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THE FREETHINKER

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Views and Opinions.

A Plea for Honesty.

We were dealing recently with the case of those clergymen who, we said, had the wit to see but lacked the courage to do. Illustrations of the truth of what was then said are not hard to find. We have, for instance, just received from Mr. Fisher Unwin a copy of *Faith in Fetters*, by the Rev. T. R. R. Stebbing (price 6s.). Mr. Stebbing is a clergyman of the Church of England, although not, we should think, a practising one. His book is a very strong and justifiable impeachment of the Church as a stronghold of ignorance and prejudice, of mental evasion and insincerity. So far as Mr. Stebbing himself is concerned, one fails to see where he retains anything that can entitle him to any real claim to the name of Christian. He does not believe in the inspiration of the Bible, or in miracles, or in the virgin birth, or in the resurrection; indeed, he disbelieves in so much that one wonders why he should still believe in calling himself a Christian, or retain the title of clergyman. We agree with the author that it is time "for men of science and theologians to join hands in revolt against superstition masquerading as piety," only we are convinced that one half the alliance will not be of a very effective character. So long as one is attacking Christianity in the name of "true religion," the Church can afford to take these attacks quite calmly. One person here and there may be affected, but in the main they serve to encourage the conviction that "true Christianity" is something the world cannot afford to lose, and that provides precisely the rationalistic and utilitarian gloss which keeps Christianity alive among the unthinking. What Christianity has really to dread is the attack which pictures it as what it is, not as a valuable system of ethics which has in the course of time been overlaid with a number of superstitions, but as essentially a collection of primitive superstitions that have, under pressure of social life, become associated with rationalistic and utilitarian factors from which a separation is urgently needed in the interest of human progress. Here, as elsewhere, the vital need is for clear thinking and plain speaking, but human nature still fights against having forced on it that which it most needs.

* * *

What is True Christianity?

What do people mean when they talk about "true Christianity"? And is not "true Christianity" as great a superstition as any they attack? It is not, evidently, historic Christianity. Mr. Stebbing is quite clear in his rejection of that. The doctrines of historic Christianity are "statements founded on fables and supported by false logic." And, indeed, the difficulty nowadays is to find educated men and women who will give their support to Christianity as the world has known it. But if we reject historic Christianity what have we left? And on behalf of what Christianity is anything claimed? Those who denounce historic Christianity are really saying that for hundreds of years the world has in the name of religion been taught a lie. It has been fed on delusion, cajoled by fraud. And not only has historic Christianity taught lies and practised fraud, but it has by every circumstance of cruelty, and slander, and persecution, striven to prevent the people from discovering the truth. Just now there is a terrific clamour over German duplicity, and German deception in having deceived the simple and trustful Britisher for nearly forty years. But assuming this to be case, and that the Britisher is the simple, trusting fool at the mercy of the German, or the Russian, or any foreign agitator that lands here, that some would have us believe, what is the record of Germany compared to that of the Christian Church? Germany has lied for forty years, and it cannot be trusted in the future. But the Church has lied, and tricked, and forged, and swindled, for more than forty-five generations, and what is Germany's record compared to that? Mind, it is not alone we Freethinkers who draw this picture of the Christian Church as the greatest lie of the ages. It is implied in the criticism passed upon the Church by men like Mr. Stebbing in the name of "true religion." If their criticism does not mean that then it is meaningless. The only Christianity the world has known is a mass of "fables supported by false logic." A more sweeping condemnation of Christianity was never made.

* * *

The First Salvation Army.

But we are forgetting "true Christianity." What does that mean? Does it mean the Christianity of the New Testament and of the primitive Christians? And if so, what kind of a picture do we get here? Is the demonism of the New Testament less of a lie than the demonism of the Mediæval Church? Are the miracles of the Gospels less incredible than those which Mr. Stebbing rejects? Is the resurrection of dead men less impossible now than it was two thousand years ago? And if we eliminate these from the New Testament, and from the beliefs of the primitive Christians, what have we left to bother about? The picture of Jesus as a Jerusalem prototype of Karl Marx, and of the early Christians as a community burning with the verbal exaltation of a modern ethical society, will not do. They were ignorant, they were superstitious, credulous to an almost unbelievable degree, and the last thing in the world they thought about or cared about was social salvation. Their trust was in the supernatural, their concern was for their souls, their hope in the next world.

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The historic truth is the exact reverse of the picture drawn for us by the liberalizing Christian. We have not a society of high thinking, liberal minded, socially inclined men and women; what we have is a body of narrow-minded fanatics, obsessed with the belief in the approaching end of the world, an invincible belief in magic and the supernatural, quarrelling with each other with a savagery that astonished the tolerant Roman world, and, then, after long centuries, this welter of primitive superstition and ferocity being toned down as a consequence of the growth of knowledge and of the secularizing of life. Ethically and socially we have a "purer Christianity" in the Churches to-day than we have ever had. And that is only another way of saying that we have less genuine Christianity than we have ever had.

* * *

An Intolerable Position.

These things are writ plain to all who care to read them. And it is straining credulity too far to expect us to believe that there are not many clergymen who both read and understand. It would be foolish of us to say of the thousands of clergymen in this country that they are all fools, and it would be equally foolish to assert that they are all philosophers. They are not all knaves, but neither are they all honest men. The Freethinker has no need to claim that the clergy are, as a body, worse than any other class; his protest is against the claim that they are better. Any bunch of them that one selected would probably present the same variations of sense and folly, of honesty and dishonesty, that one finds among other men. They select their calling from the same mixed motives that others select theirs, and, having selected it, they are governed by the same class ethic and fight for the welfare of their order as do other classes. It is the operation of these motives which are responsible for the clergy acting as they do. They must know, many of them, that the fundamental doctrines of Christianity have been riddled through and through by modern knowledge. Yet they continue to preach the old things, they use the old language, they retain their old positions. And in doing so they cannot avoid misleading those who look to them for guidance. The position, we have good reasons for saying, is almost intolerable to many. Evasions and excuses and reservations make the position bearable to some; but these apologies ring hollow. There is only one way in which a clergyman who sees the truth can act with credit to himself and with honesty to those who look to him for leadership, and that is by casting all reserve on one side, and by throwing off even the name of a creed that has ceased to carry conviction.

* * *

What is Wanted.

In this respect the clergy may not, perhaps, be much worse than other people, but they are certainly not any better. Perhaps, also, the plain and brutal truth is that the average man, whether cleric or lay, exists habitually in a state of mental haziness and moral "funk." Normally without any very strong desire to discover whether his beliefs are well based or not, he quite usually lacks the courage to express a belief that is pronounced "taboo" by general opinion. If he has ceased to believe in a God of an intelligible character, instead of saying so, he expresses a belief in a kind-of-a-sort-of a-something somewhere or other. If he does not believe in even this apotheosis of vacuity, instead of calling himself an Atheist, he confesses to being of an "Agnostic" turn of mind, leaving it to the religious world to read some sort of a religious tinge into it. So, again, when he is driven to realize that Christianity is a bundle of absurdities that can no longer be held, the fact must be camouflaged by a confession of faith in some equally mythical New Testament teacher of profound moral importance. And the plain, unadulterated name for this frame of mind is just fear. Mr. Stebbing says that "primitive beliefs, having by whatever means acquired a reputation as being sacred, retain a popular hold long after their futility has been recognized by the educated." This may be so; but we are certain that a large share of the responsibility for this rests with the educated classes. Suppose all the educated people in Britain who do not believe in Christianity were to say so. For how long would Christianity retain a hold on the people of less education? Not for long. What is needed is an example of plain, honest speech set by these same "educated" people who have given up belief in the orthodox faith. Then we should soon see things. It is not altogether a question of education. It is partly a question of moral courage. And a good example set by those who regard themselves as the leaders of the people could not but obtain a wide and beneficial response.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The God-Eating Sacrament.

III.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION.

A CRITICAL examination of the Pauline doctrine of the Lord's Supper proves its irrationality beyond the possibility of a doubt. In 1 Cor. x. 16 we find the following eye-opening definition: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?" The Greek word for "communion" is *koinonia*, which comes from a verb meaning *to have in common, to divide, to share;* and Professor Preserved Smith, in an excellent article in the *Monist* for May, 1918, renders the verse thus: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a sharing of the body of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a sharing of the body of Christ?" Taking this definition in conjunction with the words ascribed to Jesus in 1 Cor. xi. 23-25, we are in possession, germinally, of the Catholic dogma of the Eucharist. Of the bread, Jesus is made to say, "This is my body, which is (broken) for you," and of the wine, "This is the new covenant in my blood." Protestants maintain that the bread and wine are but *symbols* of the body and blood of Christ; but Paul states definitely that they *are* the body and blood of Christ. He represents Jesus as saying, not "This represents, symbolizes, or stands for," but unequivocally, "This *is* my body," and "This *is* the new covenant in my blood." The Protestants are fully justified in basing their objection to such teaching upon its unreasonableness and utter impossibility; but they overlook the undeniable fact that the author of First Corinthians believed it to be literally true. Paul would have been the first to admit that in the natural order bread and wine could not become the body and blood of Christ; but then he was the champion of a supernatural order, and what he saw on the Lord's Table was a mighty miracle. Even in *Hymns Ancient and Modern* the same miracle is sung:—

> Draw nigh and take the Body of the Lord
> And drink the holy Blood for you outpoured.
> Saved by that Body and that holy Blood,
> With souls refreshed we render thanks to God.

To Dryden, as to Paul, Nature was set at defiance, or transcended, on the Lord's Table, and reason appeared in bondage to belief.

> Can I my reason to my faith compel,
> And shall my sight and touch and taste rebel?
> Superior faculties are set aside:
> Shall their subservient organs be my guide?

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John Earl Russell, in number viii. of his *Essays* on the *History of the Christian Religion*, erroneously fathers the doctrine of Transubstantiation on Paschasius Radbert, one of the most prominent theologians of the ninth century; but his lordship's summary of Radbert's views on the Lord's Supper is accurate:—

> According to this monk, the elements ceased entirely to be what they still seemed to be to the outward senses. The bread and wine, it was affirmed, were annihilated, being changed into the body and blood of the Redeemer. The bread and wine used in the Sacrament, it is true, were to the researches of chemical science not different from any other bread and wine placed on a table for food or refreshment, but in the minds of Christians, the real body and blood of Christ (p. 110).

Earl Russell is entirely mistaken, however, when he says that "the Church of England has justly declared that Transubstantiation in the Supper of the Lord cannot be proved by Holy Writ, but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a Sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions." As a matter of fact, though the first to employ the term "Transubstantiation" was Hildebert, Archbishop of Tours, at the beginning of the twelfth century, the idea can be traced back to the Apostle Paul, and Paul claimed to have received it by revelation of Jesus Christ. "At bottom," from the first, as Harnack admits, "the faith required was blind faith"; and, of course, "miracle is the favourite child of faith," and after the miracles of the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection, the miracle of Transubstantiation is not so unbelievable. At the end of the third century Transubstantiation was firmly held by the Church, for Porphyry, who was opposed to the eating of flesh and the drinking of blood in general, denounced it in the following violent terms:—

> Is it not, then, bestial and absurd, surpassing all absurdity and bestial coarseness, for a man to eat human flesh and drink the blood of his fellow tribesman or relative, and thereby win life eternal? Why, tell me what greater coarseness could you introduce into life, if you practise that habit? What further crime will you start, more accursed than this loathsome profligacy? The ear cannot bear to hear it mentioned—and by "it," I am far from meaning the action itself, I mean the very name of this strange, utterly unheard-of offence.

It is true that there always were a very few who vigorously opposed and rejected this doctrine, holding the view that the Lord's Supper was a memorial or commemorative rite merely; and it is also true that up to the eighth century no definite theory or dogma had been framed by any Council of the Church. But the majority of the divines loyally adhered to the Pauline position. Even Augustine, who is often claimed by the Protestants as a supporter of the symbolical theory, was in reality a transubstantiator, for he declares that genuine members of the Catholic Church "are truly said to eat the body and drink the blood of Christ." "He that dwelleth not in Christ, and in whom Christ dwelleth not, neither eateth his flesh nor drinketh his blood." At the second Council of Nicæa, 787, it was decreed that "the elements in the Lord's Supper are the very body and blood of Christ, not figures." This was reaffirmed at the fourth Lateran Council in 1215, and at the Council of Trent in 1551.

During the Protestant Reformation, Transubstantiation was hotly repudiated. The Reformers could not agree as to the exact sense in which Christ is present in Eucharist, but they were all of one mind in their opposition to the Catholic view. Luther taught that the bread and wine are not changed in their substance when the words of consecration are spoken by the priest. In England, under Henry VIII., the Protestants attacked the Sacrament of the Mass with the utmost scurrility and bitterness. In ballads and mystery plays the doctrine of Transubstantiation was held up to ridicule, and we read of a certain lawyer who had the audacity to raise a dog in his hands when the priest elevated the Host. This greatly irritated the king, who, in belief, remained a Catholic almost to the end, and the Act of the Six Articles was passed, the object of which was to "abolish diversity of opinions in religion." The first article was as follows:—

> That in the blessed Sacrament of the altar, by the strength and efficacy of Christ's mighty word, it being spoken by the priest, was present really under the form of bread and wine, the natural body and blood of Jesus Christ, and that after consecration there remained no substance of bread and wine, nor any other, but the substance of Christ.

Whoever denied this Article was to be burnt at the stake, and for a time the cruellest persecution was practised.

It may be objected that the Protestant doctrine of the Eucharist was more reasonable than the Catholic, which is doubtless true; but, after all, of what advantage is it to attempt to make an essentially supernatural doctrine reasonable? In point of fact, there was no real gain in endeavouring to present a fundamentally absurd dogma in a somewhat less ludicrous light. Besides, whilst the Reformers were agreed in combating Transubstantiation, wide differences existed among them in their estimate of the significance of what was called the Real Presence, Luther, for example, introducing the tenet of Consubstantiation.

It would be difficult to exaggerate the stupidity of the Catholic dogma of Transubstantiation. In the twelfth century the custom of admitting children to the Lord's Table was abolished, for fear the bread and wine, being converted into the body and blood of Christ, might be dropped in the distribution of them. Another custom which had been gradually growing up in the Church now became confirmed, namely, that of withholding the wine from the laity. Alexander of Hales, an Englishman and a noted Schoolman, defended this custom, and the ground on which the defence was based was the preposterous doctrine of concomitance, which was invented by that incomparable intellectual acrobat, Thomas Aquinas. By concomitance was meant the presence of the complete Christ—body and blood—in each element on the Table, so that to communicate in one kind only was regarded as sufficient. When laymen complained of the refusal of the cup to them, they were assured that they lost nothing inasmuch as after consecration the bread was the blood as well as the body of Christ. The reader is doubtless familiar with Swift's scathing satire on this silly theory in his *Tale of a Tub*. Peter is represented as singing the praises of a brown loaf in the following fashion:—

> "Bread," says he, "dear brothers, is the staff of life; in which bread is contained, *inclusive*, the quintessence of beef, mutton, veal, venison, partridge, plum-pudding, and custard; and, to render all complete, there is intermingled a due quantity of water, whose crudities are also corrected by yeast or barm, through which means it becomes a wholesome fermented liquor, diffused through the mass of the bread." Upon the strength of these conclusions, next day at dinner, was the brown loaf served up in all the formality of a city feast. "Come, brothers," said Peter, "fall to, and spare not, here is excellent mutton; or hold, now my hand is in, I will help you." At which word, in much ceremony, with fork and knife he carves out two good slices of a loaf, and presents each on a plate to his brothers.

Of course, the brothers were puzzled and disappointed at getting bread instead of the promised mutton, but the only explanation afforded them was this:—

> "Look ye, gentlemen," cries Peter in a rage, "to convince you what a couple of blind, positive, ignorant,

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wilful puppies you are, I will use but this plain argument: by G——, it is true, good, natural mutton as any in Leadenhall Market, and G—— confound you both eternally if you offer to believe otherwise."

J. T. LLOYD.

A Century of Christian Charity.

In the name of universal benevolence Christians have hated their fellow men.—*Ingersoll.*

If Christians would teach infidels to be just to Christianity, they should themselves be just to infidelity.—*John Stuart Mill.*

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY died so long ago that one would have thought the facts concerning his life were well known to every lover of literature. Yet Christians are still very reluctant to admit Shelley's Freethought. Being pious themselves, they pretend that a man of genius cannot be a Freethinker; and so they distort facts, and strain their faculties to disprove what Shelley himself asserted all through his life.

Some time ago a leading London newspaper thus referred to Shelley:—

> Courageously and Christianly he held to his faith in the perfectibility of man. He did not believe in it, it is true, according to the Christian method. But to believe in it at all is a sort of Christianity.

It is enough to break a critic's heart. The idea of the perfectibility of human nature was the very mainspring of the great French Revolution, and every schoolboy should know that the leaders of that movement were, almost without exception, militant Freethinkers. Of the new world foreshadowed by these pioneers, Shelley is the poet. If this were an isolated example of gross misrepresentation, it would be unworthy of note; but in the case of Shelley, orthodox writers have always found opportunities of imposing upon the innocence of ordinary folk.

Professor Henry Morley, whose pen was at work in the interests of the Church for so many years, was a typical sinner in this respect. In his introduction to a popular edition of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, he was unpardonable. This is the way the Christian professor defamed the dead Freethinker: "the refuge he (Shelley) seeks from the wrongs of life is—though he did not know it—at the feet of Christ."

Professor Morley was not alone in this crusade of defamation. Mr. Edmund Gosse, in his address delivered at the Shelley Centenary celebration, since reprinted, said that the poet "rashly styled himself an Atheist, forgetful of the fact that, whatever name he might call himself, he, more than any other poet of the age, saw God in everything." A more recent writer, Mr. Hector Macpherson, in his book, *A Century of Intellectual Development*, debases equally the moral currency. He declares that "Shelley was bent upon Christianizing politics, and pleading for a sociology which would bring the world nearer the ideal of the Sermon on the Mount."

Even so great a poet as Robert Browning, who had hailed Shelley as "Sun-treader," was so biased by his own religion, he asserted that Shelley, had he lived, "would have finally ranged himself with the Christians." Richard Hutton, the famous critic of the *Spectator*, said that Shelley "learned even to believe in God as he drew near the end." The crusade of misrepresentation is still carried on. In a present-day publication, Dent's *Dictionary of English Literature*, which is supposed to be a work of reference, it is remarked: "The charge of Atheism rests chiefly on *Mab*, the work of a boy, printed by him for private circulation, and to some extent repudiated as personal opinion." Generations of Christian writers, from the days of Gilfillan to those of our own time, have wilfully refused to tell the truth about Shelley, though the poet's Freethought is "four square to all the winds that blow."

Shelley, be it remembered, was expelled from Oxford University for his Atheism, and, years afterwards, was declared by Lord Chancellor Eldon to be unfit to be the custodian of his own children on account of his heterodoxy. The poet's Atheism was never disputed during his unpopular days, when men and women were fined and imprisoned for selling *Queen Mab*, which figured in many a trial for blasphemy. But when it was discovered that the star of a great poet had arisen, Shelley was falsely and impudently dubbed a Christian.

Other Christians adopt the easier method of simply throwing mud at Shelley. When the news of his death reached England, the *Gentleman's Magazine* said that the dead poet was "a fitter subject for a penitentiary dying speech than a lauding elegy; for the muse of the rope rather than of the cypress." Not long before, another Christian met Shelley in the post-office at Pisa, called him a "damned Atheist," and knocked him down. Only a few days ago, one of the most widely read literary periodicals dubbed Shelley a libertine and a brute. So the game has gone on for a century. Thus Orthodox writers cast libellous dust in the eyes of the unthinking public, and incapacitate them from seeing the facts of the case. It is done to discredit the Cause to which Shelley dedicated his life.

Shelley's crime was that he proclaimed himself an Atheist. He rejoiced in the name. "I took up the word," he said, "as a knight takes up a gauntlet in defiance of injustice." All his life he was fighting the "Galilean serpent." A hundred years ago it was a very brave action. One of the results that flowed from his action was, for a century, his name was a hiss and a bye-word in the mouths of the orthodox. Christian charity is a fearful and wonderful thing. In the ages of faith the disciples of the religion of love used scaffolds, stakes, and torture-chambers, now they rely on lies, libels, and misrepresentations.

MIMNERMUS.

Book Chat.

I WONDER how many of my readers know anything of a curious eighteenth century novel, *The Life of John Buncle, Esq.*, in two volumes (vol. i., 1756; vol. ii., 1766). There was also an edition in four duodecimo volumes, 1770. These seem to have satisfied the amateurs of the outlandish and bizarre at the time; but some fifty years later there was a revival of interest in the waifs and strays of literature. *The Spirit of Buncle* (1823) was enough for those who wanted the surprising adventures of the gentleman without his amazingly learned and unorthodox disquisitions; and for those who had a liking for eccentricity and unconscious humour, there was a reprint in two volumes (1825). These appear to have satiated the literary appetite, and it was not until 1904 that we had a chance of buying a copy without searching the second-hand booksellers' for it. An edition in one volume was published by Routledge in that year. It was edited by a specialist in out-of-the way fiction, Mr. E. A. Baker.

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I am reminded of *John Buncle* by a reprint of a paper read by Mr. J. Cumings Walters before the members of the Manchester Literary Club, October, 1918. Mr. Walters has amused his leisure by analysing and annotating the two volumes. His pamphlet is therefore a real contribution to the study of a curious example of eighteenth century fiction. The writer was a Thomas Amory (1691-1788), "a man with a mania, an insatiable itch for scribbling, and without a grain of humour in his composition. He was a bookworm and a recluse, a fanatic and something of a fool;.....a self-absorbed creature, with quaint out-of-the-world manners, pursuing his chosen path obstinately, and doubtless convinced that his irresistible arguments would convert mankind to Unitarianism and multi-marriages simultaneously." The surprising

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adventures of our hero are connected with his search for a wife, who must be young, beautiful, wealthy, and learned, and a sound Monotheist. His courtship of the ladies who unite their lives with his are often screamingly funny. Its self-contained business-like air may have been designed as a contrast to the sentimental romances of the period. In that case we should be obliged to revise our notion of Amory's lack of humour. He marries, and is providentially relieved at short intervals of the learned sharers of his domestic hearth. But the adventures are not the soul of the book. *The Spirit of Buncle*, the selection I mentioned above, was, however, really the more ponderous part of that collection. It is the other side of his talent that attracted men like Hazlitt, Lamb, and Leigh Hunt. He was obviously a man of ideas; he had a thousand things he wanted to say on every subject under the sun, from trigonometry to Phallicism, from ornithology to circumcision, and he says them with the energy of a man endowed with a naturally good brain. A passage in his preface (printed only in the first edition) shows the company he had kept. "The dull, the visionary, the hard-honest man, and the poor liver are people I have had no connection with, but have always kept company with the polite, the generous, the lively, the rational, and the brightest of free thinkers of this age."

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Mr. Walters, I think, exaggerates the realism of Amory's description of certain phases of life. There is nothing in the portrait of his Irish friend Gollapsey to recall the filth of Rabelais. Indeed, the passage is reprinted by Mr. Baker without a single omission. It is simply the plain language of the English Bible, of Shakespeare, and of Fielding. It is the expression of his "gusto," his aptitude for strong sensations and emotions. Let me remind Mr. Walters of what another good reader, Mr. Saintsbury, has said of his favourite:—

> It is his business to enjoy; and he appears to enjoy everything, the pears and the antiquarian inquiries, the theological discussions and the beautiful young ladies who engage in them, the hairbreadth escapes and the lovely prospects, nay, even the company of a scoundrel with some character like Curll. Hazlitt was perfectly right in selecting the passage describing Buncle's visit with his friends, the Dublin "bloods" (some of them, apparently, greater scoundrels than Curll himself) to an alehouse on the seashore. This display of mood is one of the most remarkable things of the kind, and the wonder of it is not lessened when we remember that it was published, if not written, by a man of nearly seventy. That there is practically nothing—either real or factitious—of the sense of regret for the past is less surprising than that the gusto is itself not factitious in the least—that it is perfectly fresh, spontaneous, and, as it were, the utterance of a full-blooded undergraduate. In none of the four great contemporary novelists is there this absolute spontaneity—not even in Fielding; and Amory ought to have credit for it.

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A friend of mine, whose happy genius has brought him admirers in the most out-of-the-way places, has sent me a curious booklet. It is written by a Scotsman who has forsaken his native town of Ayr for Gowesville, West Virginia. Mr. C. S. Musgrave has entitled this "first heir of his invention" *Pebbles and Pansies*. I take it that "pansies" is just a fanciful name for the delicately coloured and sweet-scented thoughts, the emotions and sensations of a nature tremblingly responsive to the appeal of all things that are lovely and of good report. But while Mr. Musgrave has the poet's love of natural beauty, it would seem that this side of his talent is subordinated to a passion for moral beauty and strength expressed in sincere hero-worship. His heroes are all worthy of his reverence. But a critical discord here and there would have relieved and strengthened the eulogistic harmony. George Eliot is not, as her more stupid admirers would have us believe, a Shakespeare in petticoats. She is a little below Jane Austin and Charlotte Bronte, and far below Thackeray, Dickens, and Meredith. Her verse is the sort of stuff our ethical friends would sing to mid-Victorian hymn tunes. She belongs to the choir invisible—I trust inaudible too—that includes Eliza Cook, Adelaide Proctor, and others of that kidney. Again, Mr. Musgrave finds no malice in her. I advise him to read the malevolent attack on Lecky, and to notice the unpleasantly acrid quality of her other critical essays.

Shelley, Burns, Byron, Keats, Paine, Jefferson, Renan, Voltaire, are heroes for our West Virginian Scot, as indeed, they are for most of us—with certain reservations. For the poets he does but record his admiration. That is all very well, but what is more important is to see them from a new angle of vision. Mr. Musgrave could do much better if he tried hard, especially if he accustomed himself to reading only the greatest poetry. You cannot keep your sense of values if you debauch your ears with the barrel-organ rhythms of George Eliot and the insufferable Mrs. Wheeler Willcox. Unfortunately, it is not Keats, and Shelley, and Burns, that Mr. Musgrave imitates in his original verse, but the English and Yankee poetasters.

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Mr. Musgrave is more interesting on Voltaire. He was the great dominating figure in French literature in the eighteenth century, and is almost as much alive to-day as then. Yet I am surprised to find our Scottish friend endorsing Voltaire's unintelligent criticism of Atheism, a philosophical position he did not even to try to understand. It frightened him because he held, like many other people of his time, that a belief in some sort of a God was a necessary factor in the moral drilling of society. Voltaire was an energetic and energizing moral force rather than an original thinker. Mr. Musgrave seems to think that it was Voltaire who conceived the idea of the *Encyclopedie*. It owed both its conception and final success to Diderot.

. . . . .

So much for the "pansies"; the "pebbles" are hard lumps of controversial matter which our Yankee David hurls at the Goliaths of conventionality and unreason. They are amusingly violent and voluble, but the style is a little too artfully alliterative to fit in with our sober English taste. Mr. Musgrave must give the cold shoulder to Yankee journalism, and go back to Paine and Cobbett.

G. U.

Acid Drops.

The Kaiser is to be tried in London for his responsibility in bringing about the War. That is quite good in principle, and we should like to see it put into operation with regard to all wars, whether in relation to wars with a small or a large people. But we are rather afraid that the principle will not be applied to the small nations, or to less "civilized" peoples. We do not see why all responsible for the War should not be tried—or, at least, judged. For instance, the Proclamation for thanksgiving in the Churches says that "it has pleased Almighty God to bring to a close" the War. Now, if words mean anything, this means that he *could* have brought it to an end earlier. But he did not. And for anyone to continue a war of this kind a day longer than was necessary, was a crime. Mr. Asquith said so; Mr. Lloyd George said so; plenty of others said so. And now we have it officially said God brought it to an end. Its ending or continuance rested with him. And we feel that plenty were asking on Sunday in their prayers, "Father, what did you do in the Great War?"

The French Government has officially declared that there will be no resumption of official relations with the Vatican. That is as it should be. The Government has no relation with the followers of the Pope, its relations are only with its own citizens. Whether these citizens are Catholic, or Protestant, or Atheist, is a matter that concerns them alone. That is a plain and straightforward policy, and in these matters it is always the straight policy that pays best.

In the House of Commons, on July 3, Mr. Lloyd George said that one way for the Allies to deal with Germany would be to say, "Go, sin no more"; but, he added, "to have done that would have been to put a premium on militarism. I do not think it is worth arguing about." We are not disagreeing with the Premier on this; only we beg to point out that the authority for the practice which would set a premium on villainy is Jesus Christ. And we wonder what Mr. George's Nonconformist friends will think of the official assurance that the method of Jesus Christ sets a premium on rascality.

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and is not worth arguing about? Sooner or later, Freethought criticism is justified.

One of the lessons read at the thanksgiving service on Sunday included "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth," etc. And the people who spake thus were in nowise alarmed, for they bethought themselves that the Government had likewise exhorted them to invest their money in War stock at 5 per cent., and these preachers had also exhorted them in the same manner. So they took heart as they thought of their annual dividend, and wondered within themselves if they would win one of the yearly drawings. But these people were not hypocrites. They were good Christians, and acting after the manner thereof.

According to a Government White Paper just issued at Breslau, British officers found infants "from three weeks to three years sucking spinach soup from a bottle instead of milk." We hope that, after this, Father Vaughan and the Bishop of London are quite satisfied as to the moral uplift of the War, and also that Mr. Lloyd George is still convinced that the Allies are carrying out the decrees of Providence. The White Paper points out that rich people can still get food. As usual, it is the poor devils at the bottom who suffer most. But babies forced to feed on vegetable soup! We hope the clergy will think of this while returning thanks to God.

There is a new Spiritualist Society formed, and it has for its President no less a person than the late W. T. Stead. In the ordinary way, the fact of a man being dead would be a drawback, but it is not so here. Moreover, Mr. Stead has been given power to appoint a "Spiritual Committee." A committee of spooks presided over by a spook! That is certainly something unique. We have heard it said that the ideal committee is one of three persons, where two go to sleep; but a committee where they are all dead is an advance on that. The committee announces its intention of raising a fund of £50,000. We suggest that donations should be given in the form of the ghosts of Treasury notes.

"I am sending you," writes a correspondent of the *Amateur Gardener*, "a small buttercup that came up in my garden.....the seedling pod is very curious.....one more wonderful work of our good God." Whereupon the editor replied that the plant is common, very poisonous, and often kills sheep and cattle. So much for the work of "our good God"!

Rev. G. H. S. Matthews, Vicar of St. Peter's, Thanet, refused to offer up prayers for rain. His refusal has brought him much criticism, and to this the Rev. gentleman replies as follows. We quote from the *Weekly Dispatch* of July 6:—

> "I doubt," he says, "whether anyone really consistently believes that we are meant to regulate the whole course of the weather by prayer. If they do, we ought, of course, to form a standing committee of farmers and agricultural experts to decide upon the weather we need day by day and week by week, so that the clergy may know exactly what to ask for.
>
> "I remember a drought in Australia. We all prayed constantly for rain. The bishop appointed special days of prayer. Men who never went to church at other times came then on the off-chance that God might answer their prayers. But for all that the drought lasted five years
>
> "Surely no educated person really believes that the clergy of the Church of England can induce God to send rain, or that He withholds it until they use a form of prayer for that object?"

That is good "horse sense," and we congratulate Mr. Matthews on his reply. But if prayers do not induce God to do something, perhaps Mr. Matthews will inform us what is the use of praying at all? And if God does not send the rain, will he be good enough to tell us what on earth, or in heaven, he really does?

The Rev. Frederick Charles Oliver, a Presbyterian minister, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment at the Old Bailey for gross impropriety. The boasted restraints of religion are not very marked in this instance.

At the 250th anniversary at St. Mary's Baptist Church, Norwich, the Bishop of the diocese occupied the pulpit. Such a thing had never happened before. It had taken all the 250 years for these two brands of Christians to get acquainted with each other.

Religious folk often lack a sense of humour. At Southend-on-Sea an itinerant evangelist, bearing a huge placard with the words: "Prepare to meet thy God," posted himself outside a sausage-shop, much to the amusement of passers-by.

Bishop Stevens has been cleansing his bosom of much perilous stuff concerning the Church's part in the Great War. Papa does not suggest that he did much himself, but he blushes with pride when he remembers that "at the great call of God, at once, 4,000 clergy came forward," whilst the rest of their ministerial brethren screwed up their courage and comforted "the self-denying, tender-hearted sisters," who were left behind. Yet papa paints only a partial portrait of these heroes. Notwithstanding the "great call of God," the brave clergy were exempted from military service, and they only consented to guard the communion port at the price of officers' salaries. Yet at the Universities these same clergymen were not innocent of athletics and physical training. "Oh, the sorry trade!"

Miss Marie Corelli, who continues to take herself quite seriously as a thinker on social and ethical questions, has favoured the readers of the *Sunday Chronicle* with her views as to the causes of the social demoralization, with pictures, of course, exaggerated. One cause is "the criminal sufferance accorded to atheists" and "the tolerance shown by the public press to atheism and blasphemy." We wonder how on earth Miss Marie Corelli connects the newspaper tolerance of Atheism with the picture of demoralization she draws? And what is it the lady desires? Would she like a profession of Atheism made a capital offence? or would she descend to torture and compel every Atheist to spend so many hours daily reading the *Master Christian?* Anyway, Miss Corelli is in deadly earnest—that is the only amusing feature of her outburst.

The destruction of militarism is still proceeding. For example, the Government has now put on the hoardings a series of posters depicting the advantages Army life has over a civilian career. If that is true, all we can say is a civilized country ought to be ashamed to advertise it. The Chinese properly call the soldier a necessary evil, and soldiers will generally agree with the description. But to advertise that our society is so organized as to give to the soldier greater ease, better pay, more opportunities for enjoyment, etc., than it gives to the man engaged in peaceful productive pursuits, is surely to advertise the failure of our civilization.

One of our readers who had been wasting some of his time listening to a Christian Evidence Society lecturer was surprised at the statement that an Atheist said there was no God. It is not true, but it would be no more than a piece of foolishness if it were. We have no sympathy with the type of mind which treats it as though it were anything more than a lapse in logic. An Atheist does not deny "God," for the simple reason that by itself "God" means nothing. And one cannot negate nothing. God undefined is nothing. "God" defined negates itself—at least, every God that we have ever heard of does.

The Bishop of Peterborough was the hero of a series of accidents which deserve filming. Travelling to Wellingborough, the Bishop's motor broke down. He obtained another, which ran into a hedge, and threw the occupants into a ditch. The Bishop completed his journey mounted on a brewer's motor-lorry, and drove up to the church in a blaze of glory which almost rivalled the entry of the founder of the Christian religion when he entered Jerusalem mounted on a donkey.

The *Evening News* printed recently a prayer for rain. It occupied the central position on the front page. The Savage Club ought to make the editor an honorary member.

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Special.

WE have reason to believe that a systematic attempt is being made in certain quarters to obstruct the circulation of the *Freethinker*. All sorts of obstacles are being placed in the way of the public getting it, and we are of opinion that some of the methods employed are such that they might become the subject of legal action.

We, therefore, earnestly ask our readers to do all they can to check this exhibition of bigotry. The *Freethinker* is issued through all the usual wholesale agents in England, and through Messrs. Menzies & Co. in Scotland. So there need be no trouble in anyone getting copies.

This outburst of bigotry is, no doubt, a compliment to our growing influence, but we hope our friends will not allow us to suffer from this particular piece of flattery. Those who wish to have the *Freethinker* should insist upon getting it, and accept no excuse. If they cannot get it write to us at once.

To Correspondents.

J. H. O. writes us from South Africa, suggesting the formation of a league for the suppression of human vermin. He thinks certain people ought to be destroyed for the same reasons and on the same grounds that we destroy noxious kinds of insects and animals. We are afraid there would be too great a disagreement as to where the line of survival should be drawn.

MR. F. MARGETSON writes to point out that in his letter which appeared in our issue of June 29, "age," in the first line of the fourth paragraph, should have been "eye." We apologize for the misprint.

J. BREESE.—Much obliged. It does not do to take Miss Corelli *too* seriously.

C. F. J.—When we get back to sixteen pages, which we hope will be soon, we might adopt your suggestion of a Sale and Exchange column for the use of readers—that is, if they show any desire for it.

J. CLOSE.—Idea is a good one. Will see what can be done. We must be getting some more small slips advertising the paper very soon.

ONE of our correspondents is anxious to get a good work on the Russian Greek Church. Perhaps one of our readers can advise on the matter.

A. MILLAR.—We are sorry to hear of the death of Davie Watt. We have known him for many years as a single-minded loyal servant of Freethought, and are not at all surprised at the high esteem in which he was held by those who knew him. Scottish Freethought has lost a firm friend.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

The Swansea Branch of the N.S.S. has arranged an excursion to-day (July 13) to Port Eynon. The party will leave the Reformers' Bookshop, 60 Alexandra Road, at 10.30 sharp. We hope that the weather will be favourable, and that there will be a good assemblage of friends.

The Giordano Bruno Association is a group of Italian Freethinkers who are intensely earnest in their attack on clerical obscurantism. It would be hard to find a more appropriate name for such a Society than that of the sixteenth century knight errant and martyr of Freethought, who was undaunted by years of torture in the dungeons of the Holy Inquisition, and in the end was burnt alive by his infamous enemies in the February of 1600. An illustrated supplement to the journal of the Society was issued last month. Its occasion was the thirtieth anniversary of the erection of a statue to Bruno's memory in the Campo dei Fiori, at Rome, where he was burnt alive. This monument, the work of a brilliant sculptor, Ettore Ferrari, himself a man of culture and a good Freethinker, was set up on June 9, 1889. Its erection was vigorously and unscrupulously opposed by the Clerical party, who even denied that Bruno suffered at their hands, although the documents proving his death at the stake were in the Papal archives all the time. The four-paged supplement, which is enthusiastic and eloquent in the ardent Italian manner, declaims pleasantly, if rather vaguely, on a number of aspects of Bruno's genius. His claims are by no means understated on the first page. We are told that all modern systems of philosophy proceed from him; that he had an intuition of the law of evolution two hundred years before Lessing, Condorcet, and Herder; that before Darwin he divined the transformation of species and forms; that before Laplace, Lyell, and Kant he had a theory that the centre of the earth was a mass of fire; that Lamarck, in 1800, merely developed Bruno's conception of the evolution of mind; that Helmholtz demonstrated that the formulæ of thought were mathematical formulæ two hundred and fifty years after Bruno had maintained the identity of thought and matter; that he was a utilitarian before Bentham, a scientific student of the history of religions before Volney, and, finally, that he had anticipated the conclusions of Vico on the evolution of history. We are not prepared in cold blood to accept this large rhapsodical estimate of the Italian thinker and martyr. Our English admiration is well on this side of idolatry. We admit that he was an ardent revolutionary leader who caught glimpses of the truth long before it was revealed to the colder and more cautious minds.

The West Ham Branch reports a successful excursion on Sunday last to Laindon Hills. The dull and threatening early morning kept many away who might otherwise have attended, but the weather put on a more cheerful aspect before the morning was very far advanced, and retained its good humour throughout the day. There was a very fair muster of members and friends, and these enjoyed themselves thoroughly. Two of the quaint old Essex Churches were visited during the day, and the Laindon Hotel provided tea for the party.

Mr. W. H. Hearson writes:—

> I am glad to be able to tell you that as a result of advertising with you I have had a number of enquiries, most of which have resulted in tentative orders, and in quite the majority of cases appreciative recognition of the work done.

We are not surprised. The *Freethinker* is a paper that is bought to be read, not merely glanced at and thrown on one side.

In Charles W. Dahlinger's *Pittsburgh: a Sketch of its Early Social Life* (1916), the following anecdote refers to "scenes from clerical life" in the United States in the early nineteenth century:—

> A practical joke perpetuated by the Rev. Dr. John McMillan on the Rev. Joseph Patterson, illustrates the custom of drinking among the clergy. On their way to attend a meeting of the Synod, the two men stopped at a wayside inn and called for whisky, which was set before them. Mr. Patterson asked a blessing which was rather lengthy. Dr. McMillan meanwhile drank the whisky, and to Mr. Patterson's blank look remarked blandly, "You must watch as well as pray"!

The story is quoted from a Presbyterian minister.

Systems save trouble—the trouble of thinking.—*Helps.*

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The Science of the Ultra-Material.

II.

(*Continued from p. 321.*)

THE Monistic view of the nature of consciousness seems to furnish an answer to this question, for on this view there must exist a definite limit to the energy function constituting our intelligence. If our intelligence be itself but a definitely limited function of some underlying energy, then the definitely limited degree or condition of substance and movement constituting that function must impose a limit beyond which no cognition of a material energy function can be formed. As we shall try to show further on, there are scientific grounds for regarding the energy function of which mind consists as a breakdown of material equilibria in those very unstable forms of protoplasm which make up brain and nerve substance. Our cognitive faculty would be dependent on and relative to this energy function, and to such a relative faculty a degree of material dissociation or diffusion transcending that which constitutes the function might be cognized as "infinite" diffusion, while similarly a degree of velocity transcending that which constitutes the function might be cognized as "infinite" velocity.

We may, again, borrow an illustration from a familiar case in physics. The visible part of the solar spectrum forms but a small proportion of the whole spectrum, the range of vibrations which affect us as light comprising less than a hundredth part of the entire range of vibrations. Now, supposing this were a condition of things involving not merely a particular perception but the cognitive faculty itself. To such a faculty the ultra-violet vibrations, of shorter wave-length than the shortest of those functioning as cognition, might be cognized as "infinitely" small, while the infra-red vibrations, transcending in wave-length the utmost limits of those constituting the intellectual faculty, might be cognized as being of "infinitely" great wave-length.

Thus, to our intelligence, limited as it is by its own nature, expressions which connote the idea of an absolute limit carry a relative meaning when we try to realize them in terms of that limit. This is well shown in the meaning which mathematicians have to assign to the term "infinity." Thus, the sum of a convergent series "carried to infinity" does not really mean the sum of an absolutely endless series of terms, for this is inconceivable. It means the value to which, by increasing the number of the terms to any extent however great, their sum can be made to approach within any quantity however small. That is to say, an expression connoting the idea of an infinite value has to be given a meaning involving the conception of finite values; and this relative meaning is the only real and valid one we can ascribe to such expressions.

These considerations may go some way towards affording a rational basis for that purely kinetic theory of matter which recent researches seem to be leading the modern physicist and chemist to adopt. This theory necessitates a conception of immaterial energy underlying and producing all material energies—a primordial fountain of energy whence all material existence arises, and consisting of substance in a state of infinite diffusion and infinite mobility, the term "infinite" in both cases bearing the relative meaning just referred to. And if we choose to call this "the ether" we can say with Professor J. J. Thomson: "All mass is mass of the ether, all momentum momentum of the ether, and all kinetic energy kinetic energy of the ether."

THE UNIVERSE AS EQUILIBRIUM.

This conception of the immaterial world seems to imply a condition of absolute instability—a total negation of equilibrium. Equilibrium, however feeble, however unstable or fleeting, is a condition of arrest or retardation of motion; a condition of limited mobility in which kinetic energy assumes, in however slight a degree, the form of potential energy. Infinitely diffused substance in a state of infinite mobility can thus possess no equilibrium, but its very condition of instability compels it towards equilibrium. Material evolution would thus seem to be necessitated by the very nature of immaterial energy—a consideration which would seem, by the way, to afford a satisfactory reply to those who inquire as to the "why" of evolution and the "purpose" of existence. And this evolution might be described as an inevitable fall from a state of complete instability in the immaterial world, through varying stages of unstable equilibrium, to the state of relatively stable equilibrium manifested in matter. This description would be quite in accord with the results of recent researches into the constitution of matter, notably those of Gustave le Bon, who has given good grounds for his theory that all the sub-material energies—electricity, magnetism, heat, light, radio-activity, etc.—are forms of equilibrium intermediate between the "ether" and the "intra-atomic energy" of matter. Proto-material evolution, then, is a fall from instability to stable equilibrium, and might be graphically represented by the downward branch of a curve descending from an infinite "ordinate" in the immaterial world and reaching a "turning value" at the stable equilibrium of matter, whence an upward branch representing post-material evolution would take its rise. But while the characteristic feature of the downward branch is, as just stated, a fall from instability through various grades of unstable equilibrium to the stable equilibrium of matter, the characteristic feature of the upward branch is a progressive rise from stable to unstable equilibrium. Let us briefly examine it.

There is good ground for believing that atomic "valency," that is the number of combinations which an atom is capable of entering into with other atoms in the formation of molecules, is, to some extent, a measure of its instability. An atom which can combine with, say, three or four other atoms—what chemists call a tri-valent or tetra-valent atom—is, presumably, less stable than an atom which can combine with only one other atom—mono-valent. For chemical combination, probably, involves a certain disturbance of the intra-atomic equilibrium, and a greater facility for chemical combination, as manifested in a higher valency, would imply a greater readiness in the atomic equilibrium to yield to the disturbing influences of other atomic energies—that is, it would imply a less stable equilibrium. In the light of this connection between valency and instability, we shall find some clear indications that the progress of material evolution is a progress towards unstable equilibrium.

Stellar spectroscopy shows that the newest and hottest stars are distinguished by the presence of hydrogen and helium, the former being a monovalent element and the latter being devoid of any valency or chemical affinity whatever. It would hence follow that as the presence of these elements is characteristic of the hottest and most newly formed stars, the stabler forms of material equilibrium are the first to manifest themselves. And this is just what we should expect. As the various forms of proto-material energy are passing into material energy, those forms which are less stable would be unfitted to maintain a permanent material equilibrium under those conditions of intense heat which are known to prevail in the newer stars. These forms would,

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therefore, either fail to materialize at all under such conditions, or their feebler equilibria would be soon destroyed, while those of greater stability would resist disruption and survive, by a sort of natural selection, as the first outstanding forms of matter properly so called. As the heat of the condensing star-nebula diminished the less stable of the elements would be able to come into being. And this progressive evolution of matter would continue throughout the stellar history, the older stars showing the presence of elements of higher valency, such as carbon, which is a tetravalent element, and which only appears in red stars which are supposed to be approaching extinction.

A. E. MADDOCK.

(To be continued.)

John Lee and Providence.

II.

(Concluded from p. 329.)

WE now come to the attempted execution of John Lee. Mr. Pitkin, the chaplain, says that the scaffold was newly erected, but an old platform, or drop, was transferred from a dilapidated building, where it had been used for the execution of a poor woman named Annie Took, who was convicted for child-murder. He goes on to say:—

> It was quite unsuitable for a public execution, being made of thin wood and slight bolts. No dummy had been tried upon it, the dummy system having originated through the failure in John Lee's case. The fairy-tales of the rope breaking three times, and the success of the dummy trial, have been invented since that time, and are entirely fabulous.[1]

The present writer remembers reading, many years ago, the explanation given by Berry—the executioner in attendance—as to why the trap, upon which Lee stood, failed to drop when the lever was pulled. Berry declared that the scaffold was erected by convict-labour, and the convicts contrived it so that it would not act with a weight on it, and since then convicts have not been allowed to construct the scaffold. However that may be, it is certain that the structure was defective. It has been said that the boards were swollen by rain, this was evidently the idea of the officials in attendance, for Lee says he could hear them chipping and hacking away at the wood-work after he was removed from the scaffold.[2] But one of the warders told Lee afterwards that there was plenty of space between the two doors of the trap, and that if the bolt could have been drawn another sixteenth of an inch the trap would have fallen. The fault was evidently in the mechanism of the bolt and the lever. The officials, however, had evidently lost their heads and were too panic-stricken to find out the real cause. Berry himself, so Lee says, came to him after the first failure, and clasping his hands, he said, "My poor fellow, I don't know what I am doing!" And all the others were in like condition. So after the third attempt to hang Lee had failed, Mr. Pitkin (the chaplain) himself on verge of collapse, intervened and Lee was removed to the cells and afterwards reprieved.

We need not go outside Lee's own story to show its falseness. He says that on the Sunday before the day fixed for the execution, a stranger appeared in the yard where he took exercise, and upon Lee asking the warders who he was, they looked at him rather curiously and replied: "Oh, that's a visitor." Lee says: "I guessed who the 'visitor' was. 'That's the executioner,' said I to myself, 'looking at me to see how much drop I shall want.'" As a matter of fact, Lee knew nothing of the "drop" as used by the modern hangman. For when he was brought to the scaffold he was puzzled to know how the operation was to be performed. He says: "I had in my imagination a picture of the old gibbet—the post with the beam across it and the rope hanging down. I thought there would be a cart and that I would be in the cart, and that when the noose was fixed the cart would be drawn away."[1] Of course, this was the old practice, which was practically death by strangulation, the "drop" being adopted later to cause instant death by dislocating the neck.

Then, again, there is Lee's tale of his dream the night before in which he says he went through all the incidents of the attempted execution. If he had, indeed, dreamed all the incidents, he would have known all about the trap and the drop, and the arrangements would have been no puzzle to him. Mr. Pitkin, the chaplain, says Lee told him he saw in his dream that they tried three times to hang him but it would not work, and they had to take him back to his cell. But Mr. Pitkin gives a letter which Lee wrote to his sister on the following day in which he mentions this dream. He says: ".....I had a dream on Sunday night that the scaffold was not ready, and that they had to make another. And I told the officers that were on the watch over me the dream at 6 a.m. I did not think it was coming true—but it did."

This is a very different version from that which Lee elaborated later on. As a matter of fact the scaffold was ready, and another scaffold was not made. But at the time Lee wrote this letter he had not realized the advantages of working in this dream as part of the providential interference on his behalf. When he did realize it he altered it to coincide with everything that happened down to the minutest detail.

We now come to the third period of Lee's life. After serving twenty-two years in different convict establishments Lee was released. Mr. Pitkin says that he seems to have had a good time in Devon and been well supplied with money. He travelled about always putting up at all the best hotels and indulging in the best fare. A year after his release he married Jessie Augusta Bullied, chief nurse of the female mental ward at Newton Abbott Workhouse, by whom he had several children. He then removed to London where he became a barman in a public-house in one of the London markets, the proprietor of which did a good business while Lee was with him, for people came from all parts of the country to see the "man they could not hang." But after a time he was missing, and so was a barmaid who served in the bar with him. They afterwards turned up in Australia.

As Mr. Pitkin truly remarks:—

> The absence of moral sense is seen in the sequel to his life. He left the poor wife, who was very courageous to marry a man with so black a record, without any sort of provision for the family maintenance, and she was obliged to apply to the Lambeth Guardians for assistance. The newspapers have recently stated that this extraordinary criminal adventurer died a natural death in Australia, quite contrary to my expectations. I quite believed that he would have been executed for some other horrible crime.[2]

Lee was a congenital criminal; he was born with a criminal disposition. He was lacking in sympathy and imagination. Sympathy for the suffering of others, and lack of that imagination which enables more sensitive people to realize the horror of the actions they contemplate, and therefore makes them realize the consequences

[1] Rev. John Pitkin, *The Prison Cell in its Lights and Shadows*, p. 206.

[2] John Lee, *The Man They Could Not Hang*, p. 52.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 49.

[2] Pitkin, *The Prison Cell*, p. 214.

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of those actions, and acts as a deterrent to these criminal impulses. Mr. Pitkin describes him as a "criminal hero." He says:—

> A hero is a person who exhibits extraordinary courage, firmness, and intrepidity throughout his life. He has no fear and no moral sense. The character and conduct of John Lee accords with this description. He stood, calmly, close to the pool of blood in the hall near his own sleeping-place, and where the jury believed he must have murdered his kind and considerate mistress. He, without the least excitement, led Jane Neck through the smoke of the fire he had himself kindled, and stained her nightdress with the blood upon his hands. With intrepidity, he went into the dining-room, where, doubtless, he had carried the body, and tried to make it appear that he had looked round by chance, and saw the body lying on the floor. With the calmness of apparent innocence, he ran to Torquay to tell the McCleans, the murdered lady's relatives, that his mistress's house had been set on fire and she was much burnt, when he knew she had been cruelly murdered. With cool deliberation he went with the sergeant to the police-station, where he was apprehended on suspicion. He exhibited no sort of anxiety whilst awaiting trial, but conducted himself like a criminal who is charged with a trifling offence. During the three days' trial he seemed to have no care as to the result. When the verdict was given, he received it with complaisancy and indifference. During the three attempts to execute him he never spoke, and no word of dread or remorse escaped his lips. He said he wanted to die, and hoped to do so the next time he went to the scaffold. This criminal hero told the warders he had another chance of being hanged, as he could dash out the Chaplain's brains with the leg of the table, when he was alone in the cell. The officers advised me to be careful. When the Governor told him the day appointed for his execution, he turned round and smiled. Upon the scaffold, in answer to the executioner, he said that he had nothing to say. All through this notorious case you can see the criminal's nerveless demeanour, extraordinary courage, and fortitude. He had an indomitable will-power. He made up his mind to brave out the whole thing, and succeeded. The absence of moral sense accounts for this strange characteristic.[1]

It should be borne in mind that is not the testimony of a sceptic or unbeliever, but of an orthodox English clergyman; not one of those "half-believers in our casual creeds," so common among the clergy to-day, but one of the old-fashioned, ultra-orthodox believers. Mr. Pitkin even believes in demoniacal possession; for he states that he has had to minister to men and women who have purposely injured themselves, smashed everything in their cells, destroyed their clothes, leaving themselves naked, assaulted the officers, and amused themselves in this condition by singing alternately songs and hymns. When the visiting justices came to try and certify them insane, and asked the Rev. Pitkin for his opinion, he says: "The only explanation I could give was that they were possessed with an evil spirit, as I saw no signs of insanity about them"; and he cites the case of Jesus casting out evil spirits, and his declaration that "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting," which he considers even to-day to be the only successful cure.

If there had been the least doubt as to his innocence, we may be sure that this true believer would have seized upon the failure to execute Lee as a divine intervention of Providence in favour of an innocent man. But the facts were too strong to admit of any such interpretation. Innocent men have been tried, condemned, and executed, for murders they have not committed, but Lee was guilty, and escaped the penalty. Why, then, did not Providence intervene to save the innocent from execution? If the Devil governed the world, could he manage things worse?

W. MANN.

[1] Rev. John Pitkin, *The Prison Cell in its Lights and Shadows*, pp. 214-215.

Reverie and Dream.

THEY are easily overdone, and like all æsthetic pleasures, must be indulged in in moderation; but what were life without those abstract exquisite delights? All round those enchanting atmospheres and oases of existence stand those crude, clamant, actual things called duties, whose menace and insistence almost breaks the spell, but like cloud-wrapped hills seen dimly for the moment through the transforming mists and shades, partake of the beauties of the ideal scene, which forms, as it were, the vestibule and starting-place and inspiration for the heaven of achievement. It may be the mind deceives itself, and soaks for the time in an inebriate and unsound consolation; but I, at least, have often used this mental state—or it has used me—as an "inclined plane" to something attempted, something done, and without which the duty might have been neglected. It might almost be said that the higher type of mind *unconsciously* reasons (*vide* Shelley). It has read and remembered, observed and reflected, and goes its "destined" way. The mind, good or bad, weak or strong, finds its own place and its own mode of operation, and makes its heaven and hell (*vide* Milton). The present writer has a mind—of sorts; it may interest the reader, and will certainly please the writer, to give as near as possible a physical description of that psychological instrument.

It pleases me, then, and it seems to me most apt and pretty (you know how the best of us are pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw)—*vide* Pope—to compare my mind to a well that slowly fills—comes whispering to the pebbles (*vide* Ingersoll) in quiet shady places. It is easily disturbed, but ever and anon it clears and calms again and yet again, and reflects the wonder-world of animate and inanimate nature in its glassy normal deeps. There is the brute stampede of savagery round the spring, and the margin is all but obliterated; or the spring itself boils, and effervesces, and muddies, but so far it has always cleared again and smiled once more, as, at the moment, it jewels its cool and verdant shore, and contemplates the glint of shrines and sculptured gods, and the natural wisdom of trailing woodlands sweet and dim (*vide* Keat's exquisite *Ode to a Grecian Urn*).

Or, to change the metaphor—all the notes of the harmony are there; touched in a certain way at the psychological moment, and music is the result; as lightly touched another way another time, and direst discord reigns. As an instance, the mind in question awoke to consciousness the other morning, and some sounds from the street suggested the distant notes of a clarion, whereupon the said mind immediately thought of a forgotten verse of Gray's *Elegy*, or a line of it rather, and slowly pieced the rest together, as thus:—

> The breezy call of incense-breathing Morn,
> The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed.
> The cock's shrill clarion or the echoing horn
> No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For the moment I was the author of the lines. They were at least *mine*. It is thus the grand, simple things come *home*, and ennoble and enthuse the mind, aye, even in reverie and dream!

ANDREW MILLAR.

The nature of God, immortality, the being of the soul and its connection with the body, are eternal problems, wherein the philosophers are unable to give us any further knowledge.

—*Goethe.*

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Correspondence.

COURAGE IN THE PULPIT.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—An unknown benefactor has forwarded to me your paper of June 29, and increased the natural interest with which I should have perused your lively pages by superscribing, "Sir, you should be contributing to this paper rather than preaching in a Christian Church. Why not?" After having read your first article animadverting on my "having the wit to see, but without the courage to do," an article founded on a scrappy report by another unknown benefactor who heard me preach, and forthwith sent his idea of my ideas to the *Christian World* as "remarkable." I feel inclined to ask you kindly to permit me to become a contributor to your paper, in order to say that for forty years I have been an Independent minister and have never based my religion upon miracle or magic. It has not been easy going, for there are many who, like yourself, persist in the notion that religion rests on a foundation of magic and miracle. Such have generally upbraided me, and given me no further opportunity of addressing them. The sermon to which you refer was in no sense abnormal, for I have always held that as science proceeds on the assumption that the universe is rational throughout, so religion assumes and proclaims that the universe is a moral order with a purpose of good within it. Scepticism of the former faith would reduce thought to chaos; scepticism of the latter faith would deprive us of life's working power and land us in hopeless bankruptcy. That dual faith, in the reasonableness and purposefulness of the universe, saves life from being worthless and void, and that faith verifies itself every day. On this I found my preaching. How far this indicates lack of courage it is not my province to assess. Suffice it to say that any gratification that you find in my unconscious following of your lead, "even so late in the day," is not in the least grudged by me, though I had thought that in deprecating thaumaturgy and discounting magic I was following Jesus.

BERNARD J. SNELL.

[We very gladly afford Mr. Snell the use of our columns in order to place his position before those who read the article to which he refers. We do not, of course, agree that "the universe is a moral order," nor that scepticism of this would land us in "hopeless bankruptcy." Morality, to us, is part of the human order, and its existence therein no more warrants us in declaring the *universe* to be a moral order than existence of, say, a perfume warrants us in speaking of the universe as being a perfumed order. We do not follow Mr. Snell in the statement that in deprecating thaumaturgy and magic he is following Jesus. Surely, in the feeding of the five thousand, in raising the dead, in walking on the water, etc., Jesus was lending the very strongest encouragement to the practice of magic. We will only add that if Mr. Snell desires to place his position more definitely before the readers of the *Freethinker*, we shall be happy to place the necessary space at his disposal.—ED.]

Obituary.

It was with deep regret that we record the death of Mr. David Watt, 3 Albion Street, Paisley, for over thirty years a respected member of the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. The large number of friends at his funeral testified to the respect in which he was held. His presence at the Branch meetings will be sadly missed, as his wise counsel and helpful suggestions were based upon a long experience of work for the Cause of Freethought. His life was an inspiration to all who knew him; his enthusiasm never flagged. He travelled fourteen miles on a Sunday to attend the Branch meetings. The sympathy of the Glasgow Branch is extended to Mrs. Watt in her great loss. He was buried at Woodside Cemetery on Friday, 4th inst., the Secular Service being read by the Secretary of the Branch.—F. LONSDALE.

Population Question and Birth-Control.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, John A. Hobson, M.A., "Money and Morals."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Band Stand): 6.15, Mr. James Marshall, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 6, J. J. Darby, "Religious Persecution."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. C. H. Kelf, "If Bradlaugh Were With Us Now"; 6, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, A Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. Shaller, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Baker, Ratcliffe, Saphin, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

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Views and Opinions.

The Spiritualistic Boom.

For some time Spiritualism has been having something of a boom. It is not at all surprising that this should be so. We have just passed through the prolonged strain of a huge War, everyone's nerves has been at a tension, the emotional strain has been great, and nothing so multiplies the chances of delusion and illusion as that. Apart from this aspect of the matter, there is no reason why Spiritualism should have gained popularity from the War. Death is no new thing in human experience, and the pain of parting is felt no more to-day than it was felt thousands of years ago. No new evidence on behalf of Spiritualism has been brought forward; all that has been said recently has been said over and over again, and repetition, in this case, adds nothing. But we have had four and a half years of a devastating War. During that time the public mind has been on the rack, emotion has been in the saddle instead of reason, credulity has been rampant—as witness stories such as the passage of the Russian armies through England, the Mons angels, the boiling of German dead, etc.—and it would, therefore, be indeed strange if in these circumstances the marvellous and the supernatural did not gain strength with certain minds. It is an old observation that man's weakness is God's opportunity, and that holds good of supernaturalism generally.

* * *

The Value of the Evidence.

If nothing new has been said or found in connection with Spiritualism, it is sheer inaccuracy to call the evidence offered in its behalf "scientific." It has not the slightest claim to be called that. When we speak of scientific evidence we mean—or ought to mean—evidence that is producible, in the legal sense of the term, that is verifiable, that is not dependent in any way upon personal feeling or individual peculiarity. It must be evidence that will carry conviction to all normally constituted minds. How does Spiritualism meet the test? We are told of the number of scientific men who have accepted the phenomena as genuine. But that does not carry us far. For, unfortunately, there is often a wide difference between scientific evidence and the evidence of scientific men. On the face of it this is no more than the argument from authority—the argument that has done so much to establish many absurdities. When Sir Oliver Lodge, or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle tell us that they are convinced, the statement is interesting, but it is not evidence—except of the minds of these gentlemen on this subject. Admittedly the evidence is not producible on demand. It appears in a chance or haphazard way, and, more important still, others who have witnessed the same phenomena as the witnesses cited, have come to quite different conclusions concerning it. The evidence for the circulation of the blood, of the theory of gravitation, or the hypothesis of Natural Selection, was not of this kind. It was scientific because it satisfied the conditions named above. Clearly, then, we are straining language when we speak of the evidence brought forward on behalf of Spiritualism as "scientific." It is not. We have the expression of a personal conviction or idiosyncracy and that is all.

* * *

All of a Piece.

We do not labour the question of fraud, although that is serious enough. It is certainly something that, sooner or later, one medium after another meets with exposure as a trickster. And, in many cases, the same kind of evidence was offered on their behalf that is now offered for others. That, at least, throws a little doubt upon the value of the testimony offered to us. But when we have quite eliminated conscious deception, unconscious deception still remains as a factor not to be lost sight of. And the possibilities here are simply enormous. Psychology, as a science, is yet in its infancy, and the field of abnormal psychology opens up enormous possibilities. Not so many years ago the now familiar phenomena of dual personality would have seemed to many positive proof of "spirit control." To-day another and more scientific explanation lies ready to hand. Another point worthy of note in this connection is this: if anyone compares a work on Spiritualism written fifty years ago with one written to-day he will notice a strange and striking difference. And the difference will be this: fifty years ago the future life was pictured in terms of the smugly respectable Victorian religion. To-day it is described in terms of the advanced and up-to-date religious adventurer. Now, we can quite understand that men's *opinions* should have undergone a change, but in what is claimed to be a matter of objective fact, how are we to account for this peculiar and discrepant change? We are told that each one makes his own heaven and hell, and with that we agree. All we are in doubt about is how far it is true of this side the grave as well as some alleged other side. Why should the future life be described, by those who are supposed to be in it, in terms of agreement with contemporary religious speculation? When the Esquimaux pictures heaven as a place filled with whale, oil and blubber, is he acting differently from "Raymond" in finding whisky and cigars in the next world? If the Redskin pictures heaven as a veritable "happy hunting-ground," what psychological distinction can we draw between him and our modern drawing-room ghost-hunters? It is really astonishing how little superstition alters during the ages.

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The Other Side of Death.

But we are not really concerned with the alleged proofs of "spirit" intercourse. That topic has been discussed by a large number of writers, and one could only repeat what has already been said. It is more interesting to notice the purely emotional appeal made by certain advocates of Spiritualism. On this point the Spiritualist and the Christian move on the same level. Both talk as if life would be valueless if it ended at the grave, and both talk of the comfort and consolation the belief in immortality brings. We believe this to be false in both theory and fact. One's attitude towards death is mainly a question of character and temperament, and in the experience of every-day life one fails to detect differences between believer and unbeliever in the grief displayed on the death of those dear to them. Spiritualistic talk on this topic is a mere echo of the pulpit without its excuse. Grief in the presence of death is a universal fact. It would be a disaster were it otherwise. For far more hinges on the fact of death than most people are apparently aware. Death snaps many ties, it lacerates many hearts; and in the resulting pain we are all apt to be blind to its other aspects. Yet we believe that a more careful consideration of the subject will show that some of our deepest feelings and some of our most cherished affections are centered in the fact of death. From one point of view, birth and death are antagonistic facts. But from a deeper point of view they are complementary. Death is implied in birth, and birth carries with it the promise of death. A world in which no one died would be a world in which no one was born. And a world in which neither birth nor death occurred would be a world emptied of human affection. It is the uncertainty of life, the possibility of accident, of disease, that gives life its principal value. Life is, in fact, and in unexpressed imagination, set in a veritable framework of death. It is death that defines life, conditions it, and gives it a meaning and significance. To ask for immortality in order to give life meaning and value is to ask for the removal of the one condition that makes it valuable to any or intelligible to all.

* * *

Life and Adaptation.

The truth of the whole matter is that life in all its aspects—physical, mental, and emotional—is developed for this life, and will suit none other. All life is a question of adaptation, and this is as true of mental and emotional dispositions as it is of physical structures. Whatever human character may be worth, it has been developed by and for intercourse with conditions as they obtain here, and can only continue to express itself satisfactorily so long as these conditions remain substantially unchanged. Love and hate, fear and courage, with all the varied qualities of human nature, have a meaning only so long as we think of them in an environment that allows room for their expression. But if we assume some other state of existence in which a good half of these qualities must atrophy, owing to the great dissimilarity of conditions, we are, instead of providing for a development and perfecting of human character, really preparing for the abolition of its meaning and value. Thus, if we think of the next life as providing opportunities for the development of character, we must think of the present conditions remaining unchanged. In that case the argument of both the Spiritualist and the Christian breaks down. If, on the other hand, the conditions are vitally different, development is impossible, owing to the unsuitability of the conditions. Really, there is nothing new in religion. All that we meet with is a change of form. Of old, the primitive religionist drugged himself, fasted, and, by placing himself in an abnormal state of mind, brought himself into communication, as he conceived, with the gods. Ages roll by, and some people are still pursuing the same policy. The expectant state of mind, the emotional stress, the play of primitive feeling in the seance-room, is no more than the modern equivalent of the fasting, dancing, and exploitation of abnormal states that have been characteristic of religion in all ages.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The God-Eating Sacrament.

IV.

ITS VALUE TO THE CHURCH.

TRANSUBSTANTIATION was, from the first, virtually the only doctrine of the Church, though it was not formulated into a hard-and-fast theory till much later. Ignatius, only about sixty years later than Paul, speaks of the Eucharist as "the flesh of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, the drug of immortality"; to Justin Martyr the flesh and blood of Christ were the soul's food, and became its very life by assimilation; Irenæus saw in the bread after its consecration a supernatural element as well as a natural, the supernatural element being the mysterious presence of the crucified Christ in both bread and wine; and Clement of Alexandria, though by no means a typical mystic, employed language which, to many, justifies his inclusion in the list of advocates of Transubstantiation. Origen, characterized as the most profound exponent of the Christian mysteries, says that in this Sacrament, Christ is the heavenly bread given to all who are spiritually able to digest him. Indeed, Harnack tells us that the Fathers were all "Sacramental theologians"; and the founder of the cult was Paul. What were they all setting up? At once the most stupid and most powerful superstition imaginable. Speaking of the movement generally, Harnack, the greatest living authority on the subject, says:—

> One is convinced that all Christians with one accord attributed a magical force, exercised especially over demons, to the mere utterance of the name of Jesus and to the sign of the Cross; and then one can read the stories of the Lord's Supper told by Dionysius of Alexandria, a pupil of Origen, and all that Cyprian is able to narrate as to the miracle of the host. Putting these and many similar traits together, one feels driven to conclude that Christianity has become a religion of magic, with its centre of gravity in the Sacramental mysteries (*Expansion of Christianity*, vol. i., p. 292-3).

It is beyond controversy that Paul attached magical value to the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. He believed that it produced a magical effect for weal or woe upon all participants. His words remind us of the ancient custom of giving holy food to those accused of crime, whom it poisoned if they were guilty. On the Communion table was magic food, and those who consumed it without a due sense of its real character were visibly punished. "He that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body." What form the judgment or punishment was supposed to take appears from the next verse: "For this cause many among you are weak and sickly, and not a few sleep"—that is, have died. What Paul wants to impress upon the reader's mind is, that worthy participation in the Lord's Supper results in magical benefit, while the effect of unworthy participation is magically disastrous. Naturally, such a doctrine was calculated to be of immense service to the Church. As Bousset rightly observes: "Behind these words we catch glimpses of definitely sacramental feeling, the belief in the marvellous virtue of sacred food for weal or woe."

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Inevitably the celebrant of the rite was invested with superhuman dignity and glory. Speaking of him, Cyprian, the famous Bishop of Carthage, who suffered martyrdom, says: "The priest imitates what Christ did, and offers then in the Church to God the Father a true and complete sacrifice. The passion of the Lord is the sacrifice we offer." Cyril of Jerusalem describes the effect of participation thus: "By taking the body and blood of Christ, you become one body and one blood with him. For thus we become Christ-bearers by his body and blood being digested into our members." Now, the bread and wine became the body and blood of Christ, by a mighty miracle, just as the celebrant pronounced the words of consecration, with the result that the priest was regarded and honoured as a semi-Divine being. It was Cyprian who laid the foundation of the priestly caste in the Church, and it is to him we are indebted for some of the silliest stories of the magical effect of taking the sacred food. When persecution prevailed under Decius Christian courage was lacking, and at Carthage, in particular, many Christians were subject to paroxysms of weakness, the number of the lapsed forming a considerable proportion. Some there were who even offered the condemned Pagan sacrifice, and when their readmission into Church fellowship became a subject of hot controversy, Bishop Cyprian opposed it with ferocity. Milman quotes the prelate's "energetic language" in denunciation of those who had committed the horrible crime of sacrificing, and then adds:—

> Some of them died of remorse; with some the guilty food acted as poison. But the following was the most extraordinary occurrence, of which Cyprian declares himself to have been an eyewitness. An infant had been abandoned by its parents in their flight. The nurse carried it to the magistrate. Being too young to eat meat, bread, steeped in wine offered in sacrifice, was forced into its mouth. Immediately that it returned to the Christians, the child, which could not speak, communicated the sense of its guilt by cries and convulsive agitations. It refused the sacrament (then administered to infants), closed its lips, and averted its face. The deacon forced it into its mouth. The consecrated wine would not remain in the contaminated body, but was cast up again. In what a high-wrought state of enthusiasm must men have been who would relate and believe such statements as miraculous? (*History of Christianity*, vol. ii., p. 190.)

Cyprian tells another equally unbelievable tale about a little girl who, having eaten some meat sacrificed to idols, became possessed by evil spirits. Going afterwards to the Lord's Table, she refused to communicate, and fell into fits. In the Acts of Thomas, composed probably at the commencement of the third century, we read of a young man who, having murdered his mistress, went and took the communion, as if nothing had happened; but the hand that performed the sacrilegious deed immediately withered up. "Confess thy crime," the Apostle is said to have exclaimed, "for the Eucharist of the Lord hath convicted thee."

To those who communicated worthily, however, believing the bread and wine to be the very body and blood of Christ, the Sacrament was a talisman and charm against weakness, sickness, and death. The moment the consecration formula was officially repeated, a miracle took place far greater than that of turning water into wine. The bread and wine were annihilated so far as their substance was concerned, though retaining their former colour, taste, and weight, and in their place were the body and blood of Christ, the food and drink of mind and body. Consequently, the bread and wine are not surrogates or substitutes for the body and blood of the Redeemer; they *are* his body and blood. It follows, therefore, that "Do this in remembrance of me" is a wholly irrelevant phrase, because the Eucharist is in no real sense a commemorative service, but a service of participation in and thanksgiving for a present sacrifice to God the Father. It is a dramatic representation of what transpired on Calvary nineteen hundred years ago.

This was a view of the Lord's Supper for which the Church was prepared to fight with all her might. As time went on, the doctrine grew more and more bold, and independent theologians arose to challenge it, like Ratramnus in the ninth century and Berengar in the eleventh; but the ultimate effect was to confirm the orthodox belief and to make the doctrine still more rigid. The Mass, by being constantly repeated, became the central act of worship, and the people believed that the priest performed a literal miracle every time. Strange things were said to happen, such as the transformation of the host into a lamb. There were Masses when no people were present, and Masses, said in private, for the benefit of the dead. Berengar was a much stronger opponent of Transubstantiation than Ratramnus. He cleverly and most logically exposed the absurdity and harmfulness of the belief; but the Church, at Council after Council, condemned him. The master whom he followed was John Scotus, one of the keenest and subtlest logicians of the Middle Ages; but the Church excommunicated Berenger and committed the writings of Scotus to the flames. In the end, Berengar succeeded in winning Pope Hildebrand, at least partly, to his side; but it was foreseen by the generality of the priests that the adoption of Berengar's views would prove ruinous to the welfare of the Church, and some of them did not hesitate to charge Hildebrand himself with infidelity. Milman paints the result of the momentary defection:—

> The priests' power, as it was afterwards intrepidly stated, of making God; the miracles which became, or had become, so common, to prove not the spiritual but the grosser material transmutation, fell away at once: and with it how much of sacerdotal authority, sacerdotal wealth, sacerdotal dominion!—some might suppose of true and humble reverence for the mystery of the Eucharist (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol. iv., p. 118).

Thus the Eucharist fed the vanity and love of power so strongly implanted in the priestly mind. It is an appeal from objective authority to the credulity of the ignorant. Fancy a man of God having the effrontery to assure his simple-minded dupes that he had seen and touched the form of a child on the altar, and that after he had kissed it, it resumed the appearance of bread. We inwardly smile as we read such puerile stories, but the bulk of the people of the Dark Ages sincerely though ignorantly believed in their absolute truth. Consequently, Masses became the most popular and profitable of Church ordinances. There were, and still are, Masses ordinary or regular, and extraordinary or occasional; Masses simple, half-double, and double; Masses black, dry, high, and low; all contributing to swell the revenue of the Church, and to confer more and more power upon the priesthood which naturally blossomed into the worst type of priestcraft.

J. T. LLOYD.

Religious people often pray very heartily for the forgiveness of a "multitude of trespasses and sins," as a mark of humility, but we never knew them admit any one fault in particular, or acknowledge themselves in the wrong in any instance whatever. The natural jealousy of self-love is in them heightened by the fear of damnation, and they plead *Not Guilty* to every charge brought against them with all the conscious terrors of a criminal at the bar. It is for this reason that the greatest hypocrites in the world are religious hypocrites.—*Hazlitt.*

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Mary Shelley.

Not for delectations sweet,
Not the cushion and the slipper, not the peaceful and the studious,
Not the riches safe and palling, not for us the tame enjoyment,
Pioneers! O pioneers! —*Walt Whitman.*

SHELLEY'S alliance with Mary Godwin proved to be the happiest years of his life. Her father, William Godwin, was a philosopher of reputation; and Shelley was destined to be his most distinguished pupil. So much is this the case that a witty Frenchman once said that Godwin's finest work was not *Political Justice*, but Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. The young disciple was in the habit of calling on the philosopher at the Juvenile Library, Skinner Street, Holborn, where Mary lived with her father. For both Mary and Shelley it was a case of love at first sight. Hogg, the poet's friend, has described in vivid words the story of his first seeing Mary Godwin. That was in June, 1814, when Mary was sixteen and Shelley twenty-two. On July 28 Mary Godwin eloped with Shelley; an association that was only ended by the poet's untimely death, July, 1822. These years were the ripest period of his genius, during which he wrote some of the most glorious poems ever contributed to his country's literature.

Mary Shelley herself was a noble-minded and rarely gifted woman. In literature she might have taken higher rank had she remained unmarried, but her genius was overshadowed by the transcendent abilities of her husband. As it is, her novel, *Frankenstein*, is one of the most powerful books written by a woman; whilst her other works, *The Last Man* and *Lodore*, well repay reading. Her life was devoted to duty, and she was always thinking of others. So long as her husband lived she lived for him, and she was always more a mother than a daughter to her scholarly and unbusiness-like father. It is touching to read that the philosopher turned to her for help, for consolation in his troubles, and even for literary assistance in writing those novels which earned him his bread. Sir Timothy Shelley and her husband's relations treated her badly, and, like her husband, she was insulted and slandered. To the last she befriended and assisted her sister, although she found the capricious Claire a heavy burden.

With all her womanliness, Mary had much of the good comrade in her. Her relations with Trelawney were characteristic. He wished her to revise his novels, and she tried hard to soften his asperities. Trelawney would willingly have married her, but she never would consent. No woman could have been a more affectionate or a more admirable mother. She was spurred for her son's sake to excessive literary exertion that she might eke out the scanty annuity allowed grudgingly by her father-in-law. And when she sent her boy to a public school, she was sadly put about to pay the quarterly bills, estimated on the grand scale by a complacent head-master.

