev. A. H. Sayce—that "in the century before the Exodus Palestine was a land of books and schools" is somewhat misleading. No one knows when, or in what reign of the Egyptian kings, the alleged "exodus" from Egypt took place. That legendary event cannot be made to fit into the reign of any Egyptian sovereign known. Thothmes III., Seti I., Ramses II., Meneptah I., and Ramses III., have each in turn been identified as the "Pharaoh" of the Exodus, and each has been subsequently rejected as not fulfilling the necessary conditions. What a pity it is that the writer of the

Bible account did not give the *name* by which the Egyptian king was known—for every king of Egypt, without exception, had a name—instead of calling him by an appellation unknown in the country over which he ruled.

The reference of Professor Sayce is to the discovery in 1887 of 320 clay tablets at Tell-el-Amarna, in Egypt, which, when deciphered, proved to be letters and despatches from the governors and petty kings of Palestine to their suzerains, Amunoph III. and Amunoph IV., of the 18th dynasty (*i. e.*, between 1500 and 1400 B. C.). But these inscriptions were in the cuneiform character, the language being Assyrio-Babylonian; so we are no nearer to the alphabetic system in which the Pentateuch was written than before. The statement that prior to 1400 B. C. Palestine was "a land of books and schools" is a mere inference drawn from two irrelevant circumstances: (1) that an ancient town in Canaan (Josh. xv. 15) was named Kiriath-sepher—*i. e.*, "the city of books"; (2) that among the tablets discovered at Tell-el-Amarna was one of a mythological character which had been marked and pointed in red and black, as if for the use of a pupil learning to write the language. Beyond these two unimportant circumstances there is no evidence of any kind which supports Professor Sayce's sensational statement.

Sir Robert Anderson says again (p. 18):—

"The question of inspiration is quite outside the scope of my present argument. And it will be time enough to defend the historical accuracy of the Pentateuch when some case has been made out to call for an answer. Every archaeological discovery has been confirmatory of it—a statement which, if untrue, is easily refuted."

Well, in this short series of papers I do not propose to prove the utterly unhistorical character of the Pentateuch; that would be rather a large order, requiring more time and space than I have at my disposal at present. Neither shall I attempt to "refute" Mr. Anderson's cocksure statement respecting the "confirmation" which archaeological discoveries yield to the Bible narratives. I will content myself here with simply pointing out some of the "confirmatory" evidence which the tablets of Tell-el-Amarna supply—which evidence may possibly have escaped Mr. Anderson's notice. 1. These tablets prove conclusively that the Israelites were not then in the land of Canaan, as do also all the inscriptions of the Egyptian kings which have been deciphered, including those of the sovereigns I have just mentioned. 2. The tablets of Tell-el-Amarna also establish the fact of the extended knowledge of the Babylonian language and writing prior to 1400 B. C., and that this system was employed in Syria, Canaan, and Egypt for diplomatic correspondence. 3. It follows from the last-mentioned fact that the myths and cosmogony of Babylonia must have been transmitted to Palestine with the language and script. "If," said Professor Sayce, "Babylonian legends made their way to the archive chambers of the Egyptian kings, it was because they had first made their way to the archive chambers of Palestine" (Congress of Orientalists, 1892). Just so; and one of these "chambers" is supposed to have been located at Lachish. 4. The latter fact throws fresh light upon the discrepancies between the two Genesis Creation stories and the older Babylonian legends from which they were derived. After reaching Canaan these legends were preserved by oral tradition for many centuries; so that when at length they came to be written in the Hebrew books, they had gained and lost to such an extent as to be almost unrecognisable. The Babylonian gods, for instance, had fallen out of the stories, and Yahveh put in their place; the god Merodach's conflict with the dragon *Tiamat* that brooded over the unformed earth and water was left out of the first story, though the *tehom* or "deep" was retained (Gen. i. 2), etc. Sufficient, however, remained to indicate the source. The same remarks apply to the Genesis Deluge story, which is also of Babylonian origin. 5. With the myths and legends of Babylon came also most of the civil laws now

contained in the Pentateuch. The recent discovery of the "Laws of Khammurabi," many of which are also identical with those ascribed to Moses, give ample confirmation of this fact. 6. The people of Canaan, besides being indebted to Babylonia for their laws, received from that country their principal deities. The Babylonian god Bel became the Canaanitish Baal; the Babylonian goddess Ishtar became the Canaanitish Ashtoreth; the Babylonian god Ea, lord of seas and rivers and the underworld, became Yah, the tribal god of the Israelites (Psalm lxxviii. 4), whose name was afterwards lengthened into Yahveh; the Babylonian moon god Sin gave his name to Sinai, at which sacred mountain Yahveh was represented as having given to Moses the laws contained in the Pentateuch; lastly, Nebo, the Babylonian god of wisdom, gave name to the mountain in Palestine, east of the Dead Sea, where Moses is said to have been last seen alive.

Again, the inscriptions of Thothmes III., Ramses II., and Ramses III., show that there were ancient cities in Canaan named "Jacob-el" and "Joseph-el" (*i.e.*, the "god Jacob" and the "god Joseph") which fact plainly indicates that these so-called ancestors of the Jews were ancient gods of Canaan, each having worshipers in at least one city. From the first of the before mentioned inscriptions we also learn that among the spoils captured by the Egyptian monarch in his wars with the Canaanites was "an ark of gold" which had been brought into the field to insure victory, as in the case recorded in 1 Sam. iv. Yet in the Pentateuch we have an account of "the Lord" giving instructions to Moses for the making of one of these arks, including the dimensions and materials, just as if it were something unknown at that time, and which none of the Canaanite nations possessed. Both the "ark of the covenant" and the model of the temple at Jerusalem found their way into Palestine from Babylonia.