Small wonder that many of her letters are tinged with sadness. It is pleasant to find that her son, when he grew up, did what he could for her comfort, and towards the close of her life her days were passed in comparative rest. If, during that time, we are inclined to think that Mary Shelley had become commonplace, let us at least remember that she was a woman, and that she had suffered what might have broken a stronger personality than hers.

Sir Timothy Shelley does not emerge from this story with much credit. Curiously, the causes of the estrangement between Shelley and his father centre round the sinister figure of the family solicitor, William Whitton, who was a most unamiable person. Indeed, Sir Timothy left to himself, would, in all probability, have effected a reconciliation with his famous son. One very interesting statement is made in one of the solicitor's letters of complaint to the father "that Mr. P. B. Shelley was exhibiting himself on the Windsor stage in the character of Shakespeare's plays under the figured name of Cooks." This is delightfully vague, but we should like to know what Shakespearean character the author of *The Cenci* enacted.

On the principle of heredity, Shelley's son should have been a gifted man. First, his father was a really great poet, then his mother was a woman of genius, author of *Frankenstein*, and, finally, there are William, and Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, his grandparents, both of whom made a great stir in the world; the one with *Political Justice*, and the other with the *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Yet all this genius, talent, and initiative only succeeded in producing a country gentleman, with a little culture, but no taste for literature, and no sympathy with democratic ideals. The only taste he inherited from his distinguished father was his intense love of the sea and yachts.

MIMNERMUS.

On the Hills.

The hills purify those who walk on them.

WE were having our day on the hills. We have always loved them; and, in our earliest days, we remember viewing the local eminences with awe. How high they seemed, almost reaching to the clouds. And well do we remember our disappointment, when we had acquired sufficient strength of limb and spirit of adventure to make our first ascent, to find that the clouds were even further away than they first appeared to be. There is something peculiarly attractive to us in the ascent of a hill, it is so real, there is an imperativeness about it that seems to be a unique lesson in perseverance. If the summit must be reached, every inch of the road must be traversed, there is no pretence about it, you can never get there for half-price; nature seems to say: "You may fool about cities, but the hills are only for the strong and persevering."

Thus, we were travelling through the hills and dales of East Durham. Cross Fell was our objective, it is situated on the border of Cumberland, in full view of lakeland, the pride of English scenery. We had traversed the four miles of macadamized road between the station and the beautifully situated and secluded village of Garrigal. This is near the southern origin of father Tyne, on whose banks we are proud to reside and claim as our home. We had just passed through the village and were beginning to draw hard breath on the steep ascent of Rotherhope Fell. We were in rather a meditative mood, certain problems still weighed heavily on us. We had not shaken off all the perplexities with which religion burdens the human mind. We were still somewhat in "The valley of the shadow," the sun of freedom had not begun to shine fully for us. However, just above the village and at the foot of the Fell, we met a tall gentlemanly looking man. He was clerically attired, and he appeared to us as if he occupied a high position in the Christian world. His appearance at once claimed all our sympathies, his days appeared to us to be few in the land. The hollow cough and the weary, tired look, in spite of the magnificent surroundings and the bracing air, betrayed his sad case. He saluted us, and that wistful look on his kindly face went to our hearts. He questioned us as to whence we came and as to our destination; and when we had explained to him, he expressed some doubts as to our ability to accomplish all we had undertaken. We however, assured him that we had travelled

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the same road on previous occasions. After some hesitation, during which time he seemed to be thinking hard, he tendered us a little apology for detaining us. He then said, in a very sad tone of voice, "I have something that I very much want to say to you." We gently expressed our willingness to listen, quite expecting to be reproved for breaking the Sabbath. He, however, proceeded thus: "I am very well off so far as this world's goods are concerned; but," he repeated, emphatically, "but I would give all I possess if I could accomplish that which you are doing to-day." We shook hands with him. He wished us "Good day" in a broken voice. We were compelled to remain silent, and respond with a further grip of the hand.

We proceeded up the hill; the surroundings for a while were quite blurred. But we were thinking furiously. Had this poor gentleman become conscious of the truth of life? Had his religion failed him in the hour of his supreme trial? Had these stern everlasting hills impressed him? "There is nothing human in the whole round of Nature. All Nature, all the Universe that we can see, is absolutely indifferent to us, and except to us, human life is no more value than grass."

This little experience was one of the great lessons of our lives; it fixed once and for all our true place in the world. Our altruistic view of things causes us to hope that our short-time friend has overcome his illness, and still continues to see the recurring springtimes. He had learnt to appreciate life; religion was no consolation to him. We had our hour of exhiliration near the cairn. On our return we hoped to once more greet our friend, but we saw him no more. We never go on the hills without thinking of this episode; it set up a train of thought which has helped us to live, in its fullest sense.

J. FOTHERGILL.

The Dog and his Gods.

ANIMAL psychology is a study of negation. No human being can apprehend the development, or even the phenomena, of such psychology, for the very simple reason that no method, or at the utmost a very limited and inadequate method of thought interpretation exists between the human and animal races.

Yet Jack London seems to have acquired a positive knowledge of the emotions of dog psychology. This may, in part, be on account of his intimate experience of the low level of intelligence displayed by primitive peoples, while, in part also, it may be the result of his daring to put into comprehensible language definite facts about doggy emotions, which no one could readily combat because of mere lack of data.

"White Fang" displays little interest in the ultimate. "Jerry of the Islands," however, under the influence of his training and unnatural selection, has life needs which are unknown to "White Fang." Less primitive, he becomes more emotional; and being more emotional, he is subject more easily to the analysis of psychology.

The immediate need, which crops out of such a sensitized mentality, is for somewhat to worship, and to Jerry it appears that the white god-ruler of the blacks of Malaita, Mr. Haggin, and after Van Horn, hold in their hands life and death, and the knowledge of all things. The limits of his intelligence lie in his immediate environment, and he knows nothing more of the mind of man than its prohibitions and gratulation, which are the outcome of very definite actions on his part.

When Van Horn is removed, Jerry seeks another god; and as he must have a god, is obliged to accept one of the inferior black race, who is, however, superseded later by the white gods, to whom he inevitably rallies. They are even more omnipotent than Van Horn; for not only do they hold suzeranity over black, but also over the minor white gods.

Thus, with the development of his intelligence, he seeks new gods; just thus was it with his black masters, and even so with his white gods themselves. They know only the prohibitions and the praise of their gods. They know that certain actions will inevitably bring about certain results. They know the punishments and the rewards; and they worship a god, or many gods, accordingly.

In the first place, of course, a god is placed in charge of each set of actions; later, with the extension of natural knowledge and of closer acquaintance with the persistence of phenomena, the number of gods is reduced, until at length a tri-unity has been evolved. Is it to be understood that knowledge has reached its limit, and that no further change in the nature of God may take place with its increase, or that the Lord of the Universe shall be diminished by the extending of human knowledge to be but a part of his present self?

G. E. FUSSELL.

Acid Drops.

God has been officially certified to have been busy in Bermondsey. The certificate was given by Judge Parry in the County Court and reported in the *Star* of July 12. There had been a heavy storm, and a woman stepping out of bed fell into eighteen inches of water. As this led to her being in bed for eight weeks, damages was claimed from the landlord. Judge Parry declined to allow damages, because, he said, it was "almost an act of God." Now, we wonder how he knew? And if his guess was accurate, of whom is the woman to get damages? Should she bring an action against the Bishop of London as God's representative? And if she did, what would he say? Suppose the woman had been drowned, would the Judge have returned a verdict of manslaughter? If not, why not? The curious thing is that people always seem most certain about things being due to God when they are of an unpleasant kind. It will be remembered that in the Bible it was when Moses brought the plague of lice on Egypt that the magicians threw up the sponge and said: "Now we know that this comes from the Lord."

The lavish adulation of the Prince of Wales has reached a humorous climax. Not contented with praying for him by name in public form of prayers, this young man has been admitted as an elder brother of the Trinity. That ought to settle the matter once and for all. Who can any longer dispute his god-like qualities?

A *decree nisi* was granted to Mrs. K. M. Creighton because of the misconduct and cruelty of her husband, John Henry David Creighton, formerly rector of Foulsham, Norfolk. The wife complained of his conduct with women, even in his own house, and said that he supplied very little money for anything, although his income was about £800 a year. The restraints of the religious life are not very obvious in this instance.

A Sunday paper, referring to the high wages of some mechanics, calls them "preposterous." That editor never uses such language concerning the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, whose salaries amount to £300 and £200 weekly, respectively.

A correspondence has been carried on in the pages of the *Daily News* concerning the most humorous book. So far, no one has mentioned the Bible, although it would be hard to beat the account of the animals going into the Ark two by two; or the story of Jonah's bed-sitting-room in the whale's stomach.

The following appears in the *Sunday Mail* (Glasgow):—

> Sir,—I have had occasion to come in contact with a large number of ex-soldiers, and have discovered that many of them are now Atheists.
>
> I wonder if other readers have noticed the same tendency in themselves (if ex-soldiers) or in others, and if they can explain the change in their beliefs.
>
> The subject is an interesting one, and would bear discussion.
>
> CHURCHMAN.

We wonder what the clergy, who have been so full of the religion of our soldiers, think of it? We fancy Churchman

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will find the explanation in Lincoln's aphorism that you can't fool *all* the people *all* the time.

What beautiful nonsense the clergy utter in public! Speaking at Caxton Hall, London, the Rev. C. H. Lancaster declared that "the multitude of blessings" on this country was due to the Union Jack, which contained the Old Testament colours—"red for atonement; white for purification; and blue for love of God." Curiously, the same colours appear in the French tricolour flag, and our Gallic friends are often regarded as the most irreligious of men.

We have received a copy of an order issued to some of our troops in Mesopotamia, ordering a Church Parade, but bearing the information, "the service will last for half an hour only." Please put up with it—it won't last long, is, we think, the real meaning of the information. But we wonder how long it will be before the Government decides on treating soldiers as though they were grown-up men in full possession of their faculties, and capable of deciding whether they want to go to church or stay away? No one insults the soldier in so comprehensive a manner as they who profess to think most highly of him.

Lord Strathspey declares that "if the clergy and religion were on a proper footing there would be fewer strikes." This is a cryptic utterance; but the clergy have struck on the Continent, and are ready to strike anybody—for more money—in this country.

The Bishop of London still maintains that the clergy are "starving." Doubtless, some are in a bad way. For instance, the Rev. Sir E. G. L. Mowbray succumbed recently, leaving behind the sum of £188,766; and the Rev. W. E. Prickard, of Radnor, £21,302.

"Our cleverest thinkers should not be warned off by the Church, but should be called in to help solve its problems," says the Headmaster of Eton College. What Christian magnanimity! In the Ages of Faith the "cleverest thinkers" were murdered by the Church. We note the Headmaster's admission that the Church needs thinkers to-day.

A service in memory of "civil engineers" who fell in the War was held at Westminster Abbey. This is the "umteenth" War service in this venerable building. We are waiting to hear of the thanksgiving service for those who made their fortunes during the War. These cent.-per-cent. War-patriots ought to be able to pay for a full choral service.

During the War, pious journalists wrote many paragraphs concerning Providence's care for churches and religious relics. This care is not so marked in peace-time. At Clifton Parish Church, Bristol, the altar-cloth has been twice set on fire.

The value of religious training and education is vastly over-estimated by the Orthodox. Mrs. Johnson was granted a decree *nisi* against her husband, the Rev. Noel Hugh Johnson, formerly an Army Chaplain. It was stated that he was living with another woman at Newhaven, and that he had been a co-respondent in another divorce case.

A daily paper assures us that "Rome has abolished the censorship." This refers to the Italian Government and War-time restrictions. The Church of Rome maintains her censorship during peace and war impartially.

Speaking at a Church of England's Men's Society service, the Bishop of Woolwich said that if they went into Walworth they would see conditions which were not only a disgrace to their Christianity, but to their civilization. He would like to see the names of the owners of such houses put upon them. Why, however, did the Bishop single out poor, old, Walworth? He could easily match the conditions in other parts of London, such as his own diocese, or even in the shadow of Westminster Abbey. He might even consult the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Those worthy gentlemen ought to know where slum property is situated.

The Archdeacon of London preached a sermon on "Oranges and Lemons" at the service for the blessing of the bells at St. Clement's Church, Strand, London. The subject was no more silly than the fairy tales of the Bible.

The Rev. C. H. Chard, Rector of Christ Church, Spitalfields, says that half the population of that district live in single-room homes. The total population is about 20,000. A case of nine persons living in one room had been brought to the notice of the Whitechapel Guardians. Perhaps the reverend gentleman remembered that the overcrowding was even worse in Noah's Ark.

Christians of rival denominations sometimes worship together without falling to fisticuffs. A united service of thanksgiving was held recently at Trafalgar Square, and addresses were given by the Bishop of London, Mrs. Booth, and a number of Free Church ministers. The Bishop surpassed himself: "This is the greatest day of all our lives," he declared, "the Churches have come out to thank God together." Indeed, his faith was so manifest, that it was a wonder that Nelson's bronze lions did not roar in sympathy.

Providence has been more fatherly than usual. Two hundred people were killed by a tornado at Fergus Falls, Minnesota.

"Germany must drink the cup of her humiliation to the dregs," says Dr. Gore, Bishop of Oxford. The Bishop is as bloodthirsty as his name, and he has a very quaint way of showing his love for his enemies.

Modesty is a rare virtue in public men of to-day. In a Carmelite House publication, it was stated that prayers were offered at a Sussex school for Lord Northcliffe. It is a comfort to reflect that worse men have been deified.

On July 8 a man was charged at Old Street Police Court with being a suspected person. The man told the magistrate that he had come from Coventry, and had been to the Salvation Army. He was there offered work at sorting paper at a wage of 1s. per week and his food. The magistrate remanded the man for inquiries. For ourselves, we are not in the least surprised. Some years ago it was shown quite plainly what methods the Army employed; but the Army remained silent, and the public soon went to sleep again. The paper is for the most part cadged, and, having got it for nothing, the Army then sets to work to shamefully exploit the most helpless class of the population. Charity covers a multitude of—swindles.

The late Col. Vaughan, who raised many thousands of pounds for charities, was dubbed "the prince of beggars" by the journalists. Surely, the pushful penmen overlooked the claims of the clergy.

The Rev. A. T. Guttery says the Army chaplains were "the bravest men the Church had ever had." Just so! And the bravest thing most of them ever did was to guard the communion port—and get officers' wages for their courage.

The Rev. H. E. Bicknell fell dead on the lawn of the Dovercourt Sports Club. Had he been a prominent Freethinker, the kindly hand of Providence would have been traced in the incident.

"The Christian Church should have its own theatre," chirrups the Rev. H. R. L. Sheppard. Going into details, the reverend gentleman declared "the company would be engaged on an adequate living wage, but no 'star' salaries will be given." In this case, the Christian theatre will be very unlike the Christian Church.

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To Correspondents.

S. CLOWES.—Thanks; will try and use at some later date.

T. FISHER.—Our Shop Manager has written you. If any special supply of the *Freethinker* is needed, and for a special purpose, it would be as well to write direct to the office. We can then make sure that you get what you need.

J. AMES.—It may sound conceited, but we feel inclined to ask: "Who the devil are you that God should have made his existence known to you and not to us?" We can't help thinking that we are as well worth saving as other people, and we are certain that we shall feel being damned quite as much. We don't like this kind of favouritism.

C. LEWIS.—Pleased you find the *Freethinker* so much to your taste

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—F. Glaser, 5s.

W. MARTIN.—We intended it to keep alive the name and the memory of a brave man. We do not propose making any alteration at present.

R. HARDING.—The reply to your friend is that a conviction in the victory of right is one of the factors that make for triumph. The formula you cite does at least offer an explanation of observed facts, and that is certainly something, since it closes the road to false ideas.

W. ROBERTS.—Received too late for use in this week's issue, and it will be out of date by the 27th. Sorry.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We are glad to say, judging from the letters received, that our "Special" of last week has had a good effect. Those who have written express their determination to do all that is possible to break down any attempt at boycott, and we feel sure that if Freethinkers are insistent on their demand for fair play, they will get it. Anyway, we thank our friends for their help. And we hope they will not allow the matter to drop. When Christians discover that Freethinkers mean to have fair play, they will give way.

Mr. W. Repton writes:—

> Although grateful to "Mimnermus" for his contribution, entitled "A Century of Christian Charity," I regret that he omitted to mention the offensive patronage of Francis Thompson in his essay on the immortal poet. Open this book at any page and the sense of condescension strikes one forcibly—but there—perhaps it is what we deserve. Did not Homer in *Elysium* fail to recognize the great number of his commentators? Although I would not use a Freethought microscope to examine Shelley, I should think twice before using Catholic spectacles, and three times before paying 2s. 6d. for the Essay itself.

Following upon the article on the Papal Catholic Church in our issue of June 29, a correspondent asks our attention to a sentence in "My Journal in June and July, 1914," which the editor is producing in his paper *Common Sense* of June 21. He is mentioning his evidence before the Royal Commission on the Civil Service, including the Foreign Office and Diplomatic and Consular Services. He says: "The number of Roman Catholics is rather surprising." It is presumed he means that the civil servants professing that superstition exceed in number those of other superstitions. Some years ago the *Freethinker* called attention to the fact that an undue proportion of Papal Catholics were on the newspaper and journalistic press. Perhaps that has been a cause of the degradation of the press in recent years. Not long ago we had occasion to criticize the *Daily Telegraph*, and we are reminded that Mr. Foote quoted the declaration that the *Daily Telegraph* was run by a Jew in the interest of Christianity. Thirty-five or forty years ago the Glasgow people were astonished to find how many of the nurses in one of their infirmaries were Papal Catholics.

A very appreciative notice of Mr. Mann's *Science and the Soul* appears in the *Manchester City News* of July 5. The writer marks the cumulative force of the authorities cited, and quotes some very telling sentences from the pamphlet. For our part we regard Mr. Mann's essay as shattering the case for a "Soul" beyond the possibility of repair.

The *Evening Standard* notes as an "extraordinary fact" that "an American Methodist, a Welsh Methodist, and a French Freethinker" should have combined to produce a League of Nations. We need only add that but for the work of other Freethinkers in the past, it would not be possible even now.

The *Daily News* says that "if anyone were to translate *Casanova*, or publish at a cheap price an unexpurgated edition of the *Arabian Nights*, the public would be frightened out of their respectable skins." We do not agree. The Bible contains worse things than *Casanova* or the *Arabian Nights*. It is sold "under cost," or given away, and the respectable folk still possess their skins.

A Ballad of Things As They Are.

WOULD you hear a strain, a *tres* modern strain,
A song that's dreamy, or a song of wit,
A song of loss, or a song of gain,
A song that lacks any sense in it;
A song that fails the target to hit?
An Egyptian plague the *eleventh* is ta'en;
Your ears to hand—my song I remit:
The printed word and a half-fed brain.

Our Hulton, Bottomley, Northcliffe, and Newnes,
Liver eaters of under-dog man,
Different organs, all the same tunes,
Each wrestles for pelf, catch as catch can.
Since wisdom fled, and printing ink ran,
Each dishes up garbage, again and again;
Depending on it, they all will fan
The printed word and a half-fed brain.

Sorrows of Satan! My grandfather's hat!
Caxton and presses, and all tin Gods.
Workers who beg, or stand on a mat,
Or are gently stroked with Philistia's rods!
A curse on them all; 'gainst fearful odds,
Conscience whispers: Is it not their bane
This living plague (press-cultured clods)
The printed word and a half-fed brain?

ENVOI.

Prince you will see, my song is now clear;
How can we fire the enemy train
Of those who live on vileness and fear,
The printed word, and a half-fed brain?

WILLIAM REPTON.

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The Science of the Ultra-Material.

III.

(Continued from p. 345.)

PASSING from a consideration of atoms to that of their chemical combinations in molecules, it is obvious that these latter present less stable forms of equilibrium than do the atoms of which they are composed, and it may not be improbable that the varying equilibria of molecular combinations are closely related to the varying equilibria of the atoms. While chemical compounds present many degrees of stability, we find that the highest degree of instability, and the most mobile form of equilibrium in the organic world, are reached in the colloidal form of matter, which is now regarded as in some respects intermediate between the inorganic and the organic worlds. The essential feature of the colloids is that they consist of large unstable molecules which unite with other molecules to form higher aggregates. The colloids, therefore, consist of a union of molecules forming compound molecules, and thus differ essentially from ordinary chemical compounds in which atoms unite to form simple molecules. And as atoms differ among themselves in their valencies and chemical affinities, so it has been found that the constituent molecules of a colloid differ in the numbers of unions which they can mutually form and in the intensities of those unions: thus repeating, as it were on a higher plane, the principle of atomic valency and affinity.

In the living colloids of protoplasm, where carbon and nitrogen—both elements of high valency—play the leading part, the equilibrium becomes still more unstable. Indeed, the instability here reaches, as it were, a breaking point, for the energies of living matter are held to consist essentially of a rhythmic breaking down and restoration (katabolism and anabolism) of the very unstable equilibria which it manifests.

Finally, we reach the summit of instability in psychoplasm—nerve and brain matter—which, besides containing the carbo-hydrates and proteins essential to all protoplasm, contains as a further necessary ingredient of sentient protoplasm, another very highly valent and unstable element, phosphorus. It is an interesting speculation as to whether the energy functions of psychoplasm, involving as they do such a high degree of instability, may not even implicate the intra-atomic energies themselves, leading to atomic dissociation. Might it not be that while non-sentient protoplasm functions by disruption of the molecule, sentient protoplasm, reaching the final stage of katabolism, functions by disruption of the atom, and that consciousness is a form of radio-activity? Certain chemical reactions are now believed to give rise to atomic dissociation. Le Bon seems firmly to hold this view, and makes special mention of dissociation during the oxidation of phosphorus, which he describes as "one of the bodies with the most intense radio-activity." It seems to be another significant fact that nerve action is always found to be associated with electric discharge, while electric discharge is an invariable accompaniment of atomic association.

Be this as it may, we have now reached a conception of evolution as interpretable in terms of energy equilibrium. Proto-material evolution, from the primordial energy of substance to the intra-atomic energy of matter, is expressible as a fall from complete instability to a relatively stable equilibrium; while material evolution is expressible as a rise from this stable condition, through ascending degrees of unstable equilibrium, to the extreme of instability manifested in the metabolic activities of sentient protoplasm.

The profound significance for science of this new conception of matter cannot be too emphatically pointed out. Though it has been long recognized that all matter is the seat of enormous and unceasing energies, yet, so long as the atom was regarded as the ultimate element of matter—as a real entity independent of energy—it was necessarily looked upon as merely the vehicle of that energy. The atom was regarded as inert unless it were supplied with energy from outside itself, and it could give back only the amount of energy with which it was supplied. The advance from this notion of the atom as the vehicle of energy to the notion that it is itself energy may well be expected to open up undreamed-of possibilities in physical science, and it must necessarily effect a unification in our conception of existence far transcending all previous unifications. Hitherto, science has recognized two ultimate existences: Matter and Energy; and the dual doctrine of the indestructibility of Matter and the conservation of Energy has expressed their co-equal and co-eternal supremacy. In the new view, Energy alone reigns supreme with undivided sway. Energy furnishes the sole origin and constitutes the entire content of the universe, and Monism attains its final and complete justification.

And so profound a change in our ultimate scientific conceptions cannot but effect a change in our philosophic conceptions. If Mind and Matter be alike but forms of energy equilibria, they must be in essential nature the same, and the age-long problem as to the supposed "impassable gap" between them must disappear. The relation between "Thoughts" and "Things" must become easier of elucidation when it is recognized that the "Thing" and the "Thought" are both modes or functions of one and the same energy, the one function being a stable equilibrium and the other an unstable equilibrium. There can be no room for the old philosophy of Dualism in the face of such a completely Monistic interpretation of existence as this.

(To be continued.) A. E. MADDOCK.

The Twilight of the Gods.

Leave, then, the Cross, as ye have left carved gods.
—*M. Arnold.*

Is it not better that man should stand alone, unaided, self-secure, than that, cowering, mean, abject, he should seek refuge in some phantasmagorial apparition ignorance has called God?

The ages that men have spent on this muck-heap of deceased deities, refining, purifying, endeavouring to instil into the putrefying mass some beauty, have not been lost. A moral code of inestimable value has been evolved from the crude imaginings of scarcely rational beings. Purge away the last remnants of the dross, banish the idea of God, and the greatest step since man developed reason will have been made.

It is a world-wide fallacy that without a belief in some higher power, man would at once revert to a level with the beasts. A splendid view, this; it speaks eloquently for the Deist's belief in his fellow-men, well for his idea of God. This is reducing God to a Justice of the Peace. It means that man is a creature who does right simply because he is afraid to do wrong.

This is what one might look for in a religion which states that man is born with original sin—that is, is born evil.

Yet these people dare to look down upon Atheists as upon some vile animal; they have endeavoured to make our name synonymous with immorality. Let them ponder awhile. Let them look to their own religion; to

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their omnipotent, omniscient Creator, who punishes the innocent for the sins of the guilty, who has so much in common with the incestuous deities of the higher and lower barbarisms. Let them look to some of the pages of their own history, the snow-white pages of the massacres of the Albigenses and Waldenses, of the persecutions of the Jews, of the Eve of St. Bartholomew; to the spotless annals of the Vatican, of the Inquisition, and of Tyburn. Then, if they can raise their head without a blush, let them talk of Atheistic immorality.

To be an Atheist demands a greater sacrifice than to be a member of any of the thousand-and-one brands of Deism. We cannot illustrate our prospectus with pictures of a glorious, golden, garden city in an after-life; we cannot show our fellow-men roasting in a huge theological bonfire; we cannot point to a hope of celestial reunion with old friends. We offer no prizes; there can be no disappointment.

And more; we bear here a load of obloquy. Christions would fain ignore us, but this is impossible, so they endeavour to despise us. We are a despicable set of creatures, who lay aside all moral views, who deny the existence of God, in order that we may enjoy a life of unbridled license.

Let all who may have any doubts on this point lay them aside. No man who wanted to have "a good time" would remain an Atheist for a week. He would find life much easier as a professed Christian. He would find his Christian friends melt away; he would find that advancement in the social world was almost impossible; he would be "despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows." The day of Christian suffering is over. The clergy hold the benefices, their people the benefits.

What, then, have Atheists to look to? *Truth!* Truth is our war-cry, and our gospel *Man.*

Many wonder how we who are called Materialists manage to exist without something ethereal to look to. I merely ask them to turn to Shelley and to Swinburne, two of the most ethereal poets England or the world has ever produced. Both were Atheists. And I, *un pauvre poet*, I see more glory in a landscape when I look at its beauty as the result of the struggles of each individual species then as the passive result of the work of one knows not what God.

Atheists are thinkers. To be able to deny anything, one must have knowledge. A man may become a Spiritualist after an attack of the D.Ts., or a Salvationist, as the result of mental paralysis, but with us such wonders are impossible. A man can only become an Atheist after a stern bout of cold reasoning.

It has been doubted by Bacon and Dr. Arnold whether a *real* Atheist ever existed. Indeed, Addison does not hesitate to say that if a man should profess Atheism, he is an impudent liar. Well, I suppose a man is entitled to his opinion however outrageous it may be, and while Addison is entitled to his, I am entitled to mine.

It is the reticence of Atheists that has given rise to this belief in their non-existence—a belief which has led to the statement in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* that Atheism is merging into Agnosticism.

Let Bacon and Addison rave as they will. I *dogmatically* assert that there is no God, and, more, that there is no room for a God in the order of things.

Science has proved the physical origin of such a multitude of things that the few left unexplained, where the mouldering evidence fades away, leave so little that could be attributed to a creator that we are asked to believe in an omnipotent, omniscient, protecting power who created a grain of sand and then fell asleep.

Let Deists, Theists, or whatever name believers in a greater power may call themselves, give me one fully authenticated instance on which this power personally intervened in the affairs of man for his advancement, and I will join their creed to-morrow.

What, silent still and silent all?

Are we to take it that this deity, who is alleged to guide us, has developed with the development of man, or that he made his revelations by degrees? Are we to surmize that he, like man, has held various changing ideas of good and evil?

"The old view that the principles of right and wrong are immutable and eternal is no longer tenable. The moral world is as little exempt as the physical world from the law of ceaseless change, of eternal flux."[1]

Or are we to conclude that he leaves it to ourselves to find out what is right or wrong? Since there exist so many different ideas of what constitutes right and wrong, it is evident that he either doesn't care or doesn't know.

This is a pretty God to reverence.

Better lay aside this trumpery. Look at the universe as it is, not as irrational savages imagined it to be. You will think better of man if you cease to think so well of what is not.

Cast down then the gods. Cease selfishly to work for a paradise to be, and work for the advancement of man. Is it not sweeter for you to know that as the result of your life the earth will be a better place for another generation, than that you may rest after "doing business with the gods," as Socrates puts it, in the belief of a good time for yourself in some unimaginable "other world"?

I tell you there is no need for you to search the universe through for some tag on which to hang a God. Turn aside from this fruitless search, cease to imagine, and commence to be.

H. C. MELLOR.

Book Chat.

ENGLISH disregard for pure science is notorious. Whether the War will effect a change in this direction is yet to be seen. One hopes for the best, even though the omens are none too favourable. Our fault here is due to no lack of quality in the British mind. What others can do, we can do. It has been shown during the War that every scientific devilry used by the Germans we were able to take up—and improve on. If we can do this for purposes of war, there seems no reason why we should not do the same in times of and for purposes of peace. For this reason, every attempt made to create a taste for scientific research deserves a welcome, the more so when the attempt made demands recognition on its own merits.

For both reasons, *Animal Life and Human Progress* (Constable & Co.; 10s. 6d.) is to be welcomed, We are all accustomed to the expression, "The Web of Life," and its significance is well illustrated in the nine lectures that make up the volume before us. These addresses are all by men of standing in their respective departments, and present just that mixture of theory and practicality likely to commend the book to a British audience. On the economic side, Professor Newstead writes a fascinating chapter on "Tsetse-Flies and Colonization," and with that may well go the address by Dr. Leiper on "Some Inhabitants of Man." While the study of these pests is of great importance on other grounds, it is interesting as showing the care with which "Providence," having first created man, displays quite an undesirable ingenuity in fashioning devices for his discomfort and destruction. Of one diabolical contrivance alone, the "hookworm," we are told that it "stands with malaria as worse than all the other pathogenic agencies in combination." And the—perhaps unintentional—moral of all the lectures is that in the economy of Nature man stands for no more than any other form of animal life. Nature cares for neither the type nor the individual. It is human egotism that sees care and forethought for man where none exist.

[1] Sir J. G. Frazer, *Taboo*, Preface to 3rd Ed.

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The lectures, which we think most of our readers will study with the greatest interest, are those on *The Educational and Moral Aspects of Zoology*, by Dr. Bourne; *The Science of Breeding*, by Professor Punnett, and *The Origin of Man*, by Professor Wood Jones. The two first named deal with the question of breeding, and both are to be complimented on the clear manner in which a most difficult subject is placed before the non-technical reader. It is not easy to place before the general reader an understandable account of the new science of Genetics, but the two first-named lectures do this with marked success.

Professor Wood Jones' lecture is a summary of the teaching contained in his striking work, *Aboreal Man*, published in 1916. And while disagreeing with his pessimistic estimate of the influence of Darwinism, it must be admitted that he makes out a striking case in favour of his theory that man has not descended from any of the existing order of Primates, but has originated from some more primitive mammalian stock. This, it should be added, in no way affects the general doctrine of evolution. It is a question of the character of the stages and of the evolutionary mechanism. The fact of evolution is beyond question to all informed minds. Professor Dendy, the editor, is to be congratulated on placing before the public so readable a volume.

In these days of costly printing, it is not often that one can speak of anything in the reading line as both good and cheap. But one can truthfully say this of *For Liberty* (C. W. Daniel). Just over 100 well-printed pages for sixpence makes one wonder how it is done. It must be a labour of love on someone's part. *For Liberty* is an anthology consisting of citations ranging from Marcus Aurelius to the *Manchester Guardian*, grouped under the heads of Government, law, democracy, freedom, society, etc. It is always easy to find fault with an anthology, so all we will say of this one is that the examples seem chosen with great catholicity, and that Freethinkers figure well on the list. Voltaire, Paine, and Ingersoll are, of course, represented. But we hardly think the Rev. R. J. Campbell will feel pleased at finding himself recorded as saying that "If we practised Christ's teaching we should all be Socialists or Anarchists."

Those who wish to know the case against Capitalism will find it summarized in *Fifty Points about Capitalism*, by Sir Leo Chiozza Money (Cecil Palmer & Hayward, 6d.). One page is devoted to each point, and the pamphlet can be used by those who wish to do so as a handy note-book. The articles originally appeared in the *Daily Herald*.

Essays in Common-Sense Philosophy, by C. E. M. Joad (Headley Brothers; 8s. 6d.), would, in our opinion, have better achieved its purpose had the author given more of a connected exposition of his own findings on the various points discussed rather than have spent so much time on discussing the views of other people. It is true that his handling of the various subjects dealt with is suggestive enough, and plainly enough expressed, but unless the reader is to some extent conversant with philosophical discussion, he is apt to lose sight of the question at issue. And Mr. Joad is writing for what he calls "the plain man." But philosophy generally would be much more enlightening than it is if writers paid less attention to the views of other people, and more to an exposition of their own. Philosophy, like other things, suffers from the weight of authority.

In his opening chapter on "Our Knowledge of Sensible Objects," Mr. Joad lays down the basis of his own Realism. But we do not think he makes his point. His claim is that "sensible objects exist independently, and that our knowledge of them given by our senses is not illusory; that they exist, in fact, very much as we know them." This is a daring proposition, and its substantiation will require much stronger proof than Mr. Joad offers. On the other hand, we are inclined to agree with the view that "Reality—*i.e.*, existence—is not a synthenized whole, but an aggregate of different things without design." What requires to be elaborated here is the selective quality of the human mind, in which this unrelated aggregate is converted into a synthenized whole. There is a very wide and a very fertile field here for speculation.

Mr. Joad's chapters on *Monism and Recent Developments*, *The Meaning of Truth*, *Common Sense*, *and the Theory of the State*, are well done, but the last named does not, in our opinion, disprove what we have always understood to be Mr. Bernard Bosanquet's theory of the State. Still, Mr. Joad's criticism may be welcomed as a timely protest against the absolutist theory of the State, which our politicians denounce as "Prussian," even while they are busily engaged in adopting some of its worst features. The concluding chapter on *Thought and Temperament* might well have come as an introduction to the whole work. This, not because Mr. Joad deliberately favours temperament at the expense of reason so much as one cannot help feeling that some of the author's conclusions largely owe their being to the operation of this factor. He would probably urge in reply that without a temperamental bias towards this or that position in philosophy we should never get anywhere at all. From this point of view our temperaments act as selective factors, leaving it for our reason to justify the selection made.

P. S.

Correspondence.

EPISTEMOLOGY AND THE IDEA OF CREATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. Lloyd's leading article in your columns for June 22 seems to me to suggest the following critical observations. The intellectual scepticism to which Mr. Lloyd refers was not only the attitude adopted by such men as Huxley and Herbert Spencer, it was started before them by certain heretical philosophers in the Middle Ages, whose teaching, being at variance with that of the Schoolmen, was naturally condemned by the Catholic Church. The dictum of these philosophers was *nil certum*, and even the existence of their fellow-men they held to be doubtful, because they questioned the veracity of all human sense-perceptions. There is something to be said for this view. In fact, the inquiring mind usually shows a marked tendency to call everything in question, if left to work out its own salvation without guidance. Doubt springs eternal, and a too refined and exhaustive analysis will in time explain anything away. Excessive reasoning might result in the negation of all knowledge, for in a sense we can never know anything with certainty. But we ought to remember that to make an act of indecision comes to us naturally, and can be done by any one, whereas it sometimes takes a man of real courage and intuition to make an act of Faith. Mr. Lloyd repudiates this view of the uncertainty of our sensitive faculties, but it is commonly resorted to by Freethinkers when confronted with phenomena like those which recently occurred at Lourdes, and which Christians believe to be miraculous. When the doctors fail to establish natural explanations, the Freethinker is driven to assert the unreliability of sense-perceptions as a means of arriving at the truth. The evidence of the senses of normal people is immediately held suspect. It is considered to be as faulty as that obtained by means of alleged spiritualistic agencies at a *seance*. Because he has never himself personally experienced a miraculous happening, he argues that such a happening has never taken place, and could not take place. This attitude, I maintain, is illogical

Mr. Lloyd also thinks that God is a human creation. I venture to think that this view needs qualification. It is true that the idea of God was always changing among primitive people prior to the Christian Era just as it still changes now among savage tribes to whom the Gospel message has not been brought. But, on the other hand, it is the Christian contention that Christ by His recorded words and works taught a new and truer conception of Deity. Since the introduction of Christianity the evolution of the idea among Christians has not taken place, for the Christian conception has been once for all fixed and remains constant. A Perfect Being, unlimited, eternal, immutable, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, absolute—such is the God of Christian theology. This has been the predominant idea taught by Christians for nearly (two thousand) years. It was taught by Christ, by the Apostles, by the Early Church as it is still taught, by the modern Catholic Church,

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and even by the Protestant Churches of the world to-day. To admit that the idea of God changed before the advent of Christianity in no way militates against the Christian religion as Mr. Lloyd appears to think. It might, on the contrary, be used as an argument in favour of Christianity; for, if the teaching of the Church on this important point had to change in order to be true, this would conclusively prove that it must have been false at some given time in its history. But its strength lies in the fact that, whether right or wrong, it is at least consistent. *Semper eadem.* In conclusion, I do not see why Mr. Lloyd thinks that the ideas of evolution and creation are necessarily incompatible. Some of the most eminent scientists the world has ever known have found no difficulty in accepting God and creation. True, the act of creation has been scientifically explained and interpreted, and the scientist's God may not always be the personal God of Scripture. Evolution, however, only means that things as we now know them have gradually been developed out of their primitive initial forms into more complete and perfect forms. But the fact that scientists are at present unable to trace right back to the first beginnings of things does not prove that, therefore, there could have been no beginnings. To argue thus would be unreasonable. And to be a professed Rationalist is not always to be reasonable, while one can equally be reasonable without being a professed Rationalist.

TREVOR T. BERRY.

THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS AND BIRTH CONTROL.

SIR,—I am directed by the Council of the Malthusian League to request you to be good enough to find space in your paper for the following Resolution, which, with the accompanying Preamble, was passed unanimously at the forty-first Annual General Meeting of members of the Malthusian League, held at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on June 27, 1919:—

The Malthusian League desires to point out that the proposed scheme for the League of Nations has neglected to take account of the important questions of the pressure of population, which causes the great international economic competition and rivalry, and of the increase of population, which is put forward as a justification for claiming increase of territory. It therefore wishes to put on record its belief that the League of Nations will only be able to fulfil its aims when it adds a clause to the following effect:—

"That each Nation desiring to enter into the League of Nations shall pledge itself so to restrict its birth-rate that its people shall be able to live in comfort in their own dominions without need for territorial expansion, and that it shall recognize that increase of population shall not justify a demand either for increase of territory or for the compulsion of other Nations to admit its emigrants; so that when all Nations in the League have shown their ability to live on their own resources without international rivalry, they will be in a position to fuse into an international Federation, and territorial boundaries will then have little significance."

O. M. JOHNSON (Gen. Sec.).

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C.): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Religion and Revolution."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Band Stand): 6.15, Miss Kough, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 6, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 3.15, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "The Cost of Christianity"; and Mr. R. Norman.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. F. Shaller, "Science *versus* Christ"; 6, Mrs. H. Rosetti, "Secular Education."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. W. Thresh, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.30, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Saphin, Cutner, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 5.45 (afternoon). Lectures in Victoria Square at 7.15.

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Acid Drops, To Correspondents, Sugar Plums, etc.

Views and Opinions.

Pain and Providence.

The sight of suffering in the world is to every sensitive mind an unpleasant fact. But while it is unpleasant to all, it presents the believer in Deity with a problem which creates also a moral objection to its presence. To the Atheist, pain is a natural fact, and his task is to understand it, as he has to understand all other natural facts. The Theist has not only to understand its place in the world, but to justify its presence. For, on his theory, pain is a *designed* thing. It was instituted for a purpose. He must show that the end justifies the means adopted. This he has always been trying to do, but without success. The number and variety of the apologies are alone proof of their inadequacy. They all break down on the fact that if there be a God, he himself must have created the conditions that made the presence of pain inevitable. Pain thus becomes cruelty, the deliberate infliction of pain by a conscious being who might have achieved his purpose by other means. For a being who creates the conditions, clearly cannot escape responsibility by pleading that the conditions prevent things being different from what they are. The world is God's world, and he must take responsibility for it.

* * *

The Purpose of Pain

Professor Ray Lankester is, we imagine, one of that fairly numerous and peculiarly British group, an Atheist who prefers to call himself by some other name, to which less popular hostility is shown. All the same, it is puzzling to see the purpose for which he contributes a couple of articles to that new journal, *John O'London's Weekly*, on "Is Nature Cruel?" From the Freethinker's point of view the question is absurd, and Professor Lankester is quite in order in saying that we can only speak of Nature as cruel so long as we believe it to be the expression of an intelligent being. But that makes it the more puzzling, why he should immediately talk of pain in the animal world as being "a beneficent guide" "in the great scheme of the universe." That is about as misleading as language can well be, and one can imagine the avidity with which the Theist will seize upon such statements. One might ask of Professor Lankester how on earth he knows that there is a "scheme" working itself out in the universe? If there is a scheme, and as a scheme implies all that calling Nature cruel implies, what is the value of the previous caution that Nature must not be called cruel, because that would imply a mind behind Nature? If there is a scheme, and if Nature is beneficent, then the mind behind Nature is admitted. Professor Lankester should know quite well that he has no more warranty for speaking of a "scheme" in Nature than he has for speaking of a "plan" or a "design." To science, Nature presents nothing but processes, all else is our own contribution. To a scientific audience, such language as that noted would be innocuous; to a popular audience, such as that addressed, it can only mislead.

* * *

Is Pain Helpful?

Professor Lankester's reasons for thinking that pain performs a useful function in Nature are curious. Substantially, these are the reasons of the ordinary Goddite, no worse, and no better. First, "pain is a protection to animals, an automatic warning to avoid self-destruction and danger." But when all allowances have been made for those cases in which the feeling of pain leads an animal to draw away from things that would involve its destruction, what of the very large class of cases in which there is either no warning possible or no pain felt until the danger is well developed, or where the approaching danger actually produces an effect on its victim that hastens its consummation? Of the first class, we may ask Sir Ray Lankester to point out what amount of warning is there in the case of contagious diseases? Or, in the case of consumption, where the disease is usually well advanced before the discomfort drives the patient to seek medical advice? Of the second, what amount of warning is there in the case of virulent poisons? Of the third class, one may take the effects of extreme cold. Here the effect is not to warn against the approaching danger; indeed, when extreme cold has reached the point of becoming a real danger, its effect is to act as an anæsthetic. It induces a desire to sleep, and a man is seized with an overpowering desire to slumber at the very moment when his life depends on wakefulness and activity. And to this example one may add the class of cases in which the near approach of a carnivorous animal throws its prey into a state of palsy that makes its destruction certain. One might also instance the loss of nerve in both man and animals at a time when salvation depends upon its maintenance. And we should really like to know the beneficent side of, say, corns or toothache.

* * *

Pain and Progress.

The second reason why Sir Ray Lankester believes pain plays a "beneficent" part is that—

> the pain of animals and man (is) small compared with the splendour and beneficence which increasingly appertain to human life.....the ultimate evolution from living matter of conscious, reasoning, progressive, adventurous man is in itself so great a good as to vastly outweigh the relatively small accompanying pain.

Those who are familiar with Theistic apologies will recognize this as an old friend. It has done duty in the

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Christian world since the time of Paley, and is all over the once famous, but now defunct, "Bridgewater" lectures. And it might be admissible as an argument if the animal that suffered the pain reaped the benefit. But that, as we all know, is not the case. Professor Lankester justifies the process because the individual benefits. Yes, but what individual? Thousands of generations of animals suffer and die, and, we assume, that man reaps the benefit. Thousands of generations of men live and die, and it is assumed that, say, myself and Sir Ray Lankester reap the benefit. Maybe, but what of all these generations of animals and men that have gone before? By what right are they selected for the sacrifice? It is idle to reply that this is actually what takes place. That is beside the point. What Sir Ray has set himself to do—quite gratuitously—is to give a *moral* justification of the process. And that simply cannot be done. You cannot apply an intelligible moral calculus to the universe. Pain and suffering are here, and there is no reason why any Freethinker, or any scientific man, should feel himself called on to provide a justification for their existence. All we are called on to do is to make the best we can of existing conditions. Coming from an avowed Theist, the apology offered by Sir Ray Lankester would have been in its proper setting, coming whence it did, it strikes one as an interesting illustration of the way in which superstition crops up in the most unexpected quarters.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The God-Eating Sacrament.

V.

ITS NON-CHRISTIAN ORIGIN.

THE argument has hitherto been based on the assumption that the modern orthodox theory as to the dates and genuineness of the Pauline first Epistle to the Corinthians and the Synoptic Gospels is correct. From these documents as they stand, when exegetically examined, the inference is inescapable that the Lord's Supper, as a Christian ordinance, was instituted by Paul, not by Jesus, though, for obvious reasons, Paul ascribed its institution to his Master. I am fully aware that Van Manen, for example, held that all the Pauline Epistles are forgeries of the second century, say, of the years 130-140. Thomas Whittaker, an ardent disciple of the eminent Dutch critic, in his *Origins of Christianity*, maintains that First Corinthians is a work of the second century, but reluctantly admits that there is abundant external evidence of its "existence" at a date which cannot be placed later than 140. Curiously enough, Mr. Whittaker states that the *Apology* of Aristides, written possibly as early as 125, shows acquaintance with the Pauline writings, especially with the Epistle to the Romans. In the year 139, Marcion made a handsome donation of money to the Church at Rome, and Marcion is known to have been a great student of the Pauline Epistles, and to have undertaken to restore the true text of them. During the last quarter of the first century, Ignatius was bishop of Antioch, and he is believed to have written letters in which he refers to the Epistles of Paul. According to Eusebius, Ignatius suffered martyrdom in the year 109, and it is possible that his alleged letters were written during the first nine years of the second century. It is also asserted that in Clement of Rome's Epistle to the Corinthians, sent about 95, there are at least thirty passages which clearly imply his intimate knowledge of the Pauline Epistles. But no reliance can legitimately be placed on any writings attributed to either Ignatius or Clement, because many scholars regard them as spurious. What is fairly certain is that in the year 140 Marcion issued an expurgated edition of the Pauline Epistles, which clearly proves that at that time those Epistles were not only in existence and well known, but that already there were variant editions of them.

Now, so far as the argument concerning the origin of the Lord's Supper is concerned, it is wholly immaterial when or by whom 1 Corinthians was written. Even if we were to pronounce the man Paul a mere myth, it would not alter the fact that there are New Testament documents entitled Pauline Epistles, whoever may have been the author or authors, and that there is a Pauline style, as distinguished from Petrine or Johannine. Beyond all dispute, there was a Pauline theology which differed fundamentally from the Judaic or Jerusalem theology; and it is equally incontrovertible that the Eucharist could not have originated in a Church in which the doctrine of the Atonement had no place. Granting that the famous passage about the institution of the rite in 1 Cor. xi. is an interpolation, as Mr. J. M. Robertson avers, the fact remains that the rite is an integral part of the Pauline theology, and is altogether as out of place in the Synoptical Gospels as it would have been meaningless in the Jerusalem Church. There is, therefore, no escape from the conclusion that the Lord's Supper is in every respect a Pauline institution, congruous to that theological system and to no other.

Now comes a most pertinent question, is the Lord's Supper a Pauline invention, a new thing under the sun, or did Paul (or a group of men who worked and wrote in that name) adopt and adapt an institution already in use in the Pagan world? Paul claims, or is represented as claiming, that he was informed in a vision that Jesus had instituted it on the night of his betrayal, and that he introduced it into the Corinthian Church solely on that account. We know, however, that Paul made predictions "by the word of the Lord" which were falsified by the event. Speaking of the Second Coming in 1 Thessalonians iv. he assured his readers that it would come to pass in their own lifetime:—

> We that are alive, that are left unto the coming of the Lord, shall in no wise precede them that are fallen asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Up to the present history has given the direct lie to that "word of the Lord." To-day, after nineteen centuries, the faithful are still anxiously waiting for the long-delayed second coming of their Lord. In Gal. i. 11, 12 Paul says:—

> I make known to you, brethren, as touching the Gospel which was preached by me, that it is not after man. For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ.

As a matter of fact his Gospel came to him from the Pagan world, from the mystery religions which dominated the Greeco-Roman communities at the commencement of our era, and the avenue along which it travelled was the Hellenized mind of such men as the Apostle Paul. Paul was a wholesale borrower and adapter. The revelation of Jesus Christ was as illusory as the word of the Lord, and by both Christendom has been largely misled to this day. The truth cannot be disguised that in no sense whatever was the substance of the Pauline Gospel original. Documents of pre-Christian dates have been found which contain all particulars about an eternal Divine Mediator, Son of God, who, of his own free-will,

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descended to earth, lived and died for man, rose again, and then rejoined his Father in heaven. "If we look close," says Professor Bousset, "the result emerges with great clearness, that the figure of the Redeemer as such did not wait for Christianity to force its way into the religion of Gnosis, but was already present there under various forms." Professor Gilbert Murray well says:—

> The Gnostics are still commonly thought of as a body of Christian heretics. In reality there were Gnostic sects scattered over the Hellenistic world before Christianity as well as after. They must have been established in Antioch and probably in Tarsus well before the days of Paul and Apollos. Their Saviour, like the Jewish Messiah, was established in men's minds before the Saviour of the Christians. He occurs notably in two pre-Christian documents, discovered by the keen analysis and profound learning of Dr. Reitzenstein: the Poimandres revelation printed in the *Corpus Hermeticum*, and the sermon of the Naassenes in Hippolytus, *Refutatio Omnium Haeresium*, which is combined with Attis-worship (*Four Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 143).

Paul found, ready to his hands, in his native town, a Gospel of salvation through faith in a risen Redeemer. "It has been proved from linguistic evidence," says Preserved Smith, "that Paul was saturated in the current conceptions of the mystery religions." Then he adds that prominent among such conceptions "was that of the eaten body of the Saviour-God, who in human form should live, suffer a violent death, and rise again." Describing the origin of the Eucharist, the same divine observes:—

> The idea and form of this institution were suggested by Paul, who conceived them in a vision, on the model of the Pagan mysteries. In fact, as soon as any institution was established, firmly or otherwise, it was fathered on Christ, or at least on the Apostles (*The Monist*, May, 1918).

That there was a Pagan rite corresponding to the Lord's Supper is demonstrated by the contemptuous references to it found in the writings of the Christian Fathers. Justin Martyr, born in the year 100, was well versed in the philosophies of his time, and is distinguished as one of the earliest Christian apologists. And yet, in telling the story of the Holy Communion as he had learned it in the *Memoirs of the Apostles*, which he possessed, he says: "Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done." Tertullian, another apologist, who flourished in the latter half of the second century, said of Christianity that it would endure as long as the Roman Empire, and that the duration of the Empire would be coeval with that of the world. He could not find words sufficiently strong and mordant in which to denounce the Pagans and their Gods. As Milman says, every sentence of his *Apology* "breathes scorn, defiance, menace." Reminded that so many of the doctrines taught by Christians were to be found in Paganism, this Father retorted thus: "Whence is it, then, that you have all this, so like us, in the poets and philosophers? The reason simply is, that they have taken from our religion." Again: "If they maintain their sacred mysteries to have sprung from their own minds, in that case ours will be reflections of what are later than themselves, which by the nature of things is impossible." Once more, blinded by prejudice, he swears that the Devil, "by the mystic rites of his idols vies with even the most essential things of the sacraments of God."

Let us now return to the traditional Paul, from whom, probably, both Justin Martyr and Tertullian took their cue. He recognized the existence of an institution, in full operation, at Corinth, which closely resembled the Lord's Supper established there by himself. So similar were the two that even his own converts were in danger of assuming that the one was practically as good as the other. He warned them, however, that the Pagan rite was morally degrading in that it signified fellowship with evil spirits. He said: "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot partake of the table of the Lord, and of the table of devils." What we see here, at its lowest and worst, is the Christian incapacity to exercise even common fairness in the treatment of a non-Christian religion. The Greek word translated here "devils" never means "devils" in classical literature, but is one of several terms for "gods," "deities," "ghosts." Of course, to Paul, as an ambassador of the Cross, the very Gods of the Pagans were evil spirits, veritable devils, and so they have been regarded by Christians from his day to ours, their own Deity alone being pronounced ideally noble and good.

Meantime, the noteworthy point is the outward similarity between the Pagan and Christian rites. To Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and other Fathers, they were identical, and their only explanation of the identity was that the Devil had, for once, stolen a march upon the Lord, which was no explanation at all. And yet an entirely natural and satisfactory explanation is within our reach, which, when fully discovered and clearly stated, undermines completely every form of supernaturalism.

J. T. LLOYD.

Under Many Flags.

> Who shall forbid a wise scepticism?—*Emerson.*
>
> A mind for ever
> Voyaging through strange seas of thought alone.
> —*Wordsworth.*

THE appearance of Mrs. Annie Besant at the Trades Union Congress must have caused many of the older Freethinkers a pang of regret, for her secession from the Freethought Movement a generation ago was a loss. For fifteen stormy years this gifted woman was in the forefront of the battle for liberty, and those of us who were then young regarded her much as the ardent Royalists of France esteemed Marie Antoinette. In those far-off days women speakers were uncommon on Freethought platforms, and Mrs. Besant was a rare and accomplished orator. Moreover, she was thoroughly educated, though she carried her weight of learning gracefully. Matriculating at London University, she took the Bachelor of Science degree, with honours, in 1882. She translated Jules Soury's *Religion of Israel* and *Jesus of the Gospels*, and Dr. Buchner's works. As a debater and orator, she had few equals, and some of the foremost women speakers on Temperance and other platforms seemed commonplace in comparison. Thrust into leadership, she was forced into journalism by the accident of her position, but, even in the narrow way of propaganda, she, like Charles Bradlaugh, found time to encourage genius. He, it will be recalled, introduced that shy genius, James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, to a critical public; whilst she published Bernard Shaw's novels, long before that brilliant genius had stormed the bastions of success.

It is one of life's little ironies, that whereas Mrs. Besant has been regarded by the public as a leader, she has in reality been as much a disciple as any of the rank and file. Moreover, she has sat at the feet of so many teachers, such as Dr. Pusey, Dean Stanley, Charles Volsey, Moncure Conway, Thomas Scott, Charles Bradlaugh, Madame Blavatsky, the Fabians, and "the Wise Men of the East"—to mention a few names that can be recalled readily. And, after thus boxing the compass of

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opinion, she finds numbers of well-dressed and apparently educated people, who regard her as an oracle, and who wait upon her lightest word.

What is the secret of her hold on people? The explanation lies, we think, in her gift of oratory, which is very remarkable. How vividly do her speeches come through the mist of the years! When she was at the meridian of her power, she was easily first among the lady speakers. There was none like her. When she chanted, in a voice as sweet as a silver bell, the Galilean's requiem, or retold in awed accents the awful story of Giordano Bruno, the audiences cheered themselves hoarse in their admiration of her consummate oratory. At her farewell address in the old Hall of Science, after fifteen years' devoted service to Secularism, she made a most moving speech. Some of her audience actually broke down, and men were not ashamed to be seen in tears. For, in those far-off days, Mrs. Besant was one of the most fascinating and impressive speakers it was possible to listen to.

It was nearly half a century ago that Mrs. Besant discovered her gift of speech. She was then the young wife of a Church of England minister, the Rev. Frank Besant, brother to the famous novelist. One day, being alone in the church, where she had gone to play the organ, the idea seized her of mounting the pulpit, and delivering an address to the empty benches. "I knew of a verity," she wrote afterwards, "that the gift of speech was mine, and that if ever—and then it seemed so impossible!—if ever the chance came to me of public work, this power of melodious utterance should at least win hearing of any message I had to bring."

Her golden tongue has won a hearing for so many causes; but the fact emerges that her best and most lasting work was done for militant Freethought. In estimating her career, this part of her past looms very boldly, and overshadows the smaller interests that succeeded. Paradoxical as it may seem, this rare and gifted high-priestess of a latter-day superstition seems fated to pass through life and to leave no lasting vestige save that memorable time when she gave fifteen years of her splendid power to the cause of Secularism.

MIMNERMUS.

Divine Impotence.

THE longer God lives the more useless he becomes. Many years ago when a few millions of his chosen people were in bondage to the Egyptians, it was not necessary for them to fight to liberate themselves. All that was needed was for God to plague their taskmasters with frogs, and lice, and disease till they were glad enough to get rid of their slaves; and when these fleeing slaves came to the Red Sea they needed no ships to carry them over. God just blew the water on one side and they walked through the gap. And when they were marching through a desert without food, and where no new clothing was obtainable, God sent them food from heaven every day, and made their clothing everlasting, but he cannot do any of those things now. Many of his poor children are now in bondage to his rich children, many of his elect are starving, and the clothing of all of them wears out very rapidly, but he does nothing to help them.

When his ancient children wanted to destroy a walled city, a few of them walked round it seven times blowing horns, and the walls of the city very kindly fell down. God could not now bring this about, although his elect have by no means lost the knack of blowing their own horns.

There was once a certain widow who was starving, and when God heard of it he provided her with a magic meal-barrel and oil-jar that were never empty. There are now several millions of his dear children who are sadly in need of such magic vessels, but God cannot supply them. Once when a king sent some soldiers to arrest Elijah, God burnt them up with fire from heaven; and God also sent an angel to open the prison doors for St. Peter, and saved Jonah when he was thrown overboard. God cannot do any such things nowadays. If a policeman goes after one of God's children now he will have to look after himself, and if he gets into prison a smart lawyer or, better still, some friend with a political "pull," will be more useful to him than God, and if he should be thrown overboard he will certainly have to swim for it.

The time was when God would do almost anything for the clergy. All they had to do was to excommunicate a man and God would make things most uncomfortable for him. God is still very useful to the clergy, but nothing like so useful as he once was. For example, God is utterly useless to them when they try to tackle such a man as the late Professor Huxley.

I am not now trying to show that there is no God, but only that the character and conduct of God have changed very much, that, whereas, he was once very useful to his elect, he is now almost entirely worthless to them; he neither helps them nor worries their enemies. And this very marked change in the character and conduct of God is largely due, so far as his elect are concerned, to the few clergy who allow themselves to think; such parsons, for instance, as the Bishop of Hereford. It is, of course, true that back of these parsons are Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, and the scientists generally, but the masses of the spiritually elect are not so much swayed by the great secular thinkers as by their own heretical clergy.

It is these parsons with loose views who have played the mischief with God who might possibly be as active as ever otherwise, and not as deaf, dumb, and useless as he now is. For example, in the monastery run by the late Father Ignatius, God was much as he used to be. He produced visions and worked miracles just as of old, though I have not heard of his killing anybody, nor did he keep the meal-barrel full all the time—the elect had to do that themselves. But out in the world we all have to take care of ourselves just as if there were no God. When we want food, and clothing, and shelter, it does not do a bit of good to pray for them, we have to work for them, unless, indeed, we are lucky enough to be one of God's pets who are privileged to live on other people's wages. When the sun beat down on Jonah's head God caused a gourd to grow up at once to shade him; and when Elijah was hungry ravens brought him food, but it is not so with us, even if we are God's own chosen ones. In fact, some of his elect have a harder time than some Freethinkers. Of course, it is all very well for God to make the sun shine and the rain fall on the just and the unjust alike, but to allow Christians to starve while Infidels have plenty does not seem exactly right, and, according to these modern, Freethinking parsons, God is unable to prevent it, and, furthermore, he does not care. What sort of a God is he who cannot answer your prayer unless you work for what you ask for?

When I was a boy I heard a man tell at a prayer-meeting that when he was penniless he prayed for help, and, on rising from his knees, he was "moved" to go to his front door, and on the doorstep shining in the moonlight he found two bright half-crowns. If God put those half-crowns there no doubt he was useful, but is the chance worth the trouble?

When these Freethinking parsons speak of God, they do not mean any person or anything in particular. They

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only mean a mysterious Something-or-other which they think keeps things going. They call whatever they do mean "God" because they don't know exactly what they mean, and God is a good old-fashioned word which most people like to hear. But whatever this modern God may be, he is of no use to anybody. He cannot stay the hurricane, flood, pestilence, or war; he cannot set free the slave; he cannot save an innocent man from the gallows; he cannot release the many crimeless persons who are languishing in prison; he cannot purify politics or sweeten society; he cannot enforce what are said to be his own laws; he cannot keep holy what is said to be his own day; he cannot enlighten the ignorant, enrich the poor, reward the kind, or punish the cruel; he cannot say a word or do a thing to make this sad world brighter, to make life more worth living; he is of no more use to men and women in their personal affairs than if he did not exist.

This modern God is entirely synonymous with what is called Nature, and when you sum up the facts of Nature for every one that betokens intelligence, there is one that indicates lunacy, for every one that betokens kindness there is one that indicates cruelty, so that all ignorant men in making up their religions have inevitably created for themselves both gods and devils. The leading thinkers in the Church to-day are teaching the worship of a God who can do absolutely nothing, and with no more intelligence than is shown in the mechanical movements of matter which now issue in sunshine and now in storm; now in calm and now in earthquake; now in health and now in disease; now in beauty and now in monstrosity; now in sanity and now in lunacy; now in nursing and now in murder; now in life and now in death.

These Freethinking parsons are doing good work in breaking down the people's faith in the old barbarian Jehovah, but it is well to bear in mind that the rickety abstraction they call God is no sort of a substitute for the definite and vigorous Jehovah, and is as worthless for all practical purposes as no God at all. For you cannot worship a being who cannot separate himself from phenomena long enough for you to tell the difference between him and what is not he; you cannot serve a God who cannot tell you what he wants you to do; you cannot be grateful to a God who cannot do one single thing that is helpful to you in time of need!

It need hardly be said that the manlike God whom many persons fancy they serve and worship, is a scientific impossibility; but it is worth while to point out that the utterly indefinable God of the modern theologians is not only a scientific but an emotional impossibility.

The clergy at first gave to the world a God whom the scientists have dethroned as unworthy of attention, and they are now giving us one as filmy as a cloud, and as useless as a pump without a handle.

G. O. Warren.

When children succumb to inhospitable conditions of life in this world, religion offers consolation in the assurance that God has called these little ones to join the angelic hosts around his throne; if they live to grow up to continued deprivation, religion exhorts them to be content "in that state of life unto which it hath pleased God to call" them, thus throwing all the responsibility for the world's misery upon an unknown creator, just as the Mormons are said to justify their peculiar institution by the theory that innumerable souls are waiting to be born that they may glorify God and enjoy him forever, and therefore it is well-pleasing to him for human beings to furnish these spirits with mortal bodies as rapidly as possible.—*Elizabeth E. Evans.*

Acid Drops.

Rev. Dr. Stalker, Professor of Church History, Aberdeen, says that the reason why the Church was so ineffective during the War was that the best men were away at the War. We should not have thought so, but in that case the Army ought to have grown very pious. Perhaps Dr. Stalker will now explain why it is that so many of the soldiers lost their religion during the War? It is quite evident that it would have been better had these leading clergymen stayed at home. The soldiers would not have missed them.

Dr. Stalker says there was a time when Atheistic suggestions were rising in every mind, and it was all the more to be desired that "there should be such a manifest overthrow of the unrighteous and such a glorious coronation of the righteous cause as to arrest universal attention." And he cites a London Judge who said that what struck him was that "the words of Christ stood more firmly than ever, their truth shining in the glare of events." Presumably, he was thinking of "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." And Britain's 800,000 square miles of new territory is a clear example of that. Or, perhaps he saw in our Army of seven millions an illustration of how to turn one cheek when the other is smitten. We should like the name of that judge. The facile division of the righteous on the one side—meaning all the enemy, and the righteous on the other side—meaning all the Allies, is quite charming. And the implication that God kept the War going in order to kill the "Atheistic suggestions that kept rising," puts the finishing touch to as fine a piece of pious humbug as we have seen for some time.

"Alpha Beta," in the *Yorkshire Observer*, says that "the Church has fought vested interests with courage and endurance." We presume that the £270,000 which the Church of England takes in mining royalties from coal is a case in point. Certainly the Church fought other vested interests to get this revenue, and it shows its endurance in sticking to the cash. And the burden of so much wealth must be a grievous one for a Christian Church to bear. We feel very sympathetic.

A picture by Vandyck of Christ as a baby fetched £1,800 at Sotheby's Sale Rooms. According to the Gospels, Jesus was sold, when a man, for thirty pieces of silver.

"Conditions in the other world are remarkably like our own," sagely remarks Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In which case, as Voltaire said: "let us hope that fleas will be self-supporting."

Journalists must often smile at the beautiful nonsense they palm off upon an unsuspecting public. Here is a gem from a leading article in a London daily paper: "The whole fabric of organized Christianity is threatened not so much by scepticism and materialism as by the lack of Christian charity within the Churches."

The tercentenary of the *Mayflower's* famous voyage is being made much of by Free Church writers. Maybe, Nonconformists have reason to admire the Pilgrim Fathers, but there is another view of the matter. Ingersoll said it would have been better for Massachusetts if the Plymouth rock had landed on the Pilgrims rather than that the Pilgrims should have landed on the rock.

Old Froissart remarked caustically that the English took their pleasures sadly. It seems as if the remark was true to-day. Acton Town Council has voted the munificent sum of £150 for providing Sunday music in the local park. We wonder whether it will take the form of a gramophone.

Some one wrote in the *Church Times* that "The whole world consists of creatures which have been given to man for his use." On this Mr. Stephen Coleridge, who believes in a God, writes:—

> I do not think that the Tsetse-fly or the man eating tiger were given to man by Almighty God for his use. Almighty

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> God inspires the Tsetse-fly with an unfortunate desire to spread disease with its proboscis, or whatever it uses for the purpose, and the tiger derives an unpleasant appetite for human flesh from the same source. Yet it would be unreasonable to assume that man was given to the Tsetse-fly and to the tiger for their use

Now, why unreasonable? *If* God made the tiger with a taste for human flesh, what is there unreasonable in assuming that he made the human flesh to satisfy the appetite? It would have been stupidly brutal to give an animal an appetite for a food it was never intended to have. Mr. Coleridge would be well advised to revise his theistic ideas. For no one can maintain an absurd position without making ridiculous statements.

Dean Inge is one of the ablest and subtlest thinkers in the Anglican Church, and he has the courage of his conviction. The press ridicules him, flings the proverbial bricks at his head, characterizing him as "gloomy," "dismal," "pessimistic," simply because he dares to face the facts, which the majority of the clergy never do. We do not share his opinions, but we hold him in high esteem for his honesty, sincerity, and fearlessness. And is it not true, as he avers, that "it is hardly possible to paint the prospects of civilization in too dark colours"? Is it not incontrovertible that, in the form in which it has hitherto existed, "the age of industrialism, which began about 150 years ago, has received its deathblow"?

The Dean is "quite unable to predict what will be the effect (of the present unrest) upon the Christian religion." He thinks "it is probable that there will be a revival of religion, as there usually is in times of trouble." He may be right; but is he not aware that the ultimate consequence of every revival hitherto has been a weakening of the hold of religion upon the public mind? It has always been a temporary revival of an essentially dying concern.

We noticed last week the police court case in which it was reported that when a man applied to the Salvation Army for work he was offered paper-sorting at 1s. per day. A correspondent of the *Trade World* writes in the issue for July 12: "This, of course, is nothing new, as the Salvation Army have made this kind of labour exploiting a practice for the past twenty years, and, on the other hand, obtained waste free under the guise of charity, though they do not scruple to bid over any merchant or dealer at the houses he clears. That they can well afford to do so is obvious." The methods of the Salvation Army have been exposed again and again, but the game still goes on. We wonder that Trades Unions are so silent on the matter. If it were a trader paying less than Union rates there would be an outcry. But all seem afraid where religion is in question.

Field-Marshal, Sir Douglas Haig, stated the other day that the only hope of securing the permanent peace of the world lies in the Christian religion. If that is true, our poor old world is doomed to be the theatre of endless wars, because, during the last two thousand years, Christianity, so far from making war impossible, has, either directly or indirectly, fostered the warlike spirit, as well as inspired and engineered many of the bloodiest wars on record.

The Archdeacon of Hampstead explained that he has always been a most uncompromising advocate of keeping women in their proper place. Why should the clergy be so jealous? Is it because the holy men wear petticoats themselves?

The Archdeacon of London blessed the bells at St. Clement Danes Church recently. A little time ago the clergy were offering prayers for rain. Quite a busy time reviving the mummeries of the Middle Ages.

Trust in God is supposed to be an infallible cure against suicide. A verdict of suicide was returned at the inquest on the Rev. A. C. H. Hall, Vicar of Turnditch, who shot himself.

That department of the Civil Service known as the Church of England has been trying hard to strengthen its position. The House of Lords has carried the "Church Enabling Bill" which seeks to remove the ecclesiastics further from the light of public opinion.

The Rev. W. Field, of Portsmouth, a former Army Chaplain, who censored thousands of soldiers' letters during the War, says that the correspondence of the English troops was "wretched," and adds, "Germany would be filled with disgust at the educational system. It is a national reflection that we must remove." In the same paper which reports this item of news it is stated that the Huntingdon Educational Authority pays some teachers less than ten shillings a week, and a number less than one pound a week. Doubtless, the Huntingdon Educational Authority is composed of good Christians.

Someone ought to organize the religious lying about the Soviet rule in Russia. When the Russian Church was disestablished we were told that all religious worship was suppressed, and blood-curdling pictures were drawn of the brutal way in which the Bolsheviks were suppressing Church services. Now, we see from the *Church Times* of July 18 that Bishop Bury has quite a different tale to tell. Speaking at the annual meeting of the Anglican and Foreign Church Society, he said that the Society's agent in Moscow, Mr. North, was very highly esteemed by the Bolsheviks, and that although his Church had been raided for securities and valuables which had been stored there, these had later on been returned, and the Church was regaining its hold on the people. And this in Moscow! A city where we were solemnly assured all religious worship had been brutally suppressed! Why, we were at a meeting in the Caxton Hall only a few weeks ago when the Bishop of Birmingham, from the chair, solemnly assured those present that religious worship was forbidden under Bolshevik rule. It is too bad of the *Church Times* to give the game away in this manner.

What absurdities are penned by orthodox writers in defence of their opinions! Writing of Mrs. Annie Besant, in the pages of a literary contemporary, a pious penpusher refers to "her famous association with Charles Bradlaugh" as being "accidental, and a passing phase." Mrs. Besant's association with Bradlaugh and the Freethought Party lasted fifteen years, and no period of her long life was more strenuous, or more effective.

A correspondent writes suggesting that one way in which "Peace day" might have been celebrated would have been for the principal clerics to have assembled in Hyde Park and have made public confession before the people. They should have confessed that they had failed to secure peace, that the brotherhood of man had been made impossible through the hatred fostered by the Churches, that the massacres of the Bible had encouraged the warlike spirit, and had frustrated the real purpose of education in their desire to capture the children in the interests of the Churches. Our correspondent suggests that the meeting might close with a selection read from Shelley's *Queen Mab*. That is quite a nice programme, but it implies rather more feeling for facts than the average clergyman possesses.

Who is responsible for a serious blunder in connection with the Peace parade of the 19th? All sections of the Army were represented, as was only proper. But who was responsible for the omission of a detachment of Army chaplains? The Bishop of London said that only those brought up in Church schools stood the moral strain of the War well. Other clerics have assured us that it was God who gave us the victory, and the nation has been solemnly called to Church to testify to the same truth. So we feel that the clergy ought to have been represented in the procession. When the French, American, British, and other soldiers had passed, there ought to have been a detachment of parsons bearing a banner with the inscription: "The men who really won the War." To praise the Lord for giving us the victory, and to praise the soldiers for winning the War, looks as though we are fooling either the Lord or the Army.

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To Correspondents.

R. NORTON.—Professor Elie Metchnikoff was a Russian, of partly Jewish descent, and an Atheist. He was one of the greatest of micro-biologists during the past fifty years. He was the author of numerous works, but the one that would probably suit you best would be his *Nature of Man*. A cheap edition was issued at, we think, 7s. 6d.

T. ELMES.—Pleased to learn that your newsagent has secured several new readers through displaying this paper. The more readers we get the better.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—Miss E. Thornton, 10s.

T. SHARP.—Obliged for cutting. One can do almost anything with impunity so long as one works under the guide of religion. And the swindle of religious philanthropy is the easiest of all games to work.

IN response to our enquiry on behalf of a reader as to a good book on the Russian Greek Church, a correspondent advises *The Orthodox Eastern Church*, by A. Fortescue, published by Washbourne.

MARY LESTER.—Is not the notion of a Woman's Column in a paper just a little derogatory to women? It usually means writing about cooking, dresses, and the like, with the assumption that these are the only things women will take an interest in. Now, we do really believe in sexual equality, and for that reason we are not in a hurry to label one part of the *Freethinker* "For Women Only." In the best sense of the word, we hope that the *Freethinker is* a woman's paper. And we know that we have women amongst our warmest supporters. We should like more woman writers, but we cannot order them. We can only welcome them when they turn up. We write for neither men nor women specifically, but for both.

R. NISBET.—Pleased you think the last few numbers of the *Freethinker* among the best that have appeared. We do our best to keep the level high.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Owing to the strike on the North Eastern Railway, we were unable to dispatch our weekly parcel of papers to the Newcastle-on-Tyne district. We are now able to send on the parcels to the distributing agents, but Tyneside readers will understand why the issue for July 20 was not forthcoming. Presumably they will be able to get the missing number through their customary channels, but if any difficulty is experienced, we shall be pleased if they will write us direct.

We publish this week a new booklet by Mr. Cohen, entitled *Creed and Character: the Influence of Religion on Racial Life*. When so much is being said about the biological and racial value of religious beliefs, a treatise such as this one is certain to prove both useful and enlightening. The myth of the biological value of the Jewish religion is dealt with in a special chapter, and the case of Spain offers a first-class proof of the way in which Christianity, if left uncontrolled, makes for the ruin of a nation. The booklet is well printed, and neatly bound in a coloured wrapper. The published price is 7d., postage 1½d. extra. This is practically pre-War price, despite the fact that the cost of production is more than double what it was.

The house in which Thomas Paine lived in New York during parts of 1808 and 1809 is still standing, but was in danger of demolition. We see from the *Truthseeker* that this danger has now been averted through the action of Mr. J. B. Cuneo, who has secured the house on a three years' lease. Perhaps by the end of that time some wealthy American admirer of Paine may see his way to purchase the building, and so preserve it from destruction. We hope to be able to make an interesting announcement concerning Paine to our own readers before long.

Like all other advanced papers, the *Truthseeker* has had a hard time, and we see that some of its readers are taking a hint offered by one of our own correspondents some time ago concerning the *Freethinker*. This was for provincial readers to take advantage of the cheap rates of local papers and insert small advertisements at their own expense. We hope the *Truthseeker* will fall in with the suggestion. It is quite a good one.

Readers will find in another column a new translation of one of Voltaire's essays which we think has not before appeared in English—certainly there has been none since the eighteenth century, when quite a number of Voltaire's works were translated. We believe, from the appreciation with which our re-issue of Voltaire's *Dictionary* has been received, that the translation will be read with pleasure. Other of Voltaire's short stories will appear from time to time. The translations will be by Mr. George Underwood.

A pleasant tribute to the sympathetic kindness of George Eliot is gratefully recorded by Sir Charles Walston (Waldstein) in his rather wooden contribution to the subject of moral reconstruction. Like many people, she was, no doubt, amiable enough in personal intercourse, and in certain moods might even suffer fools gladly, but we are inclined to think that if she had had occasion to review a screed-like "Aristodemocracy" in the *Westminster*, Sir Charles would have been blistered with the critical vitriol she reserved for inept and ineffective work. However this is what he remembers of her:—

> I had come to England as a very young man from a continous stay of over three years at several German Universities, speaking and reading nothing but German, and dwelling exclusively in an atmosphere of German thought, and had seriously impaired the spontaneity of expression in my native tongue. I shall never forget how, when in this disconcerting position among my elders and intellectual superiors, I ventured haltingly and blunderingly to express my own opinions, she would come to my rescue, and, with delicate tact, suffused with kindliness and with penetrative intellectual sympathy, and with her mellow voice and mellifluous though precise diction, would give perfect, lucid form to my own involved thoughts—leaving me with increased self-confidence, almost proud of the pertinence and importance of my own remarks.

Of the pertinence and importance of her remarks, Sir Charles seems never to have been sceptical. What he has always lacked is the ability to express his ideas with clearness and in order. The interpretative assistance of George Eliot may have clarified them at the moment, but we are pretty certain that they began to thicken the moment her influence was withdrawn.

We received a request the other day from the New York Public Library asking if we would supply them with copies of the *Freethinker* weekly. We readily agreed, and have no objection to supplying other public institutions that do not already take the paper.

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The Old Testament.

I.

Primitive Records.

In these days, even those divines who uphold the divine inspiration and absolute truth of the New Testament commonly prefer to waive similar claims on behalf of the Old. Here and there, among the more brainless of the clergy, or in isolated parts of the country, one still finds people who regard the whole Bible as one book, "the word of God," and every text from it as equally authoritative and infallible. The general trend, however, is to class the first ten chapters of Genesis, anyhow, as an "allegory," and to represent the rest of the Old Testament as depicting the growth of religion from a rudimentary and barbaric form to the perfect article.

The real fact, however, is that we find in the Old Testament, not the development of an enlightened form of religion from an unenlightened, but the conquest and supersession of a savage tribal cult, comparable to that of savages everywhere, by a totally different principle, viz., Puritanical Monotheism, the precursor of later Judaism and of Islam. Not many, even of those who admit this, realize the extreme crudity and savagery of the religious conceptions in the early parts of the Old Testament. Much of their crudity has been carefully edited away by the compilers of the books as they now stand; but much has been allowed to remain, as we shall see.

The earliest stratum of Old Testament literature, of which long continuous portions survive, is that strand of narrative known to the critics as "J." Every student knows that the historical books of the Old Testament, from Genesis to Kings, are compilations from various distinct sources. This is evident even to those ignorant of Hebrew, if the creative narrative of Genesis i.-ii. is examined. It will be perceived that these are not one, but two narratives—one reaching from the beginning of the book to verse 4 of chapter ii. (this verse has been edited to dovetail the two sources) and the other proceeding from verse 4 on. The first-named narrative relates the successive stages of the creation, beginning with heaven and earth and ending with man, in stiff, crabbed, and precise language, marked by certain recurring phrases almost amounting to mannerisms ("And God said," "and it was so," "after its kind," "be fruitful and multiply," "herb yielding seed," and so forth). The deity in this narrative is simply called "God." The second story, in chapter ii. 4-end, gives a totally different account, in which man is made immediately after earth and heaven, and *before* the plants and animals. The style of this second narrative is not at all stiff, but graphic and flowing; and the deity is always referred to in it as "the God Yahweh" (mistranslated "the Lord God" in our Bibles). These two sources, with others which enter later, persist side by side down to the Book of Joshua. The stiff, formal source is called by critics "P," or the Priests' Book, and need concern us no further at present. The other one is called "J," because of the use of the name Jahveh or Yahweh from the beginning. It may be dated with fair certainty in the ninth century B.C.

The theology of "J" is very different from Monotheism as we conceive it. Its Yahweh is a man, vastly magnified in power, but with the human weaknesses of jealousy, spite, and ill-temper. He walks in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day (Gen. iii. 8); turns out Adam and Eve to prevent them from becoming immortal like himself (iii. 22); scatters the builders of the tower of Babel out of obvious fear of what they may do next (xi. 6); visits Abraham, in company with two fellow-travellers, and has dinner with him (xviii. 1-8); wrestles with Jacob, and wins by a foul (xxxii. 24-30); unaccountably tries to kill Moses (Ex. iv. 24); and so on. To the same order of thought, though possibly not to the same writer, belong the passages in the later history which represent Yahweh as slaughtering people for looking into his box (1 Sam. vi. 19), or even for helping to steady it (2 Sam. vi. 6-7). In these parts of the Old Testament, Yahweh is simply a fierce and irresistible warrior-chief, invaluable as an ally in war, but most uncomfortable as a constant associate.

But crude as this idea is, there are abundant signs that it developed out of yet cruder and more brutal superstitions. Yahweh was originally, it is clear, worshipped with human sacrifices. The episode of Jephthah's daughter (Judges xi. 30-40), which the narrator relates without a single word of censure or hint that such an event was in any way unusual, is an instance. So is the story in 2 Sam. xxi., where David, during a famine, has seven of Saul's family "hanged before Yahweh" at harvest-time, evidently in order to improve the next crop. In Exodus xiii. 12-13, we read that the firstborn, both of animals and of human beings, are Yahweh's: the firstborn of animals are to be redeemed by the sacrifice of a lamb, or else to be killed; the firstborn son of a family is to be redeemed. This points to an earlier practice of killing *all* firstborn, human and animal, to propitiate Yahweh.

The national deity of Israel, therefore, was not a whit superior in this respect to Molech, Chemosh, and other Semitic tribal gods. Indeed, he very clearly began as simply one of them. There are traces in "J" of an early conception of Yahweh, not as *the* god *par excellence*, but as a member of a polytheistic pantheon. When, after Adam has eaten the forbidden fruit, Yahweh says, "Behold, the man is become as one of *us*, to know good and evil"; when he says of Babel: "Go to, let *us* go down, and there confound their language," the plural pronoun implies the presence of other gods. When Abraham is visited by three strangers, one of whom proves to be Yahweh, who are the other two? In the narrative as it stands, they are ostensibly "angels," or mere attendants of the god. But the three are first introduced without any suggestion that one is greater than the other two. It is plain that Abraham's guests, in the original story, were three gods, and that two of them were reduced to "angels" in the interests of a later Monotheism. The theory of some Christian commentators, that these passages refer to the three persons of the Trinity, may be noted as an amusing instance of the lengths to which apologists will go!

Theology, however, is not the main concern of writers of this early school. Their chief purpose is to tell the story of their country and people. The deity figures, naturally, in the creation narrative, and in the stories of the patriarchs, or eponymous founders of the race, who are considered as privileged personages on easy terms with divinity. But the prevailing spirit of these histories is secular. "J" relates the adventures of the patriarchs without idealizing them, or representing them as anything but men with their full share of weakness, meanness, and cowardice. When we come to historical times, we find the narratives of Saul's and David's reigns very little taken up with religion, but concerned chiefly with David's adventures as an outlaw, and his victorious wars, and growing tyranny and sensuality, after his accession to the throne. The impression we get of the period is that of a set of savage desert tribes penetrating and settling down in Palestine, living there under rudimentary forms of government, practising a cruel and superstitious religion at local shrines under the guidance of an hereditary caste of medicine-men, and in time

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coalescing, under pressure of disaster in war, into a typical Oriental kingdom ruled by typical Oriental tyrants. After two or three generations, the kingdom falls to pieces through successful revolt, and the fragments (Israel and Judah) after a century or two more, come within the orbit of the great empire of Assyria and lose their independence.

Judaism, as we know it, and consequently also its offshoots, Christianity and Islam, owe their origin to the "prophets." We meet with "prophets" first in 1 Sam. x. 5-13, where they appear as a class of eccentrics, who go about in bands, ranting and playing pipes and tambourines. Like all insane or half-witted people in the East, they enjoyed a certain consideration, but it was not considered respectable to join them. (The question, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" proves this—the meaning being, "Fancy a respectable, solid member of society behaving like that!") The name "prophet," in its original sense, has nothing to do with foretelling the future; in 1 Sam. ix. 9, the professional foreteller, or "seer," is distinguished from the ranter or "prophet," though the two were later confused.

In the later period of the kingdom, however, we find the prophets developing from a scattered class of eccentrics into a powerful religious and political party. The cause of this is to be sought in the social evolution of the country. The course of time had developed deep antagonisms and conflicts between rich and poor, court and people, priests and laity. The poorer Israelitish peasant resented the encroachments of his rich neighbours; the masses resented the luxury and oppression of the kings; the laity resented the impositions and extortions of the priesthood. The prophets began to take part in the fray, naturally on the side of the classes from whom they mostly sprang. They became a sect, Puritanical and aggressive, with leaders, literature, and martyrology of their own. The half-legendary figures of Elijah and Elisha, whatever may be their historical basis, roughly represent the typical prophet of the ninth century B.C., opposing and bearding the court, flouting the official worship, and occasionally engineering a successful revolution.

ROBERT ARCH.

The Science of the Ultra-Material.

IV.

(Continued from p. 356.)

A FINAL question remains to be considered, and a possible misconception guarded against. In the first place it may be asked, Why should a process of evolution from stable to unstable equilibrium take place at all? While a fall from instability to stable equilibrium may be inevitable, and might thus be logically admitted, it is by no means obvious how, after a condition of stable equilibrium has been reached, there can be initiated the reverse process of a rise from this condition to instability again. Indeed, the second process seems to stand in direct opposition to the first, both physically and logically.

The first reply to this objection is that, whether or not we can understand the cause of the process, there is no doubt that it does take place. All material evolution, from elementary atoms, through chemical compounds and colloidal substances, to protoplasm and psychoplasm does undoubtedly manifest a progressive advance from stable to unstable equilibrium. And as to its explanation, we must remember that the energy equilibria of matter are not absolutely but only relatively stable. A material atom of even the most stable constitution is not something inert and passive, wherein kinetic energy has ceased, but a reservoir of immense potentiality in which kinetic energy has been temporarily locked up. Indeed, some physicists now believe that all matter, whether simple or compound, dissociates itself spontaneously—that is, that matter in whatever form is to some extent, though in most cases to an inconceivably slight extent, radio-active. Thus, even if we were to presume the possible existence of a material universe of one elementary substance only, where no chemical combinations could ever take place to initiate the breakdown of equilibrium, this inherent tendency to dissociation by a process of radio-activity would eventually achieve the rise from stable equilibrium to complete instability. For there is no such condition as rest in Nature. The movement of substance is universal, eternal, and inevitable, and every mode of existence is but a mode in which this primordial energy passes from the kinetic to the potential form, and *vice versa.*

Secondly, it may be asked, if evolution be interpreted as a fall from instability to stable equilibrium, followed by a rise from stable equilibrium to instability again in the extremely unstable equilibria of sentient protoplasm, this must imply that the end of the evolutionary cycle is of like nature with its beginning. And if the state of instability at the end of the cycle be associated with Mind, should we not conclude that the state of instability at its beginning is associated with Mind also? In fact, does not this view of the evolutionary process give support to the Spiritualism of religious systems, and the idealism of the numerous philosophies, which see in the processes of the material world a manifestation of a spiritual world, and find the origin of the universe in a Divine intelligence?

This conclusion, plausible though it may appear at first sight, is totally unwarranted as it rests on a misconception of the premises. The end of the evolutionary process is *not* of like nature with its beginning, but on the contrary the two are sharply contrasted. The instability associated with Mind is conditioned by a fall from equilibrium—a breakdown of a pre-existing equilibrium; while the instability of the primordial energy is a condition prior to all equilibrium—a state from which equilibrium develops. The evolution of Mind takes place by and through the progressive changes in the equilibria of Matter—it is a phase of material, not of proto-material, evolution. The energy functions of sentient protoplasm are functions directly dependent on the energy functions of matter, and the fact that Mind is never known to us apart from Matter finds its explanation in the obvious truism that there cannot be a *breakdown of equilibrium* unless a state of equilibrium exists to undergo that breakdown.

Hence, though matter can no longer be regarded as an ultimate reality, and though Mind and Matter must both be regarded as functions of energy, yet Matter is the primary function and Mind the secondary function. Matter, therefore, holds the priority over Mind in the evolutionary order, and stands towards Mind in the relation of cause to effect, the underlying nexus between them being the energy of which both are functions. This is the only position which "Materialism" can now scientifically take up, and in this position it must ever remain unassailable.

EQUILIBRIUM AND NATURAL LAW.

The kinetic theory of matter suggests some considerations of the utmost importance regarding those causal sequences collectively called the Laws of Nature, which, under the new aspect furnished by this theory, may be defined as the necessary and invariable functions or activities manifested by the different orders of energy equilibrium.

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Such considerations are of great interest at the present time, as it is undeniable that of recent years certain philosophers and a few mystically minded scientists, openly abandoning all further attempts at a unification of natural law, are seeking refuge in what is known as Neo-vitalism—which is nothing more than the old vitalism in a new dress. According to the apostles of this cult, the laws of life and mind can never be expressed in terms of the laws of matter and force, and we must therefore conclude that the former contain something totally different from, and of a higher order, than the latter. Hence they suggest that for life and mind to have become evolved some new Principle of Vitality or Mentality must have entered into matter and given rise to an order of phenomena transcending the physical order and incapable of ever being affiliated with it.

We have now to see what the kinetic theory of matter —which some of these philosophers cite in support of their Neo-vitalism—has to say on this subject. We shall find reason for concluding that though the premise above stated contains a partial truth—viz., that the laws of life and mind cannot be *directly* affiliated to those of matter—the inference drawn from it is quite unwarranted, and that, so far from necessitating a belief in the duality of natural law, the kinetic theory of matter affords ground for a wider, deeper, and more complete unification of natural law. For if matter itself be not a fundamental or ultimate existence, but only a form, and that not a permanent form, of energy equilibrium, the laws of matter cannot be regarded as fundamental either; and thus a failure to assimilate the laws of life and mind to those of matter does not demand the assumption of a new fundamental law, but merely throws the unification further back, and necessitates the search for a wider and more comprehensive law embracing both sets of phenomena.

A. E. MADDOCK.

(To be continued.)

Pages from Voltaire.

AN IMAGINARY CONVERSATION.

LUCIAN, ERASMUS, RABELAIS.

Scene: The Elysion Fields.

SOME while ago Lucian made the acquaintance of Erasmus, notwithstanding his distaste for everything that arrived from the confines of Germany. It was an idea of his that no Greek ought to lower himself by conversing with a Batavian; but as this particular Batavian appeared an amusing and sociable sort of dead fellow he waived his objections, and they exchanged ideas and opinions.

Lucian.—So you practised the same profession in your barbarous country as I did in the most civilized country in the world; you held up all things to ridicule.

Erasmus.—Alas! no; that was certainly my desire. It would have been the greatest of consolations for me, a poor theologian; but I was not in your position; I could not take the same liberties.

Lucian.—You surprise me: men rather like a general indictment of their ineptitudes and fatuities, provided you fasten them on to no one in particular; every one then applies to his neighbours his own ridiculous qualities, and all men laugh at the expense of the others. Was it not then the same with your contemporaries?

Erasmus.—There was an enormous difference between the stupid people of your time and of mine. You had to deal only with the gods that you put on the stage, and with philosophers who had even less credit than the gods; but I was surrounded by fanatics. I had to be very careful if I did not want to be burnt by the one or assassinated by the others.

Lucian.—How could you laugh with such an alternative before you?

Erasmus.—I can assure you that I seldom laughed; I passed for being far more amusing than I really was. People thought me light-hearted and witty because at that time every one was depressed. Their minds were occupied with crude ideas that induced a sombre melancholy. Every one who thought that a body could be in two places at once was ready to cut the throat of a man who would explain the same thing in a different manner. What was worse was that a man of my way of thinking, a man who could not accept either party, was regarded as a monster.

Lucian.—What outlandish creatures your barbarians must have been! In my time the Goths and Mesogoths were more polite and more reasonable. And what, may I ask, was your profession in your detestable country?

Erasmus.—I was a Dutch monk.

Lucian.—A monk! What sort of profession is that?

Erasmus.—It is that of having no profession, of swearing by an inviolable oath to be useless to the human race, to be ridiculous and a slave, and to live at the expense of others.

Lucian.—What a scandalous profession! How could you with your wit choose a state of existence that dishonours human nature? Putting on one side your living at the expense of others; how would you renounce your common sense and liberty?

Erasmus.—I was a mere child, and I had neither father nor mother. I allowed myself to be led away by the beggars who were seeking to increase their numbers.

Lucian.—What! are there many men of that sort?

Erasmus.—In Europe there were some six or seven hundred thousand.

Lucian.—You amaze me! The world has become much more stupid and barbarous since I left it. Horace told us that the world was going from worse to worse:

Progeniem vitiosiorem.

Erasmus.—My consolation is that, in my time, men had mounted to the last rung in the ladder of madness. They must come down again, and there will be some that will at last regain a little of the common sense they had lost.

Lucian.—I doubt it very much. Tell me, if you don't mind, what were the outstanding follies of your time?

Erasmus.—I have here a list that I always carry with me; you may read it.

Lucian.—It's a very long one. (*Lucian reads and bursts out laughing; Rabelais enters*).

Rabelais.—Gentlemen, when men are laughing I never feel myself out of place; what were you laughing at?

Lucian and Erasmus.—Absurdities.

Rabelais.—Is that so, then I'm your man.

Lucian to Erasmus.—Who is this eccentric person?

Erasmus.—He is a man who was more courageous than I, and more amusing; but he was only a priest, and could take more liberty than a monk.

Lucian to Rabelais.—Did you vow, like Erasmus here, to live at the expense of other people?

Rabelais.—In a double sense, for I was both a priest and a physician. I was born with a large bump of wisdom. I became as learned as Erasmus; and seeing how wisdom and science commonly ended either in the hospital or on the gallows, and with the knowledge that even this semi-amusing Erasmus was sometimes persecuted, I took it into my head to be more of a madman than all my countrymen put together. I wrote a big book of equivocal cock-and-bull stories, chock-full of indecencies, in which I ridiculed all supsrstitions, all

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ceremonies, all that my country reverenced, all conditions, from that of the king and that of the supreme pontiff to that of the doctor of theology, who is the last of all. I dedicated my book to a cardinal, I provoked the laughter even of those who despised me.

Lucian.—What is a Cardinal, Erasmus?

Erasmus.—He is a priest in a red robe, who has an income of a hundred thousand crowns for doing nothing at all.

Lucian.—You will at least admit that these Cardinals were reasonable. It seems to me that all your countrymen were not such madmen as you would have me believe.

Erasmus.—With Master Rabelais' permission I will put in a word. The Cardinals had their own form of madness—that of dominating, and as it is much easier to tyrannize over fools than over rational human beings, they wanted to make short work of reason the moment it gave signs of raising its head. Master Rabelais, as you see, imitated the first Brutus, who pretended to be mad, to escape the suspicion and tyranny of the Tarquins.

Lucian.—All you have said confirms me in my opinion that it was better to live in my time than in yours. The Cardinals of whom you are speaking were the masters of the whole world, since they commanded the madmen.

Rabelais.—Not so; there was an old madman in the midst of them.

Lucian.—What was he called?

Rabelais.—A *papegaut.* The insanity of this man lay in his giving out that he was infallible, and the master of all temporal rulers; he had said this so often, repeated it so often, and proclaimed it by his monks, that in the end all Europe believed it.

Lucian.—Ah, how greatly you have the advantage over us in mere insanity! The stories about Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, which I was never tired of ridiculing, were quite respectable in comparison with the cock-and-bull legends with which your age was infatuated. I cannot understand how you were able to succeed in ridiculing, with safety, people who ought to fear ridicule even more than treason. For we do not scoff at our masters with impunity; believe me, I was wise enough not to say a single word about the Roman Emperors. What are you telling me; your nation worshipped a *papegaut?* You heap all imaginable ridicule on this *papegaut*, and your nation suffered you to do so. It must have been very patient.

Rabelais.—You must allow me to give you an idea of what my nation was. It was made up of ignorance, superstition, cruelty, stupidity, and malevolent division. It began by hanging and roasting all those who spoke seriously against the *papegauts* and Cardinals. My native country, that of the Welch, was deluged in blood; but while the executions were going on the nation danced, sang, laughed, got drunk, and made love. I took my compatriots on their weak side; I talked about drinking, I revelled in obscenity; and under this mask I could say whatever I had a mind to. Men of intelligence understood my method and knew what I wanted to say; grosser minds were contented with the flavour of the obscenities. Far from being persecuted, I was loved by everyone.

Lucian.—You make me quite curious to see your book. Have you got a copy in your pocket? And you, Erasmus, will you not lend me your amusing volumes?

(*Here Erasmus and Rabelais present their work to Lucian, who reads a passage here and there; and, while he reads, the two philosophers talk.*)

Rabelais to Erasmus.—I have read your books, though you have not read mine, because I came here a little later than you. You were, perhaps, just a little too reserved in your ridicule, and I a little too daring in mine; but at this moment we both think the same. As for me, I laugh when I see a doctor arrive in this land of ours.

Erasmus.—And I do but pity him. I say: "Here is an unhappy man who all his life has been wearying himself with self-deception, and who will gain nothing here by getting rid of his errors."

Rabelais.—What are you saying? Is it a small thing to be undeceived?

Erasmus.—It is certainly a small thing when you can no longer undeceive others. The great pleasure is to point out the way to our friends who have gone astray, but the dead need no direction from any of us.

Erasmus and Rabelais went on arguing for a long time. Lucian returned to them when he had read the chapter on the *Torchecul's* (*Gargantua*, chap. xiii.), and a few pages of the *Praise of Folly.* Afterwards they happened to meet Swift and the four of them went to supper together.

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Views and Opinions.

Disease and Religion.

Everyone has heard of the theory of immunity in relation to disease. It is simple in outline, although complex in its ramifications. It is based on the observed fact that, with all diseases, some people are more resistent than others. In any epidemic, some people escape, while others are attacked. There are all degrees between the two extremes, but the fact of immunity is undeniable. Thus, a disease develops, those who are susceptible to it are attacked, and die; those who by some peculiarity of constitution are immune escape, and in this way the disease gradually loses its destructive power. Of course, a bountiful and observant Providence soon gets to work, and develops a new microbe against which the organism is not protected, but that is another story. It may also be observed that the process of selection is not confined to the man. It extends to the microbe. A too virulent microbe, by destroying all it attacked, would end by destroying its own food supply. So, while the human is modified in relation to the microbe, the microbe is modified in relation to the man. By this means a kind of working harmony is produced. The human suffers to the limit of endurance, the microbe modifies its assaults to a point consonant with its continuing to exist.

* * *

The Religious Microbe.

Now this theory of immunity fits in very curiously with what we know of the nature and progress of religion. It may not be possible to decide whether religion is due to the presence of a specific microbe, but it is indisputable that the way in which some people contract religion, while others manifest an immunity to its attacks, as well as the way in which the religious microbe is modified to meet changed conditions, presents curious analogies. First, it may be noted that religion is essentially a complaint of childhood. If it is not contracted during the years of immaturity, it is seldom acquired at all. One consequence of this is that as we have a class in the community which lives by attending to this particular complaint, we have the demand made that all children shall, wherever possible, be inoculated with this particular germ. But it is of importance to the rest of the community that children shall be given as clean a bill of health as is possible, and not be made spiritually sick, so that a certain class of self-styled specialists may live by retailing their specifics. Hence arises the quarrel in the schools between those who claim the right to inoculate children and those who resist such a claim. And so we have the curious position of society maintaining a body of men whose business it is to foster disease under the delusion of perfect health.

* * *

Selection and Religion.

In the case of religion, as in that of disease in general, we are presented, broadly, with two types of organism. We have that which shows a constitutional pre-disposition towards contracting religion, and that which shows an equal pre-disposition against it. Under normal conditions, the principle of immunity would have operated by preserving the non-susceptible type; and, broadly, this is what has actually transpired. The number of the immune *has* increased, although the rate of increase has neither been rapid nor uniform. The reason for this is that its operation has been checked by an artificially induced and sustained principle of selection in a quite opposite direction. The discovery that certain people were immune to the germ of religion was made very early in the history of mankind, and prompt steps were taken to weed out the unwelcome type. Among savages, under semi-civilized and civilized conditions, the aim of an interested and powerful class has been to weed out all those who showed a lack of susceptibility to religion. The type has been, and is still, systematically discouraged. Thus, whereas in the normal way it is the type that is immune to a complaint or a disorder that is preserved, in the case of religion an artificial selection has worked to kill off the immune, while preserving the susceptible. The persistence of this particular complaint, the existence of the "religious instinct," so-called (there is really no more a religious instinct than there is an instinct for diphtheria or typhoid fever), is really the expression of the fact that a form of selection has always been working for the suppression of an opposite type.

* * *

Survival and Accommodation.

But he who fights against natural tendencies finds the dice constantly loaded against him. A particular type of organism can only be perpetuated by a perpetuation of its appropriate environment. In this case, as has been said, the environment had to be sustained by artificial agencies; and in the nature of the case, a breakdown sooner or later was inevitable. In proportion, as social evolution took the power from the hands of ecclesiastical organizations and distributed it over a wider area, and in proportion as that evolution opened up new avenues of interest and employment, the type of mind susceptible to the influence of religion declined, while the opposite type began to flourish. The normal law of variation and survival began to operate more freely, and the type of mind best suited to the natural surroundings showed itself in greater numbers. But at this point another aspect of the theory of immunity begins to appear. We have already pointed out that the process of selection

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is twofold. There is the protective evolution of the organism against the microbe; there is also the modification of the microbe to meet the changed organism. To follow up the analogy, the microbe of religion that affected people in the fifteenth or sixteenth century would be quite harmless to the people living in this. There has been a protective evolution against it. To thrive, the microbe must be of a different variety, if not of a different species. In this manner it has come about that the religious influence to which the human organism is exposed has departed as much from the primitive variety as man himself has been differentiated from his simian ancestors. Of this change, what is called "advanced religion," "New Theology," and other names, are fundamentally the expression. It is the attempt of the microbe to perpetuate itself under changed conditions. Yet withal, it retains its fundamental characteristics. It is still, for instance, parasitic in character. Its demands on the human organism are large and persistent. Its contribution to its welfare is practically *nil*. Such beneficial qualities as are claimed for it are clearly independent of it, and flourish as well in its absence as when it is present. * * *

Germ Culture and Germicide.

It would be indeed astonishing in this age of microbiological investigation if some attempt had not been made to discover the microbe of this particular complaint and indicate the conditions of its development. The first part of this search has not been, as yet, completely successful; the second has been conspicuously so. We know the conditions under which the microbe of religion flourishes, and that gives us a knowledge of the conditions that make the culture of this particular germ difficult—if not impossible. Just as the microbe of malaria is destroyed by an effective system of drainage, or as that of consumption is killed by light and air, so is the germ of religion killed by the growth of more accurate knowledge, by more effective co-operation, and by a proper appreciation of the nature of the forces bearing upon human nature. The conditions of complete health here are substantially the conditions of complete health that prevail in other directions. We must have light and air—the light of knowledge and the air of freedom. It is only when these conditions prevail that perfect mental health is possible.

* * *

A Distinction—and a Policy.

There is, however, one thing that marks off the complaint of religion from other ailments. With physical disease, no one is more aware of its presence than the unhappy sufferer. In the case of religion, the difficulty is to persuade the sufferer that he is really ill. He persists in the delusion that he is in a much better state of health than those around him. It is only when he has completely recovered that he recognizes how pathologic his condition has been. This, of course, lifts the complaint into the region of mental disorders, and future knowledge may enable specialists to indicate, as in other complaints, the peculiar condition of the nervous system, of which the disease is the outward manifestation. Moreover, this conviction of perfect health is fostered by the conduct of those who are interested in keeping the delusion active. These persist in calling health what is really its opposite, and so induce a state of mind analogous to that induced by Christian Science. Probably, if we adopted the Chinese method with their doctors, a cure would be found for this. In China—so it is said—people pay their doctors while they are well, and stop payment when they are ill. If, accordingly, the clergy were paid when people were free from this complaint, and their salaries stopped the moment people showed symptoms of religion, we might hear much less of the evils of unbelief, and listen to fewer lamentations as to the decline of religion.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The God-Eating Sacrament.

VI.

ITS UNIVERSALITY.

THE chief feature of Christianity has always been its absolute exclusiveness. It claims to be the only true and perfect religion in the world. The tradition is that this postulate was laid down by the Apostle Peter when, speaking of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, he declared: "And in none other is there salvation, for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved" (Acts iv. 12). This principle of exclusiveness, once duly enunciated and believed, was bound to give rise to persecution. Hence Paul was the most intolerant of men, and, under the cloak of humility, the most conceited. Asserting that the Gospel came to him by revelation from above, he could brook no opposition to nor the least deviation from it. Those who differed from him were guilty of perverting the Gospel of Christ. Writing to the Galatians, he said: "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach unto you any Gospel other than that which we preached unto you, let him be anathema." In Acts xiii. 6-12, be the passage historical or legendary, we have an illustration of the cruel, brutal intolerance of the Christian spirit, and of how it delights in inflicting suffering and loss upon opponents. Elymas was not even a non-Christian, but, according to Van Manen, "one of the older and very conservative disciples of Jesus"; and yet Paul is represented, in the final redaction of the Acts, as fastening his eyes on him and saying, "O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?" Then the record informs us that as a punishment for his blasphemous audacity the poor fellow was smitten with blindness, and that, on witnessing the savage miracle, the pro-consul, Sergius Paulus, became a Christian!

Paul displayed the same intolerant spirit in dealing with the Lord's Supper at Corinth. Corinth was now a Roman city, and once more prosperous, though lacking much of her ancient splendour; but to Paul her main interest lay in the fact that she was a Pagan city, and Paganism was to him the embodiment of all that was wicked and corrupt and hateful, as his famous caricature in the first chapter of Romans abundantly shows. In First Corinthians he makes no direct attack upon it; but inferentially even here he leaves no room to doubt the utter contempt in which he held it. He says:—

> Look at the people of Israel. Do not those who eat the sacrifices share with the altar? What do I mean? you ask. That an offering made to an idol, or the idol itself, is anything? No; what I say is that the sacrifices offered by the Gentiles are offered to demons and to a Being who is no God, and I do not want you to share with demons. You cannot drink both the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake at the table of the Lord and at the table of demons (1 Cor. x. 18-21).

That was Paul's exact attitude to the Paganism of his day. A Pagan God was, as to reality, only an idol, an image, a phantom of the mind, and as to character, a demon, an evil spirit, a devil. Now, what right had Paul, whoever he may have been, whether an individual or the name in which a theological party spoke and wrote—what right had Paul to sneer at the Pagan worship in such offensive and entirely unjustifiable terms?

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In classical Greek *daimon* was one of the names by which the Deity was spoken of; but in Schrevelius' *Greek Lexicon* we are informed that "among sacred writers (it signifies) an unclean spirit, a devil." In this estimate of Pagan religion, Judaism and Christianity were in perfect agreement; but, for all that, it was an estimate rooted and grounded in ignorance and prejudice. There was no valid justification whatever for characterizing the Corinthian Pagan Sacrament as a devilish orgy. There are many exceedingly wise passages in First Corinthians, such as the purely ethical maxims in x. 23-29, and particularly the eloquent hymn to love in xiii.; but every now and then the hard, inhuman, Christian exclusiveness and intolerance step in and vitiate the whole. From the extreme vehemence of the language used, one naturally infers that Paul's own converts, complaints against whose behaviour had evidently reached him, were not above attending and joining in the Pagan sacramental services, possibly to the neglect of, if not in preference to, their own. It seems to me that it was with some such information in his mind he was moved to exclaim, "It cannot be done; there is no more heinous sin on the calendar; the contrast being that at the one Table you offer sacrifice to God in Christ, and at the other, to the Devil and all his angels."

It was a fundamentally wrong attitude of mind, and contributed in no small measure to the growth and development of the feeling of disgust and hatred which the Pagans cherished towards the Christians as a class. Tacitus, who wrote somewhere between the years 115 and 117, describing the horrible punishment which Nero inflicted upon the Christians for their suspected share in the burning of Rome, speaks of them as—

> Men, who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death, by the sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate. For a while this dire superstition was checked, but it again burst forth, and not only spread itself over Judea, the first seat of this mischievcus sect, but was even introduced into Rome, the common asylum which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confessions of those who were seized, discovered a great multitude of their accomplices, and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city, as for their hatred of human kind (*Annals*, xv., 44).

The burning of Rome occurred in the year 64, possibly while the traditional Paul was still living; and what we learn from that passage in the *Annals* is that the attitude of the Christians towards the Pagans was identical with the attitude of the latter towards the former, and that the Christians were held in the same detestation in 117 as in 64. This proves that their habitual participation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper did not result in the elevation and ennoblement of their character. In other words, there was no indication whatever in their social behaviour from day to day that their Eucharist possessed any virtue that did not belong to the correspondent Pagan rite. Hence we legitimately contend that Paul had no warrant for calling the Gentile Gods mere idols, or for asserting that the sacrifices of the Gentiles were offered to devils. The simple truth is that they drank the Cup and partook of the Table, not of devils, but of the God or Gods in whom they verily believed, just exactly as the Christians did. They were practically all Deists, Atheists, among them at any time being very few and far between. Besides, if any merit attached to religious rites, and if we were to strike a balance, it would be found to be more in favour of the Pagan than of the Christian. Church people talk glibly of supernatural grace being bestowed upon worthy participants; but supernatural grace is itself a myth, and the belief in its reality, though it may and often does induce a state of emotional inebriation of a most enjoyable kind, has no appreciably good effect on character. Indeed, so far as the influence it exerts upon those who adopt it is concerned, Christianity is essentially a non-moral religion. It is a well-known fact that those who profess to eat the body and drink the blood of the God-man are not, on an average, one whit superior to those who never communicate at all. It is a certainty that long before the close of the first century the Lord's Supper was in general use, that during the first ten centuries it became more and more a solemnity in the Church; but it is even more incontrovertible still that for the whole of that period Christendom kept sinking lower and lower morally, and ultimately reached a depth of degradation which the world had never previously touched.

At present, however, the point of chief interest is the practical universality of the rites. Every supernatural religion, ancient and modern, has its magic food, its ritual meal, its Divine sacrifice. In Japan there is a small and disappearing tribe known as the Ainos. They chiefly inhabit the island of Yesso, and are quite different in race and character from the Japanese. They were probably the original occupants of the country; and it has always been their custom to make a cereal offering and call it an eaten God. In Buru, an island of the East Indian Archipelago, there is an ancient and Pagan tribe of Indians who partake of a sacramental repast which they describe as "eating the soul of the rice." The Arabs used to sacrifice boys to the morning star, but when boys could not be obtained they seized a white camel, mortally wounded it, and then sucked its blood and ate its raw and still living flesh, the camel being the stuff out of which Gods were made. Curiously enough, it was by no means uncommon to administer a purgative prior to partaking of this ritual meal to prevent the sacred food from being contaminated through contact with profane nourishment. That is the true explanation of the Catholic injunction to take the communion on an empty stomach. Whatever form the sacred meal may take, at bottom it always signifies the eating of a God. Professor Preserved Smith says: "The god must either be eaten, or united with the worshippers in sexual intercourse. Both ideas have coloured the language and thought of all religions, including Christianity."

The only question which remains to be discussed is, How did the God-eating Sacrament originate, and what is its real significance?

J. T. Lloyd.

The Pietists and the Pantheon.

> Let the sound of those they wrought for,
> And the feet of those they fought for,
> Echo round their bones for evermore.—*Tennyson.*
>
> Aux grand hommes la Patrie reconnoissant.
> —*Inscription on the Paris Pantheon.*

Westminster Abbey has been termed the Temple of Silence and Reconciliation. This venerable building is to the British Empire what the Pantheon is to France, what the Valhalla is to Germany, what Sante Croce is to Italy. Apart altogether from its religious aspect, it is rich with historical associations. It is the last resting-place of many famous men and women, of every rank and creed, and of no creed, and every form of mind and genius. It contains the bones of Charles Darwin, the solitary student who shook the world. One name alone surpasses his, but only a statue represents William Shakespeare, whilst his dust makes Stratford-on-Avon one of the central spots of men's veneration.

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This British Valhalla ought to be a true and just record of the great nation that we are, and should afford sepulture to the illustrious dead regardless of the trivialities of theology. Yet, owing to clerical control and prejudice, it is but an imperfect and irregular commentator of greatness. A building from which clerical hostility excluded Byron, Burton, Gibbon, Keats, Meredith, and Swinburne, to mention but a few omissions, whilst many of small and no fame sleep within its precincts, hardly deserves to be regarded as the Mecca of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Westminster Abbey holds the dust of St. Evremond, a dissolute man-about-town. It immortalizes such actresses as Anne Oldfield, Susannah Cibber, Hannah Pritchard, and Anne Bracegirdle. It throws a halo round the memory of John Broughton, the prizefighter, and sanctifies the ashes of Mrs. Aphra Behn and Tom Brown, two of the sauciest scribblers in the language. The Abbey should be the Pantheon of our greatest dead. If we except about a hundred of real eminence, it is crowded with the tombs of what Shelley calls "the illustrious obscure." For every eminent name inscribed on its monuments, there are a score of nonentities either interred or commemorated within its walls.

"Westminster Abbey or victory" was Nelson's word in action. Yet neither for the little admiral, who made the world resound with the splendid tumult of his deeds, nor for Wellington, the victor of a hundred battles, was room to be found, for the Abbey must find spaces for the bones of its own dead clergy, and sometimes of their wives.

One marvels at the monuments. The cenotaph justly raised to the great Chatham, which declares proudly that he "was worthy to rest near the dust of kings," is jostled by the colossal monument to three of Rodney's captains, doubtless worthy individuals, but having no claim to such extreme honour. A huge tomb commemorates the peaceful death of Admiral Tyrrell. Hard by rests Sir Cloudesley Shovel, "wearing the eternal buckle of a long periwig." Tyrrell and Shovel were brave sailors, but what is to be said for Generals Fleming and Hargrave, who never heard a shot whistle in anger? Hargrave was simply one of the richest men of his day. The clergy, who imagined that Isaac Watts, Mason, and Shadwell were poets, had no scruple in honouring this military nobody. Hargrave's burial roused much indignation. The monument was by Roubilliac, and when Oliver Goldsmith saw it, he said: "I find in the Abbey memorials erected to several great men. The names of these great men I forget, but I remember that little Roubilliac carved the tombs."

Some inscriptions are in bad taste. The caustic remarks of the great Duchess of Marlborough, as she gazed on the epitaph erected to Congreve by the second duchess, with whom the great dramatist had been intimate, might have been uttered by Thackeray. The epitaph alluded to the happiness and honour the second duchess had enjoyed in her intercourse with Congreve. "Happiness, perhaps," scornfully said the Dowager, "but the less we say about honour the better."

To place the Abbey on a level with the ever-extending wants of a great Empire, it should no longer be the property of the priests of a sectarian body. The Abbey should become the possession of the Nation. A narrow and sectarian body is no fit judge as to who is worthy to rest under the Abbey's time-honoured roof. The clergy admitted Dickens and Longfellow, both of whom were Unitarians, and excluded scores of men who were Freethinkers. How different was the conduct of the French when they opened their splendid Pantheon! The first occupant was the great Freethinker, Mirabeau, the orator of the Revolution. There also rest the ashes of Voltaire and Rousseau. Shoulder to shoulder these two great soldiers of the Army of Human Liberation rest under their magnificent tombs, and from the tomb of Rousseau may be seen the emblematic hand thrust forth, bearing a torch.

"There is no darkness but ignorance." It will be better when the people know their famous men better, and honour them with their due. It will be well for children when they hear of Herbert Spencer, who took all knowledge for his province, and of Sir James Simpson, whose great discovery concerning chloroform has soothed the pain of countless millions, no less than the stories of the kings of Israel and Judah. Few people know in what battle Sir Philip Sidney died, but all children should know that he gave a cup of water, brought for himself, to a poor, nameless soldier, who was dying beside him.

When space is precious, it is well to remember that the sculptor is not the only artist whom we can call in to commemorate a great man. There are monuments which are more enduring than brass. A few inches upon a wall, room for the carving of a few words, and your great man may have his memory handed down in an undying sentence. Who is better remembered at St. Paul's Cathedral, the sea-captain, with his tons of marble, or the great architect, Sir Christopher Wren, with his few words of Latin?

At Westminster should be written the whole history of a mighty Empire. Here should be garnered the mighty and the noble dead. Under the present authorities, the Abbey's sculptured glories throw their shade over the tombs of unknown clergymen, and even clergymen's wives, whilst scores of memorials are excluded by reason of religious prejudice. There is nothing for it but to do as the French Nation did, and to supplant the clergy. Narrow exclusiveness is out of place in a National Valhalla.

MIMNERMUS.

Life as an Illusion.

IF we consider life as an illusion, the next step is how to make the best of it. With our rich inheritance from the world's literature this should not be an impossible task, nor should it bring us to the hopeless despair found in the book of Ecclesiastes. Our hypothesis: is it a creed of pessimism or is it an incentive to good deeds? To the latter, with Nietzschean fortitude, we answer—Yea! There are illusions pleasant and painful, but it will be readily agreed that mankind prefers the former as naturally as a wild bird hates a cage.

An end comes to this life—the life we know. This assertion, we admit, is a platitude; but, if we consider some devices of man, their very nature impels us to think that life is static, and not dynamic as history plainly proves. Institutions, laws, religions, customs, all appear as permanent ancient lights in life. Time, like the dropping of water on stone, slowly effaces them. Time, the grand Serpent, casts his skin, and, where Hope was anything but favourable to a Greek, it becomes a Christian virtue. If life is an illusion, then Christianity is another illusion added to it, and the issue becomes more clouded than ever.

Illusion on illusion, Pelion on Ossa, look at their number. In battalions they rise to the mind's eye; that the injunction to "Love one another" has failed to prevent the European War; that a bishop can talk more sense than a layman, that specially selected soldiers of Christ were at the Front in the proportion to their number, that Christian nations

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could agree. My readers, you can add to the list indefinitely. This grafting of bastard illusion is disastrous. It shows a wonderful lack of imagination on the part of the proprietors of Christianity, even as a theory of expedient ethics for man with the feeble toddle of his rationed seventy years.

We are bold enough to assert that many Freethinkers regard life as an illusion. If they regarded it as a painful fact, they would make the obvious escape from it through the emergency exit of Christianity. Consider *mes amis*, the meanderings of St. Augustine in *The Confessions*. The devout attitude is an easy way of disposing of the mystery of life. One is positively disgusted with his blabberings on the birth of his five senses. His mother is figured as a conduit pipe between himself and his God, and the sweetest dreams of his childhood are strangled in this biography of the Athanasian Creed, or paraphrase of the Old Testament. Is filial disrespect a Christian virtue?

Mr. G. K. Chesterton, whose views are as varied as the colours in the coat of Joseph, strikes a true note in the course of ringing *all* bells. He says: "The *Iliad* is true because life is a battle; the *Odyssey* is true because life is a journey; and the *Book of Job* is true because life is a drama." As a statement of fact, in our opinion, this is sublime; but, we ask: a battle, a journey, a drama, for what? From beyond the veil no one returns to tell us anything. On this side of it, all are as wise or as ignorant about the Beyond. We throw overboard the idea that life is a fact, a reality, and what have we left? Our hypothesis; that life is an illusion; and our deduction that it is an incentive to good deeds. Sowing, we care not who reaps, and our nobility shall be, that we desire no reward. Our illusion is not an investment. Our lives are not so much capital to bear interest in a land where monotony must be monotonous.

For your *Odyssey* reader, listen to the golden voices that speak to you in literature, no man knowing *why* literature exists.

> Every night and every morn
> Some to misery are born.
> Every morn and every night
> Some are born to sweet delight;
> Some are born to sweet delight,
> Some are born to endless night.
> Joy and woe are woven fine,
> A clothing for the soul divine;
> Under every grief and pine
> Runs a joy with silken twine.
> It is right it should be so;
> Man was made for joy and woe;
> And, when this we rightly know,
> Safely through the world we go.

The same genius who wrote these lines makes the following affirmation: "The world of imagination is the world of eternity. It is the divine bosom into which we shall all go after the death of the vegetated body. The world of imagination is infinite and eternal, whereas the world of generation or vegetation is finite and temporal." William Blake would have it that reality only exists in the world of imagination, but his contribution to life as an illusion will stand with dignity and grandeur among those who would add the burdens of Christianity to the burden of life.

Whether it be in a sweet or bitter mood that we view existence, we do not stand still. About a century ago a man was hanged for stealing a sheep. About thirty years ago the prison gate closed on men who were free with their tongue in discussing religious subjects. To-day, a man is released from prison after murdering Jaures, and our divines joke about their stock-in-trade with a freedom akin to levity. As a matter of fact, the music-hall audiences enjoy jokes about the Ark and sundry other Biblical matters—and Thomas Paine, with his *Age of Reason*, was regarded as a fit subject for the gallows.

Our affirmation: Life may be an illusion, or a fact, but, whatever the truth, we implicitly reject the illusion of Christianity. Christian love lies buried in the devastated Somme district; our disillusion has been written in letters of blood, and it were an insult to us to fling this hotch-potch system of ethics in our face. Man's destiny may be divlne; we may be "such stuff as dreams are made of"; but Christianity only succeeds in converting the simple to the complex.

William Repton.

Acid Drops.

Bigotry is not peculiar to one country. It flourishes wherever religion rules. In Melbourne, we see that our lively contemporary, *Ross's Monthly*, has just been experiencing a "blasphemy" prosecution. Mr. R. S. Ross has been sentenced to six months' imprisonment for sending through the post certain copies of his magazine containing articles of a "blasphemous" nature. In this case the judge held that it was not necessary to prove it was the Christian religion that was ridiculed: any religion was enough. This is a new reading of the law, and looks as though, like the Judge North of infamous memory, the judge was determined to convict whatever happened. The execution of the sentence has been suspended pending an appeal. The case offers one more proof that the only thing to do with these Blasphemy Laws is to abolish them. It is time "God" was left to depend upon other defences than that of the police force.

At the unveiling of a Barnsbury War memorial, the Rev. H. Must stated that a local soldier, who was killed, had a Bible in his pocket, and the fatal bullet had gone right through the text, "Greater love hath no man," etc. The reverend gentleman did not point the moral. It seems that one Bible is not enough to save life from rifle-fire, and that the faithful ought to carry two.

"Any boy will take an apple or a pear," said the high-minded magistrate of Old Street Police Court. This judicial utterance removes our doubt as to the action of that old boy, Adam, in the Garden of Eden.

On the body of an unknown man, found drowned at Grimsby, a printed Roman Catholic prayer was found. A statement, accompanying the prayer, says that "those who say or read this prayer never die a sudden death, either by drowning or by poison." The best comment on the value of this prayer is the verdict of the Coroner's jury, "found drowned."

At Southend-on-Sea the Town Memorial Fund has been languishing for want of support, and it is stated that already the Churches have absorbed several thousands of pounds for their "War Memorials." According to the *Daily Chronicle*, £2,000 has been raised at St. John's Church, St. Saviour's Church is raising £5,000; St. Mary's is asking for thousands; and St. Clement's and St. Alban's want £2,000 each. The "War Memorials" of the Churches include a new church, a rood screen, payments of debts, and similar purely ecclesiastical objects. When the clergy of Southend are asked what they did in the Great War, they will be able to say, "We did very well."

In order to attract congregations some of the dear clergy are becoming quite frisky. At Bedford Park an all-night Peace Dance was held, under the care of the Rev. J. C. Robinson. At St. Mary-at-Hill Church, Prebendary Carlisle blows the trombone, and cinema shows are a regular feature of the service.

The Rev. J. F. Powsring, of Cornwood, Devon, died at a Sunday service, and the Rev. W. O. Jenkins, Rector of

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Bagendon, near Cirencester, was found shot dead in his garden. Apparently, the clergy are not exempted from the merciful attentions of Divine Providence.

The President of the Wesleyan Conference, in his address from the chair at Newcastle the other day, made the amazing admission that the War had not succeeded in killing sin, forgetting that the one purpose of the War was to kill men, not sin, and that this purpose had been crowned with terrific fulfilment. Dr. Barber forgot another startlingly significant fact, namely, that some two thousand years ago Christianity came into existence with the only mission of killing sin, and yet that to-day sin is as much alive as ever. Inferentially, the President accounted for this colossal failure by the statement that although the Christian religion possesses the requisite spiritual power, it lies merely latent in it.

A newspaper reports that the Rev. J. T. Powning, Vicar of Cornwood, Devon, "died suddenly after taking evening service." After that, we think the churchwardens should put up the notice that the evening service is not to be taken. We really think that everyone would be healthier.

Through sheer necessity, temperance drinks are far more in use than they were. That is one of the inevitable results of a minority of fanatical teetotalers being allowed to impose their will upon the majority of their countrymen. Of celestial origin, the tea-plant may become yet more heavenly. Should alcohol be prohibited, Freethinkers may live to see the time when the "blood of the Lamb" will be perpetuated in the Communion service by cups of tea. Even tea would be more dignified than ginger-pop or lemon-squash.

The following bright scintillation appeared in the *Star*: "Rider Haggard would 'let this Royal intimate of Heaven fall into the hands of Heaven, not into those of man.' But even the All Highest can't fall upwards."

The dear clergy sometimes get a little butter on their bread. Canon Brennan, of St. John's Wood, has been presented with a cheque for £500 by his congregation. When the Rev. H. G. de Castro, a Shropshire clergyman, went to heaven, he left behind him on earth the sum of £13,386.

Destitution and starvation are still the lot of the clergy. Two bad cases are those of the Rev. G. W. Minns, Vicar of Weston, Southampton, who left £42,170, and the Ven. Archdeacon Stanhope, whose will was proved for £22,429. An even worse case is that of Canon James Pickop, of Manchester, who left £97,872. The Rev. A. F. Burgoyne, of Finchingfield, Essex, brings up the rear with a modest £27,015. In one week, four parsons leave £189,486; yet the Bishop of London stoutly maintains the clergy are starving.

In his presidential address at the Wesleyan Conference, the Rev. W. T. A. Barber declared that the Church "must put dynamite into its work." We wonder if this is to take the place of hell, or is merely an addition. If the latter, Wesleyan congregations have a warmer time before them than the folk they regard as rank outsiders.

Christian Scientists are to build in New York the highest church in the world. The building will have thirty stories. It seems appropriate, for Christian Science is probably the tallest religious proposition in the world.

The value of religion as an ethical guide is not so marked as the clergy assert. How otherwise can the frequent backsliding of holy men be explained? Recent police court cases include the cases of the ex-Rev. T. H. S. P. Bohun, who was convicted as an incorrigible rogue; and of the Rev. W. B. Bell, of Epson, who was fined for driving a motor-cycle without a licence.

Christian Evidence lecturers and other believers in the Design Argument, will be pleased to note a case of profiteering among birds. Two owls have been shot in the grounds of the Putney Hospital for robbing chickens.

A single day's sale of pictures at "Christie's" recently realized £146,422. This is the country which worships a carpenter-god.

A proposal to make places of worship less like mortuaries was before the Upper House of Convocation, and a proposal to use churches for conferences and lectures was adopted, the Archbishop of Canterbury supporting the resolution. If the Churches are short of lecturers, doubtless the National Secular Society will oblige.

At Acton members of the Government religion, Baptists, and Salvationists, selected the same field for their Sunday-school treats. As they did not attempt to murder each other, the reporters made paragraphs of the remarkable growth of religious unity.

Mere preaching and hymn-singing no longer fill the Churches. Only men with special gifts draw crowded congregations now-a-days, and such men are few and far between. Consequently, strange devices are resorted to in the hope of attracting the people. In America "the jazz banjo concert" is being utilized for the purpose. Of course, everything, no matter what its nature, once drafted into the service of religion, becomes sacred and holy.

The sanctifier of the "jazz banjo concert" is the Rev. Charles Nelson, of Long Island City; and it was Mr. Reef, the banjo king of jazz players, who introduced it. Mr. Nelson says that the experiment proved a complete success, and that he has something more startling still along the same line for coming Sunday evenings. "If the people want life," he sagaciously observes, "I am going to mix it with Gospel, and then I am sure they will come to church every Sunday evening." Ere long, the Gospel will be a vanishing quantity, the people demanding "life," and nothing else.

Sir Heath Harrison has given £26,000 to Oxford University for the endowment of modern language instruction. It is high time. Oxford has a weakness for "dead" languages and "dead" ideas. Maybe that is why the University authorities expelled the poet Shelley, and conferred an honorary degree on William Booth, of the Salvation Army.

The "Spiritual Lords" are very anxious to appear democratic. The Bishop of London declares that he is bound for the workhouse; and the Bishop of St. Albans follows suit by saying that he has never been a rich man. "London" gets £10,000 a year, and "St. Albans" £2,500. Neither of them can claim with justice the blessings of poverty.

As a result of religious mania, Elizabeth Beatty, of Dalston, refused to take food, and died of exhaustion. Christian Evidence lecturers kindly note.

The dear clergy are asking for a "living wage." For a modest beginning, the Bishop of Hereford suggests £400 a year and a house, and rich people are to be approached for support. Apparently, the clergy do not think very highly of relying solely upon prayer.

The honour of God, said the Bishop of London in Hyde Park on Sunday last, is pledged to people meeting again those belonging to them who were killed in the War. But suppose they don't meet? How will anyone know whether the "honour of God" has been vindicated or not? After all, this is only the language of the confidence trick. Believe in me, says the Bishop, and you shall see your trust vindicated—after you are dead. But after death no one tells. We repeat, it is the language of the confidence man exploiting a nation's grief in the interests of his craft.

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The L. C. C. and Freedom of Propaganda.

The London County Council is at it again. It will be remembered that in 1916 the Parks Committee passed a resolution forbidding the sale of literature in the Parks. This was, we had reason to believe, preliminary to stopping meetings altogether. Had the first move succeeded, the second would certainly have followed. But the proposal was resisted, and after it had been carried to the Courts, the L. C. C. was defeated, and ordered to return to its old procedure.

It was hoped that the matter was settled, but reactionaries never learn. That, perhaps, is a good thing; it leads to their destruction. Anyway, the Committee set to work to achieve its ends in other ways.

On behalf of the N. S. S., Miss Vance made application to sell certain books and pamphlets, and also the *Freethinker*. Some were permitted, but the Committee could not tolerate our *Christianity and Slavery*, *Woman and Christianity*, or our new edition of *Voltaire's Dictionary*. The selection will show the intelligence with which the Committee conducts its censorship. Probably the office boy selects with a long pin.

What we are concerned with now, however, is the ban that has been placed on weekly publications. When Miss Vance applied for a permit to sell the *Freethinker*, she was told that ten days' notice was required. In the case of a seven days' publication this was clearly absurd. After some correspondence, a meeting was arranged between certain officials of the Council and Mr. Verinder, myself, and Mr. Hubbard, the solicitor to the Protest Committee. The ten days' notice was so palpably ridiculous that no real attempt at defence was made, and an agreement was finally reached. Two copies of the *Freethinker* were to be sent each week to the Council immediately on publication. The Council was to give a permit to sell the paper, subject to its right to stop the sale of a particular issue to which exception was taken.

It was soon seen that the Committee could not keep its word, either in the letter or in the spirit. After more correspondence, the Council informed Miss Vance that no permit could be given for the sale of the *Freethinker* in the Parks.

Thus the matter stands at the moment. But it will not stop there. Mr. Harry Snell, now, we are pleased to say, a member of the L. C. C., on July 22 put a question to the Parks Committee, and extracted the information that some Socialist publications had also been banned. The matter will probably be further discussed on the Council next week, and we shall then see where we stand.

Meanwhile, the Protest Committee is still in being, and will take whatever steps are possible. Mr. Frederick Verinder is Chairman of the Committee, and in any fight for justice he can always be counted on to do more than his share. Miss Vance is Secretary, and I represent the N. S. S. So everyone may rest assured that all that can be done will be done.

It is too early in this new phase of the fight to say what will happen, but I think there are ways of once again bringing this little Star-Chamber into a more reasonable frame of mind. And in that *Freethinker* readers may be able to lend a hand. I have written to the Clerk of the Council asking, as Editor of this paper, what are the articles or paragraphs to which the Committee take exception. We shall see what reply comes to that. But it is impossible to let this attack on the right of public meeting pass without protest. *And it is the right of public meeting that is really aimed at.* Prussianism has been defeated in the field. We must see to it that it does not survive in the Council Chamber.

Chapman Cohen.

To Correspondents.

E. C. D. (Portland, Oregon).—Sorry we have no pamphlet of the kind you inquire about. We think there is a public for a pamphlet of that description, if clearly written.—Leuba's *Psychological Study of Religion* (Macmillan) gives a good view of the present position.

A. Atherton (Glasgow).—Coming change of address noted. We are pleased to have your appreciation of the paper. Shall be pleased to see you when you come to London.

Gordon.—The impertinence of some Christians almost passes belief. We should say you were well rid of such people. It is time Portsmouth wakened up and went in for some more propaganda. You may rely upon our increasing the size of the paper so soon as it can be done. Let us have another thousand a week, and we will do it at once.

F. Kuetgens.—Nansen's *Eskimo Life* contains a very good account of a people such as you inquire about. Native people are very seldom the better for European interference. Generally, they absorb our vices and ignore our virtues, and we show about an equal capacity in each direction.

K. Jones.—A list of some of our publications will be found in this issue. In what direction do you wish for the names of Atheists? As expressed, your inquiry is too general to permit of a brief answer. It would require an essay.

M. Lester.—We had no intention of administering a "snub." We were merely protesting against the policy of separating the intellectual interests of men and women. We believe in identifying them, in the best interests of the race. Mr. Cohen will be writing you shortly.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We are indebted to Mr. Lloyd for seeing this issue of the paper through the press. The Editor is taking a few days' holiday—or as much of a holiday as he can get—and he will be none the worse for a few days' rest before commencing the Autumn's lecturing work. For the next week Mr. Cohen will answer as few letters as possible, and his correspondents will doubtless overlook any delay that occurs.

The *Star* did good work in its issue of July 23 in calling attention to the ridiculous conduct of the L.C.C. in banning certain of our and other people's publications. The more publicity given to this matter the better, and we hope that our friends all over London will let their Members know their opinion on the matter. The notion of a haphazard collection of County Councillors sitting in judgment on Voltaire, and deciding that the people of this city must not read him, is absurd. These glorified Bumbles, dragged out of their native obscurity by a few votes, should be taught

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that when they lay hands on one of the world's great writers they are grappling with matters quite beyond their comprehension. And it is within the power of the people to read them the required lesson.

The following is from the *South African Review*, which advertises itself as the oldest weekly paper in South Africa :—

> When you look into the various Church pronouncements, and take a peep below the surface, you find them all alike, no matter what the denomination, and they all give themselves away with a solemn *naivete*. We have here a pastoral letter from the Moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church. It makes prominent reference to (1) the War (for which the Churches in Germany were chiefly responsible, because they originated and encouraged the "Gott mit uns" doctrine); (2) the epidemic (the origin of which was dirt, and it became more virulent by reason of the social system on which the Churches thrive); (5) the poor white problem (which is not a problem at all, but merely a result of greed, belonging to the system aforesad); (4) missionary work (as if the clergy of all denominations do not need a mission among them, in order to prevent them from fomenting further trouble, including wars).

From this we gather that the oldest review in South Africa is not over fond of the Churches.

The Decay of Sunday Observance.

To the old question, "Stands Scotland where it did?" the answer, from the Kirk and Sabbatarian point of view, must decidedly be in the negative. Scotland, during the last few years, has indubitably moved. We in the Freethought Movement think she has progressed; the earnest successors of John Knox and of the Covenant hold she has retrograded. So far as the old-fashioned observance of the Sunday (which the kirkgoer persistently and erroneously speaks of as the Sabbath) is concerned, Scotland is regarded by the stalwarts of Presbyterianism as a sad backslider. Certainly, in the matter of old-time Sabbath observance, the attitude of the general public has undergone a marked change; in our view, of course, entirely for the better.

Nowhere in the world (except, perhaps, in the New England States of America) was there ever devised a day of desolation and misery equal to the Scottish Sabbath of last century, as experienced particularly in the industrial centres of population. But latterly there has been an evolution towards sanity of outlook on this question, in some parts at least of Scotland, which, if not much to boast of so far, holds considerable promise for the future. To be candid, the present writer never expected that even the modest advance that has been made would have been achieved in his lifetime.

Within the memory of many yet amongst us, people in Scottish towns sat in their "best room" on the "Sabbath" day, behind drawn window-curtains, excluding the light and freshness of Nature, in an endeavour to pay reverential tribute to the Day of Rest. Not for worlds would they allow the tinkle of a piano to be heard. The Sunday dinner must be cooked the day before. Children dared not play, or whistle, or sing on the Lord's Day. All secular literature was temporarily banished.

It can scarcely be doubted that in a large degree this strictness of Sabbatarianism was conventional, and, indeed, mainly adhered to out of deference to the bogey of public opinion. It may as safely be asserted that much of the surviving regard paid to the Sunday is due to fear of what other people will think and say, rather than to any honest conviction that a special sanctity attaches to the first day of the week. The writer knew an elder of the Kirk, who a good many years ago confessed he saw no harm in Sunday cycling, and would have had no objection to going out for a spin if he could depend on getting back without being recognized by anyone who knew of his church connection.

The foolish reverence for the Sunday so prevalent a generation or two ago has, however, broken down to no small extent in the last two or three decades, and credit for this is in some measure due to the efforts made by the Secular Society and the Socialist parties to interest the people in the affairs of this world on the so-called Sabbath Day instead of brooding over their sins and worrying about their probable status in a problematical future life. Few people do justice to the generally rationalizing influence of Secularist propaganda. The liberalizing effect on the community of the operations of the Secular Society is not to be measured by the number of formally attached members. Of a verity the little, ardent, secular-minded minority is the leaven which shall ultimately leaven the whole mass. Anyone who comes through a course of Secularist teaching can never be the same as he was before he came under its influence, even if he may not accept all the apparent implications of Secularism. If he is even only approximately loyal to the truth which has been unfolded to him, he will ever after, without necessarily cleaving to the official Secularist Movement, be a human centre from which must inevitably radiate some modicum of rationalistic light.

For many years prior to any general stirring of the dry bones in Glasgow, the Secular Society had been doing pioneer work by holding meetings, organizing lectures, and giving concerts absolutely devoid of anything of a "sacred" nature on the Lord's Day. Much of this was done in an unobtrusive way, but its permeating effect undoubtedly extended far, and assisted to build up the healthier state of public opinion as regards the use of the Sunday that is now making itself apparent.

We have now in Glasgow got so far as to have Corporation reading-rooms open on Sunday, and Sunday band performances in the public parks. We have also had several first-class vocal and instrumental concerts in public halls in Glasgow on Sundays—concerts with never a pretence of anything "sacred" about them, and given to overflowing audiences. All who know Scotland must concede that this indicates a considerable advance, and such as would have been regarded as impossible a very few years ago.

Of course, we see regretful allusions made to the growth in Protestant Britain of the "Continental" Sunday. Pious people who have never been on the Continent, and whose knowledge of continental customs is of the haziest description, are thoroughly imbued with the idea that any tendency towards a rationally recreative use of the Sunday must necessarily be of continental origin, and therefore demoralizing. Lurid pictures of a supposititiously immoral Paris cross their mental vision. Any relaxation of Sunday observance is the first step downward on the slippery path of moral deterioration. These individuals are the lineal descendants of the earlier Sabbatarians, who, as was so grimly expressed long ago, left the Scottish people with no recreative outlet on Sunday but drink and fornication.

We notice that in England also the advent of the "Continental" Sunday is alarming the bigots. That species of semi-clerical trade-union styled the Wesleyan Methodist Local Preachers' Mutual Aid Association views with dismay and sorrow (*vide* press) the modern invasion of their monopoly of the Lord's Day. The wordy title of the above-mentioned body somehow irresistibly recalls memories of the Brick Lane Branch of the United Grand Junction Ebenezer Temperance Association, made famous by Dickens. But we must not treat the W.M.L.P.M.A.A. disrespectfully or regard it as a negligible quantity. It is not exactly a case of

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the three tailors of Tooley Street speaking as the voice of England, for this Association claims to represent no fewer than 26,000 local preachers. The constitution of the aforesaid Association being what it is, it seems fairly obvious that its opposition to any encroachment on the Lord's Day is largely of a professional nature. The instinct of self-preservation inevitably prompts its members to resent any attempt on the part of rival interests to attract their clients. If the people of England want recreation on the Sunday let them go and listen to the 26,000 Methodist local preachers. And if the people will not do this, the law and public opinion should see that they are not allowed to do anything else.

But, seriously speaking, one can only marvel at the effrontery of any religious organization stigmatizing as "desecration" such methods of observing the Sunday as do not meet with its approval. People of this temperament lack even an elementary conception of the principles of human liberty. They cannot see that while they are perfectly entitled to preach and pray to one another on the Lord's Day to their hearts' content, and observe the Sunday in whatever manner their conscience dictates so long as they do not thereby interfere with the freedom of action of anyone else, their right reaches no farther. Other people have a similar right of option to spend the Sunday in such fashion as suits them, with the same due regard for the freedom of those who differ from them.

The non-churchgoing section of the community—now by far the larger portion—is warranted in demanding that the Sunday shall be completely emancipated from the blighting influence of Sabbatarianism. It is preposterous that a minority of zealots should be allowed to exercise any prohibitory control whatever over the occupations and amusements of the people on the occasion of their weekly holiday. There should be unrestricted access to coast and country for the town-dweller on the first day of the week as well as on the other six days; and all institutions erected for the use of the people, such as museums, libraries, and picture-galleries, should be freely open to the public on the one day on which most use could be made of them. Nor does the writer perceive any valid reason why the theatres should not be available on Sunday. Those who prefer to go to church or chapel could continue doing so.

It is a favourite argument of those who uphold the Puritanic tradition of Sunday observance that any secular invasion of the sanctity of the first day of the week as a consequence entails the loss of the working man's day of rest. Whatever of truth was at one time contained in this plea, it has now entirely lost its force. We have ample evidence at the present day that organized labour is perfectly capable of holding all its hard-won privileges—and of securing a few more. There is not the smallest likelihood of the working class submitting to a seven-day working week, so the Sabbatarians need no longer pretend they are animated by a desire to conserve the labourer's weekly rest day. The worker's weekly rest day is not in jeopardy. But he has plainly very little inclination to spend it in church, and that is what troubles the clerical fraternity.

G. Scott.

'Tis with our judgments as our watches; none
Go just alike, yet each believes his own.—*Pope.*

There is a common-place book argument,
Which glibly glides from every tongue;
When any dare a new light to present,
"If you are right, then everybody's wrong!"
Suppose the converse of this precedent
So often urged, so loudly and so long;
"If you are wrong, then everybody's right!"—*Byron.*

The Science of the Ultra-Material.

V.

(Concluded from p. 370.)

In the preceding section we considered the distinction between proto-material and material evolution in terms of equilibrium, the former being regarded as an advance from instability to a comparatively stable equilibrium, and the latter as an advance from this condition through stages showing a progressive breakdown of equilibrium.

Of proto-material evolution very little is yet known, but that little is sufficient to show the contrast which exists between its laws and those of matter. The dissociation of matter is a process by which matter loses its material properties and functions, and assumes those of a different order apparently quite irreconcilable with them. As an instance, we may take the now familiar fact that the mass of the "electric particle" or electron—what we have called kinetic mass—increases with the velocity of the particle. Nothing could, apparently, be more at variance with the conditions governing mass in the physical world, and yet there can be no reasonable doubt that when the nature of the proto-material energies and the intra-atomic energies of matter come to be thoroughly understood, there will be found some underlying law or principle capable of unifying and "explaining" both these contrasted aspects of "mass."

The laws governing the material world may be broadly divided into four classes, viz., Physical or Mechanical, Chemical, Vital, and Mental laws. Of these the physical laws, governing the relationships and functions of matter and force in the mass, were, from the first, more amenable to ordinary methods of observation and calculation, and were, therefore, the first to be studied and reduced to a scientific order. They comprise the laws of motion and gravitation, of static and moving equilibria, of mechanical transformation and distribution of forces, and generally all those laws included under the term mechanics or physics, omitting, of course, the laws of electricity, magnetism, heat, and light, which are usually included in the study of "Physics," but which properly belong to the pro-material sphere. Of these mechanical laws it need only be said that they are the simplest, the most definite, and the most rigid of all the laws of Nature. Being the laws of matter in the mass they are unaffected by the internal constitution of matter, and remain true quite independently of the laws of chemistry, vitality, or mentality. This definiteness and rigidity of mechanical law is concomitant with the fact that it deals with matter in its most stable form of equilibrium. The relationships of the masses and their mechanical equilibria being completely unaffected by their internal molecular equilibria, they can be dealt with as passive vehicles or transmitters of mechanical energy, possessing only material mass or inertia.

Chemical laws take us a step further. These deal with the energies liberated by the breakdown of molecular equilibria, and must, therefore, be profoundly different from physical laws which, as we have just seen, are independent of molecular equilibria. And because of this difference it is probable that chemical laws will never be found capable of complete expression in terms of mechanical laws, but this is by no means the same as to say that the two sets of laws can never be affiliated in *any terms*. A complete unification would, no doubt, be quite possible if we could express it in terms of those energy functions which underlie both sets of laws. And there is no reason in the nature of things why we should not, at some future time, and in the light of a fuller

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knowledge, be able so to express them; for the laws of material mass and the motion of material bodies must be derived from, and dependent on, those of kinetic mass and the primordial movement of substance.

The functions of protoplasm (which the Neo-vitalists now tell us involve a special vital principle) are open to a precisely similar interpretation. Indeed, all recent investigation seems to show that chemical and vital functions are very closely related, and that the connecting link between them is, as already stated, furnished by the peculiar structure and activities of the colloids. The main difference seems to be that the equilibria of the living colloids are of a more delicate and unstable character than those of the inorganic ones, and that hence the breakdown and restoration of these equilibria, involving disruptions of a less sudden and violent kind, can go on in a more rythmic and orderly manner. It is possible that all the energies liberated by molecular disruption may before long be brought under one great generalization, and when that is the case vital and chemical laws will be completely unified.

Whether or no there be any probability of truth in the idea—put forward as a mere speculation in the preceding section—that psychic activities involve atomic dissociation, it is undoubtedly true that they involve a condition of greater instability than do the activities of non-sentient protoplasm—that in brain and nerve matter we reach the utmost limit of instability known to us in the material world. But this is a difference in degree only, and not in kind; and hence the energy functions of mind, equally with the vital and chemical energy functions, may eventually be affiliated with those of matter and force when all alike become expressible in terms of the ultra-material energies.

Thus the kinetic theory of matter affords, as it were, a common denominator in terms of which all the activities of the material world, with their seemingly irreconcilable differences and fundamental contrasts, may ultimately be expressed. And the recognition of material evolution as a progressive advance towards instability of equilibrium seems, moreover, to afford a clue as to *why* the laws of the material world also progressively advance from the simplicity, rigidity, and definiteness characterizing those of mechanics to the complexity and apparent capriciousness characterizing those of mind. For it is obvious that the laws governing any system in a condition of unstable equilibrium, though equally inflexible and inviolable, must be less simple and rigid, and more susceptible of complicacy and disturbance than those governing a stable system. As a rough instance, we may take the law of gravitation. Two bodies gravitating about their common centre of inertia form a system of relatively great stability not easily disturbed, and such as would, if left uninfluenced by other forces, continue unchanged for an indefinite period. Add a third body to the system, and the movements of each of the three become so complex that the highest resources of mathematical analysis fail to calculate them with complete exactitude, while the equilibrium of the system has at the same time become less stable. With four or more bodies their mutual perturbations become still more incalculable and seemingly capricious, and the equilibrium of the system becomes progressively less stable and more easily deranged. Yet we doubt not that, however complex and unstable the system may become, it is throughout governed by one constant and invariable law.

As little can we doubt that, however profoundly the five orders of natural law—including the proto-material—may seem to differ one from another, they are yet capable of unification, and may all be brought under the dominion of one supreme underlying law. This law is what we understand as Causality, for the essential principle of the five sets of laws is that, however varied they may be in their manifestations, they are all *causal laws*. And as the primordial energy of substance is the common element of all these varied manifestations, this energy must itself be the ultimate principle of Causality.

The promise of future progress in the unification of natural law would therefore seem to lie in the proto-material rather than in the material sphere of research—in that border-land between the material and the immaterial worlds which is now gradually coming within the cognizance of a perplexed and wondering science. The science of the future will be the science of the ultra-material, and it will probably stand to our present scientific conceptions in much the same relation as these do to the ignorant gropings and vague guesses of primitive man.

In conclusion, we may summarize the results here arrived at in the following tentative propositions or hypotheses, which seem to represent the tendency of modern speculation, and which it will be the task of future science either to verify or disprove.

1. The primordial element of existence is an immaterial energy consisting of infinitely diffused substance in a state of infinite mobility; that is to say, a condition of diffusion and mobility transcending the limits of material energy. This immaterial energy is in a state of complete instability.

2. The primordial energy or movement of substance contains the potentiality of all existence, the elemental substance constituting the basis of matter, or "matter-stuff," and the elemental movement constituting the basis of mind, or "mind-stuff."

3. Proto-material evolution is a progressive fall from this primordial state of instability, through varying degrees of increasingly stable equilibrium, to the most stable form of equilibrium attainable. This stable form of equilibrium, combining the maximum condensation of substance with the minimum freedom of movement, is what we understand as matter.

4. Material evolution is a progressive rise from the stable equilibrium of matter, through varying degrees of increasing instability, to the highest degree of instability as manifested in sentient protoplasm. The breakdown of this extremely unstable equilibrium, combining a minimum condensation of substance with a maximum freedom of movement, is what we understand as mind. The movement, or mind-element, in the primordial energy hitherto locked up, as it were, in matter, and becoming liberated by the final breakdown of the equilibria of protoplasm, functions as consciousness.

5. The entire process, both of proto-material and of material evolution, is actuated and controlled by the primordial energy of substance, and the universal and persisting influence of this energy finally manifests itself in consciousness as the Law of Causality.

A. E. MADDOCK.

The End.

IT was an afternoon in March. I stept out of my cottage, and stood for a few minutes looking at the weather and the surroundings. Rain fell heavily. From the thatched roof drops of water fell with a steady "drip, drip," into little pools of wet close to the wall. Through the low-lying pastures a small river slowly flowed, gradually increasing in volume as numerous side-streams welled into its waters. Two lapwings flew heavily across, uttering their melancholy cry of "Pee-weet." The ducks that usually disported in the brook, or walked with clumsy gaiety about the meadow, were being overwhelmed by the excess of their favourite element, and

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were waddling reluctantly to the higher ground. The downs were obscured by a curtain of mist and slanting rain, whilst overhead the continuity of the grey sky was varied only by darker masses of ill-defined cloud that rolled sullenly north-eastwards.

Shivering, I drew my oilskin closer round me, and stepped out on to the puddly path. Each side of the gate was guarded by pools, and down the road ran rivulets of mud-coloured water. Rain dripped steadily from the bare trees, the greyish-brown boles were marked with black streaks of moisture, and the hedgerows were soaked till not a dry spot remained in or under them. Cattle and horses stood inert under the non-sheltering trees, their wet coats steaming mistily, and looked with dull, patient eyes at the passers-by. Sheep huddled together, as if to protect their flanks from the downpour, even if their backs were reduced to a state of wet sponge. Runlets of brown and black liquid trickled down the banks, to mingle with the grey chalky mud of the road, and add to its messiness. Birds crouched in the hedgerow bushes with puffed-out feathers, unmoving. The patter of rain, the constant drip of larger spots, the sucking, wheezing noise of water soaking into the earth, these were the main sounds, through which the "Pee-weet" of the plover came eerily. Occasionally the faint tinkle of sheep-bells floated lingeringly in the valley. I splashed on, the smoke from my pipe hanging almost motionless in the damp atmosphere.

At the corner by the gate I stood and looked across country, usually a beautiful scene, bounded by the easy contours of the Downs. To-day the view was limited by a pall of grey, impenetrable, and thickening as the afternoon wore on. The military camp on the hilltop was invisible.

Almost imperceptibly, a mournful sound was borne to my ears through the drenched atmosphere. Listening carefully, I heard it again; music, played slowly and solemnly. From a quarter-mile away it came quivering through the stilly air, the "Dead March in Saul." A soldier was being carried from the camp to be buried in the little graveyard of the grey stone church beside the village. The sense of desolation and loneliness produced by the weather was deepened by the sad music and its associations. I could trace the procession of khaki-clad men as they followed their departed comrade down the winding road.

Now the harmony came full and strong as the higher pitched instruments took up the theme, fading again as the heavier ones repeated their diapason. At measured intervals the muffled drums rolled mournful cadences like personified sorrow muttering condolences with itself. The weather, the music, and the occasion could not have been more completely appropriate each to the other.

At the farmyard gate I waited and listened. Whilst I did so the band stopped playing. Again the silence was not broken but rather intensified by the patter and splash of raindrops and the gurgling of runlets.

As I entered the gateway a guinea-fowl retreated to a remoter shelter, and commenced its unvarying two-note call, not an ill-fitting song, striking the imagination as in keeping with the circumstances of the afternoon. I walked to the stable door and harkened again. It was easy to picture the last sad rites round the grave.....

Within the horses munched steadily. Occasionally one rattled the chain of its headstall, or stamped with heavy foot. Down in the little churchyard an obscure soldier was being lowered into his last resting-place, and the business of the world went on unheeding.

As I listened and watched, the rain lessened and the sky grew lighter. A sudden shattering crash of musketry rent the air. The firing party were signalizing their comrade's departure as befitted soldiers. Next moment the bugle rang out loud and clear, sounding the "Last Post." All was over. Now the soldiers would be reforming ranks to march back to camp. How many would give the erstwhile companion a second thought? The rain had almost ceased. I took off my drenched coat and cap, and the horses started with expectancy at the movement.

A burst of high gay music flung to the whitening sky. "Brighton Camp" broke forth, liveliest of marches, familiarized as "The Girl I Left Behind Me." The spell of death snapped, and I turned and entered the stables.

A. R. Williams.

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Regent's Park Branch N. S. S.: 3, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Blessed are the Poor"; Mr. R. Norman. "The Old Stunt."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): Mr. F. Shaller, 3.15, "Is Atheism Sound?" 6, "The Bible and Common Sense."

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God and the War.

It may safely be said that more people have had their illusions on the subject of religion dispelled during the past five years than has ever been the case in any like period. This is not because the War brought any new facts to light; it did not. But it opened peoples eyes with regard to old ones. Death and disaster, pain and suffering, are every-day occurrences, and the pain of losing one that is dear is as old as humanity. But the scale on which the War was waged, the fact of the combatants being people who have ostentatiously paraded their religion before the world, the praise of the moralizing effect of war by the clergy, the energy with which these men fanned the War spirit, all combined to bring thoughtful men and women back to the consideration of something like fundamental issues. In political and social revolutions it is usually some particular hardship —a famine, a spell of bad trade, etc.—that calls attention to grave constitutional abuses. So in this instance, the War brought home to many the utter impossibility of harmonizing the world as it is with the existence of a God wise enough or good enough to command the homage of intelligent men and women. A God there might still be, but in that case it would be more manly to "curse God and die" than to pay even lip homage to a being who could permit such a catastrophe in *his* world. The world blamed the German Government for commencing the War, it was ready to blame anyone for continuing the War a day longer than was necessary, how, then, could it relieve of responsibility a God who permitted the War to begin, who did nothing to bring it to a close, and who could calmly watch *his* children butchering each other in his name? Even religious docility and stupidity have their limits.