Mr. Anderson has told us that "Infidels care nothing for archæology," and that "Every archæological discovery has been confirmatory of the Pentateuch." Well, I hope he is satisfied with the "confirmatory" evidence which I have thought it my duty to furnish.

Returning, now, to the question of written language, I find that the oldest known specimen of Hebrew writing is the "Moabite Stone," set up by Mesha king of Moab about 850 B.C. It is also the most ancient specimen of alphabetic writing known. The next in antiquity is an inscription in the Pool of Siloam at Jerusalem, which is without date, but is supposed to be as old as the reign of Hezekiah (see Kings xx 20), the language being, according to Professor Sayce, "the purest Biblical Hebrew." The reign of Hezekiah is given as 726-697 B.C. Taking the earliest of these two specimens of Hebrew writing, we have still 600 years between the date of that specimen and the time of Moses, respecting which period nothing certain is known. There is plenty more of the "confirmatory" evidence to be derived from the Moabite Stone, but perhaps Mr. Anderson, like the imaginary "infidels" he refers to, might not care to hear it. I will therefore pass it over unnoticed.

With respect to the alphabetic writing, we may, of course, assume that the system was known and in use some time before Mesha's days, the only question being, How long? We may, I think, put its use as far back as the first mention of "recorder" and "scribe" (*i.e.*, "chronicler" and "secretary") in the historical books of the Old Testament. This we find to be the following:—

2 Sam. viii. 16 17.—"and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder.....and Seraiah was scribe."

This would be about the middle of the reign of David, and would give us a century and a half prior to the time of Mesha, leaving blank four centuries and a half unaccounted for. Until some evidence is forthcoming upon this point, it would be the height of absurdity to maintain the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch.

Sir Robert Anderson will perhaps now see that some "infidels" do take an interest in archæological discoveries, and that they can even estimate at its just value the "confirmation" which these discoveries are alleged to bear to the "historical accuracy" of the Bible narratives. The character of the "confirmatory" evidence adduced by Mr. Anderson is like that of the Irishman's "increase" of salary. His weekly wage of two pounds, that Hibernian said, was "raised" to thirty shillings. ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTIANITY AND MORALITY.

When I was a lad of about fifteen, one of the books placed in my hand, and which I was made to regard almost as inspired as the Bible, was Paley's *Evidences of Christianity*. Speaking on the scope of the Christian religion, in the second part of his book, he writes: "Moral precepts or examples, or illustrations of moral precepts, may be occasionally given, and be highly valuable, yet still they do not form the original purpose of the mission." The meaning is clear: Christ did not come to make men moral, he came to save those who shall believe in him. And this is also the teaching of leaders like Martin Luther, John Calvin, Charles Spurgeon, and General Booth. The burden of Luther's message was that "Christ had come to abolish the Moral Law." The liberty which Luther proclaimed assured the believer that even the decalogue shall not be brought into account against him, "nor its violation be allowed to disturb the conscience of the Christian." In the same spirit, Spurgeon cried in his London Tabernacle, Sunday after Sunday, for nearly half a century: "Thirty years of sin shall be forgiven, and it shall not take thirty minutes to do it in." And this doctrine that faith in Christ can in one instant make a man who had led a life of crime and corruption, one of God's saints, Spurgeon and his fellow-clergymen learned from Christ himself, who opened the gates of paradise to the malefactor on the cross, and in one minute wiped out all his past. This example from the gospels shows that the preachers and the creeds, in giving to morality a secondary place, are not misrepresenting the teachings of Christ.—M. M. Mangasarian, "The Story of My Mind."

Twenty Years After.

THE pews are not so tall as once they were;
And the old church, that seemed so grimly wide
To my young eyes, and strangely sanctified,
Is naught but sticks and stones, a sepulchre
Of vanished dreams, with God no longer there.

The dreaming priest, with dreamers on each side
And dream-book set before him, does not seem
So wise and God-inspired as when the stream
Of sermon-words did soothe the young ears, and guide
My sleepy soul where sweeter dreams abide.

The faith which I held then is like a gleam
Of moonshine now, in darkness born and dead;
And as the place of memories I tread
Once more, I hold another faith supreme,
Its grandeur unimagined in a Christian dream.

THOMAS MOULT.

I have attacked the Bible, but never the letter alone; the Church, but never have I confined myself to a mere assault on its practices. I have deemed that I attacked theology best in asserting most the fulness of humanity. I have regarded iconoclasm as a means, not as an end. The work is weary, but the end is well.—Charles Bradlaugh.

Obituary.

WITH deep regret I have to record the death of Mrs. Bella Maclean, daughter of Mr. Wm. Henderson. She died after a brief illness of but three days. This is the second daughter Mr. and Mrs. Henderson have lost within the past few months, and the sympathy of the Glasgow friends must be with them. At her own and her parents request Mr. J. F. Turnbull read the impressive Secular Service at the graveside.—WM. OWEN.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "If Man is Responsible, to Whom, or What?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, W. Davidson, "Christian 'Howlers.'"

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, James Rowney, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, S. J. Cook, a Lecture. Saturday, at 8, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Kingsland): 11.30, Mr. Marshall, "Dives and Lazarus."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 11.30, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Miss K. B. Kough, 12 (noon), "Woman and Christianity"; 6.30, "What Has Become of Hell?"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, G. W. Foote, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Jack Burt, "School Clinics."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Arthur Weller, "The Bible and the Land Question."

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's, late Danix's, Temperance Bar, Dunraven-street, Tonypanyd): 6, Sam Holman, "The Practice of Prayer."

OUTDOOR.

BLACKBURN BRANCH N. S. S. (Blackburn Market Ground): Mr. Genever, 3, a Lecture; 7.30, "How Infidels Die."

BUSINESS CARDS.

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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.

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