* * *

Man and God.

How does the Theist harmonize his belief in God with a world disaster such as the War? If, he says, people will act in a particular way they must expect certain consequences to follow. Granted that certain consequences will follow, whether we expect them or not, how does that meet the issue? Well, it does not meet it in the least. People, as Aristotle long ago said, act in what they believe to be their own interest, and if they are really acting so as to do themselves harm, surely it is here a case of "forgive them for they know not what they do." If these people had seen more clearly, surely they would have acted differently. A difference in the quality of the brains God designed would have made so much difference. As it is the "plan of creation" bears very much the look of a trap. God places man amid conditions that the brain with which he has been equipped does not enable him to properly appreciate. Blunder and wrong are thus made inevitable, and when the blunder is made he is told that he is only reaping the consequences of his actions. In what way, then, does the supposed fact of God help? How much worse off would man be without God? And then to add to the stupidity of the whole business, when the War is over God is given thanks. For what? For the fact that some have escaped? Then what of the millions who have perished? Is it not plain common sense to say that if we are to thank God for those who are saved we should curse him for the millions destroyed? And is it egotism or stupidity that leads the survivors to kneel and thank God for their own safety within sight of the dead bodies of their fellow-creatures?

* * *

The Providential Plan.

It is said that God did not desire men to act as they have acted. Maybe not, but being what he is, he must have *expected* them to act as they did. After all, if one is not a politician or a fool, he will not be content with attributing the War to one man or to one nation. Pressure of population, the desire for aggrandisement, love of military adventure, the desire for supremacy, are all causes that make for war, and are by no means confined to Germany or to any other nation. So that here once more man is only working out a career traced for him by "Providence." God first of all implants in man qualities that can have but one result, and then punishes him with every circumstance of cruelty for being what he has made him. A little difference in the human make-up would have made all the difference to the world's welfare. Almighty wisdom animated by Almighty love, and supported by Almighty power, might easily have so constructed human life that disasters consequent on human misjudgment should never occur. Divine wisdom preferred things as they are, and it is idle to attempt to evade the responsibility. It is futile to blame conditions. God made the conditions, and man himself is no more than one of the conditions in the divine scheme. For good or ill the responsibility rests with God—if there be a God. To blame man is only another way of blaming God. The world is his world, and a better plan would have turned out a better world.

* * *

An Apology for Evil.

The apology is made that we cannot see enough of the "Divine plan" to offer reasonable criticism, and that, after all, things work together to a good end. And even the War, along with all the trials and disasters of life, strengthens and develops human nature. Well, we may grant even this; but we do not see that it materially helps the believer. Granted that danger calls

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forth courage, that suffering calls forth sympathy, is this an adequate apology for the existence of needless danger and unmerited suffering? Surely not. If there is any strength in this argument, it involves the assertion that all who cause suffering are our benefactors, since they develop our sympathies. The sweater, the tyrant, the land-grabber, the man who creates a war, are all friends of humanity—they are developing our sympathetic feelings, and we owe them our gratitude. And if we ought not to thank the man who sets fire to a houseful of people, and so excites our courage and our compassion, why should we praise God for sending plague and pestilence and famine to the same end? What real distinction is there between the two cases? Will some Theist please explain?

* * *

How Man Helps God.

We have written the above on the assumption that God exists, and that the world is the expression of his character. But the assumption is groundless; neither facts nor logical reasoning support it. Nature is not conscious, neither is it intelligent; and therefore praise and blame, save as figures of speech, are quite out of place in dealing with it. For aught that we can see, Nature cares no more for the life of a man than for that of a worm. Both are born and both die with, so far as Nature is concerned, absolute indifference. It is the Theist who asserts the contrary, and he is bound to abide by the logical implications of his assertion. We have only tried to indicate what these implications are, and to insist that if the wanton infliction of suffering by man indicates an unadmirable character, the wanton infliction of pain by God must point to a like conclusion. If the indifference of man to suffering argues want of sympathy, the fact that God sits silent while men and women are blasted by disease, starved by famine, or overwhelmed by disaster, forces us to a similar conclusion. It is useless to reply that God's ways are not our ways. If we judge at all, we are bound to judge by the only measure of right and wrong with which we are acquainted. And if the statement is true, it can only be received with regret. If God exists, we may grant that he is greater than man—in power. But in kindliness, in sympathy, in all that makes up really admirable moral qualities, man is greater than his God. For it is man who corrects the blunders of his Deity. Man makes habitable the places of the earth left uninhabitable by God. He discovers antidotes to the diseases God sends; remedies for the famine and distress created by him. The enduring fact is, not God's goodness to man, but man's love and helpfulness to his fellow-man. Man owes nothing to the Gods, first created and then feared by him. These have always existed like a spasm in the heart and a cramp in the intellect, checking his noblest aspirations and damning his best efforts. It has been part of the work of civilization to free man from the rule of the gods, and only as this has been done has civilization been secure or human well-being guaranteed.

Chapman Cohen.

Q. Are the good always rewarded in this life?

A. No, surely; for many virtuous men are miserable here and greatly afflicted.

Q. Are the wicked always punished in this life?

A. No, certainly; for many of them live without sorrow, and some of the vilest of men are often raised to great riches and honour.

Q. Wherein then doth God make it appear that he is good and righteous?

A. I own there is little appearance of it on earth.—*Dr. Isaac Watts, "The Improvement of the Mind."*

The God-Eating Sacrament.

VII.

Cannibalism.

At this stage we are prepared for the formal declaration, however startling it may sound, that the governing idea of the Lord's Supper has been evolved by a perfectly simple process from the primitive ritual of anthropophagy. Men were in the habit of eating one another long before they even dreamed of the possibility of consuming their God or Gods; and it may be worth our while to make an attempt to trace the somewhat obscure process by which the man-eating evolved into the God-eating Sacrament. Everybody is aware that the consumption of food is an essential condition to the preservation of life. That is an elementary truism. But it is not so commonly realized that food is also a part of the stuff out of which character is made. A man's conduct is largely determined by his diet. This is a subject on which primitive man entertained wonderfully enlightened views. He could perceive no wide gulf separating human beings from the animals below them, the only difference between them recognized by him being one of degrees merely, not at all of kind; and as he was himself a flesh-eater, it naturally followed that to him eating a brother man was no less agreeable a performance than eating an ox, a sheep, or a rabbit. In either case, it was a fellow-being that he consumed. It is impossible to be just and fair to cannibals without bearing that fact in mind. It is only to civilized and semi-civilized people that the habit of devouring human flesh is more disgusting and loathsome than that of eating animal flesh. We pronounce it a horrible, monstrous custom, and rightly so; but to our ancestors long ago, as Pliny says, "to murder a man was to do an act of greatest devoutness, and to eat his flesh was to secure the highest blessings of health." Herodotus tells us that among the Scythians there were Androphagi (Man-eaters), and that in consequence they were "unlike any other nation in these parts" (iv. 106). He also mentions several tribes who were cannibals, such as the Padæans and Issedonians. Among the latter he found the following custom:—

> When a man's father dies, all the near relatives bring sheep to the house; which are sacrificed, and their flesh cut in pieces, while at the same time, the dead body undergoes the like treatment. The two sorts of flesh are afterwards mixed together, and the whole is served up at a banquet (iv. 26).

Again, he relates the following custom of the Massagetæ:—

> Human life does not come to its natural close with this people; but when a man grows very old, all his kinsfolk collect together and offer him up in sacrifice; offering at the same time some cattle also. After the sacrifice they boil the flesh and feast on it; and those who thus end their days are reckoned the happiest. If a man dies of disease they do not eat him, but bury him in the ground, bewailing the ill-fortune that he did not come to be sacrificed (i. 216).

Of cannibalism as a habit, with all its sickening horrors, which "assumes its most repulsive form where human flesh is made an ordinary article of food like other meat," I do not here speak. That it has been a habit among certain tribes, civilized and uncivilized, is undeniable; but it is equally a fact, as Tylor points out, that Anthropophagy is "deeply ingrained in savage and barbaric religions." This was doubtless true long before superhuman Gods had been created. There was no God-eating because there was no God, but, as Professor Gilbert Murray remarks, "only the raw material out of which Gods are made." And yet even then cannibalism was practised sacramentally because of the

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belief that the qualities of the things eaten would be assimilated by the eater. Prisoners of war were killed, cooked, and eaten that the courage they had displayed on the field of battle might pass into the victors. A lion's heart was eaten from the same motive. In those ignorant, superstitious days the sacramental element entered into almost every action. In time personal Gods appeared, and they were all made in the image and after the likeness of their creators. Erelong the day dawned when men and women resorted to cannibalism with greater devoutness than ever because they believed that the Gods delighted in human flesh. It was on this account that Anthropophagy was a vital part of the Fijian religion. It was the same conviction that gave rise to human sacrifices. Most of these sacrifices were piacular, whose object was to purchase the favour of angry Deities. At one time such offerings were well-nigh universal. All untoward circumstances, such as blighted harvests, destructive storms, ravaging earthquakes, and devastating diseases, were regarded as expressions of the wrath of the Gods, and the sacrifices were offered in the hope of placating them. But there were other sacrifices which were sacramental and magical, of which the late Professor Robertson Smith says :—

> It is perfectly clear in many cases that such sacrifices are associated with cannibalism, a practice which always means eating the flesh of men of alien and hostile kin. The human wolves would no more eat a brother than they would eat a wolf; but to eat an enemy is another matter. Naturally enough traces of cannibalism persist in religion after they have disappeared from ordinary life, and especially in the religion of carnivorous Gods. Thus it may be conjectured that the human sacrifices offered to the wolf Zeus (Lycæus) in Arcadia were originally cannibal feasts of a wolf tribe (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, Ninth Edition, vol. xxi., p. 136).

Dr. Robertson Smith, though an orthodox divine, was an honest, painstaking, and courageous critic, and the admission made in that extract is highly significant, as well as fully justified by numerous well-attested facts. Our point, however, is that it was anthropophagy that led to theophagy; or in plain English, that the God-eating Sacrament gradually grew out of sacramental man-eating. In the evolution of humanitarianism, animal sacrifices were substituted for human; but the principle involved remained the same. It mattered not of what the sacrifices consisted, slain men or slain animals, banquets were given to which the God and dead relatives were invited; but the amazing miracle was that when the God came down to share the delicacies with his worshippers, it was himself in the form of a bull, a lamb, or a goat that he ate, and it was his own blood that he drank as wine, because the moment the words of consecration were spoken by the officiating priest, all the elements provided for the feast were converted into the God's body and blood. It is a most remarkable fact that among the Aryans of ancient India, centuries prior to our era, the doctrine of Transubstantiation was both taught and practised. When rice-cakes were offered in sacrifice as surrogates for human beings, the priest uttered certain magical words, and there remained no substance of rice-cakes, nor any other, but the substance of human bodies. The Aztecs, who founded a powerful empire in the valley of Mexico four or five hundred years before the discovery of America, had the sacramental custom of making twice a year, in May and December, a dough-image of the great God, Huitziloputzli, which they broke in pieces and consumed. It appears that the paste was made of beets and maize by Aztec virgins. Then, after a dreadful holocaust of victims, the mighty miracle was performed, and the priests distributed the dough, no longer dough, but the body and blood of Huitziloputzli. After supplying full details concerning these instances of Transubstantiation in the *Golden Bough*, Frazer comes to the following conclusion :—

> On the whole it would seem that neither the ancient Hindoos nor the ancient Mexicans had much to learn from the most refined mysteries of Catholic theology.

J. T. Lloyd.

Body-Snatching as a Fine Art.

> To what damned deeds religion urges men.—*Lucretius.*
>
> What a man was while he could stand, speak, and write, is matter of interest and importance to those who care to know anything about him: when he cannot, it may be assumed that he can no longer think for himself.—*A. C. Swinburne.*

Priests seldom appear more odious than at the death-beds of those who fought against them in the full strength of their manhood. Even Wyclif was worried in this way, but drove them out with the cry, "I shall not die, but live, and will declare the evil deeds of the friars." To their dismay, he did recover, and he kept his word. Prince Jerome Napoleon was not so fortunate. On his death-bed he resisted the blandishments of the priests, but in some sort they prevailed at last. Prince Napoleon, who numbered Charles Bradlaugh among his friends, was an anti-clerical in politics, and a Freethinker in religion. He was smuggled into the Catholic Church at the last, at a time when he was unconscious. It may be that his wife was anxious for his conversion, but the spectacle of a priest administering the last sacrament to the unconscious man who had steadily resisted all entreaties to be reconciled to the Church is none the less offensive.

The priests of the Great Lying Church did the same thing with Sir Richard Burton, the world-renowned traveller. It was nothing to them that their grim farce would, if taken seriously, give the lie to the dead man's whole life. All they cared for was that the world should understand that this terrible Freethinker had submitted to Holy Mother Church at the last. While Richard Burton was sound and strong, his contemptuous disgust of their creed was wont to exhaust the whole vocabulary of his scorn. When, however, the living man was replaced by the helpless corpse, nothing hindered these body-snatchers at their ghastly revels.

Richard Burton was a complete Freethinker. His views were not merely anti-Christian, but were opposed to the invertebrate religionism of the day. Looking with cynical eyes on all religions, towards the lying Catholic Church he was especially critical, and, as events proved, not without reason. His wife, Isabel Burton, was a bigoted Catholic. When he was dying, she sent for a priest, and the great lying Church of Rome took formal possession of Burton's corpse, and pretended, moreover, to take under her august protection his "soul." Burton's funeral took place in the largest church in Trieste, and was made the excuse for an ecclesiastical triumph of a faith the great man had always loathed. Even this disgraceful demonstration at Trieste was not sufficient. The body was conveyed to England, and the funeral services were repeated at Mortlake. Again the priests intoned the Mass, again the acolyte bore the crucifix before the helpless body to the grave. Again was truth trampled under foot in a vain endeavour to exalt a church over a formidable enemy.

Indeed, the priests have made body-snatching one of the fine arts. Freethought has wrested so many positions from religion that, in order to present an appearance of having some weight of authority to support the

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tottering edifice of superstition, priests will hesitate at nothing to drag in some really great men with whose names and influence they hope to buttress the wavering allegiance of their lukewarm supporters.

Christian priests buried the heretical Charles Darwin "in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection," and, with equal effrontery and impudence, mumbled their mythological nonsense over the coffins of doubting Thomas Huxley, and Robert Buchanan, two of the most stalwart soldiers who ever drew sword in the service of liberty.

The weapon used by the clergy is a double-edged one. When the Freethinker is alive, they pour out upon him all the vituperation which their practised and venomed tongues know so well how to use. If, in spite of their abuse, he gains fame, then they claim him as one of their own. Shelley and Swinburne went through both processes. Like the vultures which feed only on corpses, so does the great Lying Church fatten her waning reputation on the dead soldiers of the Army of Progress.

Mimnermus.

The Old Testament.

II.

Before the Exile.

Our earliest first-hand evidence on the nature of the prophetic movement is afforded by the book of Amos, who flourished about 750 B.C. Amos, according to his own account, was "not a prophet"—*i.e.*, not one of the bands of ranters above mentioned—but a herdsman and cultivator, one of the class on whom the abuses of the time pressed hard. He inveighs against various Syrian kingdoms for acts of cruelty and violence, but chiefly against Israel for economic oppression, and announces, in the name of Yahweh, the downfall of the kingdom and the priesthood. Here we have the beginning of the new religious conception. The Yahweh of Amos, who is to avenge all this cruelty and injustice, is a totally different kind of being from the Yahweh of the old legends, who gloated over massacres and accepted human sacrifice. Amos attacks the whole religious ritual of his time. In chapter v. 21-25 we read:—

> I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Yea, though ye offer me your burnt offerings and meal offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment roll down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream. Did ye bring unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?

The final question incidentally proves that the Pentateuch as we have it, with its elaborate directions for sacrificial ritual, all professing to have been received from Yahweh by Moses, did not exist in the time of Amos.

If we seek the inwardness of this reforming movement, we shall find it rooted, like so many movements, in economic facts. So long as a rude social equality, with sufficiency for all, obtained in the community, the system of sacrifice was felt as an equal burden. But after the establishment of the kingdom, when (as under Solomon) thousands were compelled to labour to minister to royal and priestly pomp, and when the lands of many were seized for the enrichment of greedy courtiers, the exactions of the priesthood bore more hardly on the poorer cultivators. At the same time, alliances with neighbouring kingdoms and intermarriages with their royal houses, by leading to the introduction of alien cults and the multiplication of religious establishments, added to the burden. Hence, probably, the outcry of prophets like Elijah against the worship of the Phœnician Baal (Melkarth)—the idea of Yahweh as a "jealous god" covering the unexpressed motive of anger at accumulated burdens.[1] Later, as is the way, the material grievance took an idealistic form, and gave rise to the doctrine of *one* God, Yahweh, the creator of the universe, who was affronted by idolatrous worship and immoral rites.

About the same time as Amos was agitating, the second surviving stratum of Old Testament history took form—the narrative known as "E," because its author, like "P," calls his deity "God" (Elohim) in the early part of his work. Specimens of "E" are afforded by Gen. xxii. 1-13 (the sacrifice of Isaac), most of Gen. xl.-xlii. (Joseph in Egypt), Ex. ii. 1-22 (early days of Moses), and Ex. xxxii.-xxxiv. 28 (the golden calf affair). "E," like "J," is concerned chiefly to tell the story of his people," and does so in an attractive style not unlike "J's." But unlike "J," he is a propagandist as well. He writes under the influence of the prophetic movement, is strong against idolatry, and pronouncedly anticlerical. His conception of Yahweh is still very anthropomorphic; he thinks man may be allowed, as a special favour, to view the Deity's back, but not his face (Ex. xxxiii. 21-23); and he represents Yahweh as holding conferences with Moses in the tabernacle, screened by a cloud from the gaze of the vulgar (xxxiii. 9-10). This is sufficiently *naive*, but is certainly less gross than the Yahweh of "J" and his dinner-party with Abraham! The priestly profession, in "E," is made to cut a poor figure. Aaron is held responsible for the manufacture of the golden calf (Ex. xxxii.), and is put severely in his place on another occasion also (Num. xii.). Altogether, "E's" work is a typical product of the movement against priestcraft in the time of Amos and Hosea.

The kingdom of Israel was extinguished by Assyria not many years after this (722 B.C.). The prophetic party were able to represent this as a judgment on the abuses they attacked, and to gain a temporary triumph under Hezekiah of Judah, who was the first Hebrew ruler to attempt the extirpation of idolatry and the suppression of local sanctuaries. The devastating Assyrian invasions, however, which marked his reign, enabled the old stagers to discredit the iconoclasts, and under his son Manasseh (seventh century) the former practices were completely restored, and the prophetic party came in for a hard time—just as, in our own history, the Marian persecution followed the excesses of the Protestants under Edward VI. In this long period of adversity, many prophets seem to have despaired of their cause, and taken service with the court and the established order—the state of things which causes Jeremiah to write: "A wonderful and horrible thing is come to pass in the land; the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?" (Jer. v. 30-31).

The Monotheists now had recourse to one of the favourite weapons of religious propagandists—literary forgery. In 622, when certain repairs were being executed in the temple of Jerusalem, the priest, Hilkiah, informed one of the royal secretaries that "the book of the law" had been found in the precincts. The book was read to the young king, Josiah, to whom its contents were evidently news, for he "rent his clothes," and ordered inquiry to be made as to the means of averting the curses denounced in it. As a result, idolatrous worship was put down, the local sanctuaries desecrated, and worship restricted to Jerusalem. In Samaria, the local

[1] "Baal" is merely an epithet, "lord" or "master." It was applied to various gods, including Yahweh himself (Hosea ii. 16).

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priests were sacrificed upon their own altars—the Puritan party displaying, in their moment of triumph, their full share of barbarity and ferocity (2 Kings xxii. 3-xxiii. 20).

The forgery which worked this revolution was our book of Deuteronomy, or the first thirty chapters of it —the present end of the book being an editorial addition. This work purports to be the final address delivered by Moses to the Israelites before his death. As Moses is represented by other writers of the Pentateuch as no orator, and needing Aaron to do his speaking for him, the eloquent harangue put into his mouth in Deuteronomy is at plain variance with the story. This, however, did not trouble the Monotheistic forger, as there was no Pentateuch then in existence. The reform party evidently did a "deal" with Hilkiah, inducing him to plant their imposture on the unsuspecting king, in return for the monopoly of sacrifices which they proposed to confer on the temple of Jerusalem. Unable to sweep away the system of priestcraft altogether, they compromised with it.

The distinguishing notes of Deuteronomy are its severe Monotheism (Yahweh now has no longer any bodily form, but only a voice—Deut. iv. 12-8), and its ruthless denunciation of capital penalties on those who depart from it. The apostate prophet is to be put to death; a town practising idolatry is to be burnt, and its population massacred (chapter xiii.); and while certain relatively humane provisions are made for the conduct of war generally, Canaanite cities in Palestine are to be excepted from them (chapter xx.). No sacrifices are to to be allowed except at Jerusalem (chapter xii.). At the same time certain political and economic reforms are sketched out. All debt is to be cancelled once in seven years (chapter xv.), and the king is to be strictly limited in the number of his wives, the strength of his army, and the amount of his treasures (chapter xvii. 14-20). It is doubtful if these beneficial measures were ever executed: the periodical cancellation of debt, at any rate, is impossible in any society which recognizes private property.

The triumph of the Monotheists was short-lived. Josiah was slain in battle against Necho of Egypt, and his son Jehoiakim, whom Necho put on the throne, restored the old religious practices—perhaps estimating at their correct value the claims of the recently found law-book to a Mosaic origin. Jehoiakim showed scanty respect for any prophetic admonitions; when the first edition of Jeremiah was read to him, he unceremoniously lit the fire with it (Jer. xxxvi.)—a proceeding which the prophet resented with the natural fury of outraged authorship.

The downfall of Assyria, occurring at this time, left Babylon the mistress of south-western Asia. Judah, like the other petty kingdoms, had to accept the new yoke; and a series of futile rebellions, under Jehoiakim and his two successors, led finally to the capture of Jerusalem, the destruction of Solomon's temple, and the removal to Babylonia of most of the population who escaped slaughter (586 B.C.). The attitude of the Monotheist party, to judge by Jeremiah's utterances, was unashamedly anti-national in the final crisis; and the account of Jeremiah's arrest under the "Dora" of those days has a very modern ring about it (Jer. xxxvii. 11-21). By the fall of Jerusalem, in fact, this party were absolute gainers. Their principal enemies, the chief priests, were executed by the Babylonians; the temple, with its idolatrous associations, was burnt; the kingdom was destroyed; and all this they were able to represent as Yahweh's vengeance upon idolatry. The way was open for a strenuous propaganda among the exiles in Babylonia, which should convert the remnant of the Jewish people into a Monotheistic religious sect.

The prophetic party also undertook, shortly before or after this time, that re-writing of the history of Israel in the light of their own prejudices, which has given us the present books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings. The method followed was very simple. Extracts were freely made from the old, naive histories of "J" and his school; and these extracts were padded out with comment, on the lines of Deuteronomy, claiming disasters as the inevitable penalty of idolatry, and prosperity as the inevitable reward of Deuteronomic orthodoxy. The merits of monarchs are assessed according to their religious policy alone. The rulers of the Northern kingdom, simply because they maintain sanctuaries other than that of Jerusalem, are invariably declared to have "done that which was evil in the sight of Yahweh, and walked in the way of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin." Ahab, who was at all events a valiant fighter, not without a certain chivalry, is singled out for exceptional reprobation, because he introduced Phœnician worship; his magnanimity to his enemy, Benhadad of Damascus, is treated as a crime (1 Kings xx. 30-43). The only monarchs commended are those kings of Judah who listened respectfully to prophets, and took, at any rate, some measures against idolatry. Hezekiah, who was the first to attempt the total suppression of local worships, is highly extolled; and to minimize the impression made by Sennacherib's invasion and the thumping indemnity Hezekiah had to pay, an outbreak of sickness in the Assyrian army is exaggerated into an angelic massacre of 185,000 troops (2 Kings xix.). Deuteronomy, and the Deuteronomic history written at this time, became the nucleus of the Jewish Bible as it subsequently grew up.

Robert Arch.

Acid Drops.

Bishop Hensley Henson writes to the *Times* protesting against the identification of Christianity with an attempt to make England a "dry" country. He says that if the English artizan is forced to link together in his mind Christianity and total abstinence, he will reject both. He also says:—

> There is yet another consideration. The nation may vote itself "bone-dry," but the Church cannot, so long as it continues to celebrate the Holy Communion according to the Lord's institution. And Anglicans, before they can become prohibitionists, must revise the Catechism.

That is a decided hit. The alliance of religion and drink is an ancient one, and not to be so easily broken as some people appear to think.

The clergy were exempted from Military Service during the War, but they are determined to exploit the peace time. Three bishops took part in the service at Captain Fryatt's funeral, and another Father-in-God officiated at the service at St. Paul's Cathedral.

At a Churchmen's Union meeting at Kensington it was stated that there was a tendency to describe the Kingdom of God as the "Democracy of God." We do not despair of parsons describing the "King of Kings" as the "President of Presidents." The clergy are adepts in the art of camouflage.

Professor David Smith is a notorious trimmer and evader of difficulties. In the *British Weekly* for July 31 he is asked "Why did God allow ages to pass before he sent his Son, during which time men groped in the dark"? This is an old question, and innumerable are the attempts that have been made to answer it; but the fact is that, on the assumption of the existence of a Heavenly Father, it is eternally unanswerable. Dr. Smith juggles with it, and ignores his own doctrine of the Fall, or, as he calls it, the "Initial Catastrophy."

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The curious thing is that, completely ignoring original sin, which forms such an important article in his creed, Dr. Smith says, adopting Lessing's words: "That which education is to the Individual, Revelation is to the Race." Of course, the race does not exist at all apart from the individuals who constitute it; and according to the Bible, God revealed himself, not to the race, but to favoured individuals in a specially favoured nation. We know quite well that education is necessarily gradual, and that in the Professor's article is identical with evolution; but the Son was sent that he might become mankind's Saviour. Dr. Smith, however, teaches that mankind was incapable of being saved until it reached a certain stage in the course of its education; but he forgets that when the Saviour *did* come, he was rejected, and is still rejected by two-thirds of the human race.

The truth is that Dr. Smith is what Robert Hall more than once called the great Puritan divine, Dr. John Owen—"a double Dutchman floundering in a continent of mud." It is of evolution, proceeding by means of inexorable physical and chemical forces, that he really treats, and his frequent allusions to God's and the Holy Spirit's share in the work damns it as the most gigantic and ghastly failure conceivable. It is utterly impossible for anybody to be at once a consistent evolutionist and an orthodox Christian divine, and Dr. Smith's *naive* attempt to combine the two is screamingly ludicrous.

At the George Eliot Centenary Celebrations at Nuneaton, the Bishop of Birmingham took a prominent part. The clergy love to patronize Freethinkers—when they are dead.

Providence doeth all things well. At Rio de Janeiro a plague of locusts has cheered the inhabitants.

The *Christian Commonwealth*, in its leading article for July 30, expresses its conviction that "the remedy for superstition in religion" is not Rationalism, for the simple reason that "Rationalism tends to leave out what it cannot rationalize"; but our contemporary culpably quibbles. The Rationalism that includes what it cannot rationalize is clearly a misnomer. The editor naively admits that there has been an irrational element in the great religious movements, and, of course, "irrational" and "superstitious," as applied to religion, are synonymous terms. The question that confronts us, therefore, resolves itself to this: What *is* the remedy for irrationalism, if not Rationalism?

The irrational element in religion is theology, or supernaturalism. To speak of "a reasonable theology" is essentially illogical, and all the great theologians glory in the fact that their doctrines transcend reason. The *Christian Commonwealth* disapproves of the service of Benediction, so warmly advocated just now by the Catholic party in the English Church; but, surely, the belief in it is no whit more unreasonable than any other supernatural belief. The simple truth is that there is no such thing as a "reasonable theology," and this is the very ground on which Rationalists reject all forms of theology, and confine their researches within the limits of Nature.

Dr. Barber, President of the Wesleyan Conference, confesses that "we are faced with a world of criticism, petulant, often unjust, but with some truth in the criticism," and yet, in the same breath, proudly claims that "never was the name of Jesus Christ so honoured." Consistency is a jewel *not* possessed by the ordinary parson.

At one of the Wesleyan Conference meetings, the Rev. Mr. Gautrey sorrowfully admitted that "as a profession the Ministry was a failure," but asserted that "as a vocation it was the greatest on earth." He spoke the truth. The ministry is indeed a total failure; but it yields a comfortable living to fifth and sixth-rate men who would starve in any other calling.

The *Evening News* states that at the Woking Peace Pageant the Salvation Army took part. Two banners were carried in the procession, inscribed: "Are you prepared for death?" and "Death followeth on closely." What actually followed was a tableau of "the Allies." It might have been worse. The S.A. band might have played "The bells of hell go ting-a-ling, a ling."

Cardinal Bourne reviewed two cadet companies of the Sussex Yeomanry. Afterwards, the lads kneeling, the Cardinal pronounced the benediction. This took place in London, the capital of the British Empire, in the twentieth century.

"There is a marked increase in crimes of violence," writes a London editor. Just so! Only the dear clergy would have it that the World-War was a punishment for somebody's sins.

Place: North London Police Court. Occasion: Alfred Benning, Salvationist, summoned for maintenance of an illegitimate child. Incident: Defendant questioned as to whether he was speaking the truth. Reply: "I am a Salvationist, and don't tell lies unnecessarily." The qualification is delicious. But evidently the Court decided that this was not one of the necessary occasions, and made an order for 6s. per week.

The Vicar of Goldhangar, Essex, is seriously annoyed. It appears that "a host of ungodly persons" come to the village during the summer months for a holiday. The vicar would not object to that; but they don't go to church, and that does annoy him. For while those who let rooms and those who supply food, etc., reap the benefit of the holiday influx, the vicar gets nothing at all. The visitors require attention on Sunday, and that keeps the natives away from church. And "not only do they neglect to go to church themselves; they make it impossible for others to go." Hence the tears. And it is hard on the vicar. He is the only tradesman in the village who receives nothing from the holiday influx.

A decision has been taken by the Upper House of Convocation of Canterbury to introduce in the Prayer Book, a Collect, Epistle, and Gospel for the Festival of the Blessed Virgin. This decision, if persisted in, should go far to transform the Christian Trinity into a Quartette.

The British Undertakers' Union reports that the cost of coffins has increased sevenfold, and, in many places, burial fees have been materially increased. Perhaps the clergy will inform us if the cost of living in heaven is affected by the War.

The Mansion House is evidently undergoing a fit of active piety, for it holds a weekly prayer meeting. We confidently predict that, like most fits, this will not be of long duration.

Dr. Fort Newton, of the City Temple, makes a startling confession, namely, that, after nineteen centuries of Christian history, "very few have ever seen, even in a dream, what Jesus came to do, and what his Gospel meant, much less have they believed it." And yet, with this damning fact staring him in the face, the reverend gentleman has the temerity to assert that Jesus is the only hope of the world, in and by whom "all mankind can be saved here, now, upon earth." What an illusive hope to cling to!

The Young Men's Christian Association is to cater for women at some of their holiday camps. Perhaps they cannot get hold of the men without the girls.

The Bishop of Woolwich, like so many ecclesiastics now, is very democratic. Speaking at Brockley, he said that "he sympathized with the labour programme from beginning to end." Presumably, in the high and palmy days of Imperialism, he took comfort in the text: "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's."

The Rev. Tyssul Davis declares that Christianity is "the religion of service." Did he mean domestic service?

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To Correspondents.

A. G. Barker.—Thanks. Will prove very useful.

L. Muskett.—Congratulations on the six new readers received. We can send you back numbers for distribution if you can use them. Much obliged.

T. Sharpe.—Papers to hand. We shall be pleased to see to their distribution.

Mr. G. Trebells, replying to a correspondent in our issue of June 22, reminds us of an article which appeared from his pen on "Women and Freemasonry," which appeared in our issue for August 15, 1916. He also says that he sent us a subsequent article from New York. We regret that this never came to hand. It was probably submarined *en route*.

Mrs. E. Adams.—No, things are not much easier yet. But we are hoping for better times. And having lived through the past five years, we feel equal to anything. Thanks for appreciation.

W. Binden.—It was personal identity as the expression of an entity separate from and independent of the material organization that was intended. It is the memory of past states, with their registration in a modified nerve structure, that provides the foundation of all that we can legitimately mean by the expression.

J. W. Silkstone (Toronto).—Pleased to hear from you. It is not all "beer and skittles" being a Freethinker anywhere. But, after all, the man who has the courage to avow himself one finds something that nothing else can give him. And on any proper valuation he gains more than he loses—even though the gain cannot be counted in terms of cash or social position. Those who have tried it know it.

T. B. H.—We have not forgotten your promise, and shall certainly call on you when the time arrives.

W. J.—We did all that was necessary by letter. We have not lost sight of the other matter.

A. E. Hambook.—We agree with you that some very interesting accounts could be written of the progress of many of our readers from superstition to Freethought. One day we might start a series of such autobiographies, of about half column each—if they could be so compressed. We are gratified that you have found our writings so helpful; also that your brother-in-law in Burma finds the *Freethinker* in such ready demand.

P. Adamson.—We haven't seen Professor Adamson's book, but, as you say, it is monstrous that such men should sneer at such great figures as Thomas Paine. The truth is that religious bigotry and vested interest found so deadly an enemy in Paine that his part in moulding the better thought of the nineteenth century has been systematically hidden. And to-day there is not one writer in a thousand who has the moral courage to do Paine justice.

F. Swinford.—We note what you say, but, of course, our comments referred to the intellectual rather than the moral quality of the man. We cannot say whether Dean Inge holds shares in an armament firm or not.

E. A. Macdonald.—Safely to hand, with thanks. Rest will appear in due course. Sorry to hear you have been unwell. We are keeping fit, and in truth have no time to spend on being ill.

D. Wilson.—There is no work of the kind at present in print. Something may appear one day.

Mr. G. Wallace informs us that a popular edition of Metchnikoff's *Nature of Man* was published by Messrs. Heinemann at 1s.

O. L. Davis.—We wrote on the subject some long time ago. Will deal with it again when opportunity offers.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We hope that the Branches of the N.S.S. are not losing sight of the necessity of early preparations for the autumn and winter propaganda. It should be easier now to obtain halls for public meetings, and the public is there, if only an attempt is made to get at it. Nothing succeeds like a policy with a little courage behind it, and a Branch that ventures little cannot hope to achieve much. Ours is really "a glorious adventure," and the end is worthy the adventuring. Any help that can be given from headquarters will be cheerfully rendered.

We have nothing further to report this week concerning the action of the L.C.C. in prohibiting the sale of the *Freethinker* in the public parks. An attempt will be made to get the matter fully discussed within the Council itself, and, in view of that, we hope our London readers will let their representatives have their views on the matter. If the Council persists in its attempt to prevent anything being sold with which it disagrees, then will be the time to try other methods. But we can afford to wait. There are still some people left who care for freedom of the press and of propaganda; and the L.C.C. may find, once more, that it has tackled a bigger problem than it thinks.

We feel impelled to print the following from Mr. H. Irving, so do so:—

> Your *Creed and Character* is a fascinating little book. In the course of my reading it, I had to lay it aside once or twice on account of my work, and I begrudged doing so. You throw your "Coh-e-noors" about like a millionaire trying to beggar himself, although I suspect that, radium-like, you emit these radiations without loss to your store. But there is a financial side to the matter. Sevenpence is a low price for such a closely packed mass of information and original thinking. One would think it was a case of "easy come, easy go," and even we who have been in touch with your public career for a straight run of about thirty years are apt to forget that it is the result of sustained digging in hard rock for as long a period. Your expressed view is that giving yourself *wholly* to the Cause you love is not sacrificing yourself, but realizing yourself. It would be encouraging if Freethinkers generally would *partly* realize themselves. They could do this by extending the circulation of *Creed and Character*. I have ordered a dozen copies, which shall either be sold, lent, or given away.

Eskimo Questions.

In Curran and Calkin's interesting story of their eight months of travel by canoe, motor-boat, and dog-team, along the east side of Hudson's Bay (*In Canada's Wonderful Northland, 1917*), they describe a visit to a mission church, where they heard an Eskimo preacher addressing a congregation of Eskimo men, women, and children, and they say:—

> Although not a word from the beginning to the close of the service could be understood [by the visitors], it was our duty to be present and show these people that we were heartily in sympathy with them. The missionaries say that they are placed in a most embarrassing position when white men visit the Posts, and entirely ignore the Church. The natives suppose the Church to be a universal institution of the white man, and the missionaries have been plied with many questions regarding the fact that some of the visitors had failed to attend the services. These questions they have found very difficult to answer. In fact, the Eskimo is, generally speaking, a thinking man, and it is not an infrequent occurrence for the missionary to be hard pressed for an answer to his critical questions regarding the creation and other Biblical stories with which he is familiar.

We can guess what will happen when larger and non-missionary knowledge penetrates to Wonderful Northland. "Coming events cast their shadows before."

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In the "Upper Circles."

ACCORDING to the brief reports of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's lectures on "Life after Death" in the *Daily News* and other papers, the spirits of the dead have a jolly good time up above.

"People asked," said Sir Conan Doyle, "what about the child who dies? The answer is always the same," says Dr. Conan Doyle. "The child grows up under delightful conditions, and when the parents come across, it is there, grown up to welcome them."

"Yes."

"And what about old persons?"

"The old person goes back to the normal, the man to about thirty-five, the woman to thirty, so that no man need mourn his lost strength, or any woman her lost beauty."

"And what do they do?"

"A part of their work is missionary, and they talk of artistic, literary, dramatic, and musical matters. The 'etheric body' in which they work and which passes out of the physical body at death is an exact duplicate of the present body."

When I read this, I was, I must confess, a little bit astonished, for though I had become used to extraordinary stories from "spiritists"—friends of mine—of the doings of spirits in the other world, wherever that may be, I was not prepared for such a startler as this from Dr. Conan Doyle.

I pondered the matter over carefully for some days, and one night when I had got my mind finely attuned for the reception of any stray "spirit" that *might* be wandering about in the neighbourhood of Peckham, I called up one of my favourite little "sprites," Psycho by name, because of his sprightly movement and nimble wit, from the vasty deep, and post haste dispatched him off to the "upper circles" to ascertain for me whether what Dr. Conan Doyle had said before a large and credulous audience at Queen's Hall was strictly accurate, or whether it was, after all, only one of those fascinating stories that he used to spin when he set "Sherlock Holmes" on the track of some diabolical scoundrel of his own powerful imagination.

My little "sprite" was a long time on his errand, and in the meantime I had fallen into a sleep which, however, was more or less disturbed by strange dreams. In one of these dreams my "young sprite"—I say young, because the sprightly appearance of these creatures would lead one to suppose that they were always in their early youth—returned and narrated to me in language which I perfectly understood what he had seen "up above." Then he beckoned me to accompany him on a journey to "The Upper Circles," assuring me that it would only take a few years to reach our destination, and that he had "an invisible chariot" in waiting in which we could be comfortably wafted into the heavenly regions without running any risk of collision on the journey. When we had gone far away into the "Upper Circles" we came upon a group of beings whom my guide assured me were "spirits" who were clothed, or perhaps it would be more correct to say "wrapped in their 'etheric bodies.'" Presently when we had got, so to speak, to close quarters with numerous groups of "spirit forms," I ventured the remark that I thought I could see "the astral" or "etheric form" of some of them.

"Yes, I think you can," said my lively companion Pyscho. "But they are very thin. I fancy I can see through them, I continued."

"Well, if you can't, I can," said my guide, who was a veritable Sherlock Holmes in his method of investigation and deduction. Presently I heard them mumbling something, chattering together like so many apes.

"Is that 'jabbering' their method of talking?" I asked.

"Yes," said Psycho. "You will observe that they are all toothless."

"So I perceive. There are no dentists in the heavenly regions, I suppose?"

"None," said my guide. "And consequently no artificial teeth for the spirits."

"What long 'astral beards' those old fellows over there wear, to be sure! No barbers up here, I presume?"

"None," said Psycho. "And they can never get their hair cut."

"Do you think it possible that the 'spirit forms' grow younger as the ages roll?—that time passes them by, like the Levite, on the other side?"

"Certainly not. Look for yourself. That old joker over there looks quite a thousand years old; look how shrivelled up he is. Why, you can't see his face for wrinkles."

"Yes; but I suppose he could put us up to a wrinkle or two"—I couldn't resist the pun—"about his 'etheric form.'"

"But what about the children? Do their spirits grow old?"

"Certainly."

"When they are very young, and take on the 'etheric form,' how do they grow or develop to the full spirit form? What kind of nourishment do they get? Are they brought up on the bottle, or do they get 'spiritual milk' from the breast? I can't see any breasts in the 'astral bodies' here; in fact, I can't tell what sex, if any, they belong to—they are all so much alike."

"Quite right," said Psycho; "that is why there are no marriages in the Upper Circles—and no divorces."

"But tell me, do you think Dr. Conan Doyle is right when he says that these creatures here who have taken on the 'etheric bodies' occupy their time in discussing music, literature, and the drama."

"No; certainly not," said my guide; "because when they are on earth, although they get 'etheric bodies,' they leave their brains behind them. In fact, it's hard to say what they discuss, for they don't appear to have either teeth or tongue—and yet they have plenty of jaw."

"But have they any bands up here—string, or brass, or jazz?"

"No, not even a penny trumpet or a jews-harp. There are no instruments with an 'etheric form' and no instrument-makers up here."

"With regard to 'literature,' what books have they up here?"

"No books, no printers, no bookbinders, no machine-rulers, no publishers—no nothing; nothing but damp clouds and 'etheric' forms—too numerous to be counted."

"Then I think I can confidently tell Dr. Conan Doyle that he is wrong in this matter; that the spirits leave fools and knaves to do all the discussion down below?"

"Exactly."

"But I always understood that somewhere in the heavenly regions there was a land overflowing with milk and honey?"

"Not that I know of," said Psycho. "In any case, there are no cows and no bees up here; when they die, they are unable to put on an 'etheric form.'"

"What is that group doing over there?"

"That group," said Psycho, "is doing what all the spirits do in turn—the old trick—trying how many of them can stand on the point of a problematical needle that has neither length, breadth, nor thickness."

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"In that case I do not think we need pursue our investigations any further. Let us descend."

With that remark we made our way through the clouds until we came to our "invisible chariot," and began to make a rapid descent towards the earth; but all of a sudden we seemed to knock up against a very stiff cloud, and the machine turned suddenly over, and down we came at a tremendous speed—crash! crash! crash!—both of us being precipitated out of the machine. Over and over we turned thousands of times; indeed, perhaps we turned somersaults millions of times, before we came within sight of the earth. When I realized that we were very near the earth, I groaned with fear, thinking of the awful bump I should get when I touched *terra firma*.

At that moment I groaned and turned over in bed, and rolled on to the floor, striking my head against a chair which stood near the bedside. I saw millions of stars; but when I had sufficiently recovered from my fall, I realized that the whole series of incidents was nothing but the "baseless fabric of a vision."

Arthur B. Moss.

Is God Necessary?

Si Dieu n'existait pas, il faudrait l'inventer.—Voltaire.

Let me, with too weak words, paint for you the picture of what the alleged condition of the world under Atheism would be.

There would be wars and rumours of war. Truth would not be. Men could not trust the words of their fellow-men, nor nations the words of nations. Earth would be an armed camp and Desolation would cast its withered blooms across the face of things.

A hiatus would exist in the course of affairs. Stagnancy and putrefaction would be everywhere.

Immortality would be rampant. Robbery and murder, hand in hand, would devastate all.

No longer would man have a guiding star to look to in the darkness of his days, no longer a hope to cling to in his latest hours. Gone would be the higher things, gone the wonder of the inscrutable. He would be of the earth, earthly.

A pretty picture. Yet there is a familiar ring about it. Methinks the "God-fearing" world of to-day is not so different.

But the picture is false. It is as detestable as a *faux Rodin*. It is a fierce denunciation: a weapon of which ecclesiastics make much. But it is a two-edged dagger, cutting both ways.

For almost two thousand years Christianity and other equally inspired religions have shaped men's morals. They have insinuated their doctrines into the receptive and undiscriminating minds of children; they have bred those children to fear an invisible and omnipotent power. Yet, they argue, take away the object of their fear, which is to say, God, and they will become moral (and probably physical) reprobates. How comes it, then, that Churchmen would have us believe that fear and "bargaining with God" is a mistaken view of religion? To me, the crux of the matter lies in the fact that they themselves have no clear idea of what religion is.

This is no new situation. Andrew Lang, in his *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, is forever endeavouring to find where the one begins and the other ends. And fails. Where experts fail, can an amateur hope to succeed?

The question we must ask ourselves is, "Has Christianity (exemplifying the highest sphere of worship) accelerated progress?" Has it led us to a position which the natural development of man could not have reached?

This is a subject in which fact must to a certain extent give place to surmise. Christianity is an active force beyond the radius of whose ruthless activity is nothing. The comparative method is the only one which can be adopted. From a knowledge of what was, one can construct what might have been—and what shall be.

The origin of the idea of God was due to an ignorance of natural laws. As these became better understood, the conception of Deity changed. The power behind the veil ceased to be the maker and mover of all things. As Man ascended, God descended. Early progressive scientists became sceptics, became Atheists in many cases. With ignorance, God is great; with knowledge, God is not.

Of ancient civilizations, the most advanced was the Greek. Amongst the Greeks were numbered many Atheists, and others had but vague, indefinite ideas of Deity. Plato's God was but "the idea of good"; yet that most eminent Christian lay-preacher, Dr. Glover, once asserted to me that Plato was a pre-Christ Christian.

Democritus of Abdera, the greatest thinker of his time, the formulator of the *atomic system*, was amongst the sceptics. He did not acknowledge the presence of design in Nature, and asserted that the gods were merely aggregates of atoms.

The gods of Epicurus were otiose, decadent "beings," who slept in the background, forgetful of all they had done, and existing merely because the philosopher had more important and more difficult problems to deal with than demolishing chimeras. If Epicurus did not deny that there were gods, he did deny that there was immortality. "*When we are, death is not; and when death is, we are not.*"

Lucretius, in his *De Rerum Natura*, transmutes the twin-philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus into the stately grandeur of Latin poetry. Euhemerus, whose mythical discovery of an island whose inscribed tombs demonstrated the fact that the gods of Greece were merely shadows of defunct kings, ironically jested at the idea of divinity, while Lucian, greatest of classic essayists, openly laughed the gods to scorn.

Yet, *mirabile dictu*, early Christian philosophers adopted Euhemerism as a mode of discrediting opposition candidates for the God-head. Would that they had been consistent and had applied the system to their own gods. But one cannot look for consistency in Christians.

With the rise of Christianity, with its intolerance playing upon the fears of the people, came the dark days of ignorance. Learning slept. When hundreds of years had passed and knowledge blossomed fresh in the Renaissance, Atheism became current. The forward minds left God behind them. They led the van of the assault on the fortress of deity, they were the earliest propagandists of a "world set free."

But intolerance, excommunication, and the Inquisition, did their deadly work. Yet this time knowledge had awakened not to sleep again. Slowly, but with sure foot, progress was made. Breach after breach was made in the stronghold of the gods. Now only a few tumbled bricks remain, behind which the remaining "last ditchers" have fortified themselves about with inspiration and "belief before knowledge is possible."

It is significant that the *Dark Ages* were those in which Christianity was omnipotent. They were dark with crime, and hate, and Prelacy; Progress lay chained with the thousand chains of prejudice and enforced ignorance.

From the foregoing necessarily brief *resume*, it is obvious that progress was made not because of but in spite of Christianity. A belief in deity creates a "forbidden ground," on which it is impossible, with impunity, to tread. Take away this bogey and the world is ours.

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Why should we go through life fettered with ancient taboos and prejudices? Why should we sit, gray-haired and leaden-eyed, waiting the fulfilment of a promise made by the Lord —— knows who? Why should we wait, and watch, and weary when we might be up and doing? We are here for but a little time; make the most of it that a better world may be possible for those who come after.

Wherein, then, is God necessary? If to keep men from crime, there is a sufficiency of human laws, and judges, and policemen without introducing a series of supernatural ones. If to have something to revere, man exists, as yet the noblest evolution of the common clay.

If to have something to strive for, there exists the vista of a nobler and a better world, which would at least be a reality, not a problematic Paradise. But if it is as a salaried inactivity for mediocre talent, there will, indeed, be a void and a glut in the market for unskilled labour.

This would be the only loss, and this loss would be, for the world at large, a gain.

H. C. Mellor.

A Dirge.

Play me a march, low toned, and slow.

Secularism is a philosophy perfectly fitted to respond to all phases of life. It brings more happiness into the world than any other known deductions from the facts of Nature. But life is not all sunshine. We are all subject to the troubles inevitably linked to our existence. Even in the dark hour of final separation, Secularism is the greatest solace known to man. Reason and knowledge provide the most powerful sustenance by their harmony with the facts that everywhere surround us.

It has been our sad duty, recently, to attend and pay our last tribute and to render our last services to an aged relative. He was full of years, but—

Why mourn ye that our aged friend is dead?
Ye are not sad to see the gathered grain,
Nor when their mellow fruit the orchards cast,
Nor when the yellow woods let fall the ripened mast.

Ye sigh not when the sun, his course fulfilled,
His glorious course, rejoicing earth and sky,
In the soft evening, when the winds are stilled,
Sinks where his islands of refreshment lie,
And leaves the smile of his departure spread
O'er the warm coloured heaven and ruddy mountain head.

Why weep ye then for him, who, having won
The bound of man's appointed years, at last
Life's blessings all enjoyed, life's labours done,
Serenely to his final rest has passed;
While the soft memory of his virtues, yet,
Lingers like twilight hues, when the bright sun is set?

On arrival at the place of burial, we had some opportunity to reflect upon our change of attitude from the time when the thraldom of superstition was still upon us. How the surroundings used to weigh us down! We do not, of course, claim that we feel light and joyous now under these circumstances; but there is a great change. All around us are the innumerable dead, among whom are many that we loved, and by whom we were loved in return, and whose memory we still earnestly revere. They seem, in our present fancy, to reprove us; we come to them so seldom. What memories come to us! But we no longer fear about their fate; they are all sleeping peacefully.

How the voice of the presiding clergyman jars upon our feelings: "Man hath but a short time to live, and is full of misery," uttered in a loud, hurried manner, but soon to be lowered and slowed down as though he had become conscious of his want of harmony. Here lies our great charge against Christianity, this, our present life is belittled in the interests of a supposed future life. As the service proceeded we were greatly impressed by: "The pains of eternal death" solemnly spoken and repeated. How futile all this seemed in the presence of all these surrounding tombstones. They seemed to mutely and decidedly dispute all that was being said over the open grave: "As we are, so will you be, behold our quiet." Let us listen to Jeffries:—

> Nothing has the least fear. Man more senseless than a pigeon, put a god in vapour; and to this day, though the printing press has set a foot on every threshold, numbers bow the knee when they hear the roar the timid dove does not heed. So trustful are the doves, the squirrels, the birds of the branches, and the creatures of the field. Under their tuition let us rid ourselves of mental terrors, and face death itself as calmly as they do the vivid lightning; so trustful and so content with their fate, resting in themselves and unappalled. If but by reason and will I could reach the godlike calm and courage of what we so thoughtlessly call the timid turtle-dove, I should lead a nearly perfect life.

Thus, we here repeat that the great work of Secularism is the removal of the fear of death from the world, and by so doing we will stay all "tales of dying horror." The severing of the ties of love by death will ever bring pain and sorrow in its train. But as man becomes freed from these terrors he will learn more and more to look upon death, still with dirge-like feelings, but —

Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

J. Fothergill.

Correspondence.

"THE SCIENCE OF THE ULTRA-MATERIAL."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—Your contributor seems to me to land one into a morass of metaphysics, simply because he accepts too readily the opinions of Professor Oliver Lodge and other great physicists on the ether.

They start with an atom, and agree that it consists of matter and energy. A process of pulverization then follows, in which an atom is divided into much minuter parts. In this process matter has vanished, and we have only energy of some kind left. Professor Lodge reduces the atom to corpuscles of electricity, whatever they may be. No wonder Spiritualism flourishes after a process of metaphysics like this.

Might I recommend to your readers another view set forth on p. 250 of R. K. Duncan's *The New Knowledge?*

> The ether is what it was—the hypothetical, but none the less believed in, medium of extreme tenuity and elasticity diffused throughout all space, the medium for the transmission of radiant energy.
>
> Recently, however, Mendeleeff, the doyen of chemical science, has originated the conception that the ether, instead of being some mysterious form of non-matter, as generally believed, is actually the lightest and the simplest of the elements, and a definite form of matter.
>
> He believes it to be one of the inactive gases of the Argon family of elements, and he assigns to it the position x in the Zero Group of his revised periodic arrangement of the elements.
>
> The atomic weight of the ether he concludes to be nearly one-millionth of that of hydrogen, and its atoms consequently travel with enormous velocities.
>
> This extreme velocity explains the all-pervading character of the substance.
>
> It may be said that, on this hypothesis, Mendeleeff accounts fairly well for the properties of the ether, and his speculations are deserving of more credit and attention than they at present receive.

To the solid ground of nature
Trusts the mind which builds for aye.

Henry Spence.

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THOMAS PAINE.

Sir,—*Re* "Sugar Plum" on Thomas Paine. Am very much interested as to *the* house in New York. Some thirty years ago I found myself in the States, and from Castle Gardens some old farmer took me away out to New Rochelle, thirty miles from New York. On leaving the train we had to walk two or three miles to his and my future home for five months. Nearing there, I espied a four-walled enclosure, an iron gate entrance, weeping willows at each corner, and an obelisk in the centre. My curiosity was aroused at such a sight in the midst of open country. I questioned Livingstone Disbrow, who was to be my employer, what it meant, and I remember he sneered a reply with some contemptuous remark. This made me very determined to see it at the first opportunity. I did the next evening; the gate was locked, so had to climb the wall, and found it was Thomas Paine's memorial, his profile on one side, and quotations from his books on the other three sides, the significance of it being there I could not glean at the time. Eventually, I was employed painting on a farm adjoining the estate given by the U.S. Senate to Thomas Paine. My bedroom was in a barn, the only furniture a bed and a sleigh, and rats were were my companions; my working hours sunrise to sunset, Sundays free. From my one solitary window I often gazed on one other solitary house away in the meadows (they called them 'lots," for they had stone walls like as in Ireland), and it was the house where Paine ended his days. I read afterwards that Mrs. Annie Besant, then a neophyte in the Theosophic rubbish, made a pilgrimage to the spot by the wayside. Have I not also read that the shrine has been removed? On the voyage over, I went by a Red Star boat from Antwerp, and there were only about twenty English folk amongst a cargo of all nationalities. I had equipped myself with Paine's *Age of Reason*, and several of G. W. Foote's pamphlets. Through being seen with these, I earned the sobriquet of Bradlaugh, and a so-called "Debate" was fixed up with a broken-down Professor. He read a treatise a long way above their ken, and I replied and scored with reading *Mother Eve*, rather it was G. W. Foote that scored, only I got the credit.

W. S. Clogg.

HEROES.

There is the Open Secret Society of the heroes. Their mystery has been published in books, in songs, in world-famous deeds of life and death, to all men of all nations and languages; yet only the heroic brotherhood really comprehend it, and are fully possessed by its inspiration. Other men may have transient glimpses of its meaning, and may thrill with its divine enthusiasm in rare moments; but soon the great door shuts, and they are cowering again in the darkness and the cold; nor can they even truly remember these rare moments in other hours and days, though they remember well enough the words of the chant, or the details of the action with which the inspiration happened to be connected. But one of the brotherhood understands and feels always. The mystery which he understands so thoroughly and feels so triumphantly is simply this: That in the whole range of the universe from highest heaven to deepest hell, there is no thing or circumstance, creature or being, dreadful to a man; that out of himself there is nothing which a man need fear; that no nature can be born into a realm unconquerable by that nature; and moreover, that the most dazzling lightning of ecstasy leaps from the blackest storm of danger. But neither he who writes nor he who reads is any nearer to the heart of the mystery through this interpretation; if he is of the brotherhood his pulse beat in unison with the throbs of this heart before; if he is not of the brotherhood his pulse will never beat in unison with these throbs—save at intervals and for moments similar to those in which the hands of a clock that does not go agree with the hands of another which is keeping true time.

—*James Thomson ("B. V.")*

Whoso comforteth a woman who has lost her child will be covered with a garment in Paradise.—*Mohammed.*

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Views and Opinions.

Truth and Falsehood.

Douglas Jerrold was asked his opinion of a certain lecture he had attended on the question of "Drink." "Oh," he replied, "the lecturer was full of his subject." That may be considered a disqualification; but there are some subjects of which a man must be full if he is to do them justice. One of these is certainly that which Sir Charles Walston takes as the topic of his book.[1] Sir Charles Walston's work is one long denunciation of false-speaking, and an equally lengthy exhortation on truth-speaking. And yet one has the feeling that, however worthy the purpose of the essay, he is part of the time labouring the obvious, and failing to stress with sufficient force that which most needs denunciation. For it is not the lies that men speak or write that are most dangerous. The worst forms of lying are the lies that we act and the lies we suggest. At the side of these, the spoken and written lie is comparatively innocuous. The one may injure a person, or a number of persons; but the lie that is lived, which gets incarnated in an institution and embedded in education, by vitiating the social atmosphere, demoralizes a whole population. We could have well spared many pages of *Truth* for a more adequate analysis of the lies that have become imbedded in our civilization, and which do so much to lower our moral currency.

* * *

French and English.

Sir Charles Walston has a deal to say that is admirable as regards falsehood and truth in connection with Journalism, Politics, Finance, Public Life, etc.; but he opens his essay with a story that, if unquestionable as to origin, is certainly questionable as a matter of fact. It is that of a French youth who returned home, telling his mother that, much to his surprise, he found it quite the thing in England to tell the truth. The story sounds far more like an Englishman's impression of what a Frenchman *should* think of us than what one actually does think. And the more impartial observer will probably conclude that as between French and English—and even others—it is not so much a question of a greater or lesser degree of lying in the bulk, as it is of different kinds of lying. When it comes, for example, to the religious lie, both acted and spoken, we fancy that this country can hold its own with any nation on the face of the earth. Sir Charles speaks of us as "a nation which, as a nation, has recognized truth, not only as a moral duty, but has made its practice highly fashionable"; but as he points out (p. 159), that if all those who professed allegiance to certain Churches were to speak truthfully, the world would be astonished to find out how large a number—and of "the best and most thoughtful"—were acting a lie; that "In every class, in every social layer, in every occupation of our common life, we must be struck by the comparative lowness of our moral standards as regards Truth" (p. 17); that the same holds true of all our trade and finance; and that even with the "upper classes" "the development of the sense of truth and the duties which it imposes is comparatively most rudimentary" (p. 18). One wonders with what class and where the practice of truth-telling has become "highly fashionable." What is fashionable is the practice of lying along recognized grooves. And that is just on a level with the code of honour which decrees that a gambling debt *must* be paid, but a tradesman *may* be swindled out of his dues.

* * *

Truth and the Public.

We fancy that Sir Charles is inclined to place too great a responsibility on the War for the prevalence of a low standard of truth. It is true, as he points out, that the practice of the Censorship, the deliberate suppression of truth by the Governments engaged in the War, and the circulation of quite misleading and false "news" (perhaps the most glaring specimen here is the lie of the Russian nationalizing of women, which was endorsed by even a member of the Government in the House of Commons), the practice of deceptions which is the primary condition for the carrying on of wars under modern conditions, have all tended to still further lower the moral standard. But it is quite clear to us that a community in which the accepted standard of truth was tolerably high could not have been so easily or so quickly demoralized. And we think a truth here is that in neither politics, nor in international relations, nor in religion, do the majority of people really look for truth. (It would probably be found that in the business world, resting as it does on credit, there is a higher standard of integrity than in either of the other departments). A people who demanded a high standard of truthfulness in public life would get it; and a people in the habit of receiving it would not have been so easily or so quickly demoralized. The important issue is not whether untruthfulness is general—the fact can hardly be denied; the really vital question is a consideration of the causes that make the public so indifferent to veracity in word and action.

* * *

One-Sided Freedom.

Sir Charles Walston says that in our ethical education a proper teaching of truthfulness is neglected. But if we use education in its widest sense, the greatest influence

[1] *Truth*: An Essay in Moral Reconstruction. Cambridge University Press; 5s.

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in moulding the tone and temper of the mass of the people has, for generations, been religion. Sir Charles has a chapter on "Religious Truth," but he nowhere touches on the real influence of organized religion in inducing a particular tone and temper in relation to public life. In fact, his ideal here appears to be uniformity of belief, a desire to see all people conforming to a common creed. And in this direction he makes a quite fatal blunder. He points to the prevalence of certain superstitions—the belief in spooks, in unlucky numbers, charms, etc.—and rightly deprecates their existence. Children, he says, must be carefully guarded against their evils, and adults protected, while "the prosecution of all clairvoyants, palmists, and similar impostors must be rigorously carried on by the State." But that is just what must not be done. That an opinion is false is no ground whatever for prosecution by the State. The cure for a false opinion is a true one, and the only medium in which a superstition can thrive is an unenlightened one. And why prosecute the palmist or the clairvoyant, or the fortune-teller, while we permit a Roman Catholic priest to take money for getting "souls" out of purgatory, or a parson to draw a salary for telling us all about our state in the next world? And why protect children, by State action, against certain forms of superstition while we hand them over to a body of clergy whose sole aim is to indoctrinate them with superstitions of their own? Is it not the literal truth that all the minor and comparatively harmless superstitions denounced by Sir Charles Walston are only so many backwaters from the great river of superstition represented by the various religions of the world? The only difference is that noted long ago by Hobbes—Religion is superstition allowed, superstition is religion disallowed.

* * *

A Specimen Christian Liar.

In our last pamphlet, *Creed and Character*, we have devoted some little space to depicting what we conceive to be the great evil inflicted by religion on racial life. There is no need to go over that ground again, further than to say that a religion such as Christianity cannot escape its full share of responsibility for the low public tone which Sir Charles properly deplores. And of that one instance only need be cited. Readers of the *Freethinker* will remember the occasion when the notorious Evangelist, Dr. Torrey, came to England, and the specially filthy and venomous stories he circulated concerning Colonel Ingersoll. They will also remember that G. W. Foote set himself the task of exposing the unscrupulous character of the man, and the falsity of his allegations. In this he had the good fortune to secure the support of the late T. W. Stead. As Dr. Torrey was receiving the patronage of many prominent clergymen, Mr. Stead was sanguine enough to believe that he would get their support in denouncing, or, at least, disowning, so unscrupulous a liar. He wrote to many, and we saw copies of some of the letters he received in reply. There was not one of them who would publicly say anything on the subject. The general tenour of their letters was: "We know the man is a liar, but to publicly say so would bring discredit on religion." And so the lies went on, and the liar enjoyed the public patronage of the clergy to the end. Freethinkers were not surprised at this result. They knew from long experience the small connection between fervent religion and a love of either truth or justice.

* * *

Reaping the Harvest.

Now there is no hiding or denying the fact that for this condition of things a large part of the responsibility rests with the Christian religion. For centuries it has exercised a commanding influence in education, and has dominated the avenues of public advancement. Internally, its history has been largely made up of lies, trickery, forgery, and deception. Externally, it has fostered a social and political persecution that could have no other consequence than to place a tax upon truth and a premium upon downright lying. Never has a branch of the Christian Church placed emphasis upon the duty of either truth speaking or truth seeking. And given a religion such as Christianity in a dominating position, what else can one expect than a public such as we have around us. We have thousands professing belief in a religion for which they have lost all real respect. We have other thousands, who, while not professing faith in Christianity, seem to spend their time in selecting a name that shall, so far as is possible, hide the fact that they are no longer Christians. The social atmosphere is thick with impostures and insincerities, and it is useless for writers, such as Sir Charles Walston, to lament the fact while they will not, or cannot, see that if they leave the "lie of religion" alone they are strengthening one of the principal causes of the evil they deplore.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The God-Eating Sacrament.

VIII.

CONCLUSION.

IT is now clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that the Lord's Supper, "the greatest of all the sacraments of the Church," is the surviving relic in Christendom of early cannibalism, cannibalism being both in origin and nature profoundly religious. The Aztecs totally disapproved of the consumption of human flesh as ordinary food, and even captives of war they never ate except when sacrificially slain. They abstained from eating the flesh of fellow-citizens because their moral sense condemned the habit. In any form and for whatever purpose resorted to, cannibalism was horrible in the extreme; but as Mr. J. M. Robertson well says, it "was strictly a matter of religion."

> After a captive had been sacrificially slain in ordinary course, his body was delivered to the warrior who captured him, and was by him made the special dish at a formal and decorous public banquet to his friends. It was part of the prescribed worship of the Gods. That the Mexicans were no longer cannibals by taste is shown by the fact that in the great siege by Cortes they died of starvation by thousands. They never ate fellow-citizens: only the sacrificially slain captives (*Pagan Christs*, p. 393).

The transition from Anthropophagy to theophagy was extremely subtle. In some instances a captive was taken at random; in others, a young man, of unblemished body, was selected to represent the Supreme Being for a year. During that period he was held in Divine honour, and all alike worshipped him. When the year was up he was slain in sacrifice, and another chosen to take his place for another year. During his year of Godship the young man lived on the fat of the land, at the expiration of which time the priest cut open his breast with a stone-knife and plucked out his heart, which he offered to the Sun-God. Then his legs and arms were duly cooked and prepared for the table, and sacramentally eaten. In course of time, animals were substituted for men, and dough images of both Gods and men were introduced; but it was really immaterial of what the sacrifices consisted, for ere the feast actually began the magic words of consecration spoken by the priest converted the substance of the food and drink on the table into the substance of the Deity, who came

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down to participate in the sacramental meal. In every case, either directly or indirectly, it was a God that was sacrificed, himself to himself, and it was a God that was consumed at each sacramental feast, the underlying belief being that *the mana*, virtue, or qualities of the thing eaten passed into the eater. As Grant Allen puts it:—

> If men eat the bodies of their fathers, who are their family and household Gods, they will also naturally eat the bodies of the artificial gods of cultivation, or of the temporary kings who die for the people. By eating the body of a God you absorb his divinity; he and you become one; he is in you and inspires you (*The Evolution of the Idea of God*, p. 118).

In point of fact, the world teemed with Saviour-Gods long before Jesus Christ was ever heard of, all of whom died a violent death for the world's redemption, rose again, and became the food and drink of their followers. Isis drank the blood of Osiris, and deepest love for him welled up in her heart in consequence; but it was in a goblet of wine that she quaffed it. In every such case, wine was not a surrogate or substitute for, but by a miracle actually became, blood. There stood the wine, which in outward appearance and taste remained wine throughout; but the great miracle took place whilst the priest repeated seven times: "Thou art wine and not wine, but the head of Athene"; "Thou art wine and not wine, but the bowels of Osiris." Under Mithraism the flesh and blood of the Divine Bull conferred immortality on all who tasted them; and it is well known that the Mithraic celebration of the eucharist was conducted in an almost identical manner with that now in use in Christendom. But Mr. Preserved Smith is of opinion that, "of all the mysteries known to us, that of Dionysus bears the closest resemblance to that of Christ," and that may simply be because Paul was more intimately familiar with it than with any of the others. Dionysus was pre-eminently God of the wild mountains, a God of Intoxication and Inspiration, and giver of immortal life. He belongs to the group of Tree and Vegetation Gods already popular in Greece, and his worship was added to that of the others, whilst the reward of loyalty to him was "perpetual intoxication" beyond the grave.

When admitted into the Olympian hierarchy, Dionysus was designated the youngest of the Gods, son of Zeus. By the sixth century B.C. his religion had been merged into and become known as Orphism, and was the most fashionable of all religions for a long time. Professor Gilbert Murray supplies the following interesting and instructive sketch of it:—

> It seems possible that the savage Thracians, in the fury of their worship on the mountains, when they were possessed by the God and became "wild beasts," actually tore with their teeth and hands any hares, goats, fawns, or the like that they came across. There survives a constant tradition of inspired Bacchanals in their miraculous strength tearing even bulls asunder—a fact, happily, beyond the bounds of human possibility. The wild beast that tore was, of course, the savage God himself. And by one of those curious confusions of thought, which seem so inconceivable to us and so absolutely natural and obvious to primitive men, the beast torn was also the God. The Orphic congregations of later times, in their most holy gatherings, solemnly partook of the blood of a bull, which was, by a mystery, the blood of Dionysus-zagreus himself, the "Bull of God," slain in sacrifice for the purification of man.....It is noteworthy, and throws much light on the spirit of Orphism, that apart from this sacramental tasting of the blood, the Orphic worshipper held it an abomination to eat the flesh of animals at all. The same religious fervour and zeal for purity which made him reject the pollution of animal food, made him at the same time cling to a ceremonial which would utterly disgust the ordinary hardened flesh-eater. It fascinated him just because it was so incredibly primitive and uncanny; because it was a mystery which transcended reason (*The Athenian Drama*, pp. 167-8).

Enough has now been advanced, I trust, in disproof of the oft-repeated contention that Christianity is a Divinely revealed religion, wholly different from and infinitely superior to every other religion under the sun. The truth is that everything in it which savours of supernaturalism has been derived from older cults, just as Christmas was from the Roman Saturnalia, and Easter from an ancient Spring Festival observed by every nation from time immemorial. As already abundantly shown, this is specially true of the God-eating Sacrament. It has come down from prehistoric times, and in all essential points is the same to-day as it was three and four thousand years ago. But there never was a time when its truth was not challenged by the more enlightened members of the different communities involved. No one can read the great religious drama, entitled *The Bacchæ*, by Euripides, without realizing that there were those who doubted and denied, in spite of the cruel persecution that overtook all opponents of the dominant ritual. We cannot but feel humiliated as we read of the women of Thebes leaving their homes, neglecting all their duties, and disporting themselves like maniacs on Mount Kithairon—wildly singing and dancing and tearing in pieces everything they came across; but the thoughtful men and women held themselves aloof, smiling in their sleeves, or weeping bitter tears of pity. As time went on the number of the unbelieving non-participants increased, whose attitude at last found accurate expression in Cicero's well-known words: "When we call corn Ceres and wine Bacchus we use a common figure of speech; but do you imagine that anybody is so insane as to believe that he feeds on God"? Alas, even in Cicero's day, millions did entertain such a wild belief, and millions still hold it in the twentieth century. We are convinced that the Lord's Supper embodies the crudest and wildest superstition this world has ever seen; and our only hope springs from the undeniable fact that as a result of the growth and dissemination of natural knowledge and common sense the faith in it is rapidly declining. In this country strenuous attempts are being made by the Catholic party in the Anglican Church to revive the ancient Pagan and mediæval Christian attitude of childlike reverence for and utter trust in this supreme mystery. In organs, like the *Church Times*, we are constantly meeting with such expressions as "The adorability of the Blessed Sacrament," "After consecration there is no bread and no wine left in the Sacrament," "Since the whole substance of the bread is changed into the whole substance of the Body of Christ, and the whole substance of the wine into the Blood of Christ, our forefathers were right and wise in using the term Transubstantiation," and numerous clergymen, who style themselves priests, vainly dream that by repeating them week after week with appropriate solemnity, they will secure the support of the laity; but in a recent "Protest to the Archbishops" it is sorrowfully confessed that on every hand the signatories have to lament "the notorious disregard of, and disbelief in, the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of our Lord, and his adorable Presence in that Sacrament." The trend of the age is decidedly away from all such absurd superstitions, and confronted by common sense the long reign of the priest is assuredly nearing its close. The childish dreams of the Church are being increasingly discredited, the well-nigh universal cry being for realities. For countless ages dreams have invested the priests with limitless power, and filled the Church's coffers with a superabundance of gold; but their days

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are now numbered, for it is being more and more widely realized that, in the words of Dryden:—

Dreams are but interludes, which fancy makes,
When Monarch Reason sleeps.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Man who Made Us all Work.

A COOL ESSAY FOR THE HOT WEATHER.

In the state of innocency Adam fell, and what should poor Jack Falstaff do in a state of villainy.—*Shakespeare.*

A LONDON magistrate has been kind enough to explain why we all have to work hard. That is to say, the majority of the human race. For the aristocracy do not work, and many of the clergy work only one day a week. "You know whose fault it is that we have to work at all," said Mr. Magistrate Symmons at North London Police Court to a defendant who was summoned for income tax, and pleaded that he had to work very hard.

The defendant blushingly admitted his ignorance. "You have forgotten the Bible," said the magistrate. "It was Adam's fault, and all men after him were condemned to work by the sweat of their brows. But for him we might have lived without labour."

Who was the monster who robbed the majority of the human race of its leisure? What is known of the wretch who ensured hard labour for all of us, except the aristocracy and the superior clergy? According to the Bible, Adam was one of the most extraordinary creatures who ever existed. Even in the freak museum of the Old Testament, he is one of the star attractions. The Bible declares that Adam was the first man, the father of the whole human race. He was a gardener. Presumably, if he had been a shoemaker, he would also have been the last man. His education was sadly neglected, for he started life as a full-grown man. It is not everyone who can throw hundredweights about on their first day on the earth. But think of what he missed. No mother ever dandled him on her lap; no father ever held him facedownwards on his knees. He never learned to keep half-an-ounce of sweets in his mouth without the schoolmaster noticing it. Neither did he learn to make noises like cats, nor to smoke cigarettes without getting red in the face.

For a time Adam was the only human being on this planet. All the clothing he had was the close of day, and the mantle of night. It did not matter much, for as yet the County Council was not. A wife was found for Adam by putting him into a deep sleep, and carving the lady out of one of his ribs, which interesting case has been facetiously termed by Colonel Ingersoll as the first operation under chloroform.

Eve, for that was the lady's name, was a very fortunate woman in many respects. Like her helpmeet, Adam, she never went to school, and was in the happy position of starting life at full age. She had no washing to do on Mondays; neither did she have to sew buttons on Adam's shirts, get his overcoat out of pawn, or even argue with him earnestly about a long golden hair on his shirt front, nor did she ever lay awake o' nights worrying how to cut down his pantaloons so as to fit the boys. She had much to be thankful for.

It is difficult to write about the lady whom Milton terms "our general mother" without emotion. Tennyson calls her "the snow-limbed Eve," which is a chivalrous tribute from Alfred the Great; but, also, he knew little about her. Like the present scribe, he lived some six thousand brief summers after her death. Moses has written her biography, it is true, but he omitted to mention whether she was a blonde or a brunette, and no portrait accompanies his monograph. So we must leave the fact in the twilight of human imagination.

Before Adam was introduced to his future housekeeper, he resembled nothing so much as the mule, being without pride of ancestry and without hope of progeny. Eve changed all that. Following her appearance, several small creatures began to creep about their abode, fall into pails, swallow tin-tacks, and run away with mother's best fig-leaf.

The first case at the first assizes was caused by Adam and Eve's theft of some apples. The trouble seems to have been caused by a talkative snake, who offered free advice. Eve listened to the loquacious reptile, and then the fat was in the fire. Adam and his descendants (always excepting the aristocracy and the superior clergy) were condemned to hard labour throughout all time. No wonder Eve repented of listening to that snake's free advice. Maybe that is one reason why none of Eve's daughters even now will ever take advice on any mortal subject.

Poor old Adam must have sighed and swore when he found that he had to go to town daily and work hard, so that his wife and family could have nice, clean, fresh-gathered fig-leaves to wear at church on Sundays. Apparently, hard work did not shorten Adam's life, for the Bible tells us that he lived to the very ripe age of nine hundred and thirty years. We trust that he was not afflicted unduly with gout, lumbago, or rheumatism during his declining centuries. We trust he was tolerably well; he was intolerably old.

We thank the London magistrate for reminding us of the man who made us all work. The full account is written by Moses, who declares that Adam upset the apple-cart of Creation. Unhappily, Moses is not always a reliable writer. He wrote an account of his own funeral.

MIMNERMUS.

The Old Testament.

III.

AFTER THE EXILE.

THE Babylonian exile lasted from 586 to 538 B.C., when Babylon opened its gates to Cyrus, founder of the Persian power. The hatred of the Jewish prophets had by this time been transferred from the ancient priesthood of Judæa, now laid low, to their present Babylonian rulers; and they confidently expected that the Medes and Persians under Cyrus would wipe Babylon off the face of the earth (see the prophecies of Isa. xiii.-xiv. 23, and xl.-xlvii., added to the book of Isaiah at this time). This hope was disappointed; Cyrus entered Babylon peacefully, and was accepted as its king by the Babylonian priests. The Jews had to be content with a decree for the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. The opportunity was now present for the restoration of the Jewish national polity on the basis of the prophets' doctrines. The enthusiasts who returned to Jerusalem sternly repulsed the offer of the natives of Palestine to join in the work; and after some consequent obstruction on their part, the new temple was begun and finished (516 B.C.).

The results of the compromise with priestcraft, which has been noticed as a feature of the Deuteronomic reforms, now began to show. The prophetic, or anti-sacerdotal, party had purchased the abolition of sacrifice and priestcraft elsewhere by recognizing it at Jerusalem. The priests proceeded to snatch the utmost advantage from this. A code of law, religious and secular, was required for the community of returned exiles; and such a code, the work of a Jerusalem priest after the return,

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we find in "P," the last strand of material embedded in the Pentateuch and in Joshua. This Priests' Book, clear, crabbed, dry, and precise, is traceable in such chapters as Gen. i. (the six days of creation), Gen. xvii. (institution of circumcision), Ex. xxv.-xxxi. (ritual legislation), and the whole of Leviticus. The long genealogies and chronologies of the Pentateuch are also from "P." The whole purpose of this work is to magnify the priesthood of Jerusalem. The history of the world from the creation on is represented as a preparation for the establishment of this hierarchy in all its splendour. Aaron, who cuts such a poor figure in the anti-clerical work of "E," is transformed by "P" into a more than regal personage, who goes about arrayed in wonderful vestments and precious stones, officiates with an elaborate ritual (every detail divinely ordained), and whose rod miraculously bursts into flower to silence all murmuring against his authority. The Levites, or priests of the old local sanctuaries, are degraded by "P" to mere servers and vergers under the Aaronic priesthood.

The compilation of the Pentateuch as we have it—*i.e.*, the amalgamation of "P" with Deuteronomy and the older works of "E" and "J," to form one voluminous record of the supposed origin of Jewish institutions—was very likely the work of Ezra, a priest who came to Jerusalem from Babylon in the year 458 B.C. and reformed various laxities which had already crept in among the descendants of the returned exiles. A Jewish tradition states that the "law of Moses" had been totally lost at the time of the exile, and that Ezra re-wrote the whole of it by divine inspiration. It may very well be that Ezra wrote it, but we should correct the legend by saying that he compiled it from existing sources by the process familiarly known to-day as "scissors and paste."

There are, of course, many portions of the Old Testament later than the time of Ezra. The whole Jewish history was written afresh, about 300 B.C., by another priestly romancer, the author of the books of Chronicles, who resembles "P" in his passion for genealogies, and who subjects even the already much-tinkered history of Kings to further extravagant embellishment from a sacerdotal point of view. The prophetic books continued to be amended and interpolated to a very late day; and the book of Daniel was not written until the time of the Maccabees, under totally new historical conditions and to express ideas quite foreign to the older prophecies. Some of the Psalms are later still.

The prophetic movement, therefore, succeeded in the aim of making Monotheism the exclusive religion of the Jews; but it altogether failed in the worthier aim, announced by the older prophets (Amos, Hosea, Micah, and even Jeremiah), of emancipating the masses from priestcraft and class-oppression. That cannot be done by any supernatural religion. Amos and his successors went as far against priestcraft as was possible in the atmosphere of their time and country; but it was not far enough. It is impossible to read some of their invectives without sympathy. After all, they were the Voltaires and Paines of that day; and if their devotion to their conception of Yahweh jars upon us, we must remember that Voltaire and Paine, too, were only Deists.

But Deism is a half-way house unfit for permanent habitation. So long as a personal God is believed in, an authoritative revelation will be demanded; and once admit an authoritative revelation from a personal God, and you will have priests and priestcraft—whether the priestcraft be wielded by Oriental priests in turbans and flowing robes, or by Catholic clergy in cassocks and birettas, or by Protestant evangelists in Geneva gowns, is only a matter of degree. Amos called upon Israel to cease offering fat victims and oppressing the poor, and to "seek him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night." We say: "Beware of the man whose God is in the skies." Seek *not* him that maketh the Pleiades and Orion, for you could not discover him, even if he existed; and the Pleiades and Orion, glorious phenomena as they are, are in truth only vast spheres of matter at high temperatures adrift in space, which owe their glory only to the human eye and brain that perceive them. Seek *not* the maker of these waste globes, but seek the faculties of the human mind itself, and whatever is permanent and satisfying in them; seek to cultivate them, and to secure equal liberty for all to cultivate them also. In seeking this with a single aim, we shall write the doom of priestcraft, kingcraft, and oppression of every kind.

Robert Arch.

Acid Drops.

The woman concerned in the horrible case of baby farming at Leytonstone has now been committed for trial on a charge of manslaughter. The woman, said the coroner, gave the children every facility for dying; they were starved, ill-clad, and in a filthy condition. The coroner also added that he was not at all sure it was right to leave the husband out of the indictment. He is, we believe, a member of the Salvation Army. We agree with the coroner that the husband was let off very easily. Anyway, he can now attend his Salvation Army services with a thankful heart, and no doubt dwell upon the prevalence of a lofty morality in a Christian country.

The Army and Navy canteens made during the War a profit of between six and seven millions. This is now to be used to benefit soldiers and sailors in various ways. What we should like to know is just what profit was made by the Y.M.C.A. in supplying refreshments to soldiers. We believe the prices charged to the soldiers were the same as in other canteens, and very large sums were given by the public And to any estimate of profits, the value of huts and materials purchased by the public should be added.

I like the pathetic tale that comes from America of the young soldier who tried to get a meal but couldn't, because the place was for officers only, tried to go to an entertainment and a dance, and found he was barred for the same reason, and so went home and prayed: "Lord, don't let us have another war, but if we do, keep it for officers only."—*Daily News.*

The cry of the inferior clergy for more money will hit the Church of England and many Nonconformist bodies hard. The Roman Catholic Church, with its celibate clergy, has an enormous advantage over its rivals. Unhappily, celibacy means, as witty Horace Smith long ago pointed out, "a vow a man takes that he will enjoy none but other men's wives."

The early Christians believed in a community of property, and some modern Christians imitate their ethics. This may account for the fact that one cannot go to an hotel or boarding house without finding the touching text hanging upon the wall: "The proprietor is not responsible for articles left in the bedrooms."

A discussion on "Who reads the Bible?" has been taking place in the *Daily Chronicle.* In the opening article, it was stated on "high authority" that in this country only one person in 20,000 reads the Bible intelligently. This means that out of a population of forty millions the Bible has less than 2,000 intelligent readers. The figures appear to us to be fantastic, but that they are put forward in a daily paper "on high authority" is significant. Certainly, most Christians know very little about the Bible, and that is why they believe it. When the Bible is read intelligently by all, the clergy will be out of work.

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The Young Men's Christian Association is still bent on the secularizing of religion. In the advertisement of its Holiday Camps, the attractions mentioned include concerts, social evenings, whist-drives, dances. What a change from the time when the only attraction of the Christian evangelists was the fireworks of hell!

Patriotism sometimes takes queer shapes. During the Peace celebrations at Westcliff-on-Sea, a shop in the London Road displayed a plaster image of Jesus Christ with a Union Jack as an appropriate background. And Jesus was not even a Welshman.

Speaking at a memorial service, the Bishop of London said, addressing the mourners: "If your boy lived to be a hundred years old he could never have done a more glorious thing than he did by dying at nineteen or twenty." His lordship discreetly omitted all reference to the clergy's exemption from military service.

The Bishop of Southwark declares that the Public School System of England is an excellent one. So it is—for the bishops.

"Nobody at the present moment seems anxious to work," declares the Bishop of Birmingham. His Lordship was referring to ordinary citizens. He has never expressed surprise that so many clergy should work only one day a week.

The Bishop of Peterborough knows a cure for the present unrest. "An ounce of Christianity," he declares, "will solve all our industrial troubles." Cannot the Bench of Bishops find that ounce; they have little else to do.

Jesus told his followers that in his name they should take up deadly things and they should not harm them. Most of his followers know how to take that kind of teaching, but some are simple enough to practise it. Thus, we see from the *Salt Lake Tribune* that one, Cleveland Harrison, a member of "The Holy Rollers," in order to exemplify his faith, allowed a rattlesnake to bite him five times. Either Harrison's faith was not strong enough or the rattlesnake had never heard of the text. Anyway, the man died two days after as a result of the bite. Now, when Harrison gets to heaven, we imagine he will have something to say to the author of the text. And it will not be "I was a stranger and ye took me *not* in." If he quotes that text, we imagine he will leave out the negative.

From the same issue of the *Tribune* we see that Archbishop Moral has ordered all Mexican priests to warn women that short skirts, high boots, and fancy hats are barred from church as immodest. But if they don't wear short skirts, how will the priests be able to tell whether the ladies have on high boots or not? It looks as though they will have to hold some sort of an inspection.

God has been made to serve many parts in the course of his evolution; but never has he been seen in a more comical light than in the *British Weekly* for August 7. The leading article is entitled "The Divine Translator," in which we are informed that "it is the glory of God to translate the speech of heaven into the language of earth." How does Sir W. Robertson Nicoll know that? On what authority does he make so astounding a statement? Heaven's "speech" is a beautiful figment of the imagination, and yet Sir William regards it as an objective reality, and writes as if he knew all about it.

Sir William assures us that "God is a perfectly accurate Translator." The only inference from the assertion is that Sir William knows the original sufficiently well to sit in judgment on the translation, and that the translation was needed only by other people, less learned than himself.

God also translates human prayer into the language of heaven, and Sir William knows exactly what prayer is when so translated. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it; and we decline to accept the editor of the *British Weekly* as a reliable exponent of it.

A Yarmouth magistrate has stated that many of the houses in the town are not fit for pigs to live in, let alone human beings. In that pious town the inhabitants are not all "bloatered" aristocrats.

The latest wills of "the starving clergy" include those of the Rev. O. H. Carey, of Trusham, Devon, £19,585; Canon C. Gray, of West Retford, Notts., £12,174; Rev. K. Prescot, of Overwhitmore, Birmingham, £44,883; and Rev. W. G. Whinfield, £24,853.

The Rev. Stanley Russell, in a remarkable article on "Ism" in the *Christian World* for August 7, says: "To preach the Sermon on the Mount on Sunday and make shells in the backyard on Monday is a strange dualism for a Christian minister"; but several preachers declared, during the War, that the Sermon on the Mount no longer applied, our supreme duty being to kill as many Germans as we could.

A newspaper paragraph (Oh! those newspapers) declares that an American scientist has discovered a method of bleaching the negro's skin. Under this treatment, "God's image carved in ebony" will become as white as snow. The Christian Church also claims it can whitewash the coloured man's "soul," and the scientific gent maintains that he can modify his complexion. This happy union of Science and Religion should enable the American Christian to grasp the African's hand instead of emptying a revolver into him.

A Baltimore lawyer, Mr. O. F. Hershey, is distressed at the state of London. Returning from a European trip, he has been blowing off steam, and he says: "I have never been to Sodom, Gomorrah, nor ancient Babylon, but I have been to London." And the American citizen calmly suggests that the English metropolis is worse than the place the clergy mention so often in their sermons. What a giddy time that Baltimore citizen must have had in London.

In an article on "Prayer" in the *Daily Mail*, it is stated that "men turn instinctively to prayer." "Even the Agnostic in his last agony cried out, 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul if I have a soul.'" It looks as if the editor was on holiday; but a daily paper should not be left in charge of the office boy.

Providence is in a holiday mood. A fire balloon set a Gospel mission alight at Palmer's Green, and it was destroyed. The influenza epidemic in Labrador has nearly wiped out the coast inhhabitants. At Hebron, out of a population of 220, there are but seventy survivors, and smaller settlements suffered as badly.

A big London newspaper has been enlivening its columns with a discussion on the subject of folk who married beneath them. No mention was made of the historic case of God "marrying" the Virgin Mary.

Mormons are said to be active in Croydon and neighbourhood, and they have opened a hall for meetings. The Croydonians are not all enamoured of Old Testament ideas on marriage.

An acquaintance of ours was riding on one of the London trams when the vehicle passed the School for the Indigent Blind. He overheard a well-dressed passenger remark to a friend: "That's the school for the *indignant* blind." The defenders of the Benevolent Design Argument might try to find out the serious side to this jest.

At Christie's Sale Rooms, London, a pearl necklace was sold for £10,000; a muff-chain, of brilliants, £7,000; and a silver-gilt table ornament, £3,300. Yet the dear clergy will have it that the War was a time of God's chastening.

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To Correspondents.

W. H. Briden.—Letters to the press on *our* view of current affairs are bound to do good. One must always run the risk of the editorial blue pencil, and one must not always blame the editor overmuch. Public opinion in this country is very unenlightened, and the editor may not always do as he would wish. When the public demand honest papers, they will get them. Let us hope that we are all doing something to create the demand.

T. M. Mosley.—The new edition of *Determinism* will be out, we hope, some time before Christmas. Other things will follow. The trouble is to get the work done. Thanks; we were beginning to feel the need of a few days' holiday, and we are getting all we can. Hope that you and your family are quite well.

T. Elmes.—We had no reply from Professor Ray Lankester, or it would have been inserted. Neither did we expect one. There are occasions when silence shows much greater wisdom than speech.

T. Kars.—We should be glad to do as you suggest, but we cannot find time apart from our regular work. That already takes up all the time we have at our disposal.

G. Young.—The only sane way of preventing the clergy talking nonsense is to rob them of an audience to which it is acceptable.

C. L.—The matter is having our consideration.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

We venture to once more bring before our friends the possibility of doing a little effective propaganda work during the holiday season. There are many thousands of potential *Freethinker* readers about, and if they could only be brought into touch with this paper the trick would be done. Religious people take full advantage of the holiday season, and there is no reason why Freethinkers should not be equally alert. This paper can be ordered from any of Smith's railway bookstalls, or from any newsagent, and an extra copy or so ordered while on holiday, for distribution, may be the means of securing a lifelong friend to the cause. We suggest to all our well-wishers that they should give the matter their serious consideration.

A correspondent informs us that some time back he inserted in the *Times* the following advertisement:—

> To Spiritualists. The sum of fifty guineas is offered to any medium recommended by Sir Oliver Lodge or Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, who, instead of holding converse with dead men's ghosts, shall, under strict test conditions, get in touch with the spirit of the advertiser while still alive.

Our correspondent informs us that the replies provided plenty of amusement, but no answer came from a medium.

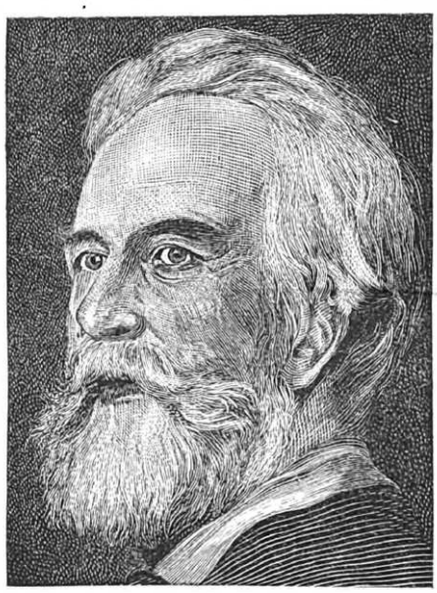
Those of our readers who possess a fair working knowledge of French will thank us for calling their attention to a pamphlet by M. Jean Robyn, who is a brilliant writer on the staff of our Belgian contemporary, *La Pensee*. His pamphlet, *Dieu et la guerre* (God and the War), deals clearly, vigorously, and eloquently with the problem that faces every Theist, the impossibility of squaring the existence of evil—here posed in its acutest form, the wholesale devastation of Belgium—with a belief in a God who has both the power and the will to do good. He quotes that most militant of Catholics, Joseph de Maistre, who grew lyrical over the divine blessings of war, with all its attendant horrors, and finishes a moving and persuasive piece of writing by saying that a "regenerated and reconciled humanity must triumph without a God, since God is war and all that is evil." The pamphlet is published in Bruxelles by H. Kumps-Robyn, Rue Keyenveld 81-85; price twenty centimes.

La Pensee has issued a leaflet, called *Why We are Freethinkers and What We Want*. It is a vigorous and enthusiastic plea for freedom of thought, an eloquent call for the concerted action of all men and women of independent spirit who would break the fetters of intellectual slavery which bind humanity. "Up, then," it ends—

> Up, then, all of you who wish to keep or regain your dignity as human beings! Up, then, men and women of our modern times! The day of religions is past! It gives place to Science and Freethought, which, alone, can lead an unfettered humanity towards its highest destiny—towards happiness, peace, and love! Long live Freethought!

The English reader will note the vibrant combination of emotion and reason in this little leaflet. It would be better for us, and for our Cause here in England, if we had a larger measure of this ardent passion for truth.

We are indebted to Messrs. Watts & Co. for the portrait-block of Professor Haeckel.



1834 — 1919

Death of Professor Haeckel.

When a man has led a career such as Professor Haeckel's, and dies at the age of eighty-six, it is a mere formality to express regret at the news. His family and intimates may well mourn the loss of a loved figure, the world is concerned with only the publicist, the man of science, the seeker after truth. In these directions Professor Haeckel's work may be counted as finished. All that remains for the public at large is to pay a well-earned tribute of respect to one of the foremost scientists of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

For more than half a century Haeckel stood in Germany as one of the foremost champions of evolution, and his reputation has stood little lower in this country during the larger part of that period. Among the general public his incursions into questions of morals, theology, and even politics, served to make him better known than might otherwise have been the case, and his opposition to the Christian theology was pronounced and undisguised.

For sheer intellectual power and philosophic insight, Haeckel would rank lower than even Darwin, but he possessed in full measure, what is so lacking in our own scientific workers, the moral courage to speak out on matters connected with the current religion. In this

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matter the world owes Haeckel a debt it cannot easily repay.

Some of our time-serving newspapers, in dealing with Haeckel's death, remarked that he made himself ridiculous by his remarks on England during the War. This may be true, but it is no more than an illustration of what Spencer called the "patriotic bias," and, in any case, his attitude towards England was not more ridiculous than that of some of our own scientists who, after impressing upon us—prior to 1914—the great scientific services Germany had rendered the world, straightway provided columns of newspaper reading to prove that in science Germany's work had always been a negligible quantity. But your fanatical patriot is ever the last one to recognize patriotism as a virtue in anyone but himself.

The *Daily Telegraph* went a step further in absurdity by saying that Haeckel's "materialistic writings played no small part in guiding the ideas which prepared Germany for the war." That statement simply adds slander to absurdity. Now that the War is over, one would imagine the absurd notion that Germany was solely responsible for the commercial rivalries, international jealousies and distrusts, rivalries in armaments, and the numerous other things out of which war grows, would lose its force. To attribute the War to Haeckel's scientific teaching is well worthy of a Torrey or a Talmage, or the Bishop of London; it is surely out of place with serious-minded people.

Haeckel's great and enduring work lay, on the one hand, in his purely scientific investigations, and in his many important contributions to biological science; and on the other hand in the strenuous manner in which he strove to bring their implications home to the mass of the people. His fighting capacity and expository power stood him in good stead here. In Germany, the orthodox held him in rigorous hatred. In this country his name also became anathema in orthodox circles. And the world could well afford the loss of some of its scientists who lack the courage to apply their knowledge to current problems, if thereby they could secure the continuance of others who, like Haeckel, believe in making their own conclusions the property of all intelligent men and women.

Ho Poneeros.

SOME years ago, two amiable British gentlemen engaged in a most vigorous dispute, which was watched with an almost prize-fight interest by crowds of bishops, deans, and serious laymen. The two gentlemen were Canon Cook and Bishop Lightfoot, and the subject of dispute was *Ho Poneeros*, which is a Greek term for something bad. But the question was whether it means Badness in the abstract, or a personal Bad One, or, as the vulgar would say, the Thorough Bad Lot. In the Lord's Prayer occurs the supplication, "Deliver us from Evil" (*apo tou poneerou*). Ought this to be translated "Deliver us from Evil," or "Deliver us from the Evil One"? (that is, from Satan, the diabolical personality). Canon Cook said "Evil"; Bishop Lightfoot said "Evil One." The debate took place in a Church paper in 1881. In 1919, not much is heard on this topic, and the general opinion seems to have settled on the use of the phrase "the Evil One." It was still a theme of eager discussion in 1891, as we may see by consulting Dr. Robinson's elaborate work of that date.[1]

[1] J. Armitage Robinson's *Texts and Studies: Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Literature*, vol. i. (Cambridge University Press).

Dr. Robinson must have spent many weeks, and perhaps months, in the cheerful business of hunting all through the New Testament for traces of a personal Diabolos, or Devil. He did so at a period which saw our country filled with agitating problems of unemployment, Socialism, Irish Home Rule, Imperialism in Africa, etc. As all Churchmen are good citizens (they say so continually), and as Dr. Robinson was a good citizen, this good citizen must have considered it of immense importance for the common weal to ascertain whether the Lord's Prayer refers to a personal Bad One. If social evils and exploitations were due, not to a mere floating tendency, so to speak, but to an Abominable Creature who spent his (or her?) time in upsetting everything that was pure and excellent, then it very much concerned the British public, and all mankind, to track the Brute to his (or her) foul lair. And Dr. Robinson earnestly and diligently set out on this business of morality and the State. Who or what was *Ho Poneeros?* From what or from whom does the Lord's Prayer plead that we—the Jewish people, the British people, the Turkish people, and all the rest of us—may be delivered?

Dr. Robinson, like one who explores a charming garden, wanders among the Epistles and Gospels, and pounces with joy upon proofs that *Ho Poneeros* is a raging, tearing, malicious, intelligent, and highly self-conscious He. In the Epistle to the Thessalonians, for instance, Paul's thoughts are much on a personal Devil, and he says that "Even Satan shapes himself into an Angel of Light." Hence, when, in the same letter, he remarks to his correspondents: "The Lord is faithful, and will protect you from the Evil" (*apo tou poneerou*), it is plain he imagines *Ho Poneeros* as a horrid Wretch with a too decided personality. Again, in the Epistle to the Galatians, Paul affirms that Christ rescues us (the early Christians) "from the Age of the harassing Evil." Surely this harassing agent is a masculine agent! Surely the Evil is a He! Such an interpretation tallies with the venerable history given in the Gospels, and picturing the harassing thing as a masculine Devil who carried Jesus to a mountain top, and held a conversation with him which is accurately reproduced in the evangelic page.

Besides this, other writers, outside the Bible identify Evil and the Evil One. One is Hermas, who talks of the Angel of Evil (*tees poneerias*). Another is Barnabas, who says something of an Evil Ruler (*ho poneeros archon*). A third is the author of the *Clementine Homilies*, who reports a dialogue between Peter and a heretic. The heretic asks if Peter believes in a Prince of Evil:—

> Peter said: "It is impossible for me to deny the assertion of my Teacher [Christ], who was tempted by him for forty days. He saw the Evil One (*ton poneeron*) falling down like lightning from heaven. And in the Prayer which he gave us it is said, 'Deliver us from the Evil One'" (*apo tou poneerou*).

Canon Cook was rather staggered by this last quotation, so he got out of the difficulty by declaring that the book cited was a spurious composition, and not a proper authority at all.

We need not follow Dr. Robinson all round his delightful garden of texts. He makes out an excellent case. The Lord's Prayer acknowledges the existence of a Thoroughly Evil Person, who is the standing enemy of mankind. This is the Unpleasant Person whom Jesus had to resist at the very opening stage of his career, when, as Irenæus said: "He picked up again the ancient and primal quarrel with the Serpent."

Of course, this fact, which was brought into relief by the learned researches of Dr. Armitage Robinson is extremely important. We now know (unless we are too

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critical) that all the miseries and misfortunes of human evolution are due to the Marplot Person from whose power the Lord's Prayer begs deliverance. For example, take this list of social ills:—

Diseases	Slavery
Vermin	Serfdom
Famine	Poverty
Drunkenness	Persecutions
Prostitution	Torture
Lunacy	Militarism
Idiocy	Ignorance
Poisons	Freethought

I do not myself consider Freethought an evil, but I include it in the dreadful list as a point of courtesy to Dr. Robinson and his companions in orthodoxy. The list might be greatly extended. Many worthy persons (as, for instance, elderly folk who reside in Harrogate hydros, or in high-class boarding-houses at Scarborough or Torquay) would add Socialism, Proposals for Divorce-law Reform, Family Limitation, and Sunday Games. Perhaps it would be wise not to go into these difficult problems. The sixteen evils above named will suffice.

Now, we are given to understand that the responsibility for these social ills, including Freethought, may finally be traced to the Serpent, or *Ho Poneeros*. All down the ages this Criminal Person has devoted his entire time, his illimitable energy, and his undoubted abilities to doing and propagating things which sanitarians and the clergy abhor. He is apparently as active in 1919 as ever he was, for we observe that Church dignitaries, the Catholic and Evangelical press, and distinguished laymen such as Lord Hugh Cecil, are constantly complaining of his excessive influence. He is the malignant "Hidden Hand," injuring the work of civilization, and impeding the plans of Heaven.

On reflection, we cannot fail to be struck with the remarkable fact that this Anarchic Person should possess such extraordinary brain-capacity. So far as we are aware (I speak with some hesitation on such great questions) he never had any education. Like the heroes of Dr. Samuel Smiles' biographical writings, he was Self-made. No uncle left him any legacies. No rich patron befriended him in his struggling youth. He had no credentials or testimonials commending him to the favourable consideration of our ancestors. Yet he has (if all tales are true) established an empire greater than the empires of Alexander, Cæsar, Jenghis Khan, Akbar, and Napoleon. The united forces of our Universities, Professions, Politicians, Aristocracy, Police, and our magnificent English Bishops, seem unable—owing to one cannot say what obscure cause—to outwit this Degraded Personage.

I have ventured to express myself plainly. The problem ought not to be hushed up. One sees attempts at ignoble concealment. For example, the statesmen who advise the King in the composition of speeches for the opening or closing of Parliamentary sessions frequently refer to Almighty God, and yet never make the least allusion to the Obnoxious Person who sorely taxes the wisdom of Senates and Assemblies. Such a policy exhibits lack of courage. Nor is it honest. We have highly paid Government officials, and we have elaborately equipped clerical orders—Catholic, Protestant, Nonconformist. They have vast resources of talent and scholarship. We, the common people, are entitled to a definite answer to the question,—How is it that this Corrupt Person manages to maintain his enormous intellectual and administrative ascendancy?

Is it too much to ask the Prime Minister to give his attention to the subject? One knows that Mr. Lloyd George is somewhat overworked, but still.....

F. J. Gould.

The Christian's Day.

Do we ever picture to ourselves what the perfect day of the Christian is, or should be? The basis of all his consciousness, of course, must be that he is but a stranger here—heaven is his home. Here he has no continuing city; he looks for a heavenly home, whose builder or maker is God. Therefore, whether in mundane affairs for six days of the week he must—to find bread for the body which perishes—ply the trade of bagman, butcher, baker, or candlestick maker, or not, his chief thoughts are, or ought to be, centred in the place where his treasure is—where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal:—

> There is no night in Heaven
> There are no burglars there:
> Banks are unknown and the wide streets
> Are strewn with jewels rare.

We do not press unfair inferences from that gem of poesy, but leave it with the comment that there appears to be a striking association therein of crib crackers and bankers. To British ears this may be startling. But it probably would not be so startling to the Chinese.

Let us contemplate the sanctified bagman as he springs from his couch in a sleeping chamber, whose walls are decorated with such legends as: "Prepare to meet thy God," "Godliness with contentment is great gain," "Jesus saves," "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Plump upon his knees he goes. His early orisons will be determined by his work for the day. Suppose he is a traveller in the hardware line, he will not scorn to ask for material success in his visits to his customers, for has he not the Divine promise of well being in the world that now is as well as life everlasting in the world to come? Therefore, after an exordium of thanks to the Creator for his night's rest, and a request for the blessing of heaven on those who have not rested, he enters upon the argument: "Lord, thou knowest that there has been a serious slump in flat-irons. O God, thou who causedst the prophet's borrowed axe to float on the water, look in mercy and loving-kindness upon my efforts this day to unload our warehouse of its large stock of flat-irons, and to thy name shall be all the praise! Lord, of the commission I secure, a tenth shall be thine!"

Then, when our sanctified bagman goes forth humming the tune of—

> Here we suffer grief and pain,

he feels that matters are in the hands of the Almighty and

> All will be well.

And mark the perfect man! He has a customer whom he knows to be a lost sheep. Shall flat-irons stand in the way of his plain duty to endeavour to bring this retailer of hard goods to a knowledge of the truth? Nay, verily, the sanctified bagman, when he enters this ironmonger's premises hands over a little tract headed: "Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?" with the observation that his heart yearns towards him Does the ironmonger think of sending for a doctor? Nay, verily, he sees the compelling fire of faith in the eye of the sanctified bagman, and is even induced to have a prayer-meeting in his little office where the bagman shows him the way of salvation. The penitent ironmonger leaves evidence of his tears on musty files of papers, and rises a new man—accepted in the beloved—fit now to join in the praises of the Lamb on a Jew's-harp or mouth-organ. The convert orders a lot of flat-irons, and the sanctified bagman caught up like Philip by the Holy Spirit, goes on his way rejoicing. Thus, we see how happily faith and flat-irons may be associated. And the recording angel makes another

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entry to the credit of the sanctified bagman. "The Day" shall declare it!

In similar ways, the Christian lawyer and doctor have opportunities of doing the Lord's work. When the Christian lawyer hears a professional brother say "Damn," he takes that brother to one side and asks him if he knows where lawyers who say such things are likely to go? The professional brother's face is suffused with blushing shame. He trembles when the knowledge of the wrath to come is borne in upon him. He confesses his fault to God, and cries for pardon. And God, who is faithful and just to forgive sin when it is confessed, extends his forgiveness to the poor convicted lawyer, who goes away a happier and a wiser man, but guarding his tongue ever after, and working out his salvation with fear and trembling.

The Christian doctor likewise carries always with him a pocket Testament, with marked passages. It may be, as he says, his duty to heal the body and relieve physical pain; but it is the supreme business to arouse sinful patients to a sense of their lost and undone condition. Illness always provides exceptional opportunities, for then the sinner is weak, and conscious of his miserable fallibility. When things are going well, it is difficult to bring conviction to many a sinner: but when adverse circumstances arise, and things are going badly, then comes the opportunity of using the sword of the Spirit. Therefore, when our Christian doctor is called in to see the very rich, very fat, and very selfish and frivolous Dowager Lady Snuphanuph, he sternly refuses to feel the proffered pulse until her Ladyship has disclosed to him the state of her heart towards God. Her Ladyship is at first startled, then petulant; but as she notes the supernatural gleam in the doctor's eye, she is reduced to tears, that tell how she realizes the vanity and emptiness of her life. In a quarter of an hour her Ladyship has been plucked from the burning and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

And so all along the line these faithful lay ministers of the Cross are day by day securing new converts, effecting new births, and making the bells of heaven go ting-a-ling-a-ling. No Christian starts the day without the resolve to do all in his power to bring at least one perisher to the foot of the Cross of Jesus, to have the burden of his sins rolled away. And the carrying out of the resolve means much to the Christian. He has the happiness of the smile of God; the consciousness, too, that he is backing his worthy pastor in his great fight with the Devil. On all hands we have the clergy testifying to the nobility of character of these laymen, who are putting forth such strenuous efforts as we have described for the furtherance of the kingdom of God.

The layman who puts God first, and uses his talents in the work of salvation, invariably goes to bed with the satisfied feeling that he has reached "the end of a perfect day."

Ignotus.

Pages from Voltaire.

An Adventure in India.

Pythagoras, when he was in India, studying in the school of the Gymnosophists, mastered the language spoken by beasts and plants. One day, as he was walking through a meadow near the sea, he heard these words: "How wretched is the life of a blade of grass! I have scarcely grown up a few inches above the ground when a devouring monster, a terrifying animal, crushes me beneath his gigantic hooves, and with his jaws, armed with a row of sharp lances, cuts me off, and then mangles and swallows me. Men call this monster a sheep. I believe there is not a more abominable creature in the whole world."

Pythagoras went a few steps further on; he found an oyster taking the air on a ledge of rock. The ancient philosopher was not bound by that admirable law whereby it is forbidden to eat our equals. He was just about to swallow the oyster, when he was aware of a pitiful voice saying: "O Nature! how happy is the grass that, even as I am, is thy handiwork. When it is cut it is born again; it is immortal; but we poor oysters, in vain are we defended by double armour—scoundrels eat us by the dozen at dinner, and this will go on for ever. What a hideous fate is that of an oyster! how barbarous are human beings!"

Pythagoras trembled; he appreciated the magnitude of the crime he might have committed; weeping, he craved pardon of the unhappy oyster, and put it back carefully on its rock.

He pondered deeply this adventure as he was returning to the town. He beheld spiders eating flies, swallows eating spiders, and hawks making a meal of swallows. "These," he said to himself, "are certainly not philosophers."

When he was just entering the town, Pythagoras was pushed, jostled, and thrown down by a rushing crowd of common people, men and women, who were shouting: "It serves them right, it serves them right; its just what they deserved!" "Who? What?" said Pythagoras, getting up from the ground; but the crowd continued to run about, exclaiming: "What fun it will be to see them cooked!"

Pythagoras thought they were talking about lentils, or some other sort of vegetable. Not at all; it was of two poor Hindus. "No doubt," said Pythagoras to himself, "these men are two philosophers who are tired of life; they are glad to be born again under another form; it is indeed a pleasant thing to change your habitation, even though you are always badly lodged; there is no disputing about tastes."

He went on with the crowd to the public square, where there was a great stake, with logs of wood burning merrily. Facing the stake was a platform, called the *tribunal*, and on this platform were seated the judges, each holding a cow's tail in his hand, while their heads were covered with a cap exactly like the two ears of the animal that carried Silenus when he went aforetime through the countryside with Bacchus, after he had crossed the Erythean Sea dryfooted and stayed the sun and moon in the courses, as we find faithfully recorded in the Orphic hymns.

Among the judges there happened to be a good man whom Pythagoras knew very well. The Hindu wise man explained to him of Samos why they were about to give this entertainment to the people.

"The two Hindus," said he, "have no wish to be burnt alive; my reverend colleagues have condemned them to this punishment; one of them for saying that the substance of Xaca is not the substance of Brama; the other for having suggested that a man could please the Supreme Being by virtue alone, and that it was not necessary to grasp a cow's tail in the hour of death; for," he went on, "a man can be virtuous at all times, but he cannot always find a cow ready to his hand. The honest women of our town were so terrified by these two heretical propositions that they gave the judges no rest until they sentenced the two unfortunates to the stake."

Pythagoras came to the conclusion that, from the blade of grass up to man, the whole of existence was full of wretchedness. However, he made the judges, even the more fanatic among them, listen to reason for once in their lives.

In the end he departed to preach tolerance at Crotona

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but an intolerant man set fire to his house: he was burned, even he who had rescued the Hindus from the flames. *Sauve qui peut.* Everyone for himself.

Englished by Geo. Underwood.

An Open Letter to Certain Members of the L.C.C.

Dear Sirs,—At the beginning of the War the world was informed by various and numerous public speakers in England that one of the objects for which the British Empire was to take part in the fight was to maintain the cause of liberty. This has been repeated times without number during the years of war through which we have passed. Yet I can take up the *Freethinker* in Cologne and find, in the issue of August 3, 1919, an article in which readers are informed that the L.C.C. is doing its best to prevent the sale, not only of the *Freethinker*, but also of various volumes of Freethought literature.

Now, doubtless, many of the members of the present L.C.C. have, during the last five years, had a good deal to say about the sons of England fighting and suffering for the cause of freedom. Is it not, therefore, time to cease trying to prevent the sale of literature which every sensible person should have the liberty to read?

In the actions which you have taken in order to suppress the sale of literature which does not give expression to your own views, you have adopted the methods of Prussianism—the very thing which you have often told your friends and the public the British Empire has been out to kill.

Who gave you the right to say in a peremptory manner that a certain paper or book shall not be read by the London public? Nobody. You can have your own opinion on the subject, but you should not be peremptory. Who gave you the right to prevent another man from buying certain papers and books which you dislike or cannot understand? Nobody. You have used public power in the interest of your own beliefs and of a section of the public who agree with you. That is not upholding the cause of freedom; it is Prussianism.

If you could give sound reasons to the effect that Freethought literature degrades the morals of the people, there would be some justification of your action. But you cannot prove that Freethought literature leads to the degradation of the people. What is more: you cannot prove that religious literature is bound to uplift the people. This you should know by now, as public men. If you do not, then come to Cologne, mingle with the troops, and find out for yourselves how religion and religious literature fails to uplift the majority of men. There is nothing like personal experience; and a trip out here, provided you kept your eyes open, would teach you many a lesson with regard to the failures of religion.

So "play the game," and be consistent with your professions about killing Prussianism; and grant to others who often think differently from you the freedom of buying and reading such literature as they care to choose.

Yours sincerely,

Cologne, Aug. 5, 1919. E. Egerton Stafford.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Band Stand): 6.15, Mr. James Marshall, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 6, Mr. J. J. Darby, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 3.15, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Secularism—The People's Salvation." A Preface by Bob Norman.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): Mr. E. Burke, 3.15, "The Tree of Knowledge;" 6, "Creation and Evolution."

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WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. Shaller, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Samuels and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Ratcliffe, Baker, and Saphin.

COUNTRY.

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SWANSEA AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Reformer's Book Shop, 60 Alexandra Road, Swansea): 6.30, Meeting. Members are urged to attend to arrange for Autumn and Winter propaganda.

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Views and Opinions.

Evolution and Religion.

The religious world has never really reconciled itself to the triumph of the doctrine of evolution. It has been compelled to acknowledge it, but it has done so in the same spirit that Poland acknowledged the supremacy of Russia and Germany, or Ireland that of England. And at every opportunity the repressed hostility breaks forth. All sorts of social evils are derived from the prevalence of so Godless a theory, and any adverse criticism of the doctrine is hailed with delight. It is not difficult to account for this. The strength of religion is always and everywhere proportionate to human ignorance and helplessness. Increase the one and you weaken the other. Whether we are dealing with the savage who sees supernatural power manifested all around him, or with present-day religious leaders, who place a God somewhere at the back of the cosmic process, the principle is always the same. It is always the unexplained that provides room for God; always the emergence of a satisfactory explanation that rules God out. We pray for that which is beyond our control or which evades our understanding—never for that which is within our power or comprehension. We pray for a man to recover from fever, but never for the replacement of a shattered limb. Ignorance in the one case and knowledge in the other is enough to account for the discrimination. The Goddite sees clearly enough that given a generally accepted cosmical theory such as evolution, there is nothing left for God to do. And a God who does nothing is soon ignored in both practice and theory.

* * *

The Press and Haeckel.

The death of Professor Haeckel has given a splendid opportunity for the concealed or repressed hostility of the pietistic world to evolution to express itself. For Haeckel was a Freethinker, and one who made no secret of the fact. And as he happened to be also a German, there was offered a splendid chance of using the unreasoning hatred excited by war to discredit the attack on religion. Religious papers referred airily to the refutation of Haeckel's theories, leaving the uninformed reader to assume that the theory of evolution had been decisively disproved. And the secular press was not very far behind. As it has to cater for a class of readers of which not one in a thousand has any knowledge of or interest in scientific things, and as the average journalist himself is little better informed than his readers, a sneer at Haeckel's work was certain to be found acceptable. Even a paper, such as the *Manchester Guardian*, can tell us that "Haeckel rode the evolutionary theory more recklessly than Darwin had ever dared" (it is well known that Darwin deliberately refrained from applying his theory as Haeckel did, in order to disarm antagonism) and would not rest until he had demolished the existence of God, freedom of the will, and the immortality of the soul. And as we are informed that Haeckel's "imposing edifice.....crumbled almost as soon as it was built," the reader who knows no better is again left with the impression that after having been demolished by the science of the nineteenth century, God, the soul, and freewill have been securely re-established by that of the twentieth. All of which, as Euclid would say, is absurd. The doctrine of evolution is as well established as the Copernician theory. There is discussion only as to the mechanism of the process. God, free-will, and soul are more discredited than ever. And the truth of Haeckel's speculations as to the machinery of the evolutionary process no more affect its reality than our ignorance of the nature and causation of cancer affects the existence of the disease. If anyone wished to prove that we are a scientifically uneducated people, a collection of newspaper comments on the death of Haeckel might well establish the thesis.

* * *

Darwinism and Imperialism.

From Haeckel to Darwinism is a simple transition, and a depreciation of the one may easily be made an occasion for the depreciation of the other. And sometimes this depreciation comes from men whom one does not usually associate with orthodox obscurantism. Thus, Mr. W. L. Courtney, in the course of a review in the *Daily Telegraph* of August 15, remarks that the "Sin of modern Imperialism.....is the reckless way in which European countries have dealt with native populations having their own right to exist—a policy of gradual extermination which is supported by a wrong-headed application of Darwin's law of the survival of the fittest." Now, while it is true that some writers have used the Darwinian formula in support of their imperialistic aims, the prevalence of Darwinism has had nothing whatever to do with either their initiation or prevalence. Broadly, the modern struggle for colonies may be said to have set in with the Spanish conquest of South America. England's fight with Spain, as later with Holland in the seventeenth century, and with France throughout the whole of the eighteenth century—in India, America, and Europe—were mainly struggles for the possession of colonies. Certainly Darwinism cannot be held responsible for these contests. The disappearance of the Redskins in North America or of the Peruvians and Mexicans in South America, the dying out of the Tasmanians, the dwindling of the native Australians and New Zealanders, the disappearance of

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natives before the piratical Europeans, have not the remotest connection with scientific theory. The ruling motive here was exploitation, mingled with crude theories of greatness, patriotism, and religious evangelization. And in the nineteenth century, had Darwinism never been heard of, the exploitation and subjection of the native races of the world would still have gone on. The connection of Darwinism with the gradual extermination of native races is as fantastical as anything could well be.

* * *

Humanism and Evolution.

Two considerations might have given some of these journalists pause—that is, on the assumption that they were honest and informed. The first is that a public opinion more alert in the interests of the weaker races has developed side by side with the growth of the theory of evolution. Just as the researches into animal and child life, directly inspired by the growth of evolutionary thought, has been accompanied by what one may call a humanization of these studies, so the attention of men having no commercial or imperialistic concern in the exploitation and subjection of the native races, but animated by a scientific interest in their life and culture, has been accompanied by a more humanistic tone in relation to them. To the buccaneers of Elizabeth's day, or to the commercial adventurers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, natives were everywhere regarded as almost an inferior species of animal, or as so many opportunities for plunder. Monarchs calmly gave their subjects rights against people over whom they had no more real moral jurisdiction than they had over the man in the moon. Whether as cause or as accompaniment, the historical fact remains that a more humane note in the relations between "civilized" and "uncivilized" peoples has developed side by side with the growth of evolutionary thinking in all departments of knowledge.

* * *

Civilization and Religion.

The second consideration is that the exploitation of native races has for several centuries been carried on under the cloak of religion. When Spain set forth on its conquest of South America, it was partly based on the avowed purpose of establishing the "true faith." A Papal Bull authorized the expedition, and, in virtue of his spiritual power, the Pope gave the Spaniards control over almost a whole hemisphere. And for generations —reckoning both before and after the Spanish adventure —the fact that certain peoples were not Christians robbed them of the right to even such elementary moral considerations as were then in force. And with the advent of the modern missionary movement we can see how, in India, in China, and elsewhere, the pretext of religion has been used as a cover for a system of exploitation that necessarily resulted in gradual extermination. Look at the sickening religious cant with which the Belgian rule of the Congo was initiated, and the almost unbelievable horrors that followed! Look at the way in which the evangelization of the Chinese has been used as a cover for their exploitation by the European Christian nations! Of course, these things might have taken place without religion; the undeniable fact is that it took place with it. And so far as the influence of religion hindered the development of a rationalized and humanized society, to that extent it has helped in their perpetuation. The spread of scientific knowledge has not, it is true, abolished the evils of our modern civilization, but it at least holds out a greater prospect of doing so than religion has ever done.

Chapman Cohen.

The Soul.

Dr. Fort Newton preached, in the City Temple, a sermon on "Winning our Souls," which appeared in the *Christian World Pulpit* for August 13, and which calls for serious comment. The text is Luke xxi. 19: "In your patience ye shall win your souls." Soul is usually defined as the spiritual, rational, and immortal part in man—that part of him which enables him to think, and by means of which he becomes a subject of moral government. According to this definition, the soul is a distinct entity or substance, tabernacling for a period in a physical body. It is in this sense that Dr. Fort Newton seems to treat the term, for he says that "saint and sage agree that life has meaning only when it has reference to the soul and its unfolding." He is fully justified in stating that the Greek verb for "win" literally means to procure, purchase, or acquire; but he omits to tell us what the Greek noun translated "souls" signifies, though he apparently takes it for granted that there dwells in every man the "seed of immortality," "the germ of the Eternal," and that it is out of this seed or germ, or somehow by means of it, the soul is to be won as a priceless possession. Dr. Fort Newton's language is peculiarly vague, even ambiguous, so that it is difficult, almost impossible, to ascertain what his real meaning is. The only thing that we may be certain of is that he regards the soul as the gift of God, "bequeathed to us through 'the mystic continuities of inheritance,'" and that it begins as a seed or germ which we are called upon to train and develop until it attains to the fullness of its spiritual stature. Now, curiously enough, while all alike receive this soul as a seed or germ, yet the destiny of it depends alone upon our treatment of it. Though in its very nature the seed of immortality, the germ of the Eternal, if we live unworthy lives, if we reject the salvation offered by Christ, we shall lose it, and, one would naturally infer, cease to be immortal. Yet the inference would be false, for lost souls are said to be cast, at death, "into the outer darkness where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The Greek word rendered "souls" in the reverend gentleman's text means wind. As a matter of fact, all the Greek words in the New Testament translated spirit, mind, soul, might be rendered breath, wind, smoke, vapour; and the same is true of their Hebrew equivalents in the Old Testament. In Genesis ii. 7 we read: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostril the breath of life: and man became a living soul." Driver, in his Commentary on the Book of Genesis, admits that "soul" in "Hebrew psychology is common to both animals and men." Hence no pre-eminence of man is declared in the words "a living soul." Thus the soul, as conceived in the Bible, is not the seed of immortality or the germ of the Eternal, but life as a breath common to all living beings, which all alike lose when they die.

Dr. Fort Newton gains nothing, even for his hortatory purpose, from his unscientific definition of the soul. There is not a shred of evidence that man is a dual being, composed of two distinct and independent entities, one physical and the other spiritual, one of the earth, earthy, and the other from heaven. There is not the shadow of proof that there is anything in man destined to survive death. There are absolutely no data upon which the belief in immortality can legitimately be held. Even the reverend gentleman's famous countryman, John Fiske, admits that probably we shall never "succeed in making the immortality of the soul a matter of scientific demonstration, for we lack the requisite data"; and one

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naturally infers that the absence of such data is due to the fact that there are no data upon which even the existence of the soul can be demonstrated. Surely Dr. Newton cannot plead ignorance of the history of the soul-theory as traced in Durkheim's scholarly work, *Les Formes Elementaires de la Vie Religieuse* (1912), and most interestingly sketched in Professor Leuba's *The Belief in God and Immortality*. Familiarity with that history makes the belief in the soul quite impossible. In early Buddhism it was discarded completely, the fundamental teaching being that "man is never the same for two consecutive moments, and that there is within him no abiding principle whatever." By soul the Buddha understood self, the existence of which he denied, and he was naturally led to say:—

> Since neither self nor ought belonging to self, brethren, can really and truly exist, the view which holds that this I who am "world," who am 'self," shall hereafter live permanent, persisting, eternal, unchanging, yea, abide eternally: is not this utterly and entirely a foolish doctrine (Mrs. Rhys Davids' *Buddhism*, p. 52)?

Apart from the soul theory, there is much in Dr. Fort Newton's sermon with which we are in hearty agreement. Some of his comments on the ethical defects of the day are excellent, the only fault one can find with them being that they are rooted and grounded in theology. But when he lays it down as a principle that we "must make up our minds to accept life as it is—with its risks, its tasks, its bereavements, its benedictions," we are impelled to give expression to our most emphatic and uncompromising dissent; and we are equally opposed to the unfortunate addition that we must accept it "as an opportunity for the making of a soul." Having already formally defined the soul as "this seed of immortality, this germ of the Eternal," he surely forgets himself when he talks of *making* it. And why the ill-natured allusion to Carlyle's sneer at Margaret Fuller because she said: "I accept the Universe"? After all, was not Carlyle the wiser of the two? Assuming the existence of the Christian God, is not the Universe a stupendous farce, the most tragic of all failures? "This world of ours," is it possible to accept it as the product of a God of love and justice? In contemplation of it, as Newman repeatedly points out, Atheism is the only logical and ethical conclusion; and as a matter of simple fact, man, as Sir Ray Lankester observes, is "Nature's insurgent Son," who is so far from accepting the Universe that he has always rebelled against it, and, in several directions, triumphed over it. To a certain extent he has learned to control ruthless Nature. Sir Ray Lankester says:—

> And as he has more and more obtained this control over his surroundings, he has expanded that unconscious protective attitude towards his immature offspring which natural selection had already favoured and established in the animal race, into a conscious and larger love for his tribe, his race, his nationality, and his kind.....At every step of his progress man has receded further and further from the ancient rule exercised by Nature. He has advanced so far and become so unfitted to the earlier rule, that to suppose that man can "return to Nature" is as unreasonable as to suppose that an adult animal can return to its mother's womb (*The Kingdom of Man*, p. 26, 27).

What we need above everything else is, not a soul, but strength to fit us for the inescapable struggle against "life as it is," and for life as it ought to be. Man is a gregarious animal, and the only difference between him and other animals is, not that he has a soul, which they have not, but that he possesses a brain of superior size and educability. He belongs to the same order of beings as they do, but he leaves them far behind by reason of his greater skill in at once obeying and controlling natural forces. Resolved not to take life as it is, he sets out to alter it, to improve its conditions, elevate its aims, and ennoble its processes; in other words, to perfect himself and his brethren in the art of gregarious life. Dr. Newton idealizes the disciples of Jesus. So far as the Gospel records are concerned, they were in no sense whatever paragons of virtue. Not only they displayed no superiority to their contemporaries, they were rather distinguished for their intellectual dullness and moral inefficiency, and yet the reverend gentleman attributes to them a well-nigh perfect character. He declares that "nothing in the life of Jesus is more wonderful than his achievement in the making of men." If his own disciples as depicted in the Four Gospels are specimens of his workmanship we must pronounce his achievement anything but wonderful. Taking them as a class, the twelve disciples were nobodies. With one or two exceptions they are utterly unknown to history; and in his glowing tribute to them the reverend gentleman draws entirely on his imagination.

The same thing is true of Dr. Newton's eulogy of Jesus; it is purely idealistic. He maintains that what Jesus did for his disciples "he has been doing ever since to those who trust their souls to him." Taking history as our witness, we learn that never have Christians, as a class, been celebrated for their exemplary moral character. Does not the reverend gentleman remember the testimony of Baronius in his *Ecclesiastical Annals*, where he characterizes the tenth century as the darkest and worst period in history, when Pope after Pope was at the beck and call of notorious prostitutes; a period which has been justly stigmatized at "the Pornocracy"? Has he forgotten that the Church, the Body of Christ, the Temple of the Holy Ghost, has never been free from bickering, wrangling, and bitter controversy, has never shone in the world as a supreme moral luminary, but has revelled in horrible scenes of intolerance, persecution, and bloodshed? He may retort, But look at the illustrious saints whom she has produced! True, there have been multitudes of saints; but in the light thrown upon them by history, most of them are seen as highly undesirable characters, deifying dirt and self-torture, retiring from the world and shunning all the obligations of social life; and one wonders whether Gustave Flaubert's *Temptation of Saint Antony* is not a fairly accurate picture of the majority of them. Even the best and noblest of them were the slaves of intolerance and cruelty. Who can forget St. Bernard's persistent persecution of Peter Abelard and Arnold of Brescia, ending in the death of both, the former of a broken heart and the latter at the stake?

We conclude that, if by soul is meant life, character, nobility, as Dr. Fort Newton now and then hints, it cannot be regarded as a special product of the Christian religion. It is to be found, here and there, in all parts of the world; and there are times when one is quite sure that it is more in evidence in some Pagan than in Christian countries.

J. T. Lloyd.

Religion never made any man in the world just and honest, who had not some foundation for it in his nature before. For all the operation it can have upon others is but artificial; and all their conversation prevail no farther upon their natural corruptions than to enable them to perform the same unjust and wicked actions under other forms and dispensations, which their inclinations led them to before; and not seldom render them more barbarous and inhuman than they were before, when zeal and conscience light in their way to serve for pretence.—*Samuel Butler, "Thoughts upon various Subjects, 1660."*

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The Beginning of the End.

Christianity has never lost the instinct of universal dominion.—*B. and F. Bible Society Report.*

The only hope for the future of society lies in the absolute extermination of Christianity.—*G. W. Foote.*

THE clergy seldom admit their fear of Freethought. In public they never tire of the bold refrain, "Who's afraid?" In private, however, they arrange quietly the means of retreat. And, unhappily for them, retreat is the order of the day, and will continue to be so.

Since Freethought has been organized, the clergy have had no rest. The frontal attacks of the Freethinkers are beginning to tell heavily, and the ecclesiastics are getting nervous. A short time ago the House of Convocation of Canterbury decided to abandon portions of "God's Holy Word," and to eliminate from the Prayer Book some objectionable features of the Old Testament. This astute clerical manœuvre may bamboozle believers for a time, but it will not save the Christian religion.

The ruse is a smart one, but it cannot serve for long. To prune the barbarities of the Psalms may spare the blushes of Christian ladies and of young clergymen, but it is a very hazardous proceeding. The Psalms are an integral part of the Holy Bible, and David, "the man after God's own heart," is too closely allied with the legendary figure of Christ to be thrown thus rudely to the rubbish-heap without disastrous results to orthodoxy. It is not only a desperate policy in the particular instance, but a precedent which will exert, in the long run, anything but a happy effect upon the Christian position.

"The Psalms" were written many centuries ago, and have been regarded by religious folk as the inspired utterances of the Almighty. For the future, Psalm lviii. will not be printed in the Prayer Book "as appointed to be read." The Convocation of Canterbury has so decreed by forty-three votes to thirteen, and the superior clergy have dismissed King David as though he were a church-organist who had dared to ask for a living wage.

What is wrong with the fifty-eighth Psalm? It is a comparatively short one, but the clergy contend that it is "un-Christian in character," which is a polite way of saying that it is entirely out of harmony with modern ideas. This is the sort of thing that the clergy do not wish their congregations to read:—

> The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance; he shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked. So that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.

It is not pretty, and it is not remarkable for its "spirituality"; but the clergy have not selected the worst utterances in the Bible. Other portions of God's Holy Word are equally open to objection, as for instance, the unlovely passage in Psalm cix.:—

> When he shall be judged, let him be condemned; and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless, and his wife a widow. Let his children be continually vagabonds, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.

And, again, in Psalm cxxxvii.:—

> Happy shall he be, that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

You will observe the clergy have themselves started to pull "God's word" to pieces. They have begun with "the Psalms," and King David, "the man after God's own heart," thus comes in for tardy, but none the less deserved, rebuke. For David is now admitted by the clergy to be a barbarian, and the champions of Christianity are obliged to throw the old Oriental savage overboard in order to absolve their deity from the crimes and vices of his favourite. Let there be no mistake about it. The remarks of that accomplished scholar, Ernest Renan, are so apt that they deserve to be quoted:—

> We shall see the brigand of Adullam and Ziklag assume gradually the airs of a saint. He will be the author of the Psalms; the sacred chorægus, the type of the future saviour. Jesus must be the son of David! The evangelical biography will be falsified in a multitude of points by the idea that the life of the Messiah should reproduce the traits of David. Pious souls, while enjoying the sentiments, full of resignation and tender melancholy, of the finest of liturgical books, will fancy themselves in communion with this bandit. Humanity will believe in a final justice on the testimony of David, who never thought of it, and of the Sybil, who never existed. O the Divine comedy!

It would be a thankless task to enumerate the false, foolish, and wicked features of the Bible, but the sacred volume is full of savagery from cover to cover. From the first error in Genesis to the final absurdity in Revelation, much of the writing is revolting to modern readers. In many places in the Old Testament the writing is filled with the scuffles of savages, whose arrows are "drunk with blood," to adapt its own charming phraseology. As for the New Testament, the moral perceptions of to-day are shocked beyond expression at the awful doctrine that countless millions of mankind will suffer eternal punishment. The clergy know this, and are seeking to purify their Bible so as to retain the respect of their congregations.

This clerical move of mutilating the Bible is not a paltry matter. For the Bible is not an ordinary book. It is stamped as God's Word by Act of Parliament, it is forced (including the Psalms, and all other unseemly passages) into the hands of children at schools, it is used as a fetish for swearing upon in courts of law. Men and women have even been punished for bringing it into "disbelief and contempt." The clergy are in retreat. At present, it is true, the process is confined to the Old Testament; but, before long, the New Testament will suffer. When the process is complete, the Christian religion will be a thing of shreds and patches. The Hebrew Bible will take its proper place beside the other Sacred Books of the East, and the clergy will have to look for honest employment. The eviction of King David is the beginning of the end.

MIMNERMUS.

On the Courage of Being Impartial.

FOR the exercise of Christian virtues, neither courage nor great knowledge is necessary. It is singularly true also that ignorance is an assistance to faith, and the Irish peasant or the Spanish labourer will take without question that which has torn countries asunder and caused Huguenots to be buried in England. It is easy to be orthodox—or give lip service to orthodoxy. Faith is fixed on a reward, and a preference for a reward is in the nature of an investment. Heaven is pictured somewhat in the style of an excessively rich man's country house, and the one-time currency of gold—a commodity scarce to the poor—was weaved in the building of this immortal house. Jewels and marble are also used; but if gold should continue to hide its head, celestial harps will have to be wrought of ——. But here we gently stir a matter in the form of a question: The Bearing of

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Currency on Inducements to Faith. And that is not our purpose.

We assert that self-interest is the motive of the Christian faith. What must *I* do to be saved? Apart from the selfishness implied in the question, there is a suggestion of a choice. We know the answer to the question, and the distracted inquirer launches on a voyage of faith with his reward in the distance. The honesty of impartial thought gives no reward beyond the grave; perhaps, through the promise of eternal life, Christian subtlety has surmounted the impossible as defined by the Greeks, "Death is the only god who cannot be wooed by gifts."

Let us now examine the inducements to scepticism. To speak candidly, they are little delight to the mentally anæmic—nay, they are even repellant. Groping for the stone of faith, this class will not venture further than arm's length from its haven of safety. To leave that place of shelter for the rocks and shoals of independent thought demands a stouter heart than it possesses. Far better to stay in peace and comfort, with the weekly sermon and—respectability. Besides, it gives the assurance of a life to come. You disturbers of things as they are, have you no feeling for its investment? But, say we, if the system that gave you your sound investment was a philosophy, we should have no quarrel with it. Then it would appeal to reason—when has Christianity appealed to Reason? We like not the spikes of the Iron Maiden, nor the fires of green wood—too significant for our taste as an assistance to believe in a philosophy. Philosophy will state truths and deductions—and will not care if they are accepted to-day, to-morrow, or not at all.

A glorious book will be written some day explaining the motive that makes man choose the dangerous path—the unorthodox path. It would, or should, contain some mention of that difficult philosopher, Nietzsche.

> What is good? Everything that increases the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in mass.
> What is bad? All that proceeds from weakness.

It is scarcely necessary, at this time, to state, that our block-headed journalists, writing with the thick end of the sword, have wilfully misinterpreted the author of that affirmation. That is, assuming that they can spell his name, and have enough mob cowardice to do their master's biddings. It is a gift from the Gods that be, that the journalist's work only lives for a day—caterpillars and gnats do not differ in this respect. View their activity and pliability as set forth in a translation from the documents unearthed in Russia. That country under the Czar *regime*, in obtaining the aid of France, speaks through its diplomats in this manner "I know how Tittoni (the Italian Ambassador in Paris) has worked up the leading French papers most thoroughly and with the most open hand." With rare exceptions that is true of all journalists. And, if they can be worked up, like flour in a cake mixture, or mud with a Thames barge, their opinions of their betters can be estimated at their true worth. Man shall have the courage to speak truth, and his reward shall be abuse by these bats of the night. Comfort for the timid: "do as others do and no one will look at you."

Come we now to the naked man, stripped of all illusions. He is divested of every material incentive, One after another, through, what I shall call, the Sieve of Trivialities, Riches, Fame, and the Pleasures of Sense have been winnowed. Courage must imperatively bring a man to this stage. Although the lack of riches may leave him impotent with mob-thought (this a good of no small value), although fame may be left to our fleeting idols of the market-place, and pleasures of sense to the Midas of industry, and muck-raking novelists, our Courageous one shall stand as a Man. There shall be no Christian virtue in his composition.

Our Man's self-interest—of what does it consist? His path of independence shall not lack thorns—peculiar self-interest when he might have journeyed to Rome—with peas in his boots—boiled, and his conscience in the hands of the Pope! Our Man's body might be plump and round, with a rubicund face supported by a port-wine neck—if he would use his gifts to soothe the impatient with tales of a far, far, better land than this—an occupation, be it noted, that can be followed with the aid of penny sermons. And, we dissatisfied ones, should we not rightly hate an age content with penny sermons?

So that, my readers, we arrive at our conclusion. The will to independent thought—your Odyssey—demands courage and patience—with the Christian God as a mere incident on the way. That path steadily followed shall give you what cannot be found in fasting and prayer, or in monasteries, for

> This thing is God: to be Man with thy might
> To go straight in the strength of thy spirit,
> And live out thy life in the light.

William Repton.

Acid Drops.

The *National News* declares that Haeckel had no "reverence in his temperament"—which only means that he did not "reverence" the things the *National News* writer is paid to uphold. He was a "most destructive critic" of the Christian religion, but "his theories and teachings have been easily answered in the apologetics of modern Christian writers." So much for Haeckel! He has been easily answered. So was Paine, so was Darwin, so was Bradlaugh. All these people are so easily answered that one is surprised anyone ever bothers to reply to them. The keen and cultured intelligence of the ordinary chapel-goer could easily detect their fallacies without the assistance of such giants as, say, a Begbie, or a Ballard, or the Bishop of London.

For unadulterated stupidity commend us to Mr. Arthur Mee. In *Lloyd's Newspaper*, under the heading of "A Plain Man's Pulpit," Mr. Mee displays his want of knowledge with all the pride that most people feel in imparting valuable information. His sermon for August 17 is concerned with Haeckel, and he leads off with the startling information that "but for him there might not have been a German Empire." And after having created the German Empire, Haeckel next "founded what is called Materialism." That is really not bad as a record of work, although one certainly had an impression that Materialism was a little older than Haeckel. Then Haeckel opened "the floodgates of despair and let loose their foul waters to drown whatever faith there was beyond the Rhine." There is plenty more of the same sort of thing, and that issue of *Lloyd's* is worth preserving as the finest example of ignorance that has appeared in print for many a day. In fact we do not remember ever seeing anything to equal it. It is surprising that the editor ever permitted it to appear. He must have known better than to have taken it seriously, for we decline to believe, without good evidence, that there are two people alive at the same time with the stupidity of Mr. Mee.

English people are threatened with a "Pussyfoot" Temperance Crusade, in which every effort will be made to drive the country into the arms of the mineral water and cocoa merchants. An amusing story used to be told of a temperance advocate who used to quote the lines from *Omar Khayyam*:—

> O Thou, who did'st with pitfall and with gin
> Beset the road I was to wander in,

and then gravely argued that old Omar meant the "unsweetened" sold at the public-houses.

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An evening paper refers to Landru, the French "Bluebeard," as "the hub of the Universe." Surely the honour belongs to Solomon. "Bluebeard's" thirteen wives make a poor show compared with the "wise man's" selection of female loveliness.

The Assistant-Secretary of the Poor Clergy Relief Corporation states the average value of a living in the Church of England is less than £250. It may be so, but the clergy are not all homeless wanderers. Thirty-nine ecclesiastics of the State Church share £180,700 annually, and bishoprics have been multiplied of late years.

Six columns were given by the *Daily Telegraph* to the death of Andrew Carnegie—followed by a couple more columns by the inevitable T. P. O'Connor, and one column to the obituary of Professor Haeckel. The allocation of space is significant. The one was only a scientist of world-wide reputation, and whose work had its part in influencing the life of humanity. The other was a multi-millionaire who gave part of his millions to founding libraries, etc., that always advertised—Carnegie. Eight columns to the millionaire. A single column to the scientist. Further comment is needless.

We have always understood that Mr. Carnegie was a Freethinker belonging to the variety that preferred to camouflage itself under the name of "Agnostic." But he took no part that we are aware of in helping Freethought propaganda in any part of the world. That kind of work has no advertising value in the world as it is to-day. The greater honour to those who do help so unpopular a cause. Mr. T. P. O'Connor says his religious opinions were "essentially unorthodox," and that he came "nearest in his religious outlook to that band of Scotch Freethinkers with Hume at their head," etc. Oh, rare "Tay Pay"! Hume is quite a respectable name now—he has been so long dead. It is therefore quite safe to say that one agreed with Hume. Had it been Bradlaugh or Ingersoll, that would have been a quite different matter. What moral humbugs most men are!

It is highly significant that in their obituary notices of the late Andrew Carnegie, the religious newspapers do not venture to claim him as a Christian believer. The *Christian World* mentions the fact that he "gave little of his money, comparatively, to directly religious objects." Not many years ago a long letter from him appeared in the New York *Truth-seeker*, in which he eulogized the celebrated Colonel Ingersoll, and described his work for Freethought in terms of warmest praise.

Civil List Pensions are being drawn by 310 persons, the highest being £300, the lowest £20, and the average £77. The majority of these people have rendered some service to the country. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishop of London, share £700 weekly. Their record is seen in the voting lists in the House of Lords.

Now that most of the fighting is over, the brave clergy are getting quite bold. The Bishop of Swansea has gone to the Front—at Swanage with the Church Lads' Brigade, and his lordship is actually on the staff. Another ecclesiastic, the Bishop of Barking, dedicated a banner belonging to the East Ham branch of the Federation of Discharged Soldiers.

The clergy may consider themselves a caste apart from their fellows, but they often fare like other mortals. The Rev. E. Greenshiel, of the Isle of Wight, has lost nearly all his belongings, including wedding presents, by the sinking of a steamer in a storm. The Rev. G. C. W. Sweet was drowned while boating at Oxford, and the Rev. J. Millett has resigned his curacy at Guildford because he cannot find suitable lodgings.

The sympathy of our readers is asked for the Rev. Arthur Tomlinson, Vicar of Bolton-le-Sands, who, on his death, was found to have borne the burden of property to the value of £86,177. Such a burden on the shoulders of a preacher of the blessings of poverty must have been indeed hard to bear. It is to the credit of Mr. Tomlinson that he carried his cross to the very end without complaint.

A man who married eight women in sixteen years will surrender himself for trial here next week. He is Charles Hugh Wilson, who for many years associated himself with the Y.M.C.A. and other religious bodies. He has been a regular churchgoer, a diligent student of the Bible, and maintains a sober and devout mien. All his wives are living, and expect to face him when he appeals to the Court. Wilson appears to have lived with each wife an average of a year, but often after abandoning one he would return to a former spouse for a short while. It is alleged one of his favourite methods of wooing was to arouse sympathy in the breast of the object of his temporary affections by recounting how he had lost his first wife and three children in a fire. He has announced that now he intends to reform and wishes to become "a channel of blessing to all men."—The *Daily News* New York correspondent.

Among the holiday items in a daily paper was one referring to a woman excursionist aged ninety-three, who was accompanied by her daughter aged seventy-two. There is nothing extraordinary in these ages. Think of poor old Adam, aged 900, introducing folk to his "baby boy," aged over eight centuries.

"Seven hundred blind persons live in London on less than ten shillings a week," declares Mr. Alfred Shortt in the House of Commons. It is strange that so large a number should have escaped the attention of "Our Father which art in heaven."

Sir William Ridgeway, in a letter to the *Times* newspaper, mentions that "No Irish Roman Catholic ecclesiastic ever pays a penny of income tax." As the clergy were also exempted from military service, they seem to occupy a very happy position.

An article in a literary weekly deals with the fascinating topic, "Not too old at forty," and refers to a number of well-known personalities who did things when over that age. Unfortunately, the writer omitted to mention Adam, Methuselah, and the other Bible patriarchs, who were not too old at four hundred.

The new Welsh Church Bill provides for a Government grant of £1,000,000, that will ultimately pass over to the Church. In addition to this, and solely as a result of the War, the increased value of tithes, etc., totals another million. We can understand, therefore, why the preachers in this country have been so quiet on the subject of profiteering. And while the Church of England is silent for one reason, the Nonconformist Churches are silent for another, although similar reason. A list of those prominent Nonconformists who have made huge fortunes out of the War would be very interesting reading. Piety pays in this country, and its profession helps to disarm attack as nothing else can.

The Rev. S. McEwan Lawson contributes an article to the *Christian World* for August 14, entitled "A Misunderstood Story," by which he means the Book of Jonah. All we can say is that the author of this Book would not recognize his own story as related by Mr. Lawson. One misses the three days' journey inside the whale, and the threatened destruction of wicked Nineveh. We love the Book of Jonah, and decline to endorse Mr. Lawson's revised version. We must have the whale.

Pastor Russell is dead and buried, but Russellism is still alive and flourishing. It claims to be the only absolutely true "ism" in the world. It is the seven hundred and seventy-sixth sect, and the seven hundred and seventy-five are all wholly false churches, it alone being the only infallible exponent of God's revelation in the Bible. Russellism's chief fascination for many people lies in the fact that it has the courage to banish hell from the Universe.

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To Correspondents.

W. H. W.—Thanks. Shall appear as early as possible.

J. G.—The comments of many of the English papers on Haeckel are simply contemptible. But what can one expect? Such men write as they are paid to write, and their standards are the passions of the moment and the profit of the occasion.

D. Mapp.—The best translation of Lucretius is by Munro (Longmans); one vol. Latin text, one vol. translation. There is a translation in the Bohn Series, and numerous translations of parts. A four vol. edition of some of Lucian's works was published some time back by the Cambridge Press. An almost complete translation was issued in the early nineteenth century, two vols. 4to.

A. Brown (S. Shields).—We have read your paper with much interest as coming from one who has recently made acquaintance with Freethought. Do you wish for back numbers of the *Freethinker* for reading and distribution? If so, please let us know, and we will send on a parcel. If there are any special pamphlets you are needing, we will send them on also on hearing from you.

J. A. S.—For the historical side read Lecky's *History of European Morals* and *Rise of Rationalism*, Buckle's *History of Civilization*, and Draper's *Conflict of Religion and Science*. Larger and more specialized works can follow later. G. W. Foote's *Flowers of Freethought* should also be read. J. M. Robertson's *Short History of Christianity* will also help. We cannot advise more definitely unless we know just what subject it is you wish to study.

G. Grove.—There are numbers of books on ethics, and we are unable to say which would suit your friend best. We are sending a couple of pamphlets that may help.

J. Breese.—We saw the letter, which we thought very opportune.

A. Rubin (Johannesburg).—Pamphlets are being sent. (1) You may find what you need in Mr. Cohen's *Religion and the Child*, which is included in the parcel. Some of Mr. F. J. Gould's writings on the training of children would probably give all you require. (2) The inquiry to your answer concerning the Editor is in the affirmative. (3) We should reply that the less a child hears of rewards and punishments the better for its moral welfare.

L. Easterbrook.—We do not know of any Secular Organization in the neighbourhood of Paignton.

T. Leitch.—Received. Will be acknowledged later.

L. J. Roe,—We can send a parcel of back numbers of the *Freethinker* if of use. Please let us know.

E. Rose.—Thanks for securing five new readers. That is a splendid way to help. We are sending the paper weekly to the address given.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. W. Thresh lectures in Victoria Park to-day, near the Bandstand, at 6.45. This is Mr. Thresh's first visit to Victoria Park, and we hope that local Freethinkers will do their best to see that the audience is a good one.

We hope that Freethinkers in South Shields and district will give a fitting response to the letter of Mr. Fothergill, which appears in another column. There are plenty of sympathizers in the neighbourhood, and the present time is a favourable one for propaganda. Some can help financially, and some in other ways; but all can give some help, if they only will. While we are on this topic, we should like to say that it is high time there was more activity on the whole of Tyneside. The district has been resting too long.

One consequence of the War is likely to be the abolition, for some years, of cheap books and journals. Publishers say there is no likelihood of books being published at anything like the old prices, and it is said to be likely that the newspapers will retain their increased prices. Of course, some increase in price is inevitable, seeing the largely increased cost of production; but one feels that there is profiteering going on here as elsewhere. And the worst of it is that the enhanced prices will tell most with the most serious works. *Good* books were ridiculously high priced in this country before the War; they bid fair to become monstrous now. We have noticed several books of late, of not more than a couple of hundred pages, published at 10s. 6d., and no increased cost justifies that price.

A well-known Rationalist has written an article in which he states that there exist 2,339 MSS. of the Greek New Testament, and that these contain 200,000 different readings, some of them in flat contradiction to each other, and he naturally asks: "Which of these MSS. is to be accepted as the inspired text?" Asked about it by "W.A.M." in the *British Weekly* for August 14, Professor David Smith says: "If this sort of thing is the best that Rationalism has to say for itself, it is surely a lost cause." And yet he goes on to admit that the number of MSS. at present catalogued is 3,829, and that the variant readings may be roughly put at 140,000. But he does not dare to determine which is the inspired text. It is orthodoxy that is "a lost cause," not Rationalism.

Arrigo Boito (1842-1918).

Fear not for any man's terrors;
Wait not for any man's word;
Patiently each take his place,
Gird up your loins to the race;
Following the print of her pace,
Purged of desires and of errors,
March to the tune ye have heard.
—*Swinburne, "The Halt before Rome."*

Arrigo Boito, who died last year, was the last of the *nuova scuola* of Italian poesie. In those dark days, when that "too much loved" land that Swinburne sang of was still prostrate before altar and throne, Boito was one of that brave band of rebellious *litterati*, which included Stechetti, Praga, and Carducci, who attuned their lyres to "Liberty." And "liberty" meant to them not merely that political screed which has ever afflicted our ears, but the only "liberty" that is worth fighting for—the "liberty of the mind." To Stechetti, this was the first of all liberties, and in the preface to his *Nuova Polemica* he said: "First of all I say, have no belief in God." His friend, the brilliant Carducci, the author of the immortal *Hymn to Satan*, was none the less appassioned for this "real liberty" when he wrote that line: "This vile Christian century," for he knew which was the greatest of all the enemies of liberty.

The key-note of the *Nuova Scuola* was "realism," and this "realism" said Stechetti, was "nothing more than the effect of a social condition—a moment in social evolution." Yet this moment of realism, as sung by the *nuova scuola*, roused Italy from its lethargy. In the awakening, literature and art, so long bound to foreign conventions, arose rehabilitated in all its natural splendour. In music, Boito became the apostle of the *nuova scuola*, but, unfortunately, the slopes of Parnassus found him more often than the altars of St. Cecilia.

Boito was born at Padua in 1842, and was educated (a terrible word for a man of genius) at Milan conser-

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vatoire, where he gained honours with a cantata, *Le Sorelle d'Italie* (1862), written in conjunction with Faccio, who was another rebel. This brought him official recognition from the Government in the shape of a grant of money. Boito's poetry had also come to be recognized, and Victor Hugo wrote him a flattering letter, as did also his compatriot Andrea Maffei. By this time, however, Boito had a musical masterpiece ready for the public—the opera *Mefistofele*, but alas, his country was not yet ready for his new ideas. What was to be done? Rebel that he was, he felt that he could not express himself within the existing operatic formulæ, the aim of which was simply to "amuse the public." To straighten his people to a better view of art, and especially his art, Boito decided that their minds had first to be freed from existing conventions, and we find his pen busy in Praga's *Figaro* and Mazzucato's *Giornale della Societa del Quartetto di Milano*. He then started concerts and a newspaper in order to improve the taste of the land of the *bel canto*, but the war clouds of 1866 soon put an end to his dreams. At the call to arms, he and other rebels of the *nuova scuola*, including Praga, Faccio, etc., joined Garibaldi's corps, and fought bravely against the "Austrian oppressors."

The war over, Victor Hugo prevailed upon him to adopt literature as his *metier*, and, unfortunately, for musical art he agreed. The failure of his opera, *Mefistofele*, in 1868, probably helped Boito in this decision. Literature has possibly gained by the choice. Besides being the author of several stage pieces, including *Le Madri Galanti* (in collaboration with Praga), Boito wrote the *libretti* to his own musical words—*Mefistofele*, *Nerone*, and *Orestiade*. For Bottesini and Mancinelli he wrote *Ero e Leandro*, for Ponchielli—*Gioconda*, for Faccio—*Amleto*, for Verdi—*Otello* and *Falstaff*. That these works have a high place in the literature of *libretti* there cannot be two opinions. *Nerone* has been awarded the highest praise by the great Italian dramatist, Cossa. Strange to say, Cossa himself owed his fame to a tragedy by the same name, but his own work, in comparison with that of Boito, he says, is "mere child's play." He further says that Boito's poem has in it "conceptions worthy of Shakespeare." But to return to Boito the musician.

Unfortunately, all that the general public know of Boito, the musician, is through the opera *Mefistofele*. This was produced at Milan in 1868. What a storm it occasioned we shall see. Boito, as we have said, belonged to the *nuova scuola*, which had its roots in "realism," and it was upon his insistence of this principle, in both the text and music of his work, that nearly brought the opera to shipwreck. Much has been written both for and against Boito's principles in this work. Mazzucato, whilst admitting the most palpable defects in Boito's attempt to weld the philosophical scheme of Goethe with an operatic setting, is, on the whole, fulsome in praise of the opera. On the other hand, our own critic, Ernest Newman, pours out his contempt upon Boito's scheme. Suffice it to say that most of the composer's so-called defects are due to his striving for "realism." Yet his efforts were the means of guiding his contemporaries and his successors. One of the most usual charges brought against *Mefistofele* is that Boito was bitten with Wagderian ideals. Nothing could be further from the truth. A glance at the music of Verdi will show that Italy had already felt the "new spirit" which had come with the "awakening of Italy." Boito, who was bolder and more original that the composer of *Rigoletto*, was the continuator of the "new spirit," and indeed he helped to give the change to Verdi's *Aida* and *Falstaff*, and to delineate the direct line of development to Ponchielli, Mascagni, Leoncavallo, and Puccini. Mascagni's prelude to *Iris* and Boito's "Prologue in Heaven" have more than an accidental resemblance. What Boito's opera *Nerone* is like no one knows as yet. Although commenced so far back as 1878, only the poem has seen the light of day. The composer was still at work upon the music up to the day of his death. However, from æsthetic considerations and estimates of Boito's music, let us turn to a phase of Boito which, as one of the *nuovo scuola*, we cannot afford to ignore. As a *confrere* of the heretical Carducci, Praga, and Stechetti, he did not forget to express his contempt for the Christian religion. As I pointed out in my *Heresy in Art*, Boito openly satirized the Roman Church. In the scene in *Mefistofele* where the master of the nether world is crowned, the whole crowd of imps, demons, and witches kneel in adoration before him to a travestied version of one of the most sacred hymns of the Church—the *Tantum Ergo*. A riot took place on the night of production, and duels were fought the next day. Needless to say, the police interdicted the performance. Boito was clearly a Freethinker and humanist. Although his *Nerone* (based evidently on the exaggerated, if not forged, account of the persecution of the Christians under Nero, in the *Annals* of Tacitus) might lead some simple people to imagine that Boito must have been quite orthodox, we must remember that the subject of the heroic has always had a fascination for artists. Boito had too broad and open a mind to trouble much with other-worldism. That quaint little volume of poetry from his pen entitled *Il libro dei versi* reveals the sceptical bent of the philosopher and humanist. One of the poems—*Re Orso*—has been a puzzle to critics as to its specific drift. But there can be little doubt as to the meaning of the fifth section of the second legend, describing the thirty years' wanderings of a worm which had entered the tomb of King Orso!

Death, which the ordinary religionist prates about as the birth of a new life, was to Boito something different. When Verdi died, Boito, who had watched his friend struggle against "that fell sergeant, Death," for nearly a week, took up his pen and wrote:—

> He (Verdi) resisted with an heroic resistance.....And so he was strong and beautiful to the very last moment. So be it. And the ancient reaper must have borne away his scythe well blunted!.....I have lost in my life beings whom I idolized, and my sorrow has survived my resignation. But never have I felt a sentiment of hate for death, and of contempt for that mysterious power at once blind and stupid, triumphant and vile. It needed the death of that nonagenarian to arouse in me such an impression. He too hated it, because he was the most powerful expression of life that one could imagine well, and he hated it as he hated idleness, as he hated an enigma or doubt. Now it is all over, and he sleeps like a king of Spain in his Escurial, under a bronze that covers all that there is of him.....

Such words were worthy of Boito, and of the *nuova scuola*.

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Pious Lying.

IT is a fact known to most people that, once a lie is perpetrated, the liar has to go on lying to prevent being found out over the first lie and to bolster up his plausible story. It is thus with the Christian lie, which has resulted in the hugest fraud that has ever been perpetrated upon mankind. The Tertullian principle, initiated by Paul and perpetuated by the early "Fathers"—Eusebius, Origen, etc.—was of a pious nature. Paul said: "For if the truth of God hath abounded *through my lie unto his glory*, why am I judged a sinner?" He did not object to lie if it added to the glory of his God.

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The principle of Tertullian, which produced such appalling ignorance amongst these early Fathers and stemmed the tide of intellectual development started by the Greek philosophers, was "Desire for knowledge *other than of Jesus*, learning *other than of the Gospel*, was no longer necessary." Eusebius, the ecclesiastical historian (third century) said that he had related "what *might redound to the glory*" and that he had "*suppressed all that could tend to the disgrace of religion*" (here is an admission); also that he was "by no means scrupulous to *record the whole truth* concerning the early Christians in the various works he has left behind," and that "it was lawful and fitting to *employ falsehood on behalf of the Church*." He admitted, too, the gross prevalence in his time of "sacred forgeries and lying frauds.....whole paragraphs have been foisted in (to the Gospels) by our predecessors." Origen, another Church historian (same period) said "it is not only justifiable, but our *bounden duty, to lie and deceive*, if by such guiles we can catch souls."

The latest example of these pious liars, who act on the Jesuitical principle that it is justifiable to do evil that good may come, and who lie for the "glory" of their religion, traduces the dead to obtain this solar halo for his God. In his obituary of the late Professor Haeckel, in the *Daily Mail* of August 11, the following words occur: "He (Haeckel) was an enemy of all religions, was a materialist, and believed that matter alone exists, and that the soul or spirit is imaginary." The first portion of the statement is true, because all religions, with the exception of Pantheism, are dualistic, but the latter portions are *absolutely untrue*, and are not in accordance with his teaching in the *Riddle of the Universe*, of which, we presume, the writer of the obituary must have had a knowledge. Haeckel *opposed Materialism*, which taught that matter alone exists, as we shall see from his own words; and taught that the soul was transmitted by the parents to the offspring through the sperm and germ. But this soul was *intra cosmos* not *extra cosmos*. It was the dualistic or spirit world which he did not believe in, an imaginary world outside and apart from the universe, inhabited by benevolent and malevolent souls and beings, such as cloud-riding and cloud-hiding gods, trumpeting angels, pitch-forking demons; and containing a heaven of harps, wine, and women, a purgatory of departed souls, and a hell of eternally enduring flames.

At p. 139, writing of souls, Haeckel says: "In the act of procreation, a portion is detached from both the (immaterial) souls of the parents; the maternal contribution passes in the ovum, the paternal in the sperm; when these two germinal cells coalesce, the two psychic fragments that accompany them also combine to form a new (immaterial) soul." Again, he says (p. 21):—

> The different ideas of *monism* and *materialism*.....are still very frequently confused. (1) Pure monism is identified neither with the theoretical materialism that *denies the existence of spirit*, and *dissolves the world into a heap of dead atoms*, nor with the theoretical spiritualism which rejects the notion of matter, and considers the world to be a specially arranged group of energies, or immaterial natural forces. (2) On the contrary, we hold with Goethe, that matter cannot exist and be operative without spirit, nor spirit without matter. We adhere firmly to the pure, unequivocal monism of Spinoza: Matter, or infinitely-extended substance, and spirit (or energy), or sensitive and thinking substance are the *two fundamental attributes*, or principle properties, *of the all-embracing divine essence of the world*, the universal substance."

Further comment on the lying obituary of the *Daily Mail* seems unnecessary, but the Church has a poor case when its advocates have to resort to such means to bolster up its claims, or rather, to oppose and hide the arguments against it.

W. W. Hardwicke, M.D.

Pages from Voltaire.

THE A B C;

Or, Conversations Between A, B, and C.

On the Soul.

B.—Come, let us make a start! But perhaps it would be just as well before we assure ourselves as to what is good and just and seemly in relation to the human soul, to find out where it comes from, and where it goes to. It is always best, you know, to have a thorough knowledge of people with whom you have business.

C.—Your remarks are excellent, although not very pertinent. Whatever may be the origin and destiny of the soul, the essential thing is that it should be virtuous. However, I have always found pleasure in discussing a subject which appealed to Cicero. What is your opinion, Mr. A? Is the soul immortal?

A.—Don't you think that such a question is a little too blunt, Mr. B? It seems to me that before I can say that the soul is immortal, I must know for certain that it exists; but that is precisely where I have no knowledge at all—except, of course, by faith, which cuts through all difficulties. Lucretius said, some eighteen hundred years ago:—

> Ignoratur enim quæ sit natura animai,

"they cannot tell what is the nature of the soul"; he could have said: "We have no knowledge that it exists." I have read two or three hundred essays on this great subject, and they have taught me nothing. I stand in the same relation to you as did Saint Augustine to Saint Jerome. Augustine told him point blank that he knew nothing about the soul. Cicero, a better philosopher than Augustine, had often made a similar confession before him, and had phrased his opinion more elegantly. Our young bachelors of philosophy have the same sort of knowledge, I don't doubt; but, speaking for myself, I am as ignorant at sixty as I was when I first saw the light.

C.—You are joking, surely! Do you not know for certain that brute creation has life, that plants have vegetation, the atmosphere fluidity, and the winds their courses? Do you doubt that you have an aged soul in your aged body?

A.—It is exactly because I know nothing about all these things that you press upon me that I am completely ignorant as to whether I possess a soul—that is, when I consult reason alone. I see that the atmosphere is in motion, but I certainly do not see in the air the real entity which you name the *course of the wind*. A rose vegetates, but within the rose I find no tiny hidden personality that is the cause of vegetation. That, I hold, is as philosophically absurd as it is to say that the scent is something in the rose. Yet this absurdity was held as truth for centuries. The ignorant natural philosophy of the whole of antiquity tells us that the scent leaves the flower to go up the nostrils, and that colours detach themselves from objects in order to reach my eyes. It gave a sort of separate existence to odour, flavour, sight, and hearing; it even went the length of believing that life was an entity that constituted the living animal. It was the misfortune of antiquity to transform in this way mere words into real existences; it was maintained that a mere idea was something that existed outside the mind, and that was necessary, above all, to take into account the ideas, the archetypes, which existed somewhere in empty space. Plato gave currency to this jargon, which was called *philosophy*. Aristotle schematized these ideological chimeras; hence his entities, quiddities, ecceities, and all the barbarisms of the schoolmen.

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A few wise men there were who saw that these imaginary entities were merely words invented to aid the understanding, that the life of an animal is no more than the living animal, that its ideas constitute the thinking animal, that the vegetation of a plant is no more than the plant vegetates, that the movement of a ball is only the ball's changing its position; in a word, that every metaphysical entity is merely one of our conceptions. It took two thousand years for wise men to reach this rational standpoint.

C.—Well, if that be the right way of thinking, if all these metaphysical entities are mere words, your soul, which is understood be such an entity, is, therefore, nothing at all. We really do not possess a soul?

A.—I did not say that: I said that, for myself, I had no knowledge of one. What I do believe is that God has given us five senses and thought, and it is not unlikely that we had our being in God, as Aratus and St. Paul assures us, and that we shall see all things in him, to borrow an expression of Malebranche.

C.—On your showing I ought to possess thought without a soul. Surely that is ridiculous, it is not?

A.—Not as ridiculous as you think. Do you admit that animals have feeling?

B.—Certainly, it would be a denial of common sense not to do so.

A.—Do you believe that a living unknown entity is lodged in them, an entity which either you name, feeling or memory, or appetite, or describe by the vague and indefinable term "*soul*"?

B.—Emphatically, I do not; nor does anyone I know believe such a thing. Brute creation feels because it is its nature, because nature has given it organs of feeling, because love, the principle of nature, has ordered it thus for all time.

A.—Very well, then! This eternal principle has so ordered things that when I possess a well-constituted head, when my brain is neither too humid nor too dry, I am able to think, and it has my heartfelt thanks for the arrangements.

C.—But how do thoughts come into your head?

A.—Let me say once again, that I know nothing about it. Some sixty years ago when his countrymen had not as yet learnt to think, a philosopher was persecuted for saying that the difficulty is not so much to know how matter thinks, as to know how a brain, of any sort at all, is capable of thinking. I am of this philosopher's opinion, and risking the persecution of fools, I declare that I am completely ignorant of the first principles of things.

B.—You are certainly amazingly ignorant; I suppose we are so too.

A.—I don't think you are far wrong.

B.—Why argue, then? How can we know what is right or wrong if we do not know what the soul is?

A.—Ah! there is a world of difference; we know nothing of the principle of thought, but we are well aware of our interest. It is obvious that it is our interest to act well towards others just as it is their interest to act well towards us, so that everyone on this ball of mud which we call the earth, may have as little unhappiness as possible during the brief space of time allotted to us by the Being of beings for vegetating, feeling, and thinking.

Englished by GEO. UNDERWOOD.

The manufacture of sins is so easy a manufacture, that I am convinced men could readily be persuaded that it was wicked to use the left leg as much as the right; whole congregations would only permit themselves to hop; and would consider that, when they walked in the ordinary fashion, they were committing a deadly sin.—*Helps.*

Correspondence.

RELIGION IN THE ARMY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Being an ex-soldier, and having read a letter in your columns taken from the *Sunday Mail* (Glasgow), touching on service men and their beliefs, I desire to say a few words on the subject.

I am by no means a well-educated man, but what I am going to say I've actually seen, and I think you will agree there is no wonder common-sense young men have turned aside from the rubbish they were taught at school.

When under heavy shell fire you would see men get well under cover and put their steel helmet at the best angle for protection from splinters. In the case of a gas attack, they would instantly place on their gas masks, and when expecting an enemy infantry attack they would pay special attention to their rifles. The aforementioned things they knew to be their salvation, and never once in all my active service did I see a man resort to prayer for a defensive measure. Not only that, men were liable to severe punishment if they in any way neglected to take proper care of their equipment, and even the Army authorities don't consider it an offence to lose or misplace a Bible. Another little instance I shall never forget occurred on the Ancre front about December 16. I was doing battalion runner, and was taking a message to Brigade H.Q. I had to pass through some heavy shelling, and when I had got nicely through it, I met the Padre of our brigade coming up. He knew the shells were dropping where he would have to pass, but what did he do? not pray to God for protection. No! but instead he asked my advice. I told him to wait until the shelling ceased if he wished to see Blighty again. Needless to say he took my advice. On another occasion I remember a preacher at a certain Y.M.C.A. hut complain to the camp commandant of the gambling that was indulged in near by. He said the crown and anchor boards kept the men from attending his service. I ask, Why did he complain to the camp com.? Had he for one brief moment lost faith in his God?

JOSEPH WORLEY
(Late York and Lancasters).

THE SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH.

SIR,—The year is past middle life, and we have rested long. We are on our trial. We are left to keep things going without the persistent activity of our late Secretary, Mr. R. Chapman, who has been been compelled to withdraw, for a while only, we hope, owing to poor health. Thirty-three years is no mean record, even though it be in "the best of causes." How shall we honour him? I would respectfully suggest to all concerned that we combine as soon as possible, and arrange a good winter's work. There is much to do, and the time is now opportune; but our members and friends are scattered far and wide. The local members feel that a course of lectures should be arranged for the season that is close upon us. Might I hope that all who are willing to help in any way will communicate with me? My address is 3 Thompson Street, Tyne Dock, South Shields. There is some difficulty about a meeting-place, which we hope to overcome soon.

J. FOTHERGILL, Secretary.

MILITARISM.

SIR,—No one admires more than I do your insistent and trenchant attacks on militarism; but, you will agree with me, I think, that to point out an evil, which after all is obvious enough to most people, is something of minor importance compared with the more difficult task of finding a remedy for the evil.

A little while ago noticed that, at a Conference held recently, a member of the N. S. S. contended that the abolition of religious teaching is the chief remedy for militarism; yet it would not be difficult to recall to memory the names of many Atheists whose jingoistic patriotism during the War was worthy of the Bishop of London.

War, I take it, is the result of economic conditions only, and religion, indeed all our ideas, are mere reflections of the material world.

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Therefore, I put it to you that if we would relieve humanity of obnoxious ideas (such, for instance, as war or religion) we must alter the conditions which make possible war and its attendant evils—militarism and navalism.

I would suggest that what we really need is a good deal more action, and a good deal less theorizing.

NAT. STREIMER.

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Views and Opinions.

The Death of Religions.

One of the largest facts in human history is religion. It is a phenomenon upon which religious advocates dwell at inordinate length, but without anything like an adequate appreciation of its cause or its significance. They point out with great glee that humanity at all times, and under all conditions, has possessed a religion; but they ignore the fact that, except under the most primitive conditions, human advancement has meant a weakening of religious conviction. With very primitive societies, gods are created with a lavish profusion, and flourish with the grotesque exuberance of an untouched tropical forest. In less primitive times the gods are more sharply defined, their "spheres of influence" marked out, the extent of their powers indicated. Advancing civilization sees them diminished in number and still further weakened in power, until their very weakness and impotency are apt to breed the kind of sentimental pity one feels for a millionaire become a pauper or an aristocratic monarch reduced to the level of a simple citizen. Like their human creator, the gods bring with their birth the promise of death. They are all born, flourish, and decay under fundamentally identical conditions. Sooner or later mankind turns its back on its gods, and the causes are patent to all who attentively study the subject. Every religion carries within itself the seeds of its own dissolution. In the causes that give the gods their being is contained the sure promise of their decay.

* * *

An Old Process.

The rejection of religion is no new phenomenon. It occurs in all civilized history. In one of his wonderfully modern Dialogues, Lucian introduces the Olympian deities discussing—like a modern Church Council—the prevalence of unbelief among men. They are disturbed that man seems to be reaching the stage of either not believing in the gods at all or not troubling about them. There is a great deal of talk, until one of the minor deities asks:—

> What other conclusion could they arrive at when they saw the confusion around them? Good men neglected, perishing in penury and slavery; and profligate wretches, wealthy, honoured, and powerful. Sacreligious temple robbers undiscovered and unpunished; devotees and saints beaten and crucified. With such phenomena before them, of course men have doubted our existence. .....We affect surprise that men who are not fools decline to put their faith in us. We ought rather to be pleased that there is a man left to say his prayers. We are among ourselves, with no strangers present. Tell us, then, Zeus, have you really ever taken pains to distinguish between good men and bad? Thesseus, not you, destroyed the robbers in Attica. As far as Providence was concerned, Sciron and Pity-o-campus might have murdered and plundered to the end of time. If Eurystheus had not looked into matters, and sent Hercules upon his labours, little would you have troubled yourself with the Hydras and Centaurs. Let us be candid. All that we have really cared for has been a steady altar service. Everything else has been left to chance. And now men are opening their eyes. They perceive that whether they pray or don't pray, go to church or don't go to church, makes no difference to them. And we are receiving our deserts.

The case could hardly be put more effectively. It is the appeal to experience with a vengeance, and experience sows the seeds of the one disease that is fatal to all shams. We can say with Lucian, Men are opening their eyes—and the gods are receiving their deserts.

* * *

Religion and Science.

How long is it since man began to find out his gods in the matter of physical science? For thousands of years the gods dominated the world. From the fall of a shower of rain to the revolution of a planet, the gods did everything. To merely question their power was the greatest of crimes. Bit by bit this vast field was reclaimed—a task at the side of which the conquest of the frozen North or of the fever-stricken tropics was child's play. The process is now practically complete. Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton, Laplace, Lyell, with numerous other workers, have given us a finished universe in which there is simply no room for the supernatural. All that was once done by the agency of the gods is now done through the motions of a cosmic mechanism with which outside interference in simply inconceivable. Physics and chemistry know nothing of the supernatural; if it exists, it is outside their departments. A chemist or a physicist would to-day no more think of bringing in "God" as the cause of the phenomena with which he deals than he would attempt to revive the cosmical theory which rested the earth on the back of an elephant.

* * *

Morals and Religion.

As in one direction we can see a physical world developed that is self-contained and self-sufficient, so in another we can see a moral world developing along the same lines. Deep down in the animal world we can see the beginning of our moral nature. We can trace, more or less completely, its growth from the purely animal to the semi-human, and from the lowest human stage to the highest. The history of the moral sense may be difficult enough to trace in full detail, but it is plain enough in its general outline, and the knowledge of detail is bound to come some day. At any rate,

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there is no room for doubt that normal human associations alone are adequate to explain the origin and development of the moral qualities, nor that the gods, as in Lucian's sketch, have been receiving credit that is not due to them. Very largely, indeed, they have hindered moral development rather than aided it. In the name of God vices have been branded as virtues and virtues branded as vices. In the name of God the moral sense has been stunted and deformed so that men have been led to praise in God conduct they would at once have denounced in their fellow-men.

* * *

Religion and the State.

In social life there is the same lesson. Once upon a time the existence of a State without a religion would have seemed an impossibility. Much as Christians have quarrelled on other matters they have agreed on this. The contest between Nonconformist and Churchman has been far more a question of *what* religion should be taught than of aught else. To-day the fact that there is a growing number who hold that the State has no right to interfere at all in matters of religion, is proof that here also the gods have been found out. It is a recognition that the gods contribute nothing of value to society at large. And this marks an enormous advance. It marks the beginning of the end, and registers the truth that man has been his own saviour in the past, and must be his own saviour in the future. People are recognizing with us, as with Lucian, that going to church, offering prayers, belief in the gods, have no real bearing on human welfare. Now, as then, people see good men punished and bad ones rewarded, and they who are not fools, and who have the courage to look facts in the face, decline to put their faith in deities who are either incapable of doing anything, or are too careless to exert their power.

* * *

The Penalty of Detection.

In all directions the gods are being found out, and no deity the world has ever seen has been proof against such a discovery. They owe their power to human weakness, their wisdom to our folly, their supposed care for man to man's lack of care for his fellows. Yet, because old beliefs die hard, and because people shrink from treading unaccustomed paths, the gods die but slowly. Fear is only quite killed by knowledge, and knowledge is of slow growth. There is an old German story of a ghost that had for long terrified a whole district. People did not wait to see it, it was enough that news came that it was abroad. At last some villagers met the ghost in a place where escape was impossible. Terrified they watched its approach, until when it came close the spectre obligingly removed its skull and showed them that it was empty and harmless. So the world has for unnumbered generations been terrified by the spectre of deity not a bit more dangerous than the Germanic ghost. It terrifies only those who are too timid to come to close quarters with it. Others are under no delusion as to its nature or value.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Why, why was I born a man, and yet see the sufferings of wretches I cannot relieve! Poor houseless creatures, the world will give you reproaches but will not give you relief. The slightest misfortunes of the great, the most imaginary uneasiness of the rich, are aggravated with all the power of eloquence, and held up to engage our attention and sympathetic sorrow. The poor weep unheeded, persecuted by every subordinate species of tyranny; and every law which gives others security becomes an enemy to them.—*Goldsmith.*

The Obsolete Faith.

ONE of the chief features of supernatural religion is its out-of-dateness. In its very essence it is an anachronism, a surviving but happily declining relic of what has aptly been called the Primal Stupidity of mankind. All its doctrines, as well as all its rites and ceremonies, are antiquated. Prayer, for example, is amusingly archaic both in style and substance. Its very language is reminiscent of times that are dead. The leading article in the *British Weekly* for August 21 is entitled "Three Steps to God." A quotation is given from the third volume of Woodrow's *Analecta*, in which the writer describes what a servant girl once told him about the Rev. Samuel Rutherford. As is well known, Rutherford was a Scottish divine who lived during the first half of the seventeenth century. He was an ultra-Calvinist, and had to undergo severe persecution for the faith that was in him. Even for his own day, his piety was of such a character that "profane wits" jested upon it, and Woodrow himself admits that he made use of "some familiar expressions." To return to the servant girl's report as supplied by the *British Weekly*, we find that—

> She overheard the great preacher in his room, and noticed that he offered three petitions to God, one after another. "When he walked sometime she heard him say, 'Lord, make me believe in Thee'—and then he sat down and mused sometime. He rose again and walked; she heard him say, 'Lord, make me love Thee!' and then sat down again. And again he rose and uttered these words, 'Lord, make me keep all thy commandments!'"

According to the *British Weekly*, there are "three steps to God," and certainly most peculiar and unnatural steps they are. Assuming the accuracy of the servant girl's tale, we have no hesitation whatever in characterizing Rutherford's threefold prayer as a telling argument against the truth of supernaturalism.

Curiously enough, however, the *British Weekly* not only makes allowances for, but positively defends and urgently recommends, the continual use of those strange petitions. It is admitted that "there is much in life, even in church life, to abate our belief in God, to dull our sense of his reality, and to damp our conviction of his living presence." We venture further, and confidently affirm that there is nothing in life, particularly in church life, even to remotely suggest the active existence of a just and loving God such as Christianity preaches; and so unnatural is the belief in him that it is in perpetual danger of dying out. As the leading article states, "unbelief is not far from any one of us, however advanced we may be." The truth is "that faith remains to the end an object for prayer." In other words, it is not in us at all; "it is a gift of God, not only at the threshold, but later." It is not a thing that can be manufactured out of our natural resources.

Now, equally foreign to our nature is the so-called duty of loving God. Of course, "there can be no love without faith, but there can be faith without love, even in Christianity." Your faith in God may be as firm as a rock, but you can have no love for him until it is shed abroad in your hearts through the Holy Ghost in answer to your own prayer.

> There are plenty of men and women in Christendom who are satisfied with their faith in a just God, but never thrilled by it. They need to pray, as they take the step of faith, "Lord, make me to love Thee!"

Thus, pietism is nothing if not irrational. Has a human child ever pestered his father with such silly petitions as "Father, make me believe in thee" and "Father, make me love thee"? Belief in and love for his father are

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perfectly natural to a healthy child, and to pray for either would be ludicrous in the extreme. And yet the Heavenly Father can neither be believed in nor loved except in answer to fervent and never-ceasing prayer.

If the Christian God really existed, the third petition would be less grotesque than the other two; for any father worthy of the name would be delighted beyond measure to be of every possible help to his children. As a matter of fact, however, there is absolutely no evidence of the existence of a Super-nature in any shape or form. We maintain that all the facts of history, honestly faced, bear witness to the non-existence of a just and loving Ruler of the world, and most assuredly there are no ethical commandments, no moral obligations whatsoever, which bear the least trace of a supernatural or super-human origin. It is easy enough for the editor of the *British Weekly* to expatiate on the undefined "laws of God" and the duty of "an all-round obedience to God's will"; but we challenge him to point to any law or will which is not wholly natural. He talks confidently of revelation to which faith is the response, and assures us that "the revelation is of a God whose character is Love," ignoring the melancholy fact that we are living in a world dominated by Hate, whose actual God is Greed. He alludes to "human conditions which are sometimes full of misunderstanding and friction," and adds, "It is there that the commands of God are visible." We aver, on the contrary, that human conditions have always been, and are now in a pre-eminent degree, so full of injustice, cruelty, oppression, and exploitation of the weak by the strong as to make the belief in a Supreme Being whose character is love the stupidest and most canting of hypocricies. There are some twenty or thirty brutal wars in progress in Europe at this moment, economic disabilities, and wicked profiteering prevail everywhere, Capital and Labour being at daggers drawn; and in all these conflicts the Christian Church, despite its tall talk, exerts no influence, and does not even take the slightest part. Face to face with such a terribly miserable situation, the following is the wisest sentiment to which the editor of the *British Weekly* can give expression:—

> "Lord, make me believe in Thee," is a prayer that accompanies us, as we live on and attempt to see God as the reason and meaning of our world, as the hope and strength of our existence.

Highly significant are the Pastoral Addresses which the various Methodist Conferences have just sent down to the Churches. They all virtually admit the practical impotence of Christianity. That of the Wesleyan Conference dwells on "the relaxation of standards of sex morality, the disregard of Sabbath observance, and of truth, the feverish gambling, love of pleasure, and the strength of the liquor traffic" as menacing signs of the times. The United Methodist Pastoral is a somewhat self-righteous document. Here is a specimen:—

> As a Church we have reason to be proud. In pulpit and pew we possess a large share of gifts, culture, and scholarship. Our financial resources were never greater. We have a finely-balanced constitution. But it is a fuller baptism of the Spirit that will alone equip us for the problems and tasks of our age.

When will that fuller baptism be realized and supply the essential equipment? The Primitive Methodist Address is a more modest and also more truthful address. It declares that "Christ must have his chance in the world's affairs," a profoundly humiliating claim after nineteen centuries of Christian history; and the League of Nations is said to be that great chance. But the Primitive Methodist Church is sensible of the fact that Christ has not yet won even Christendom. "Around us," the Note confesses in sadness of spirit, "are crowded populations in town and city drifting—steadily drifting—away from our churches." The writer is convinced that those teeming millions are not actively opposed to Christianity, though thousands of them undoubtedly are; but, in any case, the Church no longer attracts them, the true explanation of which is to be found in their total loss of positive supernatural belief.

We, therefore, contend that theological religion, or supernaturalism, has outlived its time. The bulk of the people have left it behind and take no account of it. There are Rationalists among us who simply ignore it, not thinking it worth their while to even formally attack it. Being themselves independent of it, finding their own resources adequate in all emergencies, they turn their backs upon it, and treat it as if it were not. There are others, however, who, having thrown off the yoke of superstition, are solemnly resolved to do all within their power to help those who are still in bondage to emancipate themselves as speedily as possible. It must not be forgotten that there are many thousands in Great Britain and Ireland whose livelihood is contingent upon their success in keeping the superstition afloat; and some of us regard it as our bounden duty to counteract their baleful influence over their steadily dwindling followers.

J. T. Lloyd.

Parliament and the Priesthood.

> If I had been a bishop, with an income of five to fifteen thousand a year, I should have had an inexhaustible source of rejoicing and merriment in the generosity, if not in the credulity, of my countrymen.—*John Bright.*

A cynic once described the Church of England as "a distinguished branch of the Civil Service." It was happily done, for that form of the Christian Church which is known as the Church of England has been manufactured by Parliament, and from time to time has been in the hand of its creator for repairs. This creator is a secular association known as the House of Commons, having no religion in particular, and looking upon the theology which it patronises as a special constable, whose duty it is to prevent people from attending too much to the affairs of life by promising them rewards when they are no longer alive.

Among the clergy are a number who pretend that the Church of England represents a religion independent of Parliament. Most clergymen are notoriously ignorant of the culture of their own profession, but the ignorance is unpardonable when they see from time to time the ritual, government, and doctrines of their Church being declared by Acts of Parliament, framed by Freethinkers, Roman Catholics, Free Churchmen, Jews, Unitarians, and the other religions or non-religions professed by the six hundred Members of Parliament.

It appears also that these clergy, who are so ignorant, are many of them perjurers. They subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion sanctioned by the King "by God's ordinance, according to our just title, Defender of the Faith and Governor of the Church within these our dominions." But in practice they openly defy these ordinances, which are declared to be "the true doctrine of the Church of England, agreeable to God's Word." These Articles make most curious reading. They include the belief that Christ went bodily to hell; that a spirit can be at the same time a father and a son, and also proceed from itself as a ghost; that Adam was the father of the human race, and that he ate forbidden fruit, in consequence of which countless generations are damned to everlasting torture; that the Romish doctrine

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concerning pardons, worshipping, and adoration, as well as of images and invocation of saints, is a vain invention; that the Bible is the Word of God; and that the monarch is the head of the Church.

To these Articles of Faith, among others, every Church of England parson subscribes. We know that great numbers of them do not believe in them, or observe them; that they are taking money by false pretences. Their main reasons for remaining in the Parliamentary Church of England are "purple, palaces, patronage, profit, and power," as a former Canon of St. Paul's Cathedral happily expresses it. And the right to appoint clergymen to benefices is sold for money in the open market, as if it was so much coal or a quack medicine. Parliament makes the religion and the landlords appoint its professors, or barter the appointment to the highest bidder. "O the sorry trade!"

The Parliamentary nature of the Church of England is emphasized further by the fact that the ecclesiastical canons of 1603 are still in force, except they conflict with the laws of the land, and the courts have decided that they are still binding on the clergy. They have been amended from time to time, as, for instance, in 1887, when Parliament extended the legal hours for the performance of the marriage ceremony, and one of the canons was altered accordingly. When James the First ratified these canons, they were ordered to be read once a year in every Church. It is a pity that this ordinance is no longer observed, for they are a reminder of the intolerant and bitter spirit underlying priestcraft.

The first dozen canons are aimed at Nonconformists, and all but one ends with a curse, a distinguishing mark of vertebrate Christianity. Whosoever denies what the canons affirm "let him be excommunicated by the fact itself, and not restored but by the Archbishops after his repentance and public recantation of these his wicked errors." This excommunication means that any loyal Churchman may not sit at meal with the person cast out, although he may be his own father or brother. Clergymen who look sideways at Nonconformist tradesmen, or who exclude little Free Church folk from Sunday-school treats, are only obeying the canons as best they can in a milder age.

Who are the unhappy persons who are cursed? If you deny the royal supremacy in Church affairs you are cursed. If you deny that the Anglican Church teaches and maintains the doctrines of the Apostles you are cursed. If you say that the Prayer Book is out of harmony with the Bible you are cursed. If you declare that the Thirty-nine Articles are erroneous you are cursed. And so on, and so forth, in the true spirit of Christian charity. But that the law of the land overrides these canons, everybody who refused to attend Church should be solemnly cursed, and the names read out in the parish churches.

It is a grievous and bitter thing that boys and girls, silly women, and ignorant people generally, should be taught such distinctive Church principles in language which leads them to believe, and is intended to that end, that millions of their fellow-countrymen are outside the pale of salvation. We are told from every pulpit that, now the World-War is over, our national religion is to be something quite different from what we have known before. There is much room for drastic alteration. It concerns us all, for the legal theory of this country makes us all parties to the constitution of the Church. And this branch of the Civil Service is the enemy of democracy. For no one can be a loyal Churchman without renouncing his mental and moral freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of a priest.

MIMNERMUS.

The Kirk Alarmed.

THERE has been for some time past a doleful outcry from the various governing bodies connected with the Protestant Churches in Scotland, and their plaint has latterly been increasing in poignancy. Their grievances are the serious falling-off in church membership, the lax attendance at church services, and—most ominous of all, for here the future of the Church is at stake—the dwindling number on the Sabbath-school roll.

The lamentable condition of the Scottish Churches is not a new one. Outside observers have long noted the decay in churchgoing, and its steadily progressive character; but save for an occasional utterance by some candid cleric the prevailing tendency on the part of the Churches has been to minimize so far as possible the significance of the growing defection of the masses from old-time orthodoxy.

But of late there has been in several ecclesiastical quarters very frank admission that the Churches are fast losing their hold on the people, and that it is not going to be easy for them to regain control. Obviously the Churches are hugely disappointed that the War has not been instrumental in sending the people back in droves to religious worship. Though how a War such as we have come through could be expected to lend a strengthening aid to the Christian religion must remain a puzzle to anyone whose mentality has not been completely doped by Christian teaching. The fact remains, however, that the Churches confidently expected that the War (in the providence of God) would work out to their advantage, and their chagrin at the egregious failure of their anticipation is proportionately keen.

There was some plain speaking at a recent meeting of the Glasgow United Free Church Presbytery. What was referred to as "the new situation arising from the War" formed the subject of considerable discussion. If the world was to be saved from injustice and class-hatred, there was only one thing that could do it. Needless to say this "one thing" implies the influence of Christianity. No explanation was given as to why Christianity, which has been at work for a good few centuries, had not already exorcised injustice and class-hatred. Nor do any of the speakers seem to have realized that the record of Christianity's non-success in this field hitherto is scarcely likely to encourage confidence in her future ability to achieve the much-desired object, namely, justice and universal goodwill.

It being frankly conceded by the committee previously appointed to consider the matter that the "world" at large now declines to come to the Church to be "saved," the suggestion was made that the Churches should go out to the people, presumably in emulation of the Salvation Army, though with a certain measure of refinement. It was urged that "men of special gifts" should set forth the views of the Church at open-air meetings at such places as Glasgow Green, "where all sorts of orators, atheists and agnostics among them, addressed people on all sorts of subjects." If this proposal, which is to be submitted for the approval of the congregations attached to the Presbytery, ever comes to anything we may wish the Churches joy of their attempt to compete for popular favour with the Atheistic and Agnostic orators aforesaid.

One lay member of the Presbytery made the sorrowful admission that it was the thinking working man who, to a large extent, was going from the Church. No more strikingly adverse reflection on the Churches can be conceived than the obvious deduction from this statement. Secularists have long contended that if the people would only think there would be a speedy emptying

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of the Churches. It is gratifying to find this contention confirmed from within the religious fold itself. Unfortunately for our cause but fortunately for the Churches, the percentage of those in the pews who cultivate independence of thought is not remarkably high. Religion is a sedative drug for the intellect, not a stimulant.

We are not impugning the sincerity and conscientiousness of many in the ministry when we insinuate that the clerical repining over the serious falling off in church attendance has mainly an economic basis. Observers of human nature are well aware that the motives which actuate the conduct of men and women are curiously mixed, and that singleness of purpose is an exceedingly rare characteristic. It not unfrequently happens that the ostensible reasons given by an individual for pursuing a particular course of action fail to include the one factor which really dominates the issue in his mind. We are all apt to ascribe to ourselves purer motives than those with which we are really entitled to be credited, and clergymen are no exception to this generalization. We may, therefore, reasonably infer that something besides zeal for the glory of God and for the moral uplifting of humanity lies at the root of the grave concern expressed by the clergy at the visibly growing indifference to their proffered ministrations.

There is all the more likelihood of the jeremiads of the clergy being inspired by economic considerations where a church is solely, or almost solely, dependent on pew rents, voluntary contributions from members, and donations from wealthy sympathisers. In the case of an Established church, where a comfortable "living" is provided whether the pews are filled or not, the incumbents can afford to regard empty benches with a philosophic equanimity not to be attained by the cleric to whom empty benches may spell semi-starvation. It can thus be perceived that in one most important particular the so-called Free Churches are not quite so free as they profess to be. They are tethered by the economic rope, the length of which depends upon how far they can succeed in pleasing their congregations.

Economic pressure is also—consciously or unconsciously—to a great extent the moving power of the current agitation amongst the Protestant bodies for church union; and this despite the plausible show of indignation at the scandal of a divided Christendom with which the demand for reunion is put forward. But it is not merely an amalgamation of the governing authorities of the various Presbyterian bodies that is seen to be desirable. Much more essential to the financial well-being of Protestantism in Scotland is the amalgamation of the many skeleton congregations to be found struggling to maintain their existence within comparatively small areas where church attenders are a vanishing quantity. The serious dissipation of monetary resources involved in the indiscriminate planting of churches is being vividly brought home to clerical leaders in this country. Union and combination would reduce the competition, and incidentally, by eliminating a percentage of the clergy, furnish a little more money to go round. In this way the stipends of the remaining clergy could be substantially increased.

Unquestionably, to judge from the discussions that take place at clerical gatherings and from letters to the press, the principal concern of a large number of clergymen is how they can manage to secure a better income. They are not disposed to rely upon God's overshadowing beneficence and the spontaneous or whipped-up generosity of the faithful. What they want is a guaranteed minimum salary fixed on a basis having some relation to the current high cost of living. It may be noted as a healthy sign that some lay members are of opinion that the present general income of the Presbyterian Church should be more evenly distributed, and that if this were done the income level of the lower paid clergy could be raised appreciably without any clamant appeals being made to the public for the augmentation of small livings. One correspondent—greatly daring—has suggested in the columns of the leading Scottish daily newspaper that a reasonable average stipend should be settled by the Church, and that the many clergymen who now enjoy handsome incomes should voluntarily surrender any surplus in excess of this fixed sum for the benefit of their poorer brethren, by allowing all salaries to be pooled. The above-mentioned correspondent must be remarkably sanguine if he expects the wealthier clergy to do any such thing. We think we see the ministers with the big stipends tumbling over one another in their eagerness to display their Christian charity in such tangible fashion.

The same writer has a short and easy way of dealing with an appeal which the Church of Scotland has recently made for an additional £10,000 per annum for foreign missions. He says: "Take twenty of the livings whose stipends are £1,000 each, divide each by two, and without real hardship to anybody concerned the £10,000 asked for would be obtained at once." He very aptly indicates that this is one of those causes which ministers have presumably near their own hearts and towards the support of which they should give the self-sacrificing lead, and he bluntly declares that the laity should say, "Not a penny till the Church's own house is set in order." Were this attitude of the laity to become widespread, the alarm of the Church would speedily develop into panic.

Geo. Scott.

Acid Drops.

A particularly brutal case in connection with the Prior Park Roman Catholic Industrial School came before the magistrates at Bath on August 25. The Superintendent and three other officials were charged with ill-treating a lad of thirteen who had been committed to their care from Ilford. The lad was found by the police wandering about the streets of Bath with a chain attached to his legs. He had escaped from the school, and inquiry showed that he had been severely ill-treated. He had also been chained by the ankles, and by the hands and feet in such a way as to make movement impossible, and, it was stated, had been beaten about the head with a rolling-pin. Medical evidence showed that the boy's body was covered with bruises, and that he had been subjected to gross ill-treatment. After a lengthy hearing, the Superintendent was fined £10, another official £2, one sent to prison for one month, and the remaining one discharged. The Chairman of the Bench then admonished the boy for being badly behaved, and told him that he was responsible for men of hitherto unblemished reputation being brought before the Court. We take it that the unblemished reputation only means never having been found out. For brutality of the kind described cannot be the product of an accident. But the magistrate lecturing the boy for being the cause of these pious gentlemen getting into trouble strikes us as distinctly humorous. If the men had been Freethinkers, the lad would have been praised for performing a public service.

Men no longer attend churches in any number. The Bishop of Chelmsford says that men comprise only fifteen per cent. of congregations at church services. At Bethnal Green less than one per cent. of the men attended church. Nor is this all the story, for a census taken in London some years ago showed that only five per cent. of the population attended places of worship, and of these the overwhelming proportion were women.

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The dear Bishop of London advised a Hyde Park congregation to have nothing to do with Spiritualism and ghosts. Except, of course, the Holy Ghost, which is a perfectly respectable bogey.

At Bristol, a dock labourer appealed against a sentence of one month's hard labour for stealing two apples. The sentence was reduced to two days' imprisonment. According to the Bible, for a similar offence in the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve received a perfectly monstrous punishment, which was continued during succeeding generations, and is still in force.

"Poor clergy are a disgrace," says the Bishop of Chelmsford. It is a worse disgrace that thirty-nine members of the Bench of Bishops should share £180,700 annually, and prate of the blessings of poverty.

The *Daily Chronicle*, which is old enough to know better, is voicing the dreadful sufferings of the "starving" clergy. In bold headlines, the editor harrows his readers' feelings in this fashion: "How a Vicar Lives on £200 a Year," and then adds in the letterpress that the poverty-stricken parson has to wear his overcoat in Sunday-school to hide his rags. The editor of the *Chronicle* is losing his sense of humour. Millions of families live on £200 a year, and less, and even then father doesn't have to pin his shirt-front to his braces.

Dean Inge is very gloomy about the future of this country. He thinks there will most likely be bankruptcy, followed by a period of anarchy which will end up in a military autocracy. We do not think the outlook is quite so black as this, although we agree that it is none too bright. But it is curious to observe what little real help religion is in the great crises of life. Religion could not prevent the War, it could do nothing to shorten it, and now that the War is over it can give no assistance to straighten out the tangle. And yet people ask, What should we do without religion? Perhaps the best way to answer the question is to ask, What is it that religion does that could not as easily be done without it?

Speaking at an English Church Union meeting at Weston Favell, Northampton, the Rev. T. J. Watts said: "Women were said to be emancipated, but he did not know from what. In half a century he had not discovered that they were slaves." Perhaps the reverend gentleman's reading has been confined to religious works where they do not mention such dreadful subjects.

Churchmen combine the gentleness of doves and the wisdom of serpents. The Welsh Church Bill is a case in point. By the secularization of tithe, the Church would have lost £100,000 annually, but the War caused the suspension of the Act. Since that date the value of the tithe has appreciated, and the astute Church officials have squeezed another million of money out of the taxpayers.

What did the Church do in the Great War? Apart from acting as recruiting agents, the clergy did not cut a heroic figure. The Church sent over 1,000 chaplains—at officer's pay—to the back of the fighting lines.

The Bishop of Chelmsford declares that "the Church can never identify herself with any one political party against another." It is a counsel of perfection. His lordship had better look up the record of the votes of the Bishops in the House of Lords.

The trombones of the Church Army have ceased playing military marches, and are now raising the wind by hymning the Prince of Peace. Bold advertisements, asking for thank-offerings, are now appearing in the press, and are headed with the word "Peace." We wonder if the Church Army's officials ever laugh at the results of their excessive brain-work?

"The average Englishman is shy and reticent in talking about his religious opinions," sagely remarks the *Daily Mail*. But bashfulness is excusable when the unfortunate individual is hazy as to whether he believes in one God or three, and as to whether hell is like Mesopotamia or an ice-cream factory.

The journalists are hard pressed for copy during the holidays. One London paper informed its readers that a snake eighteen inches long had been found in an allotment on the outskirts of the Metropolis. What would those journalists do if the talking snake from the Garden of Eden turned up—and bit some of them?

Mr. Bankes, a London police magistrate, writing to the *Times* on the drink question, says that he does not believe "that the miracle of the wedding of Cana of Galilee is untruly narrated." Perhaps his honor is misled by present-day conditions, when wine is indistinguishable from water.

Laundry charges are to be increased still further. At this rate, it will be cheaper to buy a new shirt than to send the old one to the wash, and presently we shall all be driven to the idea of adopting the simple-life blankets of the Twelve Disciples.

What hair-raising things are reported from Russia! It is even said that the monasteries have been closed and the monks sent to work.

In a laudatory notice of Billy Sunday, the American evangelist, who has been asked to visit England, a London paper says: "he owes his success to his unsurpassed fervour and his torrent of racy baseball slang." The latter is a strange qualification for a "doctor of divinity."

According to the *Observer* of last Sunday's date, the American Red Cross experiences great difficulty in carrying out its work in Montenegro owing to the prevalent belief in evil spirits. There is a general belief that all illnesses are borne on the night wind, and are distributed by evil spirits. As a consequence, the people keep their windows closed, and so help to spread tuberculosis. Dentists state that, when they extract a tooth, the patient keeps a handkerchief over his mouth for several days, in order to prevent evil spirits getting into the cavity. We may take this as one of the ways in which religion shows its beneficial influence—it spreads disease in the very act of guarding people against it. And an inquiry would show that even in this country many thousands of similar cases could be easily found. European civilization is still only skin deep, and this semi-submerged mass of superstition forms the great reservoir on which Spiritualism and all forms of religion so easily draw.

The "Starving Clergy" stunt in the press makes interesting reading. One of the "starving" parsons writes to the *Daily News* complaining that he has discarded his horse and trap, discharged his gardener, and two indoor servants. In their place he has a lad to help the remaining maid.

Writing of the Whitehall cenotaph, the Rev. A. Fleming, of St. Columba's Church, Pont Street, calls the memorial "a sermon in stone," and adds, "There are no dead." Presumably, the reverend gentleman means that the so-called "dead" are walking the golden streets, or else grilling in another and warmer place.

Many efforts have been made to get a *Christian* inscription placed on the cenotaph, the obvious idea being to get all the advertisement for Christianity that is possible. We protested in these columns against Christian symbols being placed over the cemeteries in France where our soldiers lie buried. We have no objection whatever to Christians putting over their graves anything they like, but it is monstrous to use the deaths of all sorts of people as an occasion for advertising the great imposture of Christianity. We are glad to see that our protest has borne some fruit in the exclusion of Christian symbols from the cenotaph, which is, we believe, to be a permanent erection somewhere or other.

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To Correspondents.

J. Adle.—We are not aware of any English translation of Laplace's *Mecanique Celeste*, but you should find an adequate account of the work in any good history of astronomy.

T. Wells.—We have no doubt that if we made the *Freethinker* other than it is, our sales might be increased. But that would not be the *Freethinker;* and, so far as we are concerned, there would be no reason for issuing the paper at all. We are not anxious to sell *a* paper—it is *the* paper we want to sell. We must sell it because we can't afford to give it away; but in either case it is only of interest to us so long as it is doing the work it has always done.

T. Elmes.—Thanks. We feel much better for the rest. It was not until we knocked off for a bit that we realized how much the rest was needed. And we made the most of it. Some days we reduced the work of doing nothing to a fine art. We don't think anyone could have done less.

Mrs. C. M. Renton.—We have handed on your suggestion to the proper quarter. Whether expressing or repressing oneself is a pleasant or an unpleasant task is, we think, a matter of character. You evidently find repression the harder task, and we congratulate you on the hardship. When you come to England we shall hope to have the pleasure of meeting you.

Mrs. Hardinge.—If God gave half the attention to murderers before they became such that he is believed to give to them after they have committed the crime for which they are executed, both they and the world might be the better for it. We agree with you as to the stupidity of most of the "spirit controls." The orthodox creed makes heaven frightfully dull, Spiritualism makes it very stupid in addition.

G. Grove.—We note your appreciation of Mr. Lloyd's articles. This appreciation is, we are pleased to say, very general among our readers.

Mr. J. Neate writes expressing the great appreciation of a large audience of Mr. Thresh's first visit to Victoria Park. Members are looking forward to another visit from the same speaker.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

When some three years ago a Freethought lecturer was arrested in Connecticut, U.S.A., on a charge of "Blasphemy," Mr. Theodore Schroeder undertook the defence. And it could scarcely have been in better hands. Mr. Schroeder has made the case an occasion for a review of the whole question of blasphemy, and as it stands we have no hesitation in saying that it is one of the most—if not the most—complete discussions of the subject yet offered. The argument fills an octavo volume of 456 pages, and is published by the Free Speech League, East 59th Street, New York. We cannot say what the published price is, as there is no indication of cost on the copy that has reached us.

The special value of Mr. Schroeder's work is that, in addition to the usual legal arguments, the reader is given a history of the "crime" of blasphemy, with a record of all the cases in England and America until the early years of the nineteenth century. But along with a record of cases, there is given, to use the author's words, "much of the psychology and philosophy of the law, and more or less of discussion as to the intellectual methods involved in the formation of legal opinion." It is these latter features which makes Mr. Schroeder's work stand out so clearly from the customary run of essays on the question of Blasphemy. The preparation of the work must have involved an enormous amount of research, and we heartily congratulate Mr. Schroeder on the result. Freethinkers everywhere are under obligation to him for his work. Bulky as the volume is, Mr. Schroeder calls his work "an unfinished argument," and hopes to one day complete it. We sincerely hope he will.

Plain, straight, clean, and courageous talking on the sex question is always welcome, and readers will find all these qualities in *Married Love: a Book for Married Couples*, by Dr, Marie Stopes (Putnams' Sons, 6s. net). Much of what Dr. Stopes has to say is, of necessity, of a speculative character, but it is all said with insight and imagination. Unfortunately, thanks to the doubtful moral tone induced in this country by the prevalence of Puritanism, the handling of questions relating to sex relationships has, for the most part, fallen into wrong hands, and an unpleasant atmosphere has gathered round a subject, the right understanding of which is of vital importance to the race. All the more reason for welcoming a work of the character of *Married Love*, which has now reached a seventh edition in the short space of twelve months. Dr. Stopes handles her subject in the only way in which it should be handled, that is with perfect frankness, which is the proper corrective to a deal of the prevailing suggestiveness. For just as it is the partly clothed, and not the nude that suggests indecency, so it is the writing that proceeds by hints and innuendo that is really unclean. The sooner sex questions are dealt with openly and plainly by people of authority and standing the sooner will it be lifted out of the hands of those who live by trading on the baser feelings of men and women.

We see that the Malthusian League is issuing a "Most Urgent Appeal" for funds. As there appears to be no money in hand, the need is evidently urgent enough, and it would be a pity to see the propaganda of the League languish for need of a little timely assistance from those who believe in its work. The address of the League is 48 Broadway, Westminster, S.W.

Mr. John Richards, a member of the Swansea Branch, has undertaken the selling of twelve copies of the *Freethinker* weekly to new subscribers, the local Branch undertaking the purchase of any unsold copies. The Secretary of the Branch writes that knowing Mr. Richards, he does not expect any of the twelve copies will remain unsold. This is a capital way of helping. Enough of this kind of assistance would enable us to get back to sixteen pages in a very short time. And we shall not be content until we get the paper back to its old size. The *Freethinker* was the last paper to change, in consequence of the War, and we think it will be one of the first to get back to its old form.

A Rondeau.

The Human Mind, by education,
Can overcome its degradation,
And, through the Flame—Experience—
Shall know the Truthful from Pretence,
And aid each salving emanation.

To weakness, born of superstition,
Is proved each Fear-housed institution
Its strength!.....Reason shall make clearance
Of remaining Lies!

Fear of the Unknown, on emotion;
On human feelings and devotion,
Exploited by Dark Appearance,
To Human Love gives severance
From Truth—to Reason, destitution;
There remain but Lies!

C. B. Warwick.

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Subjection.

"You shall be subject to your husband" must be a quotation, which, to-day, to all decent and refined women, requires a great deal of thought—particularly to the younger generation—who have their lives before them and the marriage vow or contract in their minds. Undoubtedly the word "subjection" covers absolutely the future happiness of all married women, for does it not give that opportunity to an abnormal mate or husband to really and finally spoil her future life.

To an observer with a knowledge of elementary philosophy and physiology, any street, in any town, and the various families residing there, are object-lessons. The word "subjection" hits him at once on all sides, and he has not to go far to study its effect on women, and the governing principle of the marriage vow. He sees with little effort, many, many cases of woman's whole existence as a refined being spoilt, especially in the case where the married couple happen to have been brought up in an intensely religious atmosphere, or possibly in a mixture of religions.

As an example, take a male Catholic married to a rather simple and impressionable woman, who may or may not have been lured over to the same faith—the husband, probably, is of an abnormal nature—most Catholics are, either through a mixture of foreign blood, or the fact that their antecedents have been encouraged to propagate freely on behalf of their Church; and in addition no Catholic understands science (this, of course, is "taboo"). What is the effect on the woman whom he marries? She, on her part, has vowed to the Church to be true to him. At first she is frightened, then she is disgusted, and finally she settles down to a life a little better only than that led by a woman of the unfortunate class.

Possibly, if she be a woman with a good constitution, she is burdened with a large family, and her home continually is in the hands of priests, doctors, and undertakers. Sometimes, after a few years, the husband takes to drink, and she has to keep him, and perhaps at an early age buries him, if she does not go under herself first—a tragedy caused through ignorance of the ordinary ethics of life, the Church's insistence on the woman's vows and that objectionable word "Subjection."

It may be said that very few women to-day carry out to the letter their marriage vows—possibly the more enlightened evade them; but what chance has a dependent woman who happens to marry a man distinctly more polygamic than monogamic?

Women who wish for healthy and happy unions should insist at least on an alteration in the marriage contract, or, better still, agitate for the principles of ordinary eugenics.

We hear of a lot of advice given as to the rebuilding of the human race, but is it possible while the word "Subjection" remains in the marriage contract?

W. H. W.

Mr. Speaker, Sir,—I am now the instrument to present unto you a very short, but a very sharp bill, such as these times and their sad necessities have brought forth. It speaks a free language and makes a bold request. It is a purging bill. I give it you as I take physic, not for delight but for a cure: a cure now, the last and only cure, if, as I hope, all other remedies have first been tried. I never was for ruin, so long as I could hold any hope of reforming; my hopes that way are even almost withered. The bill is intituled, "An Act for the utter abolishing and taking away of all archbishops, bishops, their chancellors, commissaries and deans, deans and chapters, archdeacons, prebendaries, chanters and canons, and all their under officers."—*Sir Edward Dering, "A Collection of Speeches, &c., 1640."*

Writers and Readers.

Christopher Marlowe.

It is a rule of journalism that writing, while it may be good enough in itself, is indifferent or bad from the standpoint of periodical literature if it is not connected however loosely with something of actual interest. It must not float aimlessly in the air. The journalism of Freethought, however, is not so completely a slave to topical interest. All that is needed is that the subject should be more or less intimately connected with the Atheistic view of things, and given a little ingenuity, it is easy to find correspondencies and analogies. A little while ago some of us were wondering what that inspiring beverage tea had to do with Freethought. A friend of mine, who knows the whole movement as well as I do the palm of my hand, tells me that the connecting link was the well-known tea-drinking habit of the great Atheist debaters. The whole thing was clear; but I still think that Mr. Palmer, who amused us some while ago with a series of articles on this mind-sapping beverage, might have worked out more fully his theory of the relation of tea to Freethought, contrasting perhaps the flatulence and dullness of the old-time debates with the sparkle of *Satires and Profanities*, the work of a poet who had "taken the Daughter of the Vine to spouse."

. . . . .

I do not think I need an excuse for talking about Marlowe in the *Freethinker*, and the topical interest, if one is required, is provided by a paragraph in the daily papers with regard to a memorial tablet to the Atheist Marlowe:—

> A memorial tablet, "To the immortal memory of Christopher Marlowe, M.A., the founder of grandiloquent blank verse, who met a tragic death near this spot 1st June, 1593, aged 29 years," and bearing the quotation, "Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight," was yesterday unveiled by Sir Frank Benson at the parish church of St. Nicholas, Deptford.
>
> After paying a warm tribute to Mr. Stanley Cooper's part in securing this tribute to the poet's memory, Sir Frank Benson said they honoured Marlowe because he so fully represented that wonderful Elizabethan age—unrivalled for the various products of human activity, the various forces set going in every direction of human life—which was so full of achievement, so greatly daring, so strong, and which laid the foundations of our Empire. The peer of Shakespeare, he had enriched our language for all time with lines such as "She gilds the flowing waters as they glide," and the picture of a king: "The perfect shadow of a sunshine day." They honoured him not only in his own achievements, but in his inspiration, as the man who helped to make Shakespeare's task possible.

How anxious are the parsons and their respectable friends to connect themselves with any writer who has added to the credit of English letters! Probably Marlowe *was* buried in the churchyard of St. Nicholas, but that was not because the Church honoured him, but because he happened to die at a disreputable tavern close by. Deptford had a roisterous and bawdy reputation in those days, and seems to have done its best to live up to it. Marlowe was filled with the heady spiritual wine of the Italian Renaissance, and his view of personal morality was no doubt hazy. At the end of May, 1593, he was boozing with some choice companions, and coming to blows over the favours of a punk or the turn of a dice, his own dagger was wrested from him and driven through the eye to the brain. Now, there is no reason why a man should not be a good Christian and a bad member of the social group. George Peele, on his own confession, was a moral cesspool, and yet he was unctuously pious, and had, we may be pretty certain, a genuine horror of Freethought. Marlowe, we feel sure, had not sunk so low as some of his fellow-playwrights, but from the standpoint of religion he was worse because he saw through it. He had found its origin in a social fiction rather than in a revelation from on high.

. . . . .

Christopher Marlowe was born the same year as Shakespeare, in 1564, at Canterbury, where his father was one of the gentle craft of shoe-makers. He was educated for one of the learned professions, possibly the Church, first at a good Canterbury school, and then at Cambridge, where he graduated B.A. in 1583, and M.A. in 1587. The freedom of

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London life attracted him, and the atmosphere of the stage which was just about to free itself from the combined fetters of Senecan tragedy and the old mystery play, was one in which he could breathe freely. It is likely that he had had a hand in many plays which have not come down to us, and his voice is to be heard in some of the anonymous plays that are now credited, in part or in whole, to Shakespeare, or to other playwrights. *Tamburlane*, an imposing pageant rather than a play, was, probably, produced in 1587. It replaced the "jigging rhymes" of the old drama by a new kind of blank verse, a fitting vehicle for vehement and heaven-aspiring thoughts. The amazing career of this scourge of heaven, the Atheist Tamburlane, must have thrilled the simple theatre-goer of the time. But not for long; in a few years the wits were raising a laugh by ridiculing the more highfalutin passages. You know the great scene where Tamburlane enters in a chariot drawn by the captive kings of Trebizond and Soria with bits in their mouths and thus addresses his steeds in great style :—

> Holla, ye pampered jades of Asia!
> What, can ye draw but twenty miles a day
> And have so proud a chariot at your heels
> And such a coachman as great Tamburlane.....
> To make you fierce and fit my appetite,
> You shall be fed with flesh as raw as blood,
> And drink in pails the strongest muscadel.
> If you can live with it, then live, and draw
> My chariot swifter than the racking clouds;
> If not, then die like beasts, and fit for naught
> But perches for the black and fateful ravens.

There is plenty more in the same Hercules vein, if you can manage to stomach it, and here and there snatches of pure lyric beauty that will quieten your irritated nerves.

. . . . .

The theme of *Tamburlane* is the lust of kingly power and possession, stifled only in the dust of death. In the next play, *Dr. Faustus*, we are shown an aspiring student of Nature reaching for knowledge beyond human limits, and finding it worthless in comparison with what is lost, when at last the knowledge is compassed. In the *Jew of Malta*, a crude and sanguinary melodrama, the theme is the lust of worldly riches. With his last and greatest play, *Edward II.*, Marlowe came to grips with the more complicated facts of human nature. In this powerful and painful drama he pourtrays for us a man, under the dominion of personal caprice, sacrificing the welfare of a loyal people to an ignoble passion, and yet not wholly bad, but rather too refined, too soft, and too subtle for the harsh times in which his lot is cast. The last scenes are concentrated horror and pathos. If this is what Marlowe could do at the age of twenty-nine, when Shakespeare was publishing the "first heir of his invention," the facile and lascivious *Venus and Adonis*, where would his genius have taken him if he had lived another twenty years?

. . . . .

These are the subjects of his four great plays. It is not possible to identify him with any one of his characters. All we are entitled to say is that he was attracted by abnormal physical and moral courage, and by equally abnormal weakness, and that he was temperamentally disinclined to run quietly in theological harness. What is more, we know, from the number of contemporary attacks on Atheism, that there was a good deal of Freethought abroad of the sporadic kind. It was not published, because your sceptic is not usually a fanatic; it was spread by private or semi-private discussion. The bold spirits at the Universities and in London would meet together to challenge the conclusions of Theism. Lyly, the author of a fashionable and tedious novel, addresses a chapter to the gentlemen scholars, in which he puts down rather too easily a sceptic whom he calls Atheos. Reading between the lines, we can see that Lyly had had the worst of the argument with some real Atheist, and revenged himself by knocking down one of his own making. Ascham found Freethought prevalent among the travelled classes, while another writer tells us that it is hard to find an older man who is not an unbeliever. The insidious spread of antitheistic theories was checked, not by argument, but by the common informer, an open confession of weakness. The latter days of Thomas Kyd, the author of the popular *Spanish Tragedy*, were embittered by the lying reports of one of these needy scoundrels, and he was even put to the torture. Kyd was most likely an innocent victim, but not too careful of the company he kept. Marlowe, we can be certain, was less innocent. There exists an indictment, prepared by one Richard Bame, which would have brought Marlowe to the stake if he had not been killed in a tavern brawl. Here are a few of the counts in the informer's indictment, and it is impossible to say that they are not in keeping with what we know of Marlowe's temperament :—

> That the Indians and many authors of antiquity have assuredly written at above sixteen thousand years agone, whereas Adam is proved to have lived within six thousand years.
>
> That Moses was but a juggler, and that one Heriots (Harriot was a mathematician and dependent of Raleigh) can do more than he.
>
> That the first beginning of religion was only to keep men in awe.

His alleged remarks on the New Testament and Jesus are even more profane. He said that Christ was the son of a carpenter, and that, if the Jews crucified him, they knew best what they were doing; that the sacraments would have been administered better in a "pipe of tobacco"; that all Protestants were hypocritical asses; that "if he were put to write a new religion he would undertake both a more excellent and more admirable method, and that all the New Testament was filthily written." The curious reader can study for himself the whole of the charges in Mr. Havelock Ellis' unexpurgated edition of the plays (Mermaid Series). Now, it would seem that the Church and her misguided friends have forgotten the Atheistic opinions of the poet, and, in their anxiety to identify themselves with a man of genius, have taken a viper to their bosom. It was not kind of Sir Frederick Benson to let down his clerical friends so badly.

Geo. Underwood.

Haeckel's Shrine.

The beauty of being an anonymous press hack is that you can snipe the big men. A writer in the *Nation* has been letting himself go on the subject of Professor Haeckel. And very entertaining his criticisms are. This sapient journalist has invented another and false antithesis to "Materialism." This time it is "Vitalism." After cursing the great German Monist for his Materialistic writings, chiefly for his arguments against the existence of a human soul, he administers the knock-out blow thus: Haeckel points out that man ought to pursue truth, goodness, and beauty; but what if the molecules of the human brain make him seek what is false, bad, and ugly? After all, Haeckel "has his shrine like the rest of us," for does he not conclude "The Riddle of the Universe" by remarking that we must "bow before" truth, goodness, and beauty?

This is subjectivity run mad. If you have a shrine of some kind, apparently you are all right, though the object of your worship and devotion may be quite insusceptible of definition. All the truth, beauty, and goodness man has ever known or acquired, or will ever know or acquire, have their source in Nature. We have no evidence or experience of a "super nature." We have known *men and women* to whom it was a delight to offer whole-hearted and reverent homage; but it is a very different proposition to expect any reasonable being to pay the same tribute to some person he has never known, never seen, and never heard. It is not the Materialist who decries and obliterates truth, goodness, and beauty. These are abstract terms, and what they represent are the qualities of human thoughts, human words, human acts. The orthodox offer you a pig in a poke. There is no room for the rule of "Caveat Emptor" in the theologians' law. You are asked to believe in, to worship and to serve, somebody you do not know and have never seen or heard. Is that anything like Haeckel's "shrine"? Does it not, on the contrary, involve a repudiation of truth? How can anybody love, or hate, or admire, or express any opinion of value upon somebody else he knows absolutely nothing about? No person who is loyal to his own manhood would so degrade his reason.

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The proceeding is essentially immoral. It is sheer pretence, and, therefore, false.

There are, no doubt, some of our own scientists who would never feel a spasm of anger though you referred every day to their "shrines." It is largely by the tyranny of terms—words—that orthodoxy manages to survive so long—terms that are polarized. "Shrine" is one of them. But the fact of a man having a "shrine" is not necessarily proof that he is pursuing truth, beauty, and goodness. On the contrary, some very great figures in history have been convicted of falsehood and deceit, oppression and villainy, who were ardent and abject devotees at some "shrine."

Haeckel is to-day the target for many popguns. We think his teaching will survive them. But, as the Editor pointed out, the sapper and miner are also at work. As he truly observed, the *Daily Telegraph* added slander to absurdity by declaring that Haeckel's Materialistic teachings had much to do in implanting the ideas that led Germany to war. This idiotic lie was copied into many other newspapers. The clerical dodge is to keep a good grip of the press, though it must be confessed that clerical influence, while very evident in the more provincial newspapers, is not quite so strong as it was in the bigger dailies, who are reducing the space that used to be given to "Ecclesiastical Intelligence." Maybe they are beginning to realize that the "Intelligence" is not so "great," and that it does not go down so readily as in former days.

It is suggestive to reflect that Haeckel's country is the land where many of our British Churches sent their divinity students to complete their education.

IGNOTUS.

Correspondence.

CHRISTIAN VERACITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your interesting series of articles on the Christian cannibal rite, more or less following the lines of Mr. J. M. Robertson's admirable *Pagan Christs*, a popular edition of which, with the polemical matter left out, I have in vain urged him to publish, there appears to me an occasional lack of one of the most essential virtues of Freethought, viz, critical scepticism. To come to the point, I allude to the following passage: "Tacitus, who wrote somewhere between the years 115 and 117, describing the horrible punishment which Nero inflicted upon the Christians for their suspected share in the burning of Rome, speaks of them as 'Men.....,'" etc.—the well-known passage. Not being a bookworm, I have to rely on memory; but I think I am right in stating that, like similar passages about the early Christians in Pliny and Josephus, this one in Tacitus is admittedly a forgery. It does not occur in any of the MS. copies of Tacitus before the thirteenth or sixteenth century. The name of the forger of the passage was given, along with other details of the forgery, but it has escaped my memory.

We all know the picture of the "infamous Emperor" conjured up by the diseased imagination of the moralists, Christian and other, dancing up and down a broad terrace, mad, and playing a fiddle—though, so far as I know, fiddles hadn't yet been invented—all Rome burning luridly below, and at intervals along the breastwork of the terrace impaled Christians, steeped in bitumen, flaring merrily, to represent street gas-lamps. If I mistake not, a second-rate Christian artist has depicted the scene, his work being about on a par with another stagey pictorial libel of the same class, entitled "A Circe of the Arena." I ran through the *Annals* many years ago, but have not retained the details in conscious memory; but much later I have twice gone through Suetonius with a certain amount of critical attention. Suetonius gives me the impression of being a more cautious and phlegmatic writer than Tacitus, and his three brief allusions to the Christian camorra in Rome have not, so far as I know, been impugned.

The first occurs in the Life of Claudius. After alluding to the establishment of fire brigades at Pazzuoli and Ostia, the suppression of the liberties of the Lycians on account of their ruinous quarrels, the restitution of those of the Rhodians on account of their good behaviour, etc., Suetonius writes: "Judæos *impulsore Cristo* (apparently the head camorrister) adsidue tumultuantes Romæ expubit"—not a word more. The second allusion to the Christians in Suetonius occurs in his Life of Nero, cap. xvi. Mention is first made of Nero's invention of a new type of architecture. Colonnades, built at his own expense, were to run in front of the blocks of houses, from the upper part of which the fire brigade was to dominate the flames when any of the blocks took fire. He proposed including the port of Ostia within the walls of the city of Rome, and uniting the two towns with a ship's canal. Public extravagance was severely checked, and public banquets reduced to the presentation at Christmas of hampers of chicken and veal pie. Cookshops were only permitted to sell haricot beans and vegetables. And finally: "Afflicti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis novo et malefico." That is all.

We come now to the burning of Rome cap. xxxviii. Someone observed: "On your death there'll be a grand flare up." "No," replied Nero, "in my lifetime." Suetonius goes on: "Nam quasi offensus deformitate veterum ædificiorum et anquotus flexurisque vicorum incendit ushem." It was done quite openly; he sent his domestics round with flaming tow and torches. The famous golden house being surrounded by sundry granaries, he had them bombarded being of stone, from which it may be inferred that the nasty slums he was determined to get rid of were mainly built of wood, and, therefore, double-distilled hotbeds of bugs and pestilence germs of all sorts and sizes. The salutory bonfire lasted a week. He watched it from the Mecænutic or Mecænatian *tower*, dressed in his stage costume (he had made his *debut* sometime previously as light tenor at the Naples San Carlo of those days) and chanted the capture of Troy presumably from some opera in which he had taken part. Such is the inflated cock-and-bull story of the Imperial monster reduced to its true dimensions.

The learned though youthful founder of modern scientific physiology had ventured to diagnose the early Christians as the enemies of the human race. A truly scientific diagnosis, and, naturally, they had to pay him out with the weapons generally employed by them, viz., lying and calumny.

The third allusion to the early Christians occurs in the account of the dastardly murder of Domitian; turn it up and you will be truly edified.

See how a plain tale shall put you down.

Genoa, August 5, 1919. W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A.

Obituary.

North London Freethinkers will learn with regret of the death of Walter Lloyd, aged seventy-three, who passed away at his residence in Kentish Town on Monday, August 17, after a long and painful illness borne with much fortitude. Mr. Lloyd had been associated with Freethought for more than forty years, and was a familiar figure at all North London meetings. To his daughter, who nursed him with devoted care, he constantly repeated the wish that a Secular Burial Service should be read at his graveside by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. This wish was carried out at Highgate Cemetery on Friday, August 22, in the presence of his sorrowing sons and daughters, to whom we extend our deepest sympathy.

E. M. VANCE.

Some for the Glories of This World and some
Sigh for the Prophet's Paradise to come;
Ah, take the Cash, and let the Credit go,
Nor heed the rumble of a distant Drum!

—*Omar Khayyam (Fitzgerald's).*

I that saw where ye trod
The dim paths of the night,
Set the shadow called God
In your skies to give light;
But the morning of manhood is risen, and the
shadowless soul is in sight.

—*Swinburne "Hertha,"*

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Band Stand): 6.15, Mr. James Marshall, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 6, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty and Mr. R. Norman, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S.: 3, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Secularism — The People's Salvation"; Mr. R. Norman, "The Money God."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. Percy S. Wilde, A Lecture; 6, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "Primitive Brains in Modern Skulls."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. W. Thresh, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Baker, Saphin, Dales, and Ratcliffe.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 5.45 (afternoon). Lectures in Victoria Square at 7.15.

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Views and Opinions.

Darwinism.

The comments of our newspapers on Darwinism, *apropos* of Haeckel's death—which, if collected and tabulated, would make about as grave an indictment of the intelligence or honesty of popular journalism as could be framed—reminded us of the treatment of Darwinism by Mr. Benjamin Kidd in his last book, *The Science of Power*. Mr. Kidd's book was published only last year, and it contained one good idea, almost drowned in a sea of fallacy. The good idea was that of social heredity, which he appears to imagine is original with him. As a matter of fact, the well-informed reader knows that this conception has been floating around for over half a century, and if the present reader will turn back to a series of articles which we wrote in this journal about ten years ago on "Freethought and Social Reform," he will find the idea worked out in some detail. We are not accusing Mr. Kidd of taking this conception from the *Freethinker*, although stranger things than that have happened. The *Freethinker*, although it has never had the circulation it deserved, has always circulated among what was probably the best reading class in the community, and many have found it, as Lamb said of some writer, "damned good to steal from." We do not complain of this; we are rather glad to see that it has so insistent an influence.

* * *

Darwinism and Force.

Mr. Kidd's book was published in January, 1918, and it is a pity that he allowed the War to influence him in writing a deal that we are sure he would not have written had the War not then been on. As it is, he finds it desirable to take up the perfectly untenable position that the War was due, certainly in a large measure, to the influence of Darwinism on the German mind. That is the kind of thing we got from the pulpit when the War began, and it is the kind of thing we are getting from the newspapers now over the death of Haeckel. It is, of course, absurd. Darwinism is accepted to as great an extent in England as it is in Germany, and it is for Mr. Kidd to explain why, if Darwinism was so demoralizing in Germany, it was not equally demoralizing in England and America, and elsewhere. The trouble about a book such as Mr. Kidd's is that many will be inclined to take it as a quite correct representation of Darwin's views and of the influence of Darwinism. Mr. Kidd's statements are the more worthy of note here because he has made himself the champion of the thesis that civilization needs some ultra-rational or non-rational sanction if it is to endure, and he finds that in supernaturalism in general, and in some form of the Christian supernaturalism in particular.

* * *

Ideas and Force.

Western society, says Mr. Kidd, has been dominated by the idea of force, and the tendency of all antagonistic groups, whether in the State or as between States, has been to express themselves in terms of force. Hence the struggle between rival groups tends to become more and more severe, and to express itself in the form of war. Hence the success of Darwinism. For when it was propounded in 1859, it gave the world exactly that scientific sanction for which it was seeking. In England it was not without its voices, and in Germany it was exalted into a positive evangel. According to Darwinism, says Mr. Kidd, the progress of society is due to the production of the "individual efficient" under the operation of the survival of the fittest. But, he continues, civilization offers an entirely different process from that outlined by Darwin. Civilization is determined by social heredity; we inherit the experience of our ancestors, and are greater than they because of our inheritance. The civilization of the future will be dominated by the power of the ideal, and by the play of emotion under the sway of a true social efficiency. There is here both truth and fallacy. Human society is not, and never was, dominated by force, but by force in the service of ideas. The tendency of struggle to become sharper is not due to the conception of force, but to the fact that as men's ideas become stronger they will fight the more tenaciously for their realization in actual life. Mr. Kidd might find the strongest proof of the play of emotion and of the ideal exactly where he thinks it is least evident.

* * *

Social Evolution.

But we are really more concerned with Mr. Kidd's presentation of Darwinism. Mr. Kidd is very fond of the expression "the individual efficient," by which he means the ability of the individual to sustain himself in virtue of his own fitness. This, he says, was Darwin's sole conception of the survival of the fittest. The individual was dominated by self-interest, all was right that made for his interest, and he did not see that the superior efficiency was social and not individual. Now, this is a sheer misrepresentation of Darwin's position, and the curious thing is that in all the reviews of the book that we saw on the first appearance of the work, none had the wit to point it out. It is not disputed that so long as we restrict ourself to a state of things in which an animal is entirely dependent upon its own efforts as to whether it shall live or die, individual efficiency is the one thing that matters. But when we come to the case of animals living in groups another principle begins to operate. And when we come to man with a language, literature, traditions,

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etc., instead of individual efficiency, it is social efficiency that is of the greater moment. Now, Mr. Kidd accuses Darwin of ignoring this truth, and of preaching the gospel of individual fitness with its consequent ruthlessness, so giving Germany her gospel which led to the War, etc. Now, on that we will ask readers to turn to the great fourth chapter of the *Descent of Man*, and he will then be in a position to judge the truth of Mr. Kidd's indictment. In this chapter, Darwin denies that man was ever anything but a social animal, and he proceeds to point out how this alters the operation of the principle of the survival of the fittest. If, he says, an individual possesses an instinct that is beneficial to a species it would be the most potent. And as no man can practice "the virtues necessary to the welfare of the tribe without self-sacrifice, self-command," etc., these have been at all times highly esteemed. The wishes and opinions of the community (Mr. Kidd's emotions and ideals) reinforce the social instincts, and "as man advances in civilization, and small tribes are united into larger communities, the simplest reason would tell each individual that he ought to extend his social instincts and sympathies to all the members of the same nation.....this point once reached, there is only an artificial barrier to prevent his sympathies extending to the men of all nations and races." How, in the face of these and similar expressions, Mr. Kidd can say that had no conception of the modification of the struggle for existence effected by social evolution is more than one can easily understand.

* * *

Evolution Past and Present.

The truth is that Mr. Kidd's misconception of evolution is vital. He assumes a time when man's hand was against every other man, and every man against him, when A sought to kill B before B killed A. But this state of things is quite imaginary, and quite false. Primitive life is not a state of universal warfare. Wars are more unusual with savages than with civilized people, and for reasons that are not hard to discern. Man commences life as a member of a group, and his interests and feelings are developed, one thing with another, in accordance with the interests of the group. And the course of social evolution is to spread these feelings over a wider and wider area, until as the tribe grows into the nation, and as knowledge and intercourse gradually extend beyond the boundaries of nations, it takes into account the whole of the human race. What we are witnessing to-day in the world is not the logical application of Darwinism to the life of the world, but the attempt to prolong beyond its proper time a phase of social evolution that the race has largely outgrown. We have been pointing out for years the modifications effected by social life in the operation of the principle of the survival of the fittest, and we are pleased to have Mr. Kidd following the same path. But we regret that in doing so he should have misrepresented Darwin's own position on the subject. Still, more, that by so doing he should be giving countenance, even though unconsciously, to those newspaper scribblers, who having little knowledge beyond that picked up from a cheap encyclopædia, and small concern save that of satisfying the ruling passion of the moment, can so readily misrepresent great ideas and great men. Darwin saw that a vital and a growing force in human society is the play of feelings and ideas. He also indicated the course of their development, and if the brute still lingers in the life of man that can hardly be placed to the discredit of one who helped us to understand the reason of their lingering.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The world and all things in it are valuable, but the most valuable thing in the world is a virtuous woman.—*Mohammed*

Orthodoxy Up to Date.

IN the Protestant world Christianity is perpetually in the melting-pot. Incessantly it is undergoing radical changes. Like the human body, every few years it becomes an entirely new thing. Its more or less orthodox champions always complain of what they call its perversions by those who wickedly coquet with modern thought. It is a notorious characteristic of Protestants, as a class, that they are always endeavouring to adapt their theology to the ever-varying intellectual and social conditions of the times in which they live. That this is an extremely perilous policy is abundantly proved by the fact that Protestantism is a visibly vanishing concern. As the *Church Times* observes, "People sometimes say that the Church has failed. What is true is that Protestantism has failed." The success or failure of the Church, as such, may be a debatable subject; but our present point is that if Protestantism has failed, the failure has not resulted from any lack of adaptability. Its first attitude to every social reform or scientific discovery, is one of positive hostility and violent resistance; but no sooner has the reform or the new theory gained popular support than the Protestant Church begins, almost imperceptibly at first, to modify its opposition; but in the end it formally adopts and treats as its own the former and yields a reluctant assent to the latter. The more conservative divines disapprove of this policy of vacillation. We are assured that Dr. Gore has resigned the bishopric of Oxford because he is "dissatisfied with the looseness of doctrine and discipline in the Church of England." Dr. Kinsman, an American Bishop, has just resigned because of precisely the same defect in his communion. This prelate finds in the American Church "tolerance of denials of the Faith, which seem to indicate failure to defend the Church's doctrine; tolerance of imperfect views of sacraments, seeming to result in failure rightly to use them; and a theory of Orders which seems to nullify them."

Now, the "tolerance" bewailed by Drs. Gore and Kinsman is one of the infallible marks of a falling Church; and to-day Protestantism not only practises toleration, but eulogizes it as a shining virtue. In other words, Protestantism acts on the unavowed assumption that Christianity is not true. If it is true, it follows that toleration is open disloyalty at once to God and mankind; and by practising it the Protestant Church is digging its own grave. Its very life-blood is steadily oozing out of it. The Catholic Church, on the contrary, remains heroically true to its primitive ideal of a Divinely ordained and inspired institution. Within its borders, too, there has been development under the Holy Spirit's guidance, a process that lasted for many centuries; and, simultaneously, there was going on wholesale borrowing, or rather cribbing, from suppressed and semi-suppressed Pagan cults. But so soon as the Church had won an assured position and could wield all-power, it became in fact what it had been in principle and spirit from the first—an absolutely exclusive and intolerant organization, whose main and final appeal was to brute force. If Christianity is true, both the exclusiveness and the intolerance of the Church are fully justified, and Lecky, in his *Rise and Influence of Rationalism*, has demonstrated beyond the possibility of a doubt that the growth of the spirit of toleration has been due to a corresponding decay of supernatural belief both within and without the Church. There is, of course, a wide difference in this respect between Catholicism and Protestantism, which is to be chiefly accounted for by the fact that from the moment the latter substituted the Bible for the Church as the court of appeal and admitted the right of

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of judgment: this is the appointed hour of doom—even the little children shall not escape." Again he rolled his lead-tinted eyes and swallowed uncomfortably.

"Oh! come, now," I protested, "your little black books don't say *that*. Not really. Don't say we're in your little black books—such a nice sunny afternoon as this, too! Pull yourself together, man: put your little black books far away into your splendidly spacious pocket. May I offer you a cigarette?" My visitor patted the little black pamphlets and coughed. "I came into this neighbourhood," he said, "on a house-to-house mission. I came to your house to tell you in simple, holy words, that the day of God is at hand. You shall not mock the servant of God with cigarettes." I smiled.

"Why, I thought the old gentleman was really fond of a little smoke—he used to be at any rate. How very well I remember at the little tin Sunday-school—they used to tell us all about the smoke and the burning bush .....most interesting it was—excuse me lighting up, won't you? Very good cigarettes these—'Three Nuns!'" My visitor shuffled his little black books and placed one of them upon my knee. The title read: "Beware of the Beast."

"Who's that?" I asked, calmly exhaling tobacco smoke; "not old Kaiser Bill again! No; *don't* say it's old Kaiser Bill. He's *such* a nasty old man to write about; made a lot of us go abroad for the benefit of somebody's health—God knows whose health ——"

"No blasphemy," exclaimed my visitor; "I will not have the name of God taken in vain. I came to this district on a house-to-house mission for the New Christana Christania Russellism, which alone can give the key to Holy Scripture. I came ——"

"All right," I interrupted; "don't get overheated; it's such a nice, sunny day outside. Put all your nasty little black books away, and have a nice, pure Virginia cigarette; it's much more interesting than Christa-Christy Russellism, or whatever you call it. Such a beastly name, too. Couldn't you think of something simple, like Chrussellem or Chrissislem? You want much more up-to-date methods. You're millions of years behind the times—you are, believe me."

My visitor placed the little black books away, and rose from his chair.

"I am going back—back to Paternoster Row," he retorted, with a hideous scowl, "I came to this hell-dark neighbourhood on a house-to-house mission ——"

"Don't go next door," I interrupted, grimly; "oh! *don't* go next door. He's six feet three in his socks, uses a Sandow developer regular, drinks Vi-Cocoa like a fish, takes Phosferine with every meal, swing clubs over the week-end, and says—says—there *isn't a God!* Just you think of the positively frightful risk you're running—especially with all those little black books! Take my advice: go round the corner as quickly as possible, and get on a No. 69 'bus. Go at once; go while you're all solid and complete. I couldn't behave unkindly to you myself—I dislike nasty messes. Your hat—the door—and please *do* go back to Paternoster Row at once. Take all your nasty little black books too; put them away in a nice, safe, smelly old cellar. They'll feel so happy, all piled up with the *Drunkard's Deaths* and *Ways of Sinners*.....Yes, I know the trade backwards. You're simply *millions* of years behind the times.....Well, good-bye-ee; there's a sun still shining in the sky-ee—and it will still be up there to-morrow—oh, so merry and bright. Don't forget the No. 69. Hide all your nasty little black books....."

Breathing heavily, my horrible Russelism agent slipped round the corner like a sinister snake—and disappeared.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

Acid Drops.

Religion generally has lost by the War, but there is one way in which the underground influence of the Roman Catholic Church seems likely to gain—for a time. A number of new States are springing up as an outcome of the War, and a number of these are, we believe, sending representatives to Rome. A consequence of this is certain to be a strengthening of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, often in quarters where it can make itself troublesome, or where its serviceable influence can be bought by interested politicians at the price of concessions elsewhere. This seems to us to constitute a real danger, and one that has been apparently not realized by press or public. And the quarrels between the Greek and Latin Churches in the East of Europe have already been the most fruitful causes of disorder in the small nations there.

If the League of Nations—which, thanks to its rapid conversion into a League of Annexations and Dominations, runs some risk of a very early demise—were intelligently in earnest, it would see to it that something was done to check the political activity of the Papacy. The Roman Church is professedly a spiritual power, and its activities should be restricted to its proper domain. And a move in the right direction would be made if each member of the League were to decline to send a political representative to the Vatican. If the Churches in the various countries did so, that would be their business; but it would be an official declaration to the world that, so far as the League was concerned, the Church of Rome was to be kept in its proper place.

Games are to be permitted on Sundays in the recreation ground at Ealing. In the course of the next half century Ealing may rise to the giddy heights of the Continental Sunday.

A condemned man, who was not sure he was going to talk to Jesus, has been hanged. He should have had another chance, for people who commit murder never seem to have any doubts about their salvation.

General Sir W. Thwaites, formerly commander of the 46th Division in France, says he has heard Army chaplains preach the most bloodthirsty sermons before a battle.

The next Lambeth conference of bishops will discuss spiritualism, marriage, and sexual morality. The last item seems quite an old favourite; but the Fathers-in-God have overlooked the claims of the "starving" clergy. Are these poor creatures to go breadless for another year?

A religious contemporary suggests honours for horses. Why not? A large number of asses have already received titles.

In spite of the arbitrary action often taken under D.O.R.A., it is not, according to British law, an offence to have revolutionary literature in one's possession. A statement is now issued by the Press Association, evidently officially inspired, stating that if the "English law is unduly lenient in this respect," making the distribution and not the mere possession an offence, we must not complain at certain results. The announcement looks very much like a piece of official "kite-flying" with the intention of testing the public mind on the subject. The system of Prussianization has gone on apace, but anything more monstrous than this veiled proposal to make the mere possession of "treasonable" literature an offence it is impossible to conceive. We hope that a very sharp eye will be kept on any move in the direction indicated by the Press Association's message.

It must be remembered that offences of the kind implied, as in the case of "blasphemy," belong to what are known as "constructive" offences. And their peculiar feature is that no one knows when an offence has been committed until

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a court decides that it is so. Publications that are not treasonable to-day may be so to-morrow. Everybody's liberty is at the mercy of the feeling of the moment. During the War the police distinguished itself by seizing copies of Mill's *Liberty*, and we conceive certain writings of Milton's being branded as treasonable or as calculated to create disaffection. There is no real freedom or justice where one's liberty depends upon the opinion of either a judge or a jury as to whether what one has done is likely to cause trouble.

Referring to the popular hymn, "Rock of Ages," the *Daily News* says that this has been translated into the Kaffir language, and it runs in this style:—

Very old stone, split
For my benefit.
Let me absent myself
Under thy fragments.

We wonder what the intelligent Kaffir thinks of it? Was it not a dusky convert who first roused Bishop Colenso to question the truth of the earlier books of the Bible?

Sometimes a prosaic entry in a calendar provokes thought. A recent entry reminded readers that a certain date was the tenth Sunday after Trinity, and that it was also the 347th anniversary of the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

Referring to the alterations in the marriage service by the American Episcopal Church, Finlay Dunne, the humourist, suggests that a needed modification should be worded: "Till death us do part," says the parson. "Or the jury," responds the blushing bride.

Here is a gem from a Metropolitan Court of Justice. The solicitor asked a woman: "Have you been an angel to your husband?" The wife answered: "There are no angels in married life."

The American Protestant Episcopal Church has under consideration the question of eliminating the word "obey" from the marriage service. Another suggestion is the alteration of dipping the wafer in the wine instead of drinking from the cup during the communion service.

Another of the "starving" clergy has shuffled off this mortal coil. The Rev. F. B. Teesdale, of Wheatenhurst, Glos., left £40,363.

A cablegram, signed by Dr. Guttery, President of the Free Church Council, Dr. Meyer, and Dr. Rendel Harris, has been sent to President Wilson, asking him to assume mandatory power in the case of Armenia. You can always trust Free Churchmen to think of the claims of liberty—outside of their own country.

A War-memorial dispute has taken place at Ealing, where the congregation of St. Matthew's Church object to the vicar's decoration scheme, which they consider would convert an austere interior into something resembling a cinema. And a picture-palace without Charlie Chaplain, too!

It is estimated that the water supplied by the Metropolitan Water Board works out at forty gallons a day for each Cockney. This ought to satisfy a hard-shell, teetotal Baptist.

Church organ-blowers are worse off than organists, and that is saying something. The late Rev. W. A. Cottee, of Kingerby, Lincs., has left £10 to "the person who blows the organ" at Kingerby Church. "The person" will notice gratefully that the reverend gentleman's estate amounted to £26,839.

A London newspaper writer makes the claim that a certain actor is the best female impersonator seen for a generation. That critic has overlooked the claims of the Bench of Bishops. He ought to see them with their dainty petticoats and lawn sleeves.

Some of our readers will remember how shocked was the House of Commons when one of the Labour Members declined to join in singing "God Save the King" at the signing of peace. Perhaps he agreed with Byron that saving kings was a very doubtful kind of an economy. We grant that it is not possible to charge God with being one of the War profiteers. He is decidedly poorer now the War is over than he was when it commenced. Still, it is not clear what we had to thank him for; and except to keep up a pious humbug, the singing was quite useless. Now we see that this English M.P. has had a successor in Johannesburg. According to the *Rand Daily Mail* for July 6, at a meeting of the Town Council the Mayor moved that thanks be "given to Almighty God, who has guided us through the War to victory." But one of the members wanted to know what we had to thank God for; and as the Mayor couldn't tell him, and as there were not enough members present to form a quorum, the matter had to be adjourned. Perhaps the Mayor will collect evidence before the next meeting. Anyway, God won't know whether he is to be thanked or not till the Council meets again.

At the forthcoming Church Congress one of the subjects to be discussed is "Housing." This is window-dressing, pure and simple. Housing has never been a strong point with Christians. The Founder of their religion is said to have been born in a stable, and the bulk of Christians have lived in hovels ever since.

The Church is fast losing her authority over the nation. She is against divorce, but folk disregard her advice. In one day recently, Mr. Justice Lawrence made absolute decrees nisi granted in no less than thirty-five divorce suits.

The *Daily Mail*—notorious for its devotion to the higher life—has been advising people to go to church, and the *Church Times* is inclined to see in this a promise of better times for the Churches. We doubt it. The movement away from religion has gone too far to be reversed, or even arrested, by an attempted revival of church-going. The *Church Times* properly says that people go to church to worship, and adds that if they care for God there will be no need to teach them to worship. It will come of itself. We are inclined to agree with this. Teach people to care for God. But how if there is a growing conviction that there is no God to care for? Or if there be a God, he is one who shows little care for man. How then? The real point seems to us, teach people that religion is true. Make them realize this—if you can—and all else will follow. And that is the one thing that cannot be done.

"Only fourteen days' coal in Europe" was a headline in a daily paper. This will be cheerful reading for the folk in the place so often mentioned in sermons.

A baby christened at Finchley has been named "Wilson Peace." That Christian baby had a narrow escape. Its pious parents might have named him "Charles Peace."

An indignant correspondent voices his grievance against the July weather by asking the editor of the *Daily Chronicle*: "Is the earth already beginning to cool down?" The earth is quite well, thank you; but a famous portion of the "next world" is much cooler.

Humour lurks under the august sign of the red triangle. A Young Men's Christian Association Holiday Home advertisement states that, "with the exception of the sleeping tents, the camp is shared by men and women." We wonder if the sisters and brethren salute one another with a holy kiss.

It was suggested by the Rev. T. Pym, speaking at St. Martin-in-the-Field's Church, Charing Cross, that men and women should read or study biography. Would he recommend the life of King David, the man after God's own heart, and if not, why not?

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private judgment in the interpretation thereof, the foundation of its faith and authoritative pronouncements were undermined, with the result that its tolerance is now the measure of its weakness. In its loyalty to the great creeds, Catholicism has not appreciably weakened, nor is it more tolerant now than it was three or four hundred years ago. If it still possessed the power which then it had, the fires of Smithfield would certainly be rekindled to-morrow. In Tract Number 27 of the *Protestant Press Bureau*, quotations are made from a book published in 1888 in New York, by Messrs. Benziger Brothers, "Printers to the Holy Apostolic See," which was circulated widely in England, in which the following questions and answers are boldly defended by the author, Father M. Muller, C.SS.R.:—

Question.—Have Protestants any faith in Christ?

Answer.—They never had.

Q.—Why not?

A.—Because there never lived such a Christ as they imagine and believe in.

Q.—In what kind of a Christ do they believe?

A.—In such a one of whom they can make a liar with impunity, whose doctrines they can interpret as they please, and who does not care what a man believes, provided he be an honest man before the public.

Q.—Will such a faith in such a Christ save Protestants?

A.—No sensible man will assert such an absurdity.

Q.—What will Christ say to them on the day of judgment?

A.—I know you not, because you never knew me.

Q.—Are Protestants willing to confess their sins to a Catholic bishop or priest, who alone has power from Christ to forgive sins?

A.—No, for they generally have an aversion to Confession, and therefore their sins will not be forgiven them throughout all eternity.

Q.—What follows from this?

A.—That they die in their sins and are damned (*The Catholic Dogma: Permissu Superiorum*, p. 67).

In the same booklet, p. 31, we read that "the Protestant religion was made, not by Jesus Christ, but 1,500 years afterwards by a wicked man called Luther, who broke his vows to God, and confessed that he made the Protestant religion to please the Devil and spite the Pope."

What the Church taught in the fourth, sixth, tenth, and eleventh centuries it still teaches to-day. In *A Guide for Priests*, the fifth and thoroughly revised edition of which was published in 1898 by the Dublin Catholic firm, Messrs. M. H. Gill & Son, we find the following:—

> What is woman? S. Jerome (342-420 A.D.) gives the answer: "She is the gate by which the Devil enters, the road that leads to sin; she is what the sting of the scorpion is." And in another place he says: "Woman is a fire, man the tow, and the Devil the bellows." S. Maximus (580-662 A.D.) writes of a woman: "She makes shipwreck of men, she is a tyrant who leads them captive, a lioness who holds them fast in her embraces, a syren decked out to lure them to destruction, a malicious, evil beast." And S. Anastasius the Sinaite: "She is a laboratory of devils, a flaming furnace, a javelin wherewith the heart is pierced, a storm by which houses are overthrown, a guide leading to darkness, an unbridled tongue speaking evil of the Saints" (p. 68).

On the subject of woman this Priest's Manual supplies similar utterances from the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries' writers; and it is a fact much criticized by Catholic laymen that in the article on woman in the *Standard Catholic Encyclopædia* essentially the same estimate of her character and position is maintained. Of course, this is the orthodox teaching, being but the legitimate application of the principle laid down by the apostle Paul.

The truth is that most Catholic dogmas are fair deductions from Biblical statements. The Pauline doctrine of the God-man, to be conceivable, necessitates that of the Virgin Birth; and there could not have been a virgin born Sinless One apart from the immaculate conception of his mother. Moreover, the orthodox doctrine of the Saviour-God inevitably implies that of the Holy Trinity. Then, it follows that, if salvation is possible only through faith in the finished work of the God-man, those who die without that faith are for ever damned. Now, this God-man, this Christ, has had all things put in subjection under his feet, and has been made "head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Consequently, it is through the Church alone that the saving grace and manifold wisdom of God have been and can be made known to a perishing world. Yes, verily, in none other than Christ is there salvation, and the Church is Christ's exclusive abode, out of which he cannot be found, and of necessity there is and can be but one Church, which Church, through its one earthly head, the Pope, is infallible, with the result that, according to the famous Papal encyclical on "Modernism," we must either accept every legend however false, every superstition however absurd, every conclusion of scholastic theologians however fantastic, or leave the Church and go to hell. There is, therefore, no logical escape from the following deduction put in a nutshell by Archbishop Bagshawe: "There is no Christianity out of the Catholic Church."

That is orthodoxy up to date, and it is incontrovertible that most of its dogmas necessitate one another. Catholicism is an eminently logical system; and it is equally irrational and absurd. It rests entirely upon faith, and its supreme appeal is to the credulity of its adherents. As a Catholic writer puts it:—

> The holy house of Loretto, the legend of which is known to rest on a fraud of the sixteenth century; the cultus of St. Philomena, who is known to be an imaginary person, and whose so-called relics are known to be those of a person who was neither a saint nor a martyr; these and similar impostures are now to be accepted by all Catholics; indeed the Pope (Pius X.) has already done his best in practice to promote them.

On exactly the same deceptive authority, and in strictly the same manner, are we commanded, by God's sole representative on earth, to believe all the mysteries of scholastic theology, and to submit ourselves to the arbitrary and tyrannical rule of the priest. Emphatically refusing to yield the obedience demanded of us, we unhesitatingly endorse the *Church Times*' verdict on Protestantism, and with as full confidence declare that the Catholic Church has been and is the most colossal failure known to history.

J. T. LLOYD.

(To be concluded.)

Jesus Christ and the Primrose League.

I am nothing if not critical.—*Iago.*

Uplift thy cross, and go, Thy doom is said.
—*Robert Buchanan.*

A STORY is told of a plaster-cast dealer who slipped on a piece of orange-peel whilst crossing Westminster Bridge. Much damage was done to his stock-in-trade, and a seven-and-sixpenny representation of Jesus Christ had its arm broken. The itinerant merchant bewailed his loss loudly, and a sympathetic crowd collected. Moved by his lamentations, a sailor stepped forward, and told the unfortunate man not to worry. "Say, guv'nor," he wound up, "why don't you knock his eye out, and call 'im Nelson?"

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by the fumes, and their charred remains were found with the woman's arms still locked round the man "in an attitude of protection." Those are the words of the *Daily News*. Do its readers make no inference? Does not the noble action of this poor man's wife convey to their minds some hint of the fact that man is greater than his God? These two perished by fire—the one helpless, the other "in an attitude of protection"—while the God we are asked to worship stood by and, we presume, admired the bonfire and pronounced it good. Indignation is a mild term for the feeling that such an act on the part of a human being would evoke in the public mind. If God's acts, then, are so much worse than man's acts, why not re-name him Devil, as he deserves? The pious who worship at this shrine are devil-worshippers, flatterers of a foul tyrant, who will reward them for acquiescing in his misgovernment of the universe.

Atheism is a necessity on moral grounds as well as on intellectual. The recognition that morality is a product of the communal evolution of life, and has no existence or meaning apart from that, relieves Nature, inanimate or non-rational, of the charge of cruelty which no conscious God can escape, and thus removes from our minds the bitter hatred which the victims of a tyranny cannot but feel as one of the heaviest of our burdens. Nature, unseeing, unconscious, moves on its way, and all we can do is to study her laws and prevent the recurrence of mishaps to the best of our ability. Nature is not a tyrant—her forces know not what they do; but God, did he exist, is worthy of nothing but loathing. Shelley's incomparable poem of "Prometheus Unbound" typifies the only moral attitude to this monster created by the mind of deluded man.

H. TRUCKELL.

Correspondence.

A CANONIZED MORAL THEOLOGIAN.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the *Freethinker* for July 6 appeared a letter making a quotation from "Liguori" on the subject of sexual morality. The present writer, although he has not specialized in moral theology, yet has had various opportunities of getting a somewhat careful acquaintance with that and other theological subjects.

"Liguori" (the Catholic Church's name for him is "St. Alphonsus Liguori") is, of all theological writers, the most dangerous for laymen to study. This is not because his system is peculiar, but because it is so elaborate and goes into such an infinite number of minute questions. The result of this infinite elaboration is that an unwary reader may see some isolated passage and, reading it without its context, misunderstand it.

Alphonsus Mary Anthony John Cosmas Damian Michael Gaspard de' Liguori was born on September 27, 1696, at his father's country house at Marienella, near Naples. The family was an ancient one, and of noble rank, but Alphonsus belonged to a junior branch of it. His father (Don Joseph de' Liguori) was a naval officer; his mother, a Spaniard. The boy was bright and quick, and made great progress in learning. At the age of sixteen he took his degree as Doctor of Laws, although the statutes fixed twenty as the minimum age, and an exception had to be made in his case. He entered upon a brilliant career in the legal profession; but in 1723 he had a "spiritual crisis," which determined him to adopt the ecclesiastical state instead. He became a priest on December 21, 1726, at the age of thirty. The great work of his life was the foundation of a new Order, called the "Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer," or "Redemptorists." This Order was begun on November 9, 1732, in a little hospice at Scala. Although Alphonsus was its founder, he did not at first take a prominent part in controlling it; being at first under the guidance of the Bishop of Castellamare, Alphonsus did not become its Superior-General until the death of that prelate.

Students are aware that, when Ignatious of Loyola founded the Society of Jesus, he at first met only with ridicule and opposition. A very similar state of affairs greeted Alphonsus. The primary work of his new Order was that of giving missions. Alphonsus, however, was indomitable against opposition; and eventually his Order became a great power. At the present day it has many churches, one in London (Lower Edmonton).

In 1762 he was made Bishop of a small Neapolitan diocese, that of St. Agatha of the Goths. This see, however, he resigned in 1775. The last years of his life were clouded by the treachery of supposed friends, who, by enticing him into signing a document which fundamentally altered the constitution of his Order, brought him not only into conflict with secular foes, but also into displeasure with the Pope. It was only after his death that the trouble cleared away, and his Order was restored to unity, having, by the troubles, been divided into two sections.

It will be seen that Alphonsus was originally rather a man of action than a writer. He only became an author fairly late in life—namely, in 1745—when his age was fifty. His great work on *Moral Theology* (*Theologia Moralis*) appeared first in 1753, and during his lifetime nine editions were called for. He also wrote numerous works of a devotional character. He died at Nocera de' Pagani, on August 1, 1787.

Catholic moral theology is an elaborate science,[1] and, if one wishes to study it, one must do so with care. This, of course, is the case in regard to any science whatever. Moral theology, is *the study of man and his actions in relation to his "last end."* Now, the actions of a man are infinite in number and complexity; therefore, the study of them will be ditto. Let us beware, therefore, of making isolated quotations. For example, the *Freethinker* correspondent quoted Liguori and Cardenas as to the lawfulness of a guilty wife's concealment of an act of adultery. Of course, the whole question there dealt with is the lawfulness, not of the *adultery* (which, having, in the supposed case, been actually committed, is the basis of the difficulty) but of the *concealment*. Liguori's opinion that she *may* conceal it is based on the ground that no person, even if guilty, is obliged to destroy publicly his own reputation unless some adequate good comes of such destruction. Alphonsus himself was at first a "rigorist" in moral theological teaching, but his opinions relaxed with practical experience of the world, and his final system followed the ideas of the Society of Jesus, which Society, while inflexibly maintaining fundamental axioms, applies them as moderately as possible to individual cases.

On the subject of *adultery*, Liguori, of course, took the view which every Catholic theologian must necessarily take, *i.e.*, that it is absolutely evil in every case. Indeed, Liguori even went beyond the opinions of some theological teachers, for he gave the name of "adultery" even to improper acts between a lawful man and wife (see *Catholic Encyclopædia*, vol. i., p. 163, col. 2, top).

In regard to the opinions of Catholic theologians in relation to such matters as sexual morality the following may be quoted:—

> Temperance is a virtue which regulates by the judgment of reason those desires and delights which attend upon the operations whereby human nature is preserved in the individual and propagated in the species. Temperance is the virtue contrary to the two deadly sins of Gluttony and Lust. As against the former, it represents Abstinence, or moderation in solid food, and Sobriety, which is moderation in drink. As against the latter, it is the great virtue of Chastity. The student must bear in mind that, to a philosopher, Temperance does not mean Total Abstinence.....Temperance, then, is made up of Abstinence, Sobriety, and Chastity (Joseph Rickaby, S.J., *Moral Philosophy*, third ed., pp. 90-91).

However, our glances into this subject have been longer than we intended, and we must close. The subject is both interesting and profound.

J. W. POYNTER.

WISE AND FREE THINKING.

SIR,—A Freethinker may surely think freely, but when he writes of stupidity it behoves him to think wisely.

For unadulterated stupidity commend me to the note in which you are good enough to concern yourself with my "Plain Man's Pulpit." The writer sets out to show that I am a stupid man, as he is entitled to do, and he begins by

[1] The science of human nature falls far short of the standard of exactness now realized in Astronomy; but there is no reason why it should not be as much a science as Tidology is.—Mill, *Logic*, ed. 1884, p. 553.

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"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.

The continuation of the abnormal circumstances created by the War compels—I hope for the last time—a re-opening of the Sustentation Fund.

Despite the close of the War the cost of production is hardly less than it was a year ago. Paper is a little cheaper, but wages have increased, and higher prices rule in other directions. On the whole, as was to be expected, the last year of the War saw cost at its highest, the difference between the pre-War figure and that of the past year being about £18 per week.

Fortunately, a large part of this increased cost has been made good by larger sales and an increase of business in general publications. Thanks also to the generous response to last year's appeal, I am able to announce that we close the present year with a deficit of between £260 and £270. It is this deficit I am asking *Freethinker* readers to make good, and if things go, as I have every reason to believe they will, I am hopeful that the present will be the last occasion on which an appeal, similar to the present one, will be necessary. It is impossible, of course, to guarantee this, but our friends may rely upon my doing my best to see that this hope is realized. It is never a pleasant task to appeal for funds, and I prefer pleasant occupations to unpleasant ones. The Sustentation Fund was purely a War measure in its origin, and with the close of the War period we may hope for its disappearance.

Looking back over these last five years, I think we have every reason for satisfaction at the way in which we have pulled through a very trying period, and also cause for confidence in the future. The *Freethinker* is one of the very few papers, the price of which has been kept unchanged, and for the first three and a half years of the War there was no alteration in size. The policy of not raising the price of the paper has been justified by a very substantial increase in circulation, which has not only been a means of keeping down the deficit, but has meant increased usefulness to the Cause. It is to this steady increase in circulation that I chiefly look as the means of placing the paper on a self-supporting basis. That has been my aim ever since I assumed the Editorship, and it will continue to be so.

The policy of previous years has been followed of meeting all business claims as they arose. The deficit represents a debt incurred by me to certain friends, but every claim on the *Freethinker* has been met as it became due. And no second application from anyone for payment has ever had to be made.

Perhaps I ought now to say, seeing that the War is over, that although, as announced at the time, I had arranged to take a very moderate sum for my work as Editor and Manager, I have not, since the death of Mr. Foote, in 1915, taken a single shilling from the paper. What I have done, in order to keep the books clear, is to take the money as salary, and replace it as a loan. The books, which are in the hands of a registered accountant, show this quite clearly. I have no desire to make a virtue of this; simply the money was not there. Capital was needed for fresh publications, the paper had to be kept going—that I was determined on whatever happened—and I could not very well take what was not available. One day I have hopes that the money will be paid, and when things have righted themselves I shall not hesitate to take what is my due. I am only mentioning this now because the War is over, and this is, I hope, the last appeal I shall have to make. I do not think the information will surprise many. Most will have realized that we have not won through without much care, anxiety, forethought, and, if one may use the expression, self-denial. And behind all there has been the comforting consciousness of the loyalty with which the friends of the paper have always stood by it. Without that knowledge the outlook would have indeed been cheerless.

But the important thing is that we have won through. Not only that, but the *Freethinker* is in a better position than it was when the War opened, and with a good prospect of being made self-supporting in the near future. Nor should it be forgotten that, in spite of the great difficulties in the way of publishing, that branch of our activity has been revived, and has proved of benefit to the Cause. Finally, the *Freethinker* has distributed amongst soldiers, sailors, and others, a very large amount of literature, and has thus been the means of carrying the Gospel of Freethought to regions where it might not otherwise have reached. We are proud of the fact that, despite the difficulties in the way, the *Freethinker* has never forgotten nor forsaken the fact that it stood primarily as the mouthpiece and representative of militant Freethought. Altogether, I think we may all feel satisfied with what has been done, and look forward to the future with cheerfulness.

It is, therefore, with the utmost confidence that I am asking for the deficit of the past year to be cleared off. Cheques and postal orders should be made payable to me, and all letters addressed Editor, *Freethinker*, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. Acknowledgment of all sums received will be made in the *Freethinker*. The first list will be published in the issue dated September 14, and, judging from previous years, I feel certain that it will be one of which the Freethought Party may well be proud.

Chapman Cohen.

To Correspondents.

C. Salway Waller.—It would be a good test of the power of prayer, but it is not to be expected that the vicar has much reliance on it.

A. Russell.—Thanks. Shall appear as early as possible. Yes, we are glad to say that we have a great many readers in Ireland, and we see no reason why we should not have more. If there is one country in Europe that needs the *Freethinker* it is surely Ireland.

P. V. M.—Thanks. Hope to use at an early date.

J. M. Silkstone.—The *Freethinker* can be sent to any part of the world for 10s. 6d. per year. The badges are out of stock at present, but the supply will be renewed as soon as advisable.

"Ignotus."—We will look out for what you require, and send as soon as we come across it.

N. S. S. General Fund.—Miss Vance acknowledges: R. J. Thompson, 3s. 6d.

N. S. S. Benevolent Fund.—Miss Vance acknowledges: A. W. D., 4s. 6d.

J. Hibbott.—Certainly your record would be suitable for what was intended, but we could not introduce that feature until we get back to our sixteen pages. Meanwhile, we will keep your MSS. by us for future use.

L. Harding.—The problem of making the paper pay its way is really that of bringing it before a sufficiently large number of people. There are quite enough people prepared to take this paper weekly if it is brought to their notice. Every time this is done we are a step nearer success.

Civilian (Capetown).—No excuse is necessary. Articles are in this paper for use, and if they can be used in other papers so much the better.

Pte. J. Selbourne.—It is very difficult, and even dangerous to express an opinion on such a case as you describe without knowing the person intimately. But to us it looks like a case of suggestion in the first instance and self-deception afterwards. We can understand that it is a source of great anxiety and worry.

Our contributor, Mr. W. Mann, informs us that a translation of Laplace's *Mecanique Celeste* was published in 1830 by Messrs. Longmans & Co. It is a volume of over 500 pages, and could only be now obtained from a second hand dealer.

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E. EGERTON.—Thanks for portrait which, so far as we can judge, is a good one. We have added it to our office gallery.

W. MACFARLANE.—We have heard of the Darwin story before. The falsity of Lady Hope's story was exposed by a member of the Darwin family—one of the Galton's. Shall hope to see you again when we come North in November.

AUTOLYCUS.—We are obliged for cutting. A useful tit-bit.

D. MACCONELL.—Sorry your *Freethinker* did not come to hand, but are glad of your report. We do hope that our readers will see to it that their newsagents secure the paper for them regularly. There is no reason whatever why they should not.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

An attempt is being made to start definite Freethought propaganda work in Bristol. There are a great many Freethinkers in and about the city, and if those who are interested will communicate with Mr. J. Milton, 15 Perry Street, Stapleton Road, Bristol, the matter might be put in proper trim. We hope that all who can help will do so.

Plymouth friends are trying to arrange a visit from Mr. Cohen, and we are asked to invite all who would co-operate in trying to make the visit the starting-point of a regular propaganda to communicate with Mr. H. Tucker, 7 Sea View Avenue, Plymouth. We trust there will be a ready and generous response to this appeal.

While we are on this topic, will Freethinkers at Portsmouth who are desirous of seeing an energetic campaign carried on there please communicate with the General Secretary, Miss Vance? There are shoals of heretics in the town, and something ought to be attempted there this season.

Some years ago Mr. Cohen wrote a pamphlet on *Socialism, Atheism, and Christianity*. The pamphlet has been long out of print, but there has been constant demands for it. Mr. Cohen has now re-written and enlarged the pamphlet to such an extent as to make it practically a new one. It has, therefore, been re-named *Socialism and the Churches*, and as the subject with which it deals is of special interest just now, there should be a rapid sale. *Socialism and the Churches* is well printed on good paper, and with neat cover. The price is 3d., postage 1d.

All human creatures, in all ages and places of the world, who have had warm affections, common sense, and self-command, have been, and are, Naturally Moral. Human nature in its fullness is necessarily Moral,—without Love, it is inhuman,—without sense, inhuman,—without discipline, inhuman. In the exact proportion in which men are bred capable of these things, and are educated to love, to think, and to endure, they become noble,—live happily—die calmly.

—*John Ruskin.*

On Chinese Lanterns.

THE impulse to be deceived finds a ready source of deception. The open eye may be a less sure judge than the closed one, and the screening of light may possess more symbolism than a piece of biscuit accepted as a portion of a man's body. Be that as it may, Chinese lanterns are very pretty. They are pretty to look at when lit up on summer evenings. Their mellow glow lends an air of enchantment to the most common surroundings, and if Ariel or Prospero should make an appearance, we, for one, should not be startled. Fairies are busiest in moonlight—the gleaming rays of the sun would scorch their wings. As their mission is to hang dewdrops on the tiny green swords sticking out of the ground, this work could not be done in the heat of the day. We are told in all good faith by a child of our acquaintance that they also repair broken flowers. It is not for us to cast doubt in the mind of one who thinks that beauty is eternal. Twilight, evening, deepest darkness—these are the times for light. Where sleeps the genius who first thought of surrounding the yellow flame of a candle with coloured paper? Maybe he sleeps with the other genius who invented bread-and-butter; and our sense of the fitness of things, of their quiet and majestic repose, would not allow it to be broken by the company of the lesser genius who invented poison gas and barbed wire.

Autolycus, wearing a very shabby pair of modern trousers, and living in one of our mean London streets, sold to us a Chinese lantern. It is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. Is it not an illusion? When folded, you might guess its nature as many times as man has tried to discover the philosopher's stone. When opened, it displays a lovely coloured form that pleases the eye by its outline. On its corrugated sides, ultramarine smudges conjure up the beauty of a peacock's tail. There are red and yellow squares, suggestive of the game of chess—the game of life—where the bishop moves on the cross. Vivid red dragons on a pale green and yellow background are clawing the air. This does not disturb the for-ever growing state of some lilac of the palest blue. Gold colour of sunrise or sunset is cunningly worked into the patterns; and emerald green takes us to the sea.

"The eyes of the multitude," says Plato, "are not strong enough to behold Truth." In a republic of masters and slaves this is true—it would be dangerous for the masters if it were false. In modern and more congenial times of monarchy, when truth seems to be below the bottom of the well, the lath and plaster of Democracy is content with the patronage of those who keep it up their lawn sleeves. Our great philosophers think they have found it, and bury it in expensive books. It is impossible for them to write about it in words of one or two syllables. Others find its counterfeit, and proceed to surround it by coloured paper. These are industrious people; they delight us with their poetry. The glow-worm lures its victims to destruction by its phosphorescent light; the moth will shatter or burn its delicate wings in an attempt to lose itself in light. This, in itself, seems a good reason why we should sleep through the darkness of superstition; or, better still, not trouble to look for truth in the night. Screech-owls, dressed in black, carrying farthing dips, will give us all kinds of stupid advice. They will ask to get on our backs so that their light may be used to better advantage. If we are wise we shall say: "Not to-night will we make our journey—we will wait for the sunrise; to carry you is too big a price to pay for your farthing dip, and we reason that the sun will want no such payment."

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telling his readers that I informed the readers of *Lloyd's News* that, but for Professor Haeckel, there might not have been a German Empire.

I am not concerned that you should think me stupid, but I am concerned that journalism should be honest and wise. Only an imbecile or a rogue could attribute to me the sentence you put in my mouth. I said nothing of the kind; what I did say was, not that Haeckel made the German Empire, but that he was one of its destroyers.

Let us keep our freedom in thinking by all means, but let us keep a little sanity too.

ARTHUR MEE.

[The two passages quoted from Mr. Mee's article were "but for him there might not have been a German Empire," and Haeckel "founded what is called Materialism." Mr. Mee questions only the first. Referring to the article we find the sentence to run: "Who knows that but for him there might not have been a German Empire yet." We regret that in transcribing the passage the sense should have been reversed, and apologize for the blunder. But we do not see that attributing to Haeckel the downfall of the Empire is any less stupid than giving him credit for its creation. Save as a variation in folly there seems little to choose between the two statements. And, after all, we question whether creating the German Empire is more remarkable than for Haeckel to have "founded what is called Materialism." Mr. Mee either does or does not know that Materialism is a form of thinking that is as old as philosophy, and as he objects to foolish statements being called stupid, he will perhaps be good enough to say how that remark ought to be described. Quite frankly, it is deliverances such as those of Mr. Mee's that lower English journalism in the minds of all informed readers, and which would not be were the general public better educated than is actually the case.—EDITOR.]

Population Question and Birth-Control.

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National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON AUGUST 28.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Kelf, Lloyd, Moss, Neate, Palmer, Quinton, Rogers, Rosetti, and Silverstein, Miss Pitcher, and the Secretary.

Minutes of last meeting read and confirmed.

The Treasurer's Report presented and adopted.

It was reported that a further grant of £100 had been received from the Secular Society, Ltd.

New members were received for the Edinburgh, Maesteg, Regent's Park, and West Ham Branches, and the Parent Society, twelve in all.

The Secretary reported many fruitless attempts to secure London Halls for lectures in the autumn, and that a course of Sunday afternoon lectures had been arranged at South Place for the afternoons of October 12, 19, and 26.

It was also reported that Mr. Harry Snell had raised the question of the refusal of the L.C.C. Parks' Committee to permit the sale of the *Freethinker*, and that the matter would be raised again after the L.C.C. recess.

Suggestions as to the distribution of literature in London were received and remitted to the Propagandist Committee.

Other minor details were dealt with. The Secretary reported that she was taking a brief holiday and the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

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W. H. HEARSON, UTTOXETER.

The Humanitarian works by Joachim Kaspary, out of print, can be studied in the Reading Room of the British Museum, London. They will, however, be Revised and Published as soon as possible.

THE FOLLOWING WORKS ARE IN PRINT.

1. International Peace. Price 2d., post free 1898
2. The Guide of Life and the Ethics of Humanitarian Deism compared with those of Christianity and Buddhism 1899
   Price for Poor People, 2s., post free.
   Price for Rich People, 21s., post free.
3. The Humanitarian View of the British-Boer War, of the Chinese Question, and of the Restoration and Maintenance of Peace. Price 6d., post free ... 1901
4. An Addition to the Humanitarian View of the British-Boer War, etc. Price 2d., post free 1902
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6. Humanitarian Deism. Price 1d., post free 1½d. ... 1904
7. Self-Knowledge, or the Humanitarian Psychology ... 1904
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9. The Character of the Apostles. Price 1d., post free 1½d. 1904
10. The Humanitarian View of the Public School Question 1904
    Price 3d., post free.
11. The Life and Character of Paul 1905
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17. The Dishonesty of Broad Churchism and the Humanitarian Review of The Rev. R. J. Campbell's "The New Theology." Price 2d., post free 2½d. ... 1907
18. The Humanitarian Address to the Congregation of Westminster Chapel.
    The Abolition of Legal Murder, miscalled Capital Punishment.
    The Humanitarian Manifesto for the General Election.
    The above 3 pamphlets together, 1d., post free 1½d. ... 1909
19. Lady Cook on the Franchise for Women, and Joachim Kaspary on the Wise Home Rule Bill, and Home Rule Letters. Price 1d., post free 1½d. 1910
20. Real Liberalism and Real Progress against Sham Liberalism and Disguised Conservatism... ... 1910
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21. The Political Crisis and Eternity against The Origin of Species. Price 1d., post free 1½d. 1910
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25. The Balkan-Turkish War and the Humanitarian Defence of Jesus against Christianity. 1913
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27. The Restoration and Maintenance of Peace... ... 1915
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28. The Science of Reincarnation, or the Eternity of the Soul. Price 10s. 6d. nett, post free 1917
29. Dr. Woodrow Wilson's Oration and the Prevention of Future Wars. Price 1d., post free 1½d.
30. The League of Nations. War Price 6d., post free 6½d. 1918
31. Humanitarian Cosmopolitan Peace against Mammonite National Wars. Price 6d., post free 6½d.

If any of the above published works cannot be obtained through Newspaper Agents or Booksellers, please order direct, enclosing Stamps or Postal Orders, from

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

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SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Joseph McCabe, "The Reality of Moral Forces."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Band Stand): 6.15, Mr. E. Burke, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 6, Mr. E. C. Saphin, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S. (near Band Stand): 3, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Is There a God?"; "Bible Chestnuts," Rebaked and Boiled by Bob Norman.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. F. Shaller, "Is Christianity Played Out?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Dales, Baker, and Ratcliffe.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place): 6.30, Lecture, "The Origin and End of Worlds."

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Views and Opinions.

Religion and Labour.

The Rev. F. H. Stead announces that he is about to undertake an inquiry concerning the state of religion among the working classes. That is an interesting announcement for many reasons, and, if a committee were appointed, we should not mind serving on it. We are quite certain that the report would in that case be much nearer the facts of the case than it is likely to be otherwise. For with all these committees the aim is not so much to discover how far people really believe in religion as it is to find out how much religion can be with safety offered to them. Mr. Stead's method appears to be open to question even more than is usually the case. According to a paragraph in the *Star*, Mr. Stead has addressed a dozen questions to "leading representatives of the Labour Movement and allied interests relating to such questions as the following: Indifference to religion, the adoption of Haeckel's Materialism, the influence of the Rationalist propaganda, increase of drunkenness and other vices, attendance at public worship, middle-class ascendancy in organized religion," etc. When he gets all these reports in, Mr. Stead hopes to make the results public in connection with the International Conference on Labour and Religion. For our part, we have not the slightest doubt as to the nature of the report. We have come across such before, and they are about as valuable as would be a blind man's report on the appearance of the lunar craters.

* * *

An Old Trick.

One may note in passing the graceful association of an inquiry as to the growth of Freethought with the "increase of drunkenness and other vices." True, this is followed immediately by "attendance at church"; but Mr. Stead would probably argue that this was one of the results of the prevalence of "drunkenness and other vices" that followed an adoption of Haeckel's Materialism, etc. But it is evident that the theory of the association of a lax morality with the rejection of religion is too valuable to be allowed easily to die. If it is not openly asserted, it must be insinuated. Somehow or the other, people must be induced to believe that this giving up of religion is a most serious affair. Only so will it be possible to maintain that amount of social pressure which can make them keep their unbelief to themselves. For, once let the world grasp the fact that of all questions concerning which mortals bother their heads there are none that are intrinsically of so little consequence as those that come properly under the name of religion, and the game is up. Ideas can only be kept alive in one—or both—of two ways. Either the majority must believe that they are true or they must believe that they are useful. Apparently the hope of proving that religion is true is now given up as almost hopeless. Nothing remains, then, but to prove that it is useful. And even that is not attempted in a positive manner. It is rather by way of suggesting the awful things that may happen if religion loses its hold on the people. And all the time the lesson in front of us is that every vileness can and does flourish in connection with the most fervent profession of religious belief.

* * *

Why Working Men?

But why should Mr. Stead address his inquiry specifically to the religion—or lack of it—of working men? If religion is true, and if it is useful, it should be of as much importance to other people as it is to working men. Really, the soul of a millionaire should be as worth saving as that of a navvy. On behalf of the "upper classes," we protest against this favouritism. Why not give to Mayfair some of the attention that is bestowed on Mile End? Genuine religious belief is, after all, not something that affects one class of society. Societies may be more or less religious, but they are more or less religious as a whole. Freethought is not something that affects society as Alopecia affects the hair of one's head – in patches. It affects all who think, and many who do not; and there is no reason whatever for confining the capacity for thinking to one class of the community. Some of the keenest intelligences we have met have been uneducated, and some of the greatest fools have been educated. Education does not give capacity; it seems pretty evenly distributed through all the social grades; and therefore we do not see why Mr. Stead should limit his attentions to the working classes. Does he think that if the working classes can only be kept religious it does not matter much about the others? Personally, we should not be surprised if this were the case; for it is the working classes who have always been most carefully guarded against the spread of unbelief. It has been pointed out that in all the cases of prosecution for "blasphemy" that have occurred it was never they who wrote for the "upper classes" in expensive volumes that were prosecuted, but always they who wrote for the working man. Had Paine written in stilted English and published at a guinea a copy, he would never have been made the subject of a prosecution, nor would others have been punished for selling his works. This concern for the working man is very touching—and just a trifle suspicious. It looks as though there were a desire to keep him religious—in order to prevent his waking up.

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Cause for Suspicion.

Mr. Stead's method of enquiring whether the working men are religious by addressing a circular to "leading representatives of the labour movement" is very ingenuous. Putting on one side the fact that the leaders addressed will, in all probability, be quite *safe* ones of whom to make enquiries, Mr. Stead ought to know that this is the last possible way in which one could get reliable information. Why, many of the labour leaders are afraid to let their opinions on religion be known for fear of damaging their interests in other directions, and it is quite certain that the replies will be of a kind to please the religious world. They will be told that the working man has a dislike to the formalism and class atmosphere of the Churches, that he has a profound respect for the character of Jesus, etc. We saw this game worked with the soldiers during the War, when the men were represented as half-baked idiots who gave up religion because they did not like the cut of the parson's collar, or from some other purely imaginary cause. Anything, in fact, to disguise the truth that the working man is, as are others, steadily outgrowing these childish fantasies of the world's infancy which meet us in the shape of religion. Why, indeed, should Mr. Stead assume, if he does assume, that while the rest of the world is steadily outgrowing religious beliefs, the working man is so constituted that he is destined to put up for ever with these same fables as the literal truth? The truth of the whole matter is that these religious leaders cannot get over the habit of thinking of the workihg class as a class apart, one that requires special teaching and *special watching*. They must be kept in order, and what is there that can do it so well, or that has done it for so long, as religion? And when religions fail to do this, its utility to the governing classes of the country will have gone.

* * *

An Awakening.

Perhaps, if Mr. Stead cares to set on foot a genuine enquiry, he will discover how much truth there is in what has been said. The working man is not, of course, the only one who sees what the historic function of religion has been, he is only the last to realize it. While the general environment was such as to encourage religion, the establishment of it in all branches of life gave rise to no special reflection. But when the environment underwent a change, when the growth of knowledge led to a universal weakening of religious belief, then the strong desire of the governing classes that men should be kept religious aroused first suspicion, then enquiry, and finally conviction. It was seen that from the most primitive times whenever the sinister interests of a country needed protection that function was always performed by religion. Behind the autocrat, the tyrant, the monopolist, the exploiter, always the priest. The frame of mind that was favourable to the latter was favourable to all the others. The people might be kept ignorant, but there was always religious instruction forthcoming. Their bodies might be starved, but their "spiritual" nature always received nourishment—of a kind. Under the worst conditions of factory employment the visit of an inspector might be resisted, but the visit of a "missionary" was always welcome. And now the working man is waking up. He sees no reason why knowledge should be the possession of a class, or why he should longer give support to institutions and ideas that have no justification in either truth or utility. Enquiries about the religion of the working man will not re-establish belief. Vague speeches about the religion of labour will not drive from the minds of those who think the knowledge they possess of the historic part played by religion in the life of the world. You cannot very easily turn the world back; you can more easily delay its progress. That may be done by religious organizations as it has been done before. But it is a little more difficult now than it was. The world is waking, and man is beginning to stand erect. And before knowledge the gods retreat as the morning mist is dissipated by the rising sun.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Orthodoxy Up to Date.

(Concluded from p. 435.)

THE *Church Times*, while almost gleefully admitting the failure of Protestantism, expresses the opinion that "it will be time to say that Catholicism has failed in England when it has been fairly tried." That is a perfectly legitimate statement; but I venture to affirm that Catholicism was once fairly tried in England, and that it signally failed. Now, the *Church Times*, being a Catholic journal, on the whole very ably and discreetly conducted, will readily admit that up to the time of Henry VIII., England was a Catholic country, and that whenever and wherever the true Church exists it is a Body whose Head is Christ. The Church of England was founded early in the seventh century, and continued as a branch of the Catholic Church until the beginning of the sixteenth. Curiously enough, Augustine, the first missionary, was a Roman abbot whom Pope Gregory the Great sent, at the head of a band of forty monks, to convert the English people to Christianity. For close upon a thousand years Catholicism had a fair trial in England. Its career was somewhat chequered, and its relations with Rome were often painfully strained; but not even the *Church Times* will deny either the validity of its orders or its right to be regarded as *the* Church. Its founders were monks, and monks were its glory or its shame throughout its history. Gardiner, in his article on England in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, well says:—

> The Church of England is the daughter of the Church of Rome. She is so perhaps more directly than any other Church in Europe. England was the special conquest of the Roman Church, the first land which looked up with reverence to the Roman Pontiff, while it owed not even a nominal allegiance to the Roman Cæsar.

Without a doubt, then, the Church of England was from the first in the fullest sense Catholic; but was it morally and socially a success? Let us glance at its condition in the twelfth century, in the reign of King Stephen. England was then passing through terribly troublous times, Stephen lacking all kingly qualities except bravery. The clergy were extremely worldly men, who cared much more for their own interests than for the welfare of their flocks. Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, had but one ambition, namely, the acquisition of wealth and the promotion of his family. His two nephews were bishops of Lincoln and Ely, while his two illegitimate sons occupied exalted positions, the one being Chancellor and the other Treasurer. The bishops lived in large, well-fortified castles, and ruled their subordinates with rods of iron. They were mighty princes in the land, who took prominent parts in the political conflicts of their day. Milman says:—

> Such were the prelates of England just before the commencement of Henry II.'s reign: all, says a contemporary writer, or almost all, wearing arms, mingling in war, indulging in all the cruelties and exactions of war. The lower clergy could hardly, with such examples, be otherwise than, too many of them, lawless and violent men. Yet the Church demanded for the property and persons of such prelates and such clergy an absolute, inviolable sanctity. The seizure of their

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palaces, though fortified and garrisoned, was an invasion on the property of the Church. The seizure, maltreatment, imprisonment, far more any sentence of the law in the King's Courts upon their persons, was impiety, sacrilege (*History of Latin Christianity*, vol v., pp. 19, 20).

The Church proudly claimed absolute independence and irresponsibility for its sacerdotal order. No matter what crime any member of that caste might commit, he was not amenable unto the law of the land. It was maintained that even the most menial churchman was immune from the law of capital punishment. "The churchman too was judge without appeal in all causes of privilege or of property, which he possessed or in which he claimed the right of possession." It was for this complete immunity of the sacerdotal order that Thomas-a-Becket fought such a desperate battle with Henry II. It was for the honour of his order that that extraordinary fanatic sacrificed his life at Canterbury. Among the king's commands which the haughty archbishop was requested to sign was this: "If any cleric be accused of felony, the Church shall not protect him, but he shall answer to the summons of the king's court to be tried therein." Becket exclaimed:—

> And that I cannot sign.
> Is not the Church the visible Lord on earth?
> Shall hands that do create the Lord be bound
> Behind the back like laymen-criminals?
> The Lord be judged again by Pilate? No!
> —*The Works of Tennyson*, p. 705.

The Church of the twelfth century manufactured piety, or saintship, in superabundance; but greatness and nobility of character it cannot justly claim as one of its peculiar products. St. Bernard, the celebrated abbot of Clairvaux, the most influential man of his age, was by no means an exemplary character, as the following incident related by Dean Milman indubitably shows:—

> The Abbot of Clairvaux was involved in a disputed election to the archbishopric of York. The narrow corporate spirit of his order betrayed him into great and crying injustice to William, the elected prelate of that See. The rival of the Englishman, Henry Murdach, once a Cluniac, was a Cistercian; and Bernard scruples not to heap on one of the most pious of men accusations of ambition, of worse than ambition: to condem him to everlasting perdition. The obsequious Pope, no doubt under the same party influence, or quailing under the admonitions of Bernard which rise into menace, issued his sentence of deposition against William (*Latin Christianity*, vol. iv., p. 390-1).

Other incidents, equally or more discreditable, in the life of the illustrious saint of Clairvaux are on record, showing that saintliness and honourable behaviour do not necessarily go together.

Let us now take a leap from the twelfth century to the sixteenth and inquire what moral and social progress was made during the interval. The first thing that arrests our attention is the following reflection by the illustrious scholar and critic, Erasmus:—

> Oh, strange vicissitudes of human things. Heretofore the heart of learning was among such as professed religion. Now, while they for the most part give themselves up, *ventri luxui pecuniæque*, the love of learning is gone from them to secular princes, the court, and the nobility. May we not justly be ashamed of ourselves? The feasts of priests and divines are drowned in wine, are filled with scurrilous jests, sound with intemperate noise and tumult, flow with spiteful slanders and defamation of others; while at prince's tables modest disputations are held concerning things which make for learning and piety (Froude's *Henry the Eighth*, vol. i., p. 30, 31).

By the twelfth century the Church had won the affectionate allegiance of the mass of the population. Throughout Becket's violent strife with the king, the people, especially the poor, were enthusiastically on the archbishop's side, because they believed that the clergy were their best friends and protectors. Becket was assassinated in his own cathedral, but he had really won a temporary victory, and erelong we see Henry II. walking bare-foot through the streets of Canterbury, and then kneeling while the monks, at his own request, scourge him on the pavement in the chapter-house. Despite many glaring faults, the clergy were then veritable servants of society. Monasteries and nunneries were numerous and rapidly growing rich; but their main object was still to relieve the necessities of the poor. In course of time, however, the men of God became notoriously worldly and selfish, and their very privileges proved their ruin. Religion degenerated into an empty form. The religious houses lost their original purity and honour, and sank into centres of luxury and vice, the abominations of which were notorious. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries their names stank in the nostrils of the public, and Cardinal Morton, having visited them by permission of the Pope, laid their scandalous condition before a provincial synod held in 1486. The report says:—

> Many priests, it was stated, spent their time in hawking or hunting, in lounging at taverns, in the dissolute enjoyment of the world. They wore their hair long like laymen; they were to be seen lounging in the streets with cloak and doublet, sword and dagger. By the scandal of their lives they imperilled the stability of their order. A number of the worst offenders, in London especially, were summoned before the synod and admonished (Froude's *Henry the Eighth*, vol. i., p. 60).

But there was no amendment. "The monasteries grew worse and worse." In Roy's *Satire against the Clergy*, the bishops are thus described:—

> As for preaching they take no care,
> They would rather see a course at a hare;
> Rather than to make a sermon
> To follow the chase of wild deer,
> Passing the time with jolly cheer
> . . . . .
> They drink in golden bowls
> The blood of poor simple souls
> Perishing for lack of sustenance,
> Their hungry cures they never teach,
> Nor will suffer none other to preach.

For nearly a thousand years Catholicism was fairly tried in England, and the result was a total failure. Cardinal Morton's letter to the Abbot of the monastery of St. Alban's contains the following passage:—

> The brethren of the abbey, some of whom, as is reported, are given over to all the evil things of the world, neglect the service of God altogether. They live with harlots and mistresses publicly and continuously, within the precincts of the monastery and without.

The Church, with such an inglorious past, stands self-condemned and doomed to extinction, despite its orthodoxy of belief and exquisite machinery.

J. T. LLOYD.

I am now convinced, that no great improvements in the lot of mankind are possible, until a great change takes place in the fundamental constitution of their modes of thought. The old opinions in religion, morals, and politics, are so much discredited in the more intellectual minds as to have lost the greater part of their efficiency for good, while they have still life enough in them to be a powerful obstacle to the growing up of any better opinions on those subjects.

—*John Stuart Mill.*

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The Grand Old Man of Laughter.

How many and many a weary day
When sad enough were we, Mark's way
(Unlike the Laureate's Mark's)
Has made us laugh until we cried,
And sinking back exhausted, sighed
Like Gargery, "Wot larx!" —*Andrew Lang.*

FOR forty years Mark Twain filled the English-speaking world with laughter, always generous, always clean, often springing, as the truest humour must spring, from the source of tears. Beneath his cap and bells was only partially concealed one of the sanest writers of our time; a satirist who reserved his scorn for the mean and ignoble, and all the praise for the worthy and pure. The incident of his financial failure, which, like Walter Scott's, was the work of others, raised him to the rank of the heroes, and every new revelation of his character only brought him closer to the hearts of his admirers.

Regarded as the prince of jesters, he was so much more than that. He was a great man, a great citizen, a great writer. Mark Twain was the national author of the United States in a sense in which we, in England to-day, have no national writer. The feeling for him among his own people was like that of the Scots for Walter Scott ninety years ago, or like that of our fathers for Charles Dickens. There was admiration in it, gratitude, pride, and above all, affection. This was shown at one of the last public dinners Mark Twain attended. When he came in he was escorted to the table, and the whole company, in which no man was indistinguished, rose to greet him, and remained standing till he had taken his seat.

This full flame of personal affection went out to Mark Twain for what he had written and what he had done. His dashes against tyranny, humbug, and corruption attracted men no less than his irresistible humour. Such a man's humour was bound to be interwoven with seriousness. "Papa," said his young daughter, "can make bright jokes, and he enjoys funny things, but still he is more interested in earnest books and earnest subjects."

A thorough Freethinker, Mark Twain always wrote under the restraint of a family full of religious prejudice. His pious wife edited his jokes, and some of his serious attempts at philosophical writing, such as *What is Man?* were suppressed, or else withdrawn quietly from circulation by the unseen hand of piety. Probably we shall never know how far his writings were edited in the interests of God and Mrs. Grundy. Some of his jokes have disappeared from recent editions of his works, such as the jest on Joseph and his brethren, in which Joseph says, "Pity me!" and Twain adds, "his brethren pitted him." Fortunately, through the sincerity af his friend and biographer, Mr. Bigelow Paine, we know something of this side of Twain's character. It is well; for the hirelings who write for the "free press" of England and America have chosen to ignore the subject of Twain's heresies.

It is characteristic that at the time of the posthumous publication of so many of Twain's heresies that the orthodox press should discover that the great humourist's work is no longer to the public taste. People talk of him more than they read him, so they say. It is the fate of all writers with great reputations. They will, however, not get rid of Mark Twain so easily.

The orthodox journalists who are frightened at Mark Twain's reasoned attacks on Christianity must have forgotten the iconoclastic note in his most popular works. Some of the liveliest jests appear in *The New Pilgrim's Progress*, in which he describes the travels of an excursion party through the Holy Land. Here is a fine jibe:—

> The street called straight is straighter than a cork-screw, but not as straight as a rainbow. Saint Luke is careful not to commit himself. He does not say it is the street which is straight, but the "street which is called straight." It is a fine piece of irony, and it is the only facetious remark in the Bible, I believe.

A shrewd thrust at priestcraft is shown in his laughable remark:—

> These gifted monks never do anything by halves. If they were to show you the brazen serpent elevated in the wilderness, you could depend they had on hand the pole it was elevated on, and even the hole it stood in.

There is a palpable thrust at Oriental boastfulness in the following:—

> When I used to read of "kings" in Sunday-school, it suggested to me the kings of such countries as England and France, arrayed in splendid robes ablaze with jewels, marching in grave procession with gold sceptres in their hands, and flashing crowns on their heads. But, here in Syria, it suggested ill-clad, ill-conditioned savages, much like our Indians, who lived in sight of each other, and whose "kingdoms" were large at five square miles and containing two thousand souls.

A delightful piece of irony is displayed in his comment on the alleged tomb of Adam:—

> There is no question that he is actually buried in the grave which is pointed out as his. There can be none, because it has never yet been proved that that grave is not the grave in which he is buried.

Writing of monks, he is in his most Ingersollian vein:—

> They have banished the tender grace of life, and left only the sapped and skinny mockery. Their lips are lips that never kiss and never sing; their hearts are hearts that never hate and never love. They are dead men that walk.

In his autobiography there are many Freethought touches. Whilst visiting Europe, he had an invitation to dinner from an Emperor. For some time Mark Twain had been meeting titled persons, but when the Imperial card was passed round the breakfast-table, his daughter said with emotion and excitement: "Why, papa, if it goes on like this, there won't be anybody left for you to get acquainted with except God." It was not complimentary, adds Twain, to assume that I was unknown in that august quarter, but young folk jump to conclusions without reflection.

Sometimes he threw aside the cap and bells, and spoke from a full heart. The question of ethics and religion is well put in the following:—

> It needed no God to come down from heaven to tell men that murder and theft and other immoralities were bad, both for the individual and society. If I break all these moral laws, I cannot see how I injure God, for he is beyond reach of injury from me. I could as easily injure a planet by throwing mud at it.

That was written in his Theistic days, but in his later years he became Agnostic. In his *Mysterious Stranger* he makes a fierce attack on the God idea:—

> Strange, because they are so frankly and hysterically insane—like all dreams: a god who could make good children as easily as bad, yet preferred to make bad ones; who could have made every one of them happy, yet never made a single happy one; who made them prize their bitter life, yet stingily cut it short; who gave his angels eternal happiness unearned, yet required his other children to earn it; who gave his angels painless lives, yet cursed his other children with biting miseries and maladies of mind and body; who mouths justice and invented hell, mouths mercy and invented hell, mouths Golden Rules and forgiveness multiplied by seventy

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times seven, and invented hell; who mouths morals for other people and has none himself; who frowns upon crimes, yet commits them all; who created man without invitation, then tries to shuffle the responsibility for man's acts upon man, instead of honourably placing it upon himself; and, finally, with divine obtuseness, invites this poor, abused slave to worship him.

The posthumous works of Mark Twain, which have so upset the orthodox, show Ariel turned Prospero, and showing in the tranformation how extraordinary a spirit Ariel is. Despite his dress of motley, he was ever a knight-errant charging down the wind at the hosts of superstition. Honour was his shield, and truth tipped his lance. Gentle in his dealings with gentle people, he was relentless in his contest with humbug. The lustre of his fame must deepen with the progress of the years.

MIMNERMUS.

The New Testament.

I.

PAUL.

READERS of Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* will remember the passage where Sue Bridehead offers to make Jude a "*new* New Testament," by cutting out and rearranging the separate books in the order of their composition, beginning with Paul's Epistles. Such a rearrangement would no doubt have a certain subtle effect in the direction of rationalizing our conceptions of these writings. The present order is eminently calculated to suit the current clerical fiction, designed for consumption by simple souls, according to which the Gospels are authentic memoirs of Jesus (two of them written by apostles, and the other two at any rate by immediate followers of apostles), and the Epistles an edifying commentary on the Gospel story, written in full view of the events recorded in it. This fictitious view is tacitly assumed by the clergy in nearly every sermon they preach—the truth, or an approximation to it, not being allowed to appear except in expensive volumes and periodicals only read by scholars, and beyond the reach of the average man. This is part of the ecclesiastical machinery for dusting the eyes of the common people.

A "new New Testament," as above defined, would give the order of the books somewhat as follows:—

1. *Pauline Epistles.* 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians, Philippians. (Before A.D. 64.)

2. *Anti-Pauline writings.* James, Revelation. (Before A.D. 70.)

3. *Primitive Gospel narratives.* "Q" (the elements common to Matthew and Luke, but not Mark), and Mark. (A.D. 70 to 85.)

4. *Post-Pauline Epistles.* Hebrews, 1 Peter, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus. (A.D. 85 to 100.)

5. *Later Gospel narratives and companion writings.* John (Gospel and Epistles), Matthew and Luke (the parts peculiar to each), and Acts. (A.D. 100 to 140.)

6. *Inferior late stuff.* Jude and 2 Peter. (A.D. 120 to 150.)

It is well for the open-minded student of the New Testament to read its contents in this order, and thereby ensure that he approaches the documents earliest in date free from preconceptions derived from those written later.

When, accordingly, we start with the genuine Pauline Epistles, we find at once that we are confronted with the phenomenon of a few individuals (Paul, Silvanus, Timothy, etc.) on the shores of the Ægean preaching a new religion, for the understanding of which some knowledge of the social and religious history of the times is the main thing necessary. It has been held by some respectable critics that Paul himself is a fictitious character, and his letters therefore—even those most generally accounted genuine—pure forgeries. This hypothesis, however, is not really a very helpful one. Like the Bacon-Shakespeare theory, it only pushes the problem further back; for no one can read Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians, at any rate, without perceiving that, whether by Paul or not, they are the work of a distinct and remarkable personality, and that if that personality was not Paul, but a forger who invented Paul and his whole system, he was a more remarkable individual than Paul himself would have been, and we have to account for the odd fact of his having left no other trace of his identity. For present purposes, therefore, I regard Paul as the historic author of those epistles which go under his name, those to the Hebrews, Timothy, and Titus excepted.

By the first century A.D., all the petty kingdoms and city-states of the Mediterranean had become enslaved to the Roman Empire, administered by a bureaucracy of proconsuls and other officials deriving authority from the emperor, or hereditary war-lord and chief magistrate of the Roman State. Public life had become a routine, concerning nobody but the officials and the Italian plutocracy. Religion, once a live ritual designed to conciliate natural forces and serve the interests of the tribe or people practising it, had become a hollow form, ridiculed by the learned, no longer appealing to the slaves and disinherited, but enforced for political reasons by the Imperial officials. Not the tribe or the people, but the individual and his destiny had become the centre of ethical teaching and religious speculation. The old "mysteries," connected with the local cults of Demeter at Eleusis, Isis in Egypt, Adonis in Syria, Attis in Asia Minor, and so forth, had originally (as demonstrated by Sir J. G. Frazer) been magical rites to further the revival of vegetation and crops in spring. No one any longer believed in them in this sense, but devout persons continued to be initiated into the "mysteries" in the belief that the slain and resurrected gods, whom they celebrated, could free them from the bondage of the flesh, and fit them for eternal happiness after death.

Towards the middle of the first century, Paul and his companions appear in the Greek cities of Thessalonica, Athens, Corinth, and Ephesus, proclaiming the revelation of a new "mystery," specially intended for the poor, the ignorant, and the wretched in this life—the mystery of Jesus, the "Christ" or Messiah, crucified as a sacrifice to God for human sin, and risen again as a pledge of the future resurrection of believers in him to an eternal life of bliss. By accepting this "mystery," believers would become sharers in the "Holy Spirit" of Christ; they would forget their miserable earthly existence, as though they were dead to it, and live in continual ecstasy, praying and preaching, speaking strange tongues "of men and of angels," miraculously recovering from diseases, and triumphing over the flesh and its temptations, until the wonderful day soon to come, when Jesus would appear from the sky, dead believers would come to life and be caught up, with the living, to dwell with him for ever, and the wicked, the scoffers, and the rich in this world would be cast into everlasting darkness and torment!

This highly sober and rational creed is set forth at length in Paul's letters—our prime authority for its tenets. From them, particularly those to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans, we learn not only the nature of Paul's preaching, but something of his antecedents and the kind of opposition he had to encounter. Paul

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was a Jew, exceedingly ignorant and uncultivated, who had hit upon the new "mystery" in an emotional reaction against the legal requirements of orthodox Judaism, of which he had been an adherent. "Through a revelation from Jesus Christ," according to him—but really through the effect of continual brooding over the Law and the Prophets upon a mind already religious to the point of mania—Paul had come to the conclusion that Jesus, the founder of an obscure Jewish sect, crucified as a seditionist a little before Paul's time, was not only the longed-for "Messiah" or deliverer, but a divine person, sent into the world to redeem men by his death after the manner of the Pagan "mystery" gods.

That there actually had been an historical individual called Jesus, the founder of the sect above-mentioned, and that he was not altogether the coinage of Paul's imagination, is a conclusion to which I am led, not by Paul's extremely irrational theories on the subject, but by the nature of the opposition with which he was confronted. We read of "apostles that were before" Paul—that is, the leaders of the Jewish sect in question—and of two in particular, Cephas or Peter, and James "the Lord's brother," with whom Paul had difficulties. Paul, therefore, had to do with a reputed brother of Jesus, and there is at least this much evidence for the latter's historicity—altogether apart from the Gospels, to which we shall come later.

At the time when Paul wrote the Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans, the little sect he had founded in the Greek cities was disturbed by violent schisms. The Jewish followers of Jesus, finding Paul preaching a new religion in the name of their founder, which to them was heathenish blasphemy, had sent emissaries among his converts to discredit him, and to make out that they, the Nazarenes of Palestine, were alone the accredited apostles of Jesus. On the other hand, some of the Greek converts, with a smattering of philosophy, finding Paul's teaching excessively crude (as it was), were endeavouring to rationalize it to a certain extent by explaining the resurrection figuratively. Paul's letters attack both these sets of opponents. Galatians and 2 Corinthians x.-xiii. deal with the original followers of Jesus, Peter, and James, in an extremely bitter fashion. 1 Corinthians i.-iv. and xv. deal with the Greek intellectuals. It is in these controversial chapters that we find the real Paul. These railings at "the extra-special apostles," as he calls his rivals—these anathemas on anyone who preaches a different Gospel from his—these sneers at the eloquent and intellectual among his Greek opponents, do not reveal Paul as a very lovely or saintly character; but they are authentic; they are the outpourings of a man fighting for all that to which his life's work has been given, and not the compositions of a literary forger. Here, at any rate, if nowhere else, we can study the protagonist of early Christianity.

ROBERT ARCH.

Nothing is idler than disputes about the motives to virtuous deeds or the proportion of praise to be assigned to the doers of them. It is a common criticism that a sweet temper deserves no commendation, because the blessed possessor of it is naturally sweet-tempered, and undergoes no terrible struggle in order to say the sweet word which he who is cursed with spite only just manages to force himself to utter. What we are bound to praise or blame, however, is the result, and the result only—just as we praise or blame perfect or imperfect flowers. If it comes to a remorseless probing of motives, there are none of us who can escape a charge of selfishness; and, in fact, a perfectly *abstract* disinterestedness is a mere logical and impossible figment.

—*Mark Rutherford.*

The Personal Equation.

IT would be very foolish to deny the power of personality. All men are equal, but all men are not identical. Some men have no personality to speak of. There are varieties of personality as well as varieties of other things in Nature. We speak of the force of personality, the attractiveness of personality, and so on. But no man or woman should allow himself or herself to be so subjected to another personality as to have no will of his or her own. Now, the Churches use personality for this very purpose—to blot out other personalities. The exaltation of a limited number of individualities is secured by the mental subjection and dependence of the mass.

This statement can be tested in many ways. Why do men obey laws? The great majority of men obey laws because of fear of the law-giver, or of the law administrator, or because of the uncomfortable results flowing from disobedience. Only one man in a myriad deliberately obeys or disobeys a law after reaching a reasoned conclusion as to the quality of the law.

The policy of the clergy confessedly is (they have supernatural authority for it) to rob people of their wills. "Free-will," after all, means nothing. God holds all the aces. There can be no such thing as free-will. How can there be in the Christian scheme? We are adjured to submit to the divine will, or to merge our wills in the Almighty will. If we do so, what becomes of our so-called free-will? There never was such a thing as free-will. It never existed.

We sometimes talk of a determined man as one "who has a will of his own." He is an exceptional man who has; but even he is limited in the exercise of his will. His will is not free. Conditions are always imposed by Nature. You cannot break her, but you can break yourself against her. In the language of the theologians, this attitude of Nature is transferred to their God—a personality praise-greedy, jealous, revengeful.

If it were not for powerful orators or eccentric slang-slinging evangelists, we should not see big audiences crowding to hear the "old, old story." The crowds do not go to church, chapel, or revival meeting for the sake of the message, but to hear the entertaining messenger. They want to be emotionally impressed or to be tickled or thrilled. The very same motives that take them to hear the preacher—who, when successful, is ever an actor—are those which take them to the theatre or great political demonstration. In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the burden of the sermon is forgotten before the meeting-place is left. Change and sensation are the things that most people are out for. They are willing to pay for them, too, if required. No wonder the big church is packed when some well-boomed preacher with a big voice appears. There is no admission fee.

The Freethinker is right. The emancipation of humanity must begin with the lesson of thinking for ourselves. A man, to know anything profitably, and to be of any service or usefulness to his fellow-beings, must have a mind and will of his own. If he be gigantically strong in mind and will, he must ever remember that, to be nobly helpful, he must not use his strength like a giant. The true man exercises his strength of mind and will, not in vulgarly asserting himself and brazenly obtruding his strength—not in terrorizing and tyrannizing over others—but in embracing opportunities of social service, in finding out Nature's secrets, in elucidating matters, and in vigorously attacking the forces of darkness—anti-social forces of every kind.

Everybody must have a mind and will of his own. If he has not, he is a parasite. Loudness, showiness,

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and the popular limelight are no proofs of strength of character. Character is just the strong, conscious possession of a mind and will of one's own, and it often exerts its influence unseen and in silence. The Churches to-day are going in for all-round galvanizing. They are using the limelight, the spectacular show, and blaring brass bands and brass lungs, to keep people in mind of their existence. But silently, amidst it all, the seed of Freethought is taking root in innumerable corners. Returned soldiers—thoughtless before the War—have become thoughtful, and in the great majority of cases, hostile to the claims of clericalism. The Personal Equation enters into many decisions. It is never pleasant, for instance, to have to oppose, or contradict, or run counter to one whom we love or respect. But the claim of Truth, which is just the claim of Humanity, is paramount. Therefore, if we have not yet got them, let us each set about finding out how to acquire a will and mind of our own.

IGNOTUS.

Acid Drops.

We have received an urgent appeal for funds from the Y.M.C.A. in order to send out concert parties to Russia for the entertainment of the British troops. But we have it on the word of the War Minister that our troops are to be withdrawn, and in that case the men can wait for concerts until they return home. The document is signed by Sir Arthur Yapp, so that either he is making a needless appeal or Mr. Churchill is not speaking the truth. We are thus in a difficulty, for the reputation of both religionists and politicians stands so high that it is hard to believe that their statements are in any degree inexact.

Stands Scotland where it did! A Glasgow University has conferred an honorary degree on the Roman Catholic Cardinal Mercier. In acknowledging the honour, the wily ecclesiastic said that he regarded it as a tribute to his Church rather than to himself. The Cardinal need not get cold feet over this business. British Universities honour so many people, including successful tradesmen and Royal nobodies. Some years ago, Oxford University conferred a degree of Doctor of Civil Laws on General Booth the First. And people have not done laughing yet.

The clergy like people to think that the dear bishops are elected by the Holy Ghost. This does not always harmonize with the facts. Referring to a deceased ecclesiastic, the *Daily News* calls him a "Campbell Bannerman" bishop, and adds that the Dowager Lady Wimborne brought his services to the attention of the former Prime Minister. This is, indeed, a secular solution of a pretty spiritual mystery.

According to the newspapers, a recent Saturday was observed in New South Wales as a day of prayer and humiliation for a mitigation of the dry weather. If this be so, "God's own Anglo-Saxons" and the Australian aborigines ought to shake hands as equals.

The blessings of poverty are not so attractive to the clergy as the curse of riches. Despite Christ's injunctions, they lay up what treasure they can get their hands upon. This week's wills includes the name of the Rev. W. Townsend, of Bawdrip, Somerset, who left £9,782.

The Church of Scotland candidates at the education elections in Glasgow are in trouble about their expenses. Some portion of the costs has been raised, but there is a balance of over £100, and an appeal is now being made for this. Perhaps some of our readers would care to help.

In an article on "Anti-Semitism" in the *Westminster Gazette*, the writer suggests that the reason "is to be found in a radical difference of ethic between Jews and Europeans." What a fog of words! The reason is solely one of religious prejudice, fostered in a soil of ignorance. Among really cultured people no such prejudice exists at all.

Here is a good story. A little boy coveted a gold watch belonging to a priest. "Do you believe if I prayed long enough God would give me a gold watch like your's?" said the boy to the priest. "Certainly, if your faith was strong enough," replied the priest. "Then," said the smart boy, "you give me your watch, and you pray to God for a new one."

A Chatham resident was scared on finding a snake curled up on his doorstep. What must poor Eve's feelings have been in the Garden of Eden when the snake started talking to her?

A humorous writer in a contemporary says a dead man cannot pour a long, cool drink down his hot throat. Of course, it is not to be expected that a humourist should read such a serious work as the Bible.

The late Rev. E. H. Bennett, of Cheltenham, ignored the Biblical injunction to lay no treasure up on earth. When he left to talk to Jesus, he left behind £16,770.

An advertisement in an Irish paper throws a light upon the interesting methods of the cinema proprietors: "To-night! Pictures! Daniel in the Lion's Den," etc. If the film producers can screen the story of Jonah and the Whale, they will shake Charlie Chaplin off his throne.

At a Bible Society garden party at Cambridge the ghastly discovery was made that no plate was handy for the purposes of the collection. One of the visitors passed his hat round.

A press paragraph states that a suburban curate wants a bicycle to assist him in his parish work. Why does not the brother-in-the-Lord think of relying upon prayer rather than the advertising methods of the heathen.

So the explanation of the rectory ceiling which mysteriously dripped oil turns out to be a commonplace affair after all. It was all a trick of the servant girl, who has now confessed, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle has missed a splendid chance. He might easily have made it a "precipitation" by spirit-agency, and the servant girl the operating medium. In that case her confession would not have interfered with the theory. For that in turn would have been due to "tricky" spirits influencing the girl.

But the illuminating thing was the way in which, day after day, this absurd story was served up with assumption that some ghostly or spiritual agency was at work. To those who need it, that in itself was a revelation. It showed how ready the general mind is to seize on this kind of story, and how little removed the mass of people are from the savage state of mind. Those who think that the work of Freethought is done should find a corrective in such incidents. And for Sociologists also the lesson here is a very important one. For it is certain that until that type of mind is reduced to harmless proportions a rational ordering of social life is impossible.

For several Sundays pigeons entered Harlesden Parish Church when the windows were opened, and left after the evening service. Maybe the birds were religious. One of the partners in the Christian Trinity is associated with a pigeon.

A picture in an illustrated contemporary showed a tapir at the Zoological Gardens, suffering from mumps, and with his head bound up. Fancy dear old Providence afflicting the giraffe with six feet of sore throat!

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Marshal Foch is a Roman Catholic, and he has not been allowed to forget it. The Catholic clergy have lionized him —and themselves—during the Marshal's visit to London.

A man was sentenced to three years' penal servitude for robbing church offertory boxes in Kent. It seems a severe sentence for a few coppers and trouser-buttons.

Barley, oats, and wheat are all growing in the churchyard of St. James, Bermondsey. As these things flourish in "consecrated" ground, are they consecrated also?

The Christian Evidence Society must look to its faded laurels. A new sect has been started in Arabia, says the *Times*, which includes armed attacks upon infidels among its objects. Perhaps the athletes of Craven Street will take lessons in the noble art of self-defence.

Will the pious ladies and gentlemen who prayed for fine weather in 1914 kindly note that the present summer has exceeded the customary three fine days and a thunderstorm?

The *Evening News* asks, "Shall we allow the uniformed limpets to cling to their spoof jobs?" Is this meant to be a cut at the Army chaplains?

A Mr. T. Nicholls write in the *Rugby Observer* that over 5,000 Atheists have been converted to "British Israelism." Our knowledge of British Israelism is of the slightest, so also is our knowledge of Mr. Thomas Nicholls. Still, there are some things that one would venture, as did Charles Lamb when he "damned" at a venture the troublesome old lady's parson. And we dare venture the assertion that if Nicholson's name is not mentioned in the New Testament, it is only because the space is already occupied by a gentleman named Ananias. Really, Mr. Nicholls is insulting. If he had converted his 5,000 to some presentable form of religion it would have been bad enough, bnt to have picked out that particular form of Christian insanity known as "British Israelism" is enough to make one look round for a brick.

During the absence of the organist on holiday a piano was used at a Chislehurst Church. Why not? An evangelist at Spurgeon's Tabernacle used to play the cornet; Prebendary Carlile blows the trombone; and General Booth's male and female followers play all sorts of instruments. The very sacred instrument—the harp—is said to be popular in heaven, and outside public-houses.

The *Daily News* suggests calmly that the Gospels were written in "the language of the Holy Ghost." It seems appropriate that the story of one bogey should be written by another.

Mr. G. N. Barnes, M.P., a member of the Cabinet without portfolio, delivered a speech at the Browning Settlement Hall, Walworth, in which he spoke of the "new and menacing danger of materialism." What beautiful nonsense is this? Materialism is older than the "everlasting hills," and it has never been a danger to anyone except priests.

In a flamboyant report of a religious meeting, it was stated that "strong men, as well as frail women, were seen in tears." We cannot compliment the strong men on their associates.

Llanelly Free Church ministers held prayer-meetings in protest against a boxing entertainment in the town. Owing to the extra advertisement, the boxing show was very well patronised.

At the forthcoming Church Congress that devout Christian, Mr. George Lansbury, who will be assisted by Lord Eustace Percy, will speak on "Christian Ideals in World Politics." Comrade Lansbury was also a star preacher at the Browning Settlement Hall meetings. Soon he will be indistinguishable from a professional sky-pilot.

"Ask and ye shall receive" is a fine text for the congregation, but it does not appear to have much weight with the minister. His house having been sold and notice to clear out given, the Rev. W. Atkins, Vicar of Snibston, held a meeting of parishioners to ask their advice.

The *Daily Mail* tells a tale of a suburban parson who said, "Peace, be still," in his sermon, as a coin intended for the collection plate slipped and rolled down the aisle.

An advertisement of a chapel for sale states that the contents include a white marble altar, with inlaid pearls and coloured marbles. The panels of the building are of satinwood. Some improvement has been made since the Christian Religion started in a stable.

The Rev. T. Pym, of Camberwell, cannot understand why there should be any prejudice against games on Sunday. Most Camberwellonians will agree with him; but he still has the task of converting the parsons to this view.

The clergy must show, if they can, that they are doing something. So, Northampton Racecourse being closed, the Rev. Dr. Guttery claims that as being due to their influence. But the *Northampton Daily Chronicle* points out that the reason for the closing of the racecourse was the condition of the track. This was said to be dangerous to both man and beast. So now Mr. Guttery will have to go one further back, and assert that "Providence" ruined the course on the suggestion of the Churches.

A Wesleyan chapel at Bishop's Stortford is to be made into a cinema theatre. This is a conversion which Christians will not approve of.

A novel note is sounded in a tailoring advertisement, which justifies high prices by remarking "in primeval wars indifferent fig-leaves were rationed at an exorbitant figure; at any rate, we know Adam's apple cost a hell of a price."

A woman gave birth to a baby boy in a Mitcham 'bus. If that boy grows up, he will have the consolation of knowing that the Deity was born in a stable.

There are not many sources from which the Church will not take money, but the Bishop of Chelmsford has set his face against raising money for the Church by holding dances and whist drives. He wants the people, he says, to give money for a "sptritual object," and he says he has never heard of dances and whist drives being opened or closed with prayer. Neither have we, nor do we think that all the sources from which the Church gets its money are connected with prayer. What of tithes, mining royalties, rents, dividends, etc.? It looks as though the Bishop is out for a cheap advertisement, and by discarding a shilling hopes to get in a sovereign.

For ages man has bred animals for physical points. The Church for century on century has bred for mental points, viz., for a mental conformity to her beliefs and teachings. When the slightest variation showed itself to the forced belief, that variation was weeded out by the rack or the stake. This process has evolved a mental condition in the race which, by intellectual impressions transmitted from age to age, renders most men unable to think otherwise than with the mass.—*J. W. Wood.*

Matter and its movement are the ultimate factors to which all things may be traced, while they themselves can be traced no further. They are the great X and Y, whose eternal and illimitable process constitutes the universe.—*Buchner.*

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"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

It is never a pleasant task to ask for financial help; but so far as it can be robbed of unpleasantness, those who have so promptly responded to our appeal of last week have done so. The letters received prove—if proof were needed—that the *Freethinker* has lost none of its hold on its readers. There is a touch of personal interest in this journal, displayed in the letters received, that fills one with a sense of satisfaction and courage. We are certain that no journal ever inspired a more *personal* feeling in its readers than this one does. We thank heartily those who have responded to our article in so generous a manner; and if, in the few letters from which our available space has enabled us to quote, we have passed in silence much of a personal nature, it is not through any lack of appreciation of the kindly sentiments expressed.

Major Wallas suggests:—

> Why not call it the "Victory Fund"? That seems to me to express the situation. You have had a long and strenuous fight, and may surely count it a victory to have so successfully piloted the "one and only" through the storm. Please accept the enclosed as an indication of my ability to help, not as a measure of "the will to give."

Major Wallas's suggestion strikes us as a good one, and we have adopted it.

Mr. T. Robertson, Glasgow, writes:—

> I have much pleasure in sending £5 towards the "Sustentation Fund." You have done well during the past year to have incurred so small a deficit, in view of your very much increased working expenses. I hope your appeal will bring sufficient, not alone to wipe out this deficit, but to leave such a balance as will enable you to "carry on" until your circulation balances your outlays.

If only half our readers would make it their business to secure *one* new reader within the next month, that desirable end would be attained.

From Mr. J. Sumner:—

> Again, as last year, I must congratulate you upon what you have achieved; but at the same time you must not mind my saying that, as a business man, I think the paper should be self-supporting. I do not believe in doles where they can be avoided, and I am of opinion that at any rate ½d. per copy would not influence the circulation. A man should be prepared to pay for what he wants, and you would still be giving good value for money. However, you are working on the inside and I on the out, so that you should be able to see the more clearly.

We appreciate our friend's suggestion, but what we have had in mind is the building up of a circulation that will make the paper self-supporting, and by that means avoid detracting from the usefulness of the *Freethinker* as a propagandist organ. And it is next to impossible, at the same time, to increase circulation and raise the price. As a business man, Mr. Sunmer will appreciate losing on a rising circulation rather than making ends meet on a declining one.

Dr. P. Meehan M'Dermott says:—

> I have much pleasure in handing you the enclosed cheque.....for our *Freethinker* whose advent is always welcomed by me as a week-end of refreshing ozonic change from the nauseating atmosphere created about me by the rampant hypocrisy of the London daily journalistic publications.....To me it is a fund of instruction and interest, and occupies a conspicuous place in my waiting-room.

C. W. B. writes:—

> If earnest wishes were effective, you should have a splendid response that would make the *Freethinker* self-supporting, but, like prayer, it is '*non est inventus*.' Accept this material action as a subscription of £10 towards the Sustentation Fund, and may it be the means of putting ginger into some latent Freethinker.

A. W. B. says:—

> It is with very great pleasure I enclose my small contribution to the Sustentation Fund, £5. It is very much below the amount I should like to give, but in times such as now prevail one must move cautiously. Certainly you deserve a full measure of praise for your efforts, and, may I add, sacrifices on behalf of the *Freethinker*? Personally, I desire to thank you for the pleasure I experience each week from the perusal of the best paper of its kind in the United Kingdom.

Mr. H. Jessop sends his cheque for £25 with a congratulatory letter on having pulled through the year with so small a deficit.

Mr. T. Wadsworth hopes that we shall go from victory to victory. Mr. W. R. Munton, along with cheque, offers his congratulations on the way we have pulled through a most difficult time. Major Warren, in sending his contribution, hopes that we shall have no trouble in getting all that is required, and says that although the times are hard for persons in his position, he cannot avoid contributing his mite to keep the flag flying. We can assure the Major that we fully appreciate the spirit of his letter and of his action.

Mr. J. B. Middleton is gratified at the way we have carried on, and hopes that all Freethinkers will respond to the call, and give all the help possible to make the paper go ahead. Mr. E. D. Side writes on behalf of himself and father, and encloses cheque, with a flattering reference to the "nourishing brain food supplied each week."

Mr. A. D. Corrick hopes that we shall be deluged with subscriptions, and adds: "Allow me as a reader and admirer to congratulate you on success under the most abnormal and disconcerting circumstances." Mr. W. B. Columbine sends cheque for ten guineas, and says:—

> You have my heartiest good wishes for the success of your efforts to place the paper on a self-supporting basis, and I have no doubt that ultimately you will be able to do this. The steady, persistent work you are putting into the whole undertaking is sure to bring this reward.

All we can say is, if we do not get the paper in the position in which it deserves to be, it will not be for want of trying. We owe that to all who have stood by us so well in these five years' fighting.

We are holding over other letters from which we hope to quote next week.

The following represents the subscriptions received up to the time of going to press:—

First List of Subscriptions.

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Per South Shields Branch, N.S.S.:—A Friend, 5s. L. Carr, 2s. 6d. J. Hannon, 2s. R. Chapman, 2s. J. W. Freedman, 2s. J. Fothergill, 2s. Mrs. J. Fothergill, 2s. Total, £147 4s. 6d.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

To Correspondents.

C. HARPUR.—We should have no serious objection to using the words "Personalist" and "Impersonalist" in place of Naturalist and Supernaturalist, as the real issue is, as you say, whether we give to Nature a personal or an impersonal characterization. Of course, you may not be able to avoid thinking about "God"; but, on the other hand, many can avoid any reference to God, and as the statements go, one cancels the other. A statement of individual preference is never very conclusive.

T. ELMES.—We are afraid there is no chance of very cheap editions of Mr. Cohen's *Slavery* and *Woman*, much as we should like to see them. The price at which they are published leaves little in the way of profit as it is. If published at a price such as you suggest, someone with money enough to lose would have to bear the loss.

ALPHA.—We *have* considered your statements, but we see no reason to alter our opinion of the two men. We are not lacking in admiration for Haeckel, but we do not think that he could be considered as the philosophical equal to Darwin. The latter we regard as one of the leading minds of the nineteenth century. He threw away, in the shape of suggestions in the course of his main work enough to have made a reputation for a smaller man. Haeckel's greatness lay in another direction from that of Darwin's.

MRS. C. M. RENTON.—Thanks for copy of the *Ceylon Daily News*. It certainly possesses courage, and appears to be edited with ability.

L. R.—Every new subscriber gained is a source of permanent help and a step nearer financial independence. That is why we are so anxious for our readers to help in this way.

MRS. CROSS.—Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances* is out of print, and we cannot say how you could get a copy. The work may possibly be reprinted.

E. D. SIDE.—Thanks. Please give our kindest regards to your father. We have not seen him of late, which, considering his great age, is not surprising. We hope that he is well.

J. G.—Thanks for cutting. The religious marriage service is, naturally, not very flattering to woman.

A. ROWLEY.—There is not the slightest danger. Nothing short of an earthquake would be able to wreck the *Freethinker*. Our capital is the affection of our readers, and we feel quite secure here.

J. Y.—Next week. Crowded out of this issue.

DR. DUNLOP.—Very pleased to have your appreciation of the *Freethinker*. If any numbers of your papers are missing, let us know, and we will try to supply them.

J. HINLEY.—If *every*one did what they could, our task would be, so far as finances are concerned, a very easy one. Your plan of putting the paper into new hands is excellent, and exactly the kind of help we want.

W. ALLAN.—It is quite accidental. We have no prejudices in the direction you indicate. And our feelings run quite the other way.

R. ALLEN.—Showing the paper to your customers is excellent. We note that you have secured new readers. This balances some other news we received of one who was threatened by *his* customers for showing the paper. Much, we think, depends on the man.

A. MILLAR.—We know we can always rely on your doing what is possible.

R. DARTLE.—We cannot see anything in the remark, except the insinuation that, being deformed, the Christian Church is the more fitting place in which to be.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

With extra demands on our space, we have increased our issue to sixteen pages, for "this week only." But we *shall* be glad when we are able to do this permanently. Another thousand readers would enable us to do so quite easily. Therefore we hope that a thousand of our present readers will take the hint, and see that he, or she, gets one of them without delay. It *can* be done.

Apropos of the comments on Lord Halsbury, Mr. E. A. Hawkins writes:—

> Lord Halsbury, rich, pious, eloquent, and learned, may indeed be regarded as the embodiment of the qualities most admired in this country in the nineteenth century, but I doubt whether any Freethinker (or any woman, whether freethinking or not) who has read the minutes of the prosecution of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant would feel able to pay such a tribute of praise to Lord Halsbury as that contained in the *Daily Chronicle* for September 2, 1919.

The comment is timely. Lord Halsbury's work as counsel for the Crown in "blasphemy" trials reflected little credit on him as a man, and hardly covered him with glory as a lawyer.

There has been great difficulty experienced in getting halls in London during the winter. Many are still in occupation by the military, although we may suppose that they will have to clear out one day. We expect there will be an improvement the other side of Christmas, and in the meantime the Executive is trying the experiment of three Sunday afternoon meetings on October 12, 19, and 26, at South Place Institute. Full articulars will be given later.

We are pleased to see in the *Railway Service Journal* a very appreciative sketch, with portrait, of our friend Mr. F. E. Willis, of Birmingham. Mr. Willis has led a very strenuous career, and has played a prominent part in Trades Union and other movements. At present he is President of the Birmingham Trades and Labour Council, and is well known for his earnest and useful work in many local movements. Mr. Willis, it is to be recorded, makes no secret of his opinions on religion, and lectures frequently for the local Branch of the N. S. S. He is now a member of the N. S. S. Executive. We confess to being a trifle jealous of the demands of other movements upon his time. We should like to see him still more active in the Freethought Movement.

One of our friends is setting about helping this paper in a very practical manner. He has arranged for an advertisement of the *Freethinker* to appear on the screen of a good

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picture house for a year, and, in addition, is placing fifty of our posters on the hoardings of the same town for a similar period—the posters to be renewed as it is found necessary. Thus is salvation to be brought within reach of all who will take it; and we shall be surprised if a goodly number do not respond.

Freethought in Unusual Places.

I.

The Revolutionary Kinema.

The Kinema, the people's theatre, by virtue of the limitations of its possibilities, was necessarily a drastic change in dramatic representation. Action entirely without speech, which seemed to be demanded by the present development of this type of drama, was impossible, and therefore the terse note thrown on the screen was imperative for explanation of the action. The actual brevity of these notes demanded that they should be pungent and witty, containing the utmost explanation in the fewest possible words, and a brilliance of wit which would not only fix the attention of the audience, but also would make its separate appeal.

Wit knows no rule, and it is perhaps scarcely surprising to find that these explanatory words at times have a purely revolutionary tendency. Far from shocking the audience, this tendency gives rise to laughter of an uproarious kind, and proves that they are willing to accept and assimilate such strong food.

A rich example of this kind of notice was the terse perversion, "Early to bed and early to rise, makes those we work for wealthy and wise." This was received by an audience of middle-class people in a somewhat snobbish suburb with Homeric laughter. They at least accepted the truth of a witticism which is diametrically opposed to the ethics of opportunism upon which society is supposed to be based. Apparently they did not think that mere application to a laborious task would further their own ends, although they may equally not have known that mere application to a task, if it is a chosen task producing a worthy result, is one of the fundamental instincts of human character.

Beyond such humour, the actual action presented by the kinema producers, being of necessity movement, demands often an unconventional method of life, which cannot do very much to sustain the public interest in stabilizing those attitudes which are constantly presented to them as ridiculous.

In this connection the most powerful influence is that of the comedians; and, undoubtedly, Charlie Chaplin is the prince of Kinema humourists. Nothing is sacred to him. All the pomposities of life are mocked at and made a laughing-stock. Always, by means of some crude horseplay, or some fatuous, practical, often dangerous, jest, he takes from his antagonist the dignity with which he is at first invested. It is granted that in the Chaplin films, dignity is only of the grotesque character, but that does not even slightly mitigate their influence. Indeed, it is rather an added factor in their revolutionary tendency.

Similarly, in more serious or less consciously humorous work, Douglas Fairbanks constantly attacks the conventionally minded. In "Mr. Fixit," he adopts the attitude of a complete "outsider" with the pompous members of a "family," bringing to their magnificent house a bevy of poverty-stricken children, in order to secure from them at least some display of human emotion which, in their desire to maintain the dignity of the family, they had never before permitted themselves. Their disgust at the intrusion changes gradually to love for the children, and a correspondingly easier attitude towards the affections of their precious ward.

The implication of this play is an obvious one. If only people would suffer emotion, suffer friendship and companionship without a previous comparison of bank balances, there would soon be a change of outlook. Money, or its possession, having failed to make any difference in human relations, there would be an immediate impetus towards the millennium, for the possession of an aggregation of unusable wealth would connote no special advantages.

In other plays, Douglas Fairbanks uses equally unusual means to secure his ends; and he does, of course, since he is the main figure in his plays, succeed. Constant appreciation by his audiences of the presented fact, is a direct indication of the modern tendency of society, and it is possible that he is either a brilliantly subtle or quite unconscious propagandist. In the latter event, he has a wonderful judgment of the public pulse, and can make it beat fast or slow as he wishes.

Be that as it may, he and other kinema actors and producers leave very little doubt of their intentions. Under the existing system they are naturally desirous of securing large audiences, for large audiences will pay a greater revenue, and that is what they desire above all things. At the same time, the natural unconvention of their art—it has only been in existence a few years, and has not yet had time to develop a tradition—leads them into unconventional productions and unconventional witticisms, which are sharp-edged and biting, and yet accepted by the public with enthusiasm.

They perhaps would not admit that they are doing anything of any tendency at all. They would hold that they are merely earning their living by giving the public a palatable entertainment, and perhaps that view would be a true one. But the mind of man has been opened to impressions; it has become ready to regard with amusement tinged with disgust the false gods which it had raised up; and these men, as well as others who are more consciously endeavouring to bring about the inevitable changes, are in the grip of a movement not of parties, not even of nations, but of mankind. They therefore, being the successful of their kind, are representative of the "Revolutionary Kinema." That it undoubtedly is, and, being so, is perhaps a more accurate mirror of contemporary feeling than even the daily press, which seems to be seeking it knows not what, it knows not where; while by a hint here, a subtle allusion there, the kinema is provoking laughter and disdain for matters which a few short years ago would have been regarded with awe.

G. E. Fussell.

Religion in Russia.

Baseless accusations are often printed in the newspaper press to the effect that the Bolsheviks in Russia are persecuting the priesthood. As a matter of fact, the Soviet power has merely effected a separation of church from state and of school from church. A great number of Russian priests and of other "True Christians," together with the "Patriarch" (the head of the Russian Church) and the bishops, have been carrying on among the people a systematic, exceptionally intensive, counter-revolutionary, subversive agitation against the workers and peasants' government in Russia. In certain parts of Russia this activity has gone so far that the local authorities have been obliged to intervene and oppose certain "holy" Insurrectionists, who attempted everything to carry out literally the appeals and requests of the patriarch, of the holy synod (the highest governing

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body), and of the Church councils. A number of priests have paid for their counter-revolutionary zeal either with imprisonment or, in some cases, with their lives. And, as a rule, the Soviet Government is altogether too tolerant in its relations to the Church and to its "faithful servants," and allows the Churches themselves to continue operating. For, proceeding from the principle of religious liberty, both the Soviet Government and the Russian Communist parties consider as their chief instrument in their struggle against this power of darkness, not measures of force, but a work of cultural enlightenment and communistic propaganda among the broad masses of the Russian people. In connection with the provocative rumours spread in recent days with particular enmity, to the effect that Moscow Soviet intends to undertake some kind of action against ecclesiastical objects, such as ikons, golden crosses, church vessels, etc., a member of the All Russian Central Executive Committee, at a meeting of this committee, delivered a categorical statement in the name of the Moscow Soviet to the effect that the Soviet had no such plans.

The only "violation" of "sacred objects" which the Soviet Government has undertaken was an investigation of the so-called "sacred relics." In certain churches, and particularly in a number of monasteries, there were preserved in Russia relics of various saints, or fragmentary portions of such relics. According to the orthodox doctrine, the bodies of saintly persons are "indestructible." A number of pilgrims visit such monasteries in which relics of particularly "celebrated" saints are preserved. Wonder-work relics have been an inexhaustible source for the enormous income of these monasteries. Therefore it has been customary for such monasteries as were lacking in such objects to purchase portions of sacred relics from some other monastery. A regular traffic in relics had been organized, for believing Christians not only are in the habit of paying for extra masses over these relics, but also purchase various souvenirs of them; for example, pictures of saints, little wooden crosses, etc.

All half-way intelligent persons in Russia have always considered such relics, as for example, a piece of the right hand of John the Baptist, or of the foot of the Apostle Thomas, and the like, which were actually exhibited in Russian monasteries, as humbug pure and simple, intended for the fleecing of the unenlightened. Yet the Czarist Government persecuted by its police and its gendarmes all the "sceptics" among the people who dared expose this deception. Such persons were declared by the priests to be dangerous sectarians, and were incarcerated in prison or were sent to Siberia. Under the protection of the highest Church functionaries and of the Government there was still flourishing in Russia in the twentieth century a form of idolatry which was almost incomprehensible to civilized human beings. We may here mention in addition a few examples of the crude misrepresentation proposed by priests and monks in Russia.

In the great monasteries at Kiev, relics of the fourteen thousand children who were killed at Bethlehem. In the Svyetogorsk monastery, in the government of Kharkov, even a strand of Christ's hair was preserved. In the monastery of the New Jerusalem there was preserved a drop of the milk of the Virgin Mary and a drop of the blood of John the Baptist. In the cathedral of the Apostle Andrew at Kiev, "the faithful" were allowed to kiss the cross which, according to a legend, had been raised by the above-named apostle on the hill on which Kiev now is situated. The "faithful" used to lie in wait for an opportunity to bite off a little piece of this wonder-working cross. An old priest once confessed to Lomakin, author of an article on this fraudulent business, in Isvestia, that while he was in office this cross had to be replaced three times, for two of them had been actually eaten up by pious pilgrims. In one Russian monastery the monks traded in the nails with which Christ had been crucified. According to the confession, between the "holy" impostors the nails that had been sold would have sufficed for the crucifixion of at least ten thousand persons.

The "godless" Bolsheviks determined to open the eyes of the people to this humbug and to expose the "sacred relics." In a number of places the silver and golden chests were opened, and in place of indestructible corpses, in the most favourable cases, bones much the worse for time were found. But some of these splendid coffins contained wax dolls, ladies' stockings, sacks filled with bricks, cotton, nails, pins, etc. In all places where such investigations were carried on there were present, in addition to the Soviet members, also physicians and representatives of the priesthood and the population, and a precise record was kept of the proceeding.

In the Moscow newspaper, *Pravda*, there is depicted among other things the opening of the relics of the Saint Sava Storshevski, which took place on March 17, in the large well-known Svenigorodsk monastery. The record of the proceeding was signed by a physician and the others present. In the coffin was found a doll made of cotton. In the autopsy of this doll, no traces were found of the "sacred" body, but only bones that were so decayed that the physician could not even tell what kind of person they were from. Among these bones there were discovered two coins of the ten and twenty kopek denominations. These coins were introduced only during the War period. The monks had therefore recently opened the coffins, and knew the value of these relics very well, but continued permitting the people to believe in these "wonder-working remnants."

The Russian Orthodox Church had the habit of frequently "discovering" new saints, and under the government of Nicholas the Last, "holy" Russia was enriched by many new relics.

The above narrated struggle of the Soviet power against the ecclesiastic humbug constitutes an important chain of the huge work of enlightenment which is being carried out by the Bolsheviks "hostile to culture in Soviet Russia."

V. M.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Chant Pagan.

My Grannie says with solemn face,
Above the sky there is a place,
Where Angels play on harps and things,
And little children fly on wings.

She says that if I'm very good,
And do what darling babies should,
I shall go there with mum and dad,
But if my conduct here is BAD—

There is another place call'd Hell,
Where all the naughty babies dwell;
Inhabited by mice and moles,
Toasting their toes upon the coals.

There is no rabbit, rat, or mouse,
In God the Father's holy house,
No coals to warm my little feet,
But just a golden, shining street.

So VERY naughty I shall be,
And sing and eat too much at tea;
Because the mice, I love them so—
And where they are, there I will go.

From the *Nation*.

JAMES DALE.

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Pages from Voltaire.

The Dying Words of Epictetus to his Son.

Epictetus.—I am about to die, my son, I hope that you will keep me in loving remembrance, and that you will not shed useless tears; I die contented since I leave you with a virtuous disposition.

Son.—You have been my guide in the paths of virtue; but you are aware how my mind is troubled. A new religious sect from Palestine are trying to instil remorse into me.

Epictetus.—Remorse, you say? Criminal minds alone feel remorse. Your hands and your heart are clean. I have instructed you in virtue and you have practised it.

Son.—Yes; but this new sect tells me of a new virtue of which, it would seem, I am ignorant.

Epictetus.—What is this new sect?

Son.—It is made up of Jews who deal in old rags and love-philters, and who clip the coin of the realm.

Epictetus.—The virtue they teach is apparently that of coining false money.

Son.—They declare that it is impossible for a man to be virtuous if he has not undergone a minor operation for removing an unnecessary piece of skin, or if he has not been dipped in water in the name of the Father through the Son; it is true that they are not all agreed on these points; some think the operation useless. Some believe water necessary, as Pindar did, who calls it marvellous; some dispense with it; but they all say that you must give them money.

Epictetus.—What do you say? Money? Without a doubt it is our duty to keep the poor who cannot work, to pay wages to those who can, and to assist our friends. It is a part of our law, our moral code. It is what I have done from the time Epaphroditus gave me my freedom, and it is what I have seen you do with a satisfaction that renders my last moments supremely happy.

Son.—The philosophers I am telling you about inculcate something wholly different. They wish us to lay at their feet all we possess, even to the last obol.

Epictetus.—If that is the case, they are thieves, and you must give notice to the pretors or centurions.

Son.—No! no! They are not thieves, they are dealers who give you the very best value for your money; since they promise you eternal life, why should you, when you lay your money at their feet, keep back only enough to get food for yourself? They have the power to strike you dead.

Epictetus.—Then your philosophers are assassins whom society should get rid of at once.

Son.—Not at all! they are magicians who possess wonderful secrets, and who can kill with words. The Father, they tell us, has given them this grace through the Son. One of their proselytes who smells horribly, and who is a great preacher in barns, told me yesterday that one of their brethren, by name Ananias, having sold his farm to please the Son in the name of the Father, brought the money to a magician called Barjona; but because he had kept back enough to buy food for his child, he was punished with sudden death. Afterwards his wife came to Barjona and was struck dead by one word from the magician.

Epictetus.—What a fine lot of criminals are here! If the thing were true, they would be the most abominable scoundrels on earth. They have been filling you with cock-and-bull stories; you are a good boy, but I fear you may turn out a fool, and that prospect is painful.

Son.—But, father, if a man gains eternal life by giving all he possesses to Simon Barjona, it is evident that he has the best of the bargain.

Epictetus.—Eternal life, communion with the Supreme Being, my son, has nothing in common, believe me, with your Simon Barjona. The great and good God, *Deus optimus maximus*, whose spirit in manifested in Cato, Scipio, Cicero, Pericles, Emilius, and Camillus, the father of the gods and of men, has placed his power in the hands of a few. I know for certain that these wretches spring from the superstitious populace of Syria, but I did not know that they carried their insanity so far as to call themselves the prime ministers of the Deity.

Son.—Yet, my dear father, they are continually working miracles. (*Here the good man, Epictetus, laughs sneeringly.*) You are sneering, father; you shrug your shoulders.

Epictetus.—Alas! a dying man has little inclination to laugh; but you make me, my dear boy. Have you ever seen any of these miracles.

Son.—No; but I have talked to men who have talked to women who said that friends of theirs had seen them. And then, what finer morality than the morality of the Jew who has undergone that little operation, and who has been immersed in water!

Epictetus.—And what are the moral precepts of these people?

Son.—Firstly, that a rich man cannot possibly be virtuous, and that it is more difficult for him to enter the kingdom of heaven or its garden than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, notwithstanding which every rich man must give all his possessions to the beggars who preach this kingdom and this garden. Secondly, that only imbeciles, the poor in spirit, are blessed. Thirdly, that he who refuses to listen to the assembly of beggars is to be despised as if he were a publican. Fourthly, that if a man hates not his father and his mother and his brothers, he has no part in this kingdom or garden. Fifthly, that we must bring not peace, but a sword. Sixthly, that when we give a wedding-feast we must force all passers-by to come in, and throw into the ditch at the end of the back-yard all those who have no wedding-dress.

Epictetus.—Alas! you silly boy. I had almost died in a fit of laughter, but now I believe you are likely to make me die of indignation and grief. If the wretches whom you are telling me of can seduce the son of Epictetus, they are likely to seduce many others. I can foresee terrible unhappiness in this world. Are there many of these wonder-working magicians?

Son.—Their number increases from day to day; they have a common fund from which they pay certain Greeks who write for them. They have invented mysteries; they require the strictest secrecy; they have set up oracles which decide all matters of interest to them, and that will not allow any of the sect in any case whatever to plead before the magistrates.

Epictetus.—*Imperium in imperio.* My son, all is lost.

Englished by Geo. Underwood.

There is a strange analogy between the fertility of error and the fertility of the lowest organisms in Nature. Not the highest, but the lowest organisms are the most prolific. Ephemeroids propagate in millions. So, too, in the region of human opinion. The history of mankind teaches us that whereas the breeding power of Error is immense, Truth and Justice increase with intolerable delay.—*W. R. Paterson* ("*Benjamin Swift*").

Spartans, stoics, heroes, saints, and gods use a short and positive speech. They are never off their centres. As soon as they swell and paint and find truth not enough for them, softening of the brain has already begun.—*Emerson.*

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Correspondence.

MIND AND MATTER.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your remarks on Haeckel and his ideas about the soul, you represent him as saying that the soul or mind is inherited as something spiritual, as a definite something, side or sides of the inherited matter forming the material body. This is a metaphysical idea, and its introduction into the region of practical science and natural history is greatly to be deplored. One Siemens, I think, has gone a step further, and given us certain metaphysical particles, which he calls en-mnemes. In other words, the very thing real science attempts approximately to explain, memory, is foisted into the material elements as a metaphysical mystery, to the confusion of everything linked from one end to the other in the chain of evolution. It is just the same anthropomorphism and idolatry that is justly criticised in dualism. Seeing that both mind and matter are equally incomprehensible to us, the theory does not make things the least more comprehensible. On the other hand, what right have we, along with the Deists and idolaters, to assume that the other side or sides of matter be equivalent to what we call mind? The Buddhist conception is that soul and mind are purely illusory, and without any sort of permanent existence.

As a matter of fact, from the inorganic matter has developed a combination of matter we call organic. When this organic matter is brought into *relation* with its organic or inorganic surroundings, or both, certain transient phenomena occur, such as depict thought, feeling, hearing, etc., which cause in us the illusion of a permanent entity inside us which feels, hears, etc. In reality, according to Buddhism, this entity has no real existence; it is simply the congeries of thoughts, feelings, perceptions, etc., due to the relation between these organic concretions and their surroundings. An original illustration of my own was accepted by the orthodox. It is as follows: Nothing seems more completely inherent in objects, and part and parcel of them, than their colours. But this illusion is wholly due to the relation between the organic percipients and the so-called coloured thing perceived. One might go further, and demonstrate the illusive character of our other perceptions and ideas, such as times, space, and so on. In fact, as is often pointed out, the mind and soul are far more fleeting and perishable than the body. The *elements* of the body are, according to our present knowledge, imperishable; but the soul, being merely an illusion due to the relation of these elements, while organic with their surroundings, when they cease to be organic and lapse into the inorganic, the ego or soul is wiped out altogether. Does this mean that the soul and ego illusion indicate nothing at all in nature? It does not follow. The colour illusion points to something in the (so-called) coloured object that causes the illusion, and the same is true of that more complex illusion the soul or ego. What presumption and conceit it is for us to couple this illusion due to the accidental formation of organic matter with matter in general as its other or mythical side! It is more reasonable to conclude that, as with colour, the ego illusion is the index of something in matter which causes the illusion altogether beyond the comprehension of our illusive mentality. In every human being, the sum and composition of the inherited matter necessarily differs enormously, and this is quite sufficient to explain the differences in the illusive soul or ego, caused by different collections of organic matter—the so-called individuals—and their relations to their surroundings. This does not exclude the possibility that what our transient illusive minds indicate as existing may be not only totally different but immeasurably superior to our fleeting mental and spiritual illusions.

W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A., Trin. Coll., Cam.
Hotel Milano, Via Balbi, Genova, Italia.

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Views and Opinions.

The Cult of the Credulous.

The European War has proved itself to be a great disturber of established notions. It upset many things that were taken to be firmly placed, and it established some things that were, to many, highly doubtful. But in all probability the greatest revelation of all was the tremendous amount of sheer primitive credulity of which "civilized" mankind was still capable, provided the right emotional atmosphere could be created. Everyone will recall, for instance, the case of the Angels at Mons. Here we had a story of angelic interference on behalf of the British troops that was deliberately invented by a journalist, with no other motive than the writing of a picturesque and romantic story. Mr. Machen made no secret of how he came to write the story, and disclaimed having any facts whatever to go upon. But that mattered little. Other journalists, like Mr. Harold Begbie, smelt good war time copy, and proceeded to provide "proof" that the story was based on fact. And, of course, several returned soldiers were found who had actually seen the angels, and some of the clergy came forward with *their* evidence. Then we had, it will be remembered, the famous transit of the Russian Army across England. Thousands of people saw and spoke to this non-existent Army. Following, there was the Belgian Baby with its hands cut off, who was seen all over the country, by some one known to the narrator. Then we had the story of the Germans boiling down their dead for the sake of the extraction of fats, etc. Nothing was too wild or too absurd for credence, and the whole provided a striking example of the credulity of civilized mankind, given favourable conditions for its manifestation.

* * *

Are we Civilized?

Last week we wrote a couple of paragraphs concerning the oil-dripping-ceiling at Swanton Novers Rectory. But there are certain aspects of that topic which could neither be dealt with nor dismissed in a paragraph. Day after day the papers contained accounts of a ceiling that mysteriously dripped oil. And the whole essence of the matter lies in that word "mysteriously." Something uncanny, weird, ghostly, was suggested, and it was that which gave the subject its attractiveness. If the dripping of the oil had been recognized by all as necessarily a *natural* occurrence, due to either trickery or to some natural cause, there would have been no space spent on it in the press, beyond, perhaps, a chance paragraph. It was the possible emergence of the supernatural that made the subject good "copy," and in that fact lies its significance. For suppose that the population of these islands had been full-grown, mentally, instead of being in the stage of mental undevelopment that is actually the case, would the papers then have written about the oil-dripping ceiling as they did? Everyone knows that they would not have done so. A really educated people, a people that were civilized in thought as well as in a number of superficialities that are only of secondary importance, would never have been attracted to such a subject as containing the possibility of the supernatural. The bare possibility of the thing could never have occurred to them. The newspapers were, as usual, simply writing to a felt demand. And their doing so testifies to the existence of a mass of superstition, latent and active, that contains a very serious menace to the little real civilization we possess.

* * *

Is Religion Dead?

Now, there are many people who tell us, and they appear to believe it, that our work as Freethinkers is done. The Church they say has lost its power, Christianity is dead, therefore, we can cease the attack, our work is over. It is not without significance that many of those who talk in this way usually disprove their own statement by their fearfulness of offending the susceptibilities of religious people. But supposing it were true that Christianity was dead, does that really finish our work? We think not. Our ultimate fight is against the type of mind, the culture stage that expresses itself through Christianity and through all other religions. We are not engaged in a series of exercises in pure dialection, but in a campaign that has a practical and a social end in view. Freethinkers realize—apparently they are the chief ones who do realize it—that the creation of a better type of society is ultimately dependent upon the existence of a better type of mind, and of a sanely educated intelligence. And you cannot be certain that you have done that by merely destroying Christianity. Christianity is only one of the manifestations of a general superstition; and very often, just as a man prides himself on his advance when he gives up the Roman Church for the English one, so we have others priding themselves on having given up Christianity, and at once adopting another form of irrationalism. Look at the recent performances of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, and then say in what way does he represent a social gain or mark an advance in real culture in having given up the Christian faith for Spiritualism. The same type of mind is being perpetuated under another name.

* * *

The Social Lesson.

There was one utterance made during the War which contained a vital truth, although those who used it seldom recognized its significance. They told us that the War was a war of ideas. This was true, but only because all social movements, whether of war or peace,

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are ultimately due to the play of ideas. And if that be true, it follows that the direction and value of social movements will be finally determined by the kind of thinking of which the social units are capable. Given a people whose emotional output is so little under the control of their reason, or whose mental life is so ill-regulated, as is manifested in the ready acceptance of such manifestly absurd stories as those already named, or a people who do not automatically reject stories or insinuations of the supernatural, and we have a society in which it is always possible to revive the more primitive social ideas, and so make for reaction. This was, indeed, one of the real and important lessons of the War —the readiness with which, quite apart from the question of the justice of this or that side, the primitive qualities of the social mind were roused to a state of almost fanatical activity. It was a revelation that thoughtful students of sociology are not likely to forget. For it really meant that here was a huge reservoir of unreasoning social energy that might be enlisted, provided the proper steps were taken, on the side of conservativism and reaction. And if the lesson should not be lost to reformers, one may rely upon it that it will not be lost to the reactionists. They are certain not to overlook this source of help when the need for it arises.

* * *

What Lies Below.

The truth is, as Sir James Frazer reminded us, that even educated people are for the most part unaware of the extent to which our society is honeycombed with superstitions that are not a whit more intellectually respectable than the superstitions that dominate the minds of recognized savages. Consider the number of people who are ready, while professedly disowning all credence in the supernatural, to tell you of the remarkable occurrences that have happened to themselves or to their friends, and which they suggest cannot be explained by any known or natural force. Or the vogue of palmistry, or the wearing of mascots, or the ebbs and flows of the Spiritualistic cult. To again cite Frazer, the man who opens his eyes can see that the mass of the people of Europe are still in a state of intellectual savagery, and that the "smooth surface of cultured society is sapped and mined by superstition." Now and again these hidden mines explode, sometimes in the world-resounding manner of the European War, sometimes in the quieter manner of the oil-dripping ceiling or of the vogue of "spook-hunting." But in either and every case we have a manifestation of the darker and more hidden of the social forces. And the upshot of the whole matter is that, instead of our work as liberators being nearly finished, we have scarcely made a beginning. All we have done is to clear the ground, so as to make a decisive action the more possible. Superstition is weakening, but, unfortunately, it is not dead. And while it flourishes it is hopeless to expect that the people will ever take such a rational and balanced view of social possibilities as reformers would wish. A people under the sway of superstition is a people ready formed for tyranny and reaction. They lack the strength to resist the one and the intelligence to prevent the other. Mental emancipation is always the high road to social freedom and genuine progress.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

If you wish to be considered essential be careful that the wounds you cause be healed only by yourself. Never neglect yourself. On the last day of your life even, your face may become the guiding star of another's life. If you learn to look brightly at life as a whole you will find for the sorrows of the individual the true sympathy that is the true balm.

—*Mme. Leandre.*

Where is the Kingdom of God?

KINGDOM, kingdom of God, the kingdom, kingdom of heaven, his kingdom, my kingdom, thy kingdom, are oft-repeated terms in the Bible, and the meaning attached to them therein is always narrow, exclusive, egoistic, and essentially the same. All modern Biblical scholars frankly admit that by the kingdom we are to understand the rule of God over his own peculiar people. In the Old Testament it is a narrow nationalistic conception of it that prevails. The world of the future, the Messianic age, is the exclusive possession of Israel, over whom, thoroughly united once more, some descendant of David is to bear rule. We meet with the same conception in the New Testament, only here Israel after the spirit is substituted for Israel according to the flesh. In both Testaments the kingdom is equally exclusive. Jesus must reign till all his enemies are either converted or permanently put under his feet. W. R. Matthews, M.A., B.D., Dean of King's College, London, in a sermon published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for September 10, says, that when Jesus began to teach "the kingdom of God" was the dominating thought in everybody's mind, the catch-word around which men's religious emotions and political hopes centred. Then he adds:—

> There were, we must confess, many superstitions connected with this thought, many unworthy conceptions were mingled with it; so that when we read the literature, a large part of which has only recently been recovered, in which this idea is described, it is sometimes difficult to restrain from a smile. We see how the Jew, with his fervid imagination, pictured to himself the golden age that was coming as one of luxury and idleness. Part of the luxury, we cannot doubt, was to consist in taking revenge upon his enemies.

The Dean does not mention, however, that this Messianic kingdom was not intended to include the Gentiles, except as dependents and servants, never as equal sharers in its rights and privileges. Indeed, according to Professor Charles, in his article on Eschatology in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, the destiny of the Gentiles was "subjection or destruction—generally the latter, always so in the case of those that had been hostile to Israel." So, likewise, the doom of unbelievers under the Christian dispensation is everlasting punishment. Paul describes certain people as "the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction" (Phil. iii. 18).

The Dean of King's College, judging him by the sermon now before us, is by no means a champion of Pauline theology as interpreted in the great Creeds of Christendom. Nor is he a believer in the proper deity of the Gospel Jesus, for he treats him merely as a great teacher, or one who knew how to teach. According to him, Jesus had no new Gospel to preach, no new kingdom to initiate. He merely "took up this conception of the kingdom, purified it from the gross conceptions that marred its beauty, turned it from a material into a spiritual ideal." For Paul, Jesus as teacher barely exists, and his life is but an inference from the facts of his birth and death, the only events that supremely matter being his crucifixion and resurrection; but for these all the rest might not have been. For Mr. Matthews, so far as the discourse under review is concerned, it is the life of teaching and example alone that counts. The blood that cleanses from all sin, the supernatural grace that scotches all iniquity and energizes the soul for a life of pure holiness, the redemption that lifts individuals, and through them society as a whole, into newness of life as by a mighty miracle, for these

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there is as little need as there is evidence of their reality. The only thing, apparently, which the Christian Gospel believes in and provides for is the possibility of progress:—

> It will have nothing to say to that cry of the faint-hearted, that there can be no movement onwards because human nature remains the same, and, in the long run, it will always defeat any movement upwards and towards a higher ideal. Our Lord asserts, with passionate conviction, that this is a fundamentally false assertion. Human nature is changing, and can be changed. Men can have ideals presented to them, conceptions of life which will transform their action and alter their character from top to bottom. It is in this changeability of human nature, this possibility of changing springs of action, upon which our Lord relies for the possibility of the kingdom of God.

There is very little in that extract that could not be uttered by a Secularist, and nothing that remotely hints at supernaturalism. Jesus was simply an advocate of the practicability of human progress. The message of this sermon consists in the assurance that "the main spring of the kingdom, the source from which it is to come is in the consciences and hearts of men." If Mr. Matthews would but substitute "man" for "God," we would be in substantial agreement with him; but this, of course, being a clergyman, he cannot afford to do. The discourse was first delivered to a congregation of supernatural believers whom, as an ordained minister of a supernatural Gospel, he was bound to consider; but so far as its central, predominating idea is concerned, all terms suggestive of supernaturalism are completely out of place. Having defined the kingdom as the ideal of human intercourse, the reverend gentleman says:—

> To us, at any rate, this ideal of the kingdom of God remains an ideal, and centuries hence, we cannot doubt, it will remain an ideal, whatever advance is made in the meantime towards higher and more perfect forms of social intercourse. The kingdom, in fact, is always coming and never comes. It stands before the eyes of men's minds as an endless vista, something to be struggled towards with endless hope and endless effort.

Applied to the ideal of the kingdom of man, that passage would be beautifully and literally true; but its incongruity on the lips of a supernaturalist is colossal. Humanity is constitutionally an evolving race, and its evolution has been going on for at least a hundred thousand years; and as every student is aware, evolution is by no means a uniformly upward movement, but rather a zigzag, undulatory, wavelike one, though on the whole it has been slowly making, in the human world, for a more perfect social intercourse.

In reality, Mr. Matthews reduces Jesus to a wild idealist, an irresponsible visionary or dreamer, though one looks in vain for such a character in the Four Gospels. According to these, Jesus came, not as a preacher of a Gospel, new or old, not as a teacher of a new theory of life, but as the Saviour of his people from their sins, as the almighty restorer of a fallen and ruined humanity, as the reconciler of the race to God through the offering up of his life as a ransom for them. Of this aspect of his mission there is not a single trace in Mr. Matthews' oration. Here we find a supernaturalist compelled by the facts of life to disguise himself as a naturalist. Humanity's upward progress is perfectly natural. The kingdom stands before our mind's eye as "something to be struggled towards with endless hope and endless effort"; and yet every now and then hints are thrown out that it is a movement with a Divine Being and omnipotent power behind it. At one moment God is represented as the irresistible agent, at another the burden of responsibility rests on man's shoulders, so that between the two "the kingdom of God, in fact, is always coming, and never comes." Nowhere, except in a pulpit or on a political platform, would such hopeless inanity be for a moment tolerated.

As already intimated, apart from the occasional intrusion of theology into it, Mr. Matthews' address is a beautiful and inspiring utterance. It is quite true, as he puts it, that "social life does not mean living together, next door to one another, being subject to the same government, a part of the same system of police and communications, belonging to the same natural state. It means intercourse." Yes—

> It means intercourse. The defects of social life at the present time may all be summed up in one phrase—imperfect intercourse. We do not gain from our fellow-beings all that they might give us, and we do not give them all that we might. Therefore, our lives are smaller, poorer, and meaner things than they might be.

Now, these hindrances, these obstructions to perfect intercourse must be removed, if at all, by ourselves, and if we wait for supernatural aid they will never be removed at all. Where is the kingdom of God? It has never been seen on land or sea, and never will be. It is a dream incapable of verification. It is the kingdom of man that we need, and this kingdom's coming is contingent alone upon the due exercise of our faculties. Alas, much of the evidence submitted to the Royal Coal Commission showed that there are multitudes of people in our midst who are strongly opposed to its coming, who, in fact, are determined, as far as in them lies, to prevent its coming. Such selfish motives and aims must be overcome and destroyed, and man must meet man in the sweet bond of brotherhood, all the barriers that divide and alienate must be shattered, and all hatred and animosity dissolved in the ocean of natural human love; and then, but not till then, shall come, in the fullness of its beauty and power, the kingdom which is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit of our Mother Nature.

J. T. LLOYD.

Faith, Filth, and Foolishness.

> It is an absolute crime that you should sanction the instilling into the minds of children statements which are not true, and the instruction which they receive a few years later will infallibly upset.—*T. H. Huxley.*

EDUCATION in this country has always been hampered by the desire to ally with education religious teaching, in spite of the many conflicting opinions among the exponents of theology. The teachings of the Established Church were considered by the Nonconformists to be wrong and harmful, while the instruction given by Dissenters was pronounced by Churchmen to be heretical and dangerous. Ultimately it was agreed that the Bible might be read in the public schools, but that no theological doctrines should be taught. This is what is called the "compromise," and, although it satisfies most of the clergy, who use it as the thin end of a wedge, it still impedes education and fetters progress. For the clergy know that so long as the fetish book is used in education, their own position is safe. They have only to insist that the Bible is the beginning and end of wisdom, and say, or rather shout, that national degeneration must inevitably follow its removal from the schools.

Let us test this sacred volume as a school book, and see whether such extraordinary pretensions can be sustained. There are grave reasons why the Bible should have no official place in our public schools. Its educational teaching is sadly out of date, and sounds "like the horns of Elfland faintly blowing." What do our kindergarten teachers make of such Biblical advice

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as "A rod is for the back of him that is void of understanding," "Thou shalt beat him with a rod," "Chasten thy son, and let not thy soul spare for his crying"? Such Bible injunctions may be the teachings of a god, but they are the essence of barbarism. Moreover, parts of the Bible are unfit for children to see. If it were an ordinary volume, instead of a fetish book, it would be pilloried as immoral, and excluded from every school in the country. If parents knew the contents of the sacred volume, they would as soon send their daughters to a house infected with diphtheria or small-pox as put such a book into their hands. For in its sacred pages may be found plain, unvarnished accounts of sodomy, rape, unnatural vice, and all manner of Oriental "frightfulness," written with all the nasty particularity and love of detail which is the peculiar birthright of all Eastern scribes. The florid, heated rhetoric of the Old Testament leaves nothing to the imagination, and the least lettered juvenile could appreciate the glowing periods. In fact, Oriental nastiness begins where Occidental pornography leaves off, and the ordinary sex-novel is a model of purity and restraint compared with the lusciousness of the Bible. No novelist would dare to disfigure his pages with realistic accounts of incest, rape, and various other forms of vice. He would be imprisoned and his books destroyed. Yet the dear clergy force the Bible, which contains all this filth and abomination, into the hands of millions of children, knowing all the time that they themselves dare no longer read it in all its completeness to a mixed audience of adults.

Nor is this all! Bible chronology is utter nonsense. Only grossly ignorant, or mentally feeble persons can believe that the universe was created six thousand years ago. Probably others, similarly afflicted, believe that Adam, Methuselah, and Noah, each lived nine centuries, and that Melchisadech had neither beginning nor ending of days. Philology gets no countenance from the blunders of the building of Babel, or the pious perversions of the tongues of flame at Pentecost. Biblical zoology would strain the credulity of a Gold Coast negro to breaking-point. The story of Noah's Ark is sufficiently funny to make the bronze lions in Trafalgar Square break into a guffaw. The veriest amateur in natural history would rub his eyes at the Biblical error of confounding the hare with the ruminants. Even in the New Testament the whale is described as a fish by the Deity, who is supposed to have made millions of them. The most ordinary common-place of knowledge, such as the part not exceeding the whole, is contradicted by the story of the feeding of the five thousand, where the fragments left over exceed the original amount. In sober truth, throughout the sacred volume the atmosphere is that of *Arabian Nights* and *Grimm's Fairy Tales*. A snake talks, a whale has a boarding-house in his stomach, a pigeon acts as a co-respondent, and a donkey makes speeches. Fiery serpents, unicorns, dragons, flaming horses, giants, satyrs, and cocatrice ramble through the sacred pages.

Concerning medicine, we find the long-discredited notion of demoniacal possession being the cause of disease. Fevers are rebuked, leprosy cured by a fig-poultice, and blindness removed by expectoration. Some happy persons die twice, and others, still more fortunate, never trouble the undertakers at all. Witchcraft is still insisted upon as being true long after it has been discarded by every nation pretending to civilization. Ghosts still squeak and gibber in the pages of the Holy Book.

As for ethics, the least said the better. Where is the moral to be derived from such stories as those of Lot and his daughters, David and his adultery, Jacob and his wives, Judith, and Ruth? The lives and actions of the Patriarchs, the Kings of Israel and Judah, and other Biblical heroes and heroines, are only paralleled in the Newgate Calendar, and other records of criminal history. Some of the Psalms are a further proof that the Deity's ways are, fortunately, not our ways. In short, the Bible, from the page describing Adam and Eve starting life at full-age until the Second Person of the One and Undivided Trinity ascends into the ether like a flying-machine, is a salmagundi of unrestrained and riotous Oriental imagination. The stories are inconsistent with common sense and ascertained knowledge, and, sooner or later, they will have to be so regarded, in spite of all the ten of thousands of priests in this country.

Of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have emanated from the imaginations of religious enthusiasts, the Bible is one of the worst. The work which Freethinkers have set themselves is that of freeing the little children from the absurdities, immoralities, and barbarities of pre-scientific times which are perpetuated in that grossly overrated fetish book.

MIMNERMUS.

The New Testament.

II.

THE OPPONENTS OF PAUL.

WE have a first-hand specimen of early anti-Pauline writing in the Epistle of James. This purports to be a letter from "James, a slave of God and the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes of the Dispersion"—*i.e.*, a circular to Jews throughout the Roman world. The author is traditionally identified with "James, the Lord's brother," mentioned by Paul in Galatians i. 19. That this document, which is in pretty good Greek, was not actually composed by a Galilean artizan is certain; but there seems to the present writer no sufficient reason why it should not be an actual circular sent out with James' authority as leader of the Nazarene community, though written no doubt by a Greek-speaking Jew acting as secretary. It is in the main a moral homily, emphasizing the importance of practical benevolence, the blessedness of the poor, and the woe awaiting the rich—corresponding, therefore, roughly to the Gospel teaching as found in the "Sermon on the Mount." It also glances at Paul by directly attacking his doctrine of "justification by faith." Paul, obsessed by the theological problem of the impossibility of any man escaping damnation if escape depended on moral perfection, had asserted that the sacrifice of Jesus would be accepted by God as an expiation for the sins of all sincere believers. For James, the theological problem does not exist; he is impressed by the immorality and absurdity of sinners being considered as saints simply for an act of belief. He takes the plain view that men will be saved by good actions and damned by bad ones. The central Pauline dogma, the resurrection of Jesus, James passes over in significant silence. The border-line between Christianity and orthodox Judaism is in this epistle very thin—a Christian is simply a Jew who accepts Jesus as the promised Messiah. No wonder that this work found its way into the canon with difficulty, and that Luther, concerned to rehabilitate Paul's doctrine of "justification by faith," pronouced it "an epistle of straw," and rejected it altogether.

The materials for dating the Epistle of James are very slight, but it must belong to an early stage of the controversy, before the language of the disputants had finally passed the bounds of permissible violence. In Paul's later epistles, the claims of his supernaturalism grow by leaps and bounds. In Colossians, Ephesians,

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and Philippians the "mystery" has become a veritable theosophy. Christ has lost all semblance of humanity, and has become a metaphysical abstraction personified, existing from the beginning of things, his death and resurrection only the latest episodes in a wholly supernatural history. Christian believers are not only *partakers* of the "body of the Lord" in the Eucharist, as in the earlier epistles; they actually *are* that body collectively: doubtless their regular diet of god-flesh in the intervening years had produced this transformation!

In countries so enamoured of the irrational as the Levantine regions in the first century A.D., it was impossible to compete with such a master-myth-monger as Paul. Pauline Christianity triumphed over the Jewish variety by sheer excess of absurdity. When we come to the next document of the anti-Pauline party, the Apocalypse, written in A.D. 69, and addressed to Jewish believers in western Asia Minor, we find that the writer, fierce Jewish patriot and enemy of Paul as he is, goes nearly as far as Paul in his supernatural view of Jesus, and limits his attack on Paul to other points. Christianity as a reformed Jewish sect had no future away from Palestine; it had, in the Ægean world, to make itself a "mystery" in order to live.

The Apocalypse, or Book of Revelation, professes to be a "Revelation from Jesus Christ, which God gave to him, to show his slaves what must shortly happen"—the "happenings" in question being the fall of Jerusalem before the Roman armies, the return of Nero to power, and the renewed persecution of the Christians, followed after three years and six months by the descent of Christ in glory and the inauguration of the millennium. The only item in this prophecy which was fulfilled was the fall of Jerusalem, which took place in the following year (A.D. 70). Nero, being dead and buried, did not return to power; and the Second Advent, after 1,850 years instead of three-and-a-half, remains overdue. The period of three-and-a-half years was selected as having been that during which the temple of Jerusalem had been profaned by Antiochus Epiphanes (168-165 B.C.). Antiochus was the orginal Antichrist, and is the subject of the prophecies in Daniel xi.-xii.—written, of course, in his time. The reign of Antiochus not having been immediately followed by the Messianic kingdom, the predictions relating to him were subsequently applied by the Jews to Caligula, and by the Christians to Nero, Domitian, Diocletian, Mahomet, the Pope, Napoleon, the Kaiser, and any potentate who happened to get into their bad books at a particular time. The Antichrist of Revelation is Nero (the letters of "Nero Cæsar" in Hebrew adding up to the "number of the beast," 666).

The actual prophecies in Revelation are prefaced by letters from "John," the author, to seven Churches in the Roman province of Asia, in which certain persons are abusively attacked under the various designations of "those who call themselves apostles and are not," "Nicolaitans," "those who say they are Jews and are not," "those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to throw a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, namely, the eating of things sacrificed to idols, and fornication," etc. This is intended by the Jewish author for the followers of Paul—the heretic, who set himself up as an apostle against the twelve, who taught the abrogation of the Jewish law, and who told his converts that they might "eat anything that was sold in the market, and ask no questions for conscience' sake" (1 Cor. x. 25). Paul also figures in the prophecy as the beast who "had two horns like a lamb, but spoke like a dragon" (Rev. xiii. 11), who teaches men to commit idolatry, supports the power of Antichrist, and will finally be thrown, with Nero, into the lake of fire and brimstone, and be tortured day and night for ever and ever (Rev. xx. 10).

There is thus abundant evidence, in the Pauline Epistles and in the Apocalypse, of the bitter and bloodthirsty hatred that severed the two extreme parties in the early Church—the followers of James, strict Jews in everything except their expectation of the return of Jesus as the Messiah, who hated Rome, and looked upon Gentiles as sinners destined to eternal torment unless they accepted the Jewish law; and the followers of Paul, who would abolish Judaism altogether, and replace it by Paul's new "mystery" of justification by faith in Christ, the crucified and risen God, whose flesh and blood were eaten and drunk in the Eucharist on the analogy of the Pagan "mysteries."

The final history of Paul is unknown. We have no writings of his after the outbreak of persecution under Nero (A.D. 64), and the inference is usually drawn that he perished at that time. The author of Revelation does not seem to have known of Paul's fate, and the earliest external testimony on the subject is that of Clement of Rome (A.D. 95), who refers to Paul's martyrdom as a well-known fact. To the orthodox Christian, Paul is the great "apostle of the Gentiles," the fellow-worker of Peter, and the hero of the interesting adventures recorded in the unhistorical book of the Acts. To the critical historian, he is one of the notable founders of religions, a man of striking personality and will-power, like Mahomet, Luther, and Brigham Young, not remarkable for charity to opponents or scrupulous choice of means, but sincere with the formidable sincerity of self-deception, and an undeniable maker of history.

ROBERT ARCH.

Acid Drops.

Strikes are in the air, and there appears to be a possibility of them extending to the clergy. At any rate, the Cardiff *Evening Express* publishes the following outburst from the Rev. R. Stratton, pastor of the fashionable Calvary Baptist Church, New York:—

> Therefore be it resolved that we preachers of America do hereby announce to our churches and to the general public that we will no longer submit to the harsh, heartless treatment to which we have been subjected from time immemorial; that we will not even grant three days' postponement with a view to possible arbitration; but here and now we declare to our churches and to the general public that unless we are given immediately an eight-hour day and a 50 per cent. boost in salary we will go on strike and let them all go to hell.

That is not at all a bad idea, and we would like to see the clergy act on it. In fact, if they would only make a long strike of it, we would not mind subscribing to an unemployment fund. We feel quite sure that the community generally would bear that strike with the greatest of equanimity.

From the *Daily News* of September 12 we see that there is a possibility of the clergy on this side the Atlantic forming a Trade Union. At least, that is the suggestion of G. L. H. Harvey, of the Clergy Association. So we may have a strike after all. And if the strike does come off, we suggest that the clergy should be asked to go on a piecework rate. They could then be paid by results. When the harvest is bad, for instance, they should be put to improving it—by prayer—and paid according to results. The Catholic clergy might also, when they receive money for getting souls out of purgatory, be asked to produce evidence that this had been done, or asked to return the payment. There are many possibilities in this move by the clergy, and we hope that they will be fully explored. But we are just a little afraid that the strike will not materialize.

The clergy are still "starving." A bad case is that of the late Rev. F. St. J. Thackeray, of Mapledurham, Oxford,

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who left £10,503. Another case is that of the Rev. A. Gordon, of Edinburgh, who left personal estate of the value of £4,577. Neither of these unfortunate men will ever hear St. Peter say: "Give him a harp."

"Why could we not stop the War?" asks the Bishop of London. And he replies that it was because Christians were not united. The Bishop has a very bad memory, or hopes that other people have very short ones. For the one thing noticeable about the Churches was that they were all united for the War. There never has been such unity about them for any other purpose. And the Bishop should remember that it was he who described the War as "the day of God," and declared that there had not been such another day of God for a thousand years. More, the Bishop dwelt upon the uplifting effect the War had on the people, when anyone with honest sense knew that there never had been a war, whether inevitable or not, that had not resulted in a larger or smaller measure of demoralization. Perhaps the Bishop would like to forget his past. It certainly looks like it.

If women didn't go to church, says the Rev. Kennedy-Bell, the bulk of our population would cease to believe in a God. Exactly; but women *are* ceasing to go to church. They are becoming less afraid of the social taboo, and we fancy men are beginning to appreciate the companionship of women who can take an intelligent and independent interest in the world's affairs, rather than one who is a mere echo of a clergyman's machine-made sentiments.

One of the speakers at the Conference on Labour and Religion, held at Browning Hall, Walworth, said "the workers must unite so that there should not be a slum in Canning Town, Canton, or Calcutta," and Labour should "carry its faith in Jesus and his principles to Asia and Africa." The speaker who proposed this excursion round the world was Mr. B. Matthews, of the London Missionary Society, whose fame as a Labour leader is not wide.

Rev. F. S. Cragg denies that Widnes is a Christian town. He says that when he goes round Widnes and sees all its sin and misery he is convinced that it was a heathen town. Now, we wonder why a town that has sin and misery in it forfeits its right to be called Christian. Christians used to delight in calling themselves "miserable sinners," and it would, therefore, seem that a town full of miserable sinners would be generally Christian. Or perhaps the sinners of Widnes are not miserable, and that robs them of the right to be called Christian. It is quite Christian to present the "heathen" with the sin and misery. At any rate, we are quite sure there has been no lack of parsons in Widnes, and now, perhaps, some of the inhabitants will wonder what benefit the town has derived from their presence.

Many of the English clergy, when it was found that the stories of the growth of religion in the British Army fell on deaf ears, turned their attention to France. There was at any rate a revival there, they said, hoping that this would create a kind of competition. Of course, the one revival was as imaginary as the other. And in the review of literature in the special French number of the *Times*, the writer says that "It cannot be said that the religious revival, expected by many, is evident in literature." He prophesies "a yet longer period of irony and scepticism than the one which followed 1870." Considering that this period was not ended when the War broke out, the prospect is not very cheerful for the Church.

A frenzied appeal is issued by the Bishop of Archangel, asking that the British troops may be allowed to remain, in order to "save God's sanctuaries from defilement." We are not sure what defilement means. To many English Churchmen a church is "defiled" if a Nonconformist mounts the pulpit. And probably all that it means in this case is that some of the churches may be put to secular uses. In any case, we do not see what the British "Tommy" has to do with it. If they are God's sanctuaries, it seems to us to be God's business to look after them. "Doing God's work" is one of the phrases that one very often hears, but it is really about time that he began to do a bit on his own account. And our pension list is already so large that there is no need to needlessly extend it.

Dr. Fort Newton, of the City Temple, London, has been spending his holiday in France, going over the battlefields. Most of the courageous clergy spent their time away from the battlefields while the War was in progress.

The Rt. Rev. Father-in-God, the Bishop of Winchester, presided at Farnham Picture Palace at the exhibition of a film showing the War-work of the Church Army. A film exhibiting the "War-work" of the clergy themselves should be more interesting, for these fire-eaters were exempted from military service. And there are 50,000 of them.

Mr. Jerome K. Jerome writes in *Common Sense*:—

> Will the ruling classes ever get rid of their inborn conviction that the Sermon on the Mount was intended for the exclusive use of the lower orders; that Christianity was intended by its Founder to be an inexpensive supplement to their police force; and heavenly rewards for the meek and humble promised for the purpose of keeping the workers contented under the somewhat depressing conditions of their earthly existence?

This is all very well in its way; but when Mr. Jerome and others have quite finished with all this fantastical folly about what the "Founder" of Christianity intended, and the wild supposition that Christianity was instituted as an aid to the Labour Movement, we should like them to address themselves to the question as to why it is that at all times and under all conditions these same "ruling classes" have found it so much to their interest to see that the "lower orders" had plenty of Christianity? The association is too widespread and too continuous to be accidental. Sentiment is all very well in its way, but what the world requires at the moment is a little clear thinking. We have had nearly 2,000 years of this vapouring about the "Founder of Christianity," and the result is before us. It is about time a little common sense was tried in its place.

The Vicar of St. Jude's on the Hill, Hampstead Garden Suburb, believes in turning one cheek when the other is smitten—except in the case of bicycle stealing. In that case he advises all who catch the thief in the act to "mete out the stern justice such a contemptible crime deserves. The Church will pay the fine gladly." We presume the Vicar is a rider himself. Perhaps he has even lost a "bike" of his own. It is in cases such as these that the clergy show what dare-devils they are. Now, if it were a case of sweating, or rack-renting, or food profiteering, they would proceed more cautiously.

The so-called International Conference on Labour and Religion, held at Walworth, was opened with prayer by a minister of the Government religion. The reverend gentleman also took part in the discussion on "the perils to the workers from materialism." As may be expected, he gave the wicked materialists "hell."

The Bishop of Birmingham is a singularly brave man—on his own confession. Writing in the *Diocesan Magazine*, he says that he is not afraid of the working classes. Doubtless, the working people return the compliment.

The use of Sunday should be that of making it "a day of the most expansive life and profoundist enjoyment" suggests the *Daily Chronicle*. It is a dazzling prospect, but local authorities usually limit the "expansive life" to a band performance with all the liveliness left out.

"If it had not been for the Puritans we should long since have had a working week of seven days" declares the *Daily Chronicle*. Yet, on the Continent, there are no Puritans, and Sunday is a day of real recreation.

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"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

We have to again express our thanks to all who have so generously subscribed to our "Victory" Fund. Many who have done so promise to send again, but we feel sure that this will not be necessary—if we may be guided by our previous experience. And from the letters we are receiving there is certainly no falling off in the interest shown in the *Freethinker*. Here we would like to note the many kindly-expressed letters we are receiving from quite recent readers. The paper appears to have come to them as something in the way of a revelation, and their warm appreciation of it is very gratifying to all who are concerned in its production.

Mr. J. B. Palphryman writes:—

> I have pleasure in sending you herewith £1 towards the "Victory" Sustentation Fund. I wish I could make it ten times as much, because you deserve well of the whole of the Freethought Society for keeping the Flag of Freedom flying during these difficult times since the death of our great leader, Mr. Foote.

J. C., sending subscription, says:—

> I am sending this in memory of one of the finest men I have ever met, and who introduced your paper to me, but who was killed in France in 1917. He was my dearest friend, and when I compare some of my Christian acquaintances, I realize what I have now lost. I am unable to take any very active part in the propaganda of Freethought, but I well remember many wet nights around Jerusalem putting up some very heated arguments for the "greatest of all causes" against "fearful odds." But I have always had the satisfaction of afterwards being thanked by all the troops who have generally admitted that they had not previously looked at the matter like that.

Mr. H. Silverstein writes:—

> You are entitled to every credit for keeping the paper alive and healthy during the trying period of the War, and one can only regret that you were compelled to give so much of your time and great ability without receiving the recompense to which you were fully entitled.

The recompense we want and ask for, are those new readers who are waiting round every corner. And we shan't be happy till we get them.

Mr. H. Raines says:—

> Please accept the enclosed treasury note from one of the smaller "financial" fry who values the *Freethinker* above all the other papers he reads. We cannot all forward substantial cheques, but there must be at least a thousand readers of your paper who could afford to send 5s. each. That alone would be a handsome sum, and I hope this year, at least, all your readers who can do so will make it a point of being represented in the subscription list. My heartiest wishes for your continued success.

Mrs. E. Adams sends cheque, with regrets at her cheque not being larger. Mr. A. Delve sends us a thank-offering for the way we have "carried on." Mr. W. Moore feels that our work should be suffiiently appreciated to secure a much larger sum than the one named in our appeal. Mr. A. B. Wykes hopes to subscribe again next year if necessary; but we sincerely hope the need will not arise. Finally, Mr. J. Wood writes that as it is usual to give a "grant" to a "Victory" general, "When is one coming to you?" Well, we have already asked for it, and are awaiting its arrival. We have asked for a thousand of our readers to get one new subscriber each within the next month. We know they can do it if they try; and when it is done we shall be back with our sixteen pages, and we will say, as prettily as we can, "Thank you."

Mr. J. Breese writes:—

> Herewith first instalment, together with my best wishes and sincerest congratulations on your magnificent efforts to keep the good ship going. If I may express my opinion on the "method in your madness" in keeping the *Freethinker* at twopence, it appeals to me as sound business.....your method is sound, I am convinced.

Several have written in the same vein, and we hope to find that events will justify our policy.

Mrs. R. Wilmot finds a very ingenious reason for sending along her subscription:—

> Some of your readers appear to have overlooked the fact that, as the pound is now not worth more than 10s., in keeping the *Freethinker* at 2d. you have really been selling it at a penny. I therefore enclose P.O. for 5s. to make up the difference. If all your readers do the same, the result will be very gratifying to everyone who is interested in the welfare of *our* journal.

Mr. W. J. Wilmot says, in thanking us for the magnificent services you are rendering to a great and noble cause:—

> For myself, I must express here and now my unbounded admiration for the manner in which the paper is conducted. The whole year in which it has been my privilege to read each weekly contribution I have never found any falling off in the quality of its articles. In fact each number seems more piquant and forceful than the last.

We thank Mr. Wilmot for his appreciation, but we are a long way short of having done for this paper all we have in our mind to do—one day.

Second List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £147 4s. 6d. J. Close, 5s. H. Raines, 10s. Mrs. A. C. Hampson, 5s. F. C. Hampson, 5s. E. Owen, 2s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. R. H. Rosetti, 2s. 6d. A Friend, £2 2s. Belgravia, 10s. Swansea, £2 2s. Libra, 10s. W. Reynolds, 5s. O. Friedman, £1. T. Bunnins (Norwood), 10s. J. L. Vickery, £5. J. W. Blakey, 5s. J. Breese, £2 2s. Mrs. R. Wilmot, 5s. John's Grandpa, 10s. Dr. R. T. Nichols, £5 5s. J. G., 10s. W. J. Wilmot, 2s. Mrs. E. Taylor, 7s. 6d. W. S. C., 10s. Mr. and Mrs. P. Gorrie, £1. E. Mills, £2. Gordon, 5s. F. H. Dell, 10s. 6d. T. Good, 10s. F. W. Theobald, 10s. Dr. C. M. Beardnell, 5s. R. B. Harrison, 2s. 6d. T. Baker, 3s. Mrs. E. Adams, £5. A. R. Wykes, 10s. E. A. Wykes, 2s. 6d. W. Moore, 5s. T. Harting, £1. G. L. Alward, £1 1s. Mrs. Robertson, £1. J. W. Wood, 10s. 6d. A. B. Moss, 10s. K. J. (Poplar), 2s. 6d. J. B. Palphryman, £1. T. Sharp, 5s. W. F. Ambrose (2nd sub.), 2s. S. Clowes, 5s. Tynesider, 2s. Dr. R. Rawson, 10s. R. T., 2s. 6d. A. Delve, £1 1s. Philip Winer, 3s. 6d. Total, £188 9s. 6d.

Corrections.—The £3 acknowledged last week from Mr. A. H. Harden should have been from Mr., Mrs., and Miss Harden—£1 from each. We would much rather have it this way than the one announced. It is an indication of family unity on a most important point. Mr. J. W. Arnott, 2s. 6d., was omitted from the list of subscriptions in our last issue from the South Shields Branch.

The volume of nature is the book of knowledge; and he becomes most wise who makes the most judicious selection.

—*Goldsmith.*

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 5, Swansea; October 12, South Place, London; October 26, Manchester; November 2, Glasgow; November 3, Paisley; November 4, Milngavie; November 9, Edinburgh; November 16, South Shields; November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

ONE of our readers, Mr. A. H. Lye, of 43 Vale Road, Sutton, would be glad to hear from Mr. W. Walder, late of Brighton and B.E.F. This may perhaps catch his eye.

H. JAMES.—See "Sugar Plums."

W. WIDDUP.—Very pleased to hear of the good influence Freethought lectures and speeches have had on you.

J. L. VICKERY.—Very glad to have your warm appreciation of the *Freethinker*. We hope your health is keeping good.

T. BUNNINS.—We are sending on the literature to the addresses given. Passing on the paper when read is an excellent way of getting the paper into fresh hands. And that is all we need. Our motto is: "You find the readers, we keep them."

A. RUSSEL.—We long ago ceased to be surprised at the stupidities of some members of the clergy. As Heine said of the Deity and forgiveness, it is their trade. And besides, there is a certain absorption point for surprise in the human make-up.

MRS. E. TAYLOR.—We hope your efforts will be successful. But for some reason or the other, Huddersfield seems a difficult place to work up. All the more credit for any success that is achieved.

C. T. SHAW.—Cuttings are always useful, if not at the moment, then later. We are pleased to learn of the exhibition of the poster, it is certain to do good. We should like to see more propaganda in your town.

J. H. MCNEILL.—We are sending on the copies you say your newsagent was unable to get. But please press for them, and do not be put off a regular delivery. There is no delay at this end. And by pressing for a regular delivery you are defeating those who would put obstacles in the way.

E. MILLS.—We expect that if we looked at the matter from the standpoint of profit and loss we should not bother with the *Freethinker* at all. One doesn't—unless one happens to be a born fool—take up the work of a Freethought propagandist without being prepared for rough times.

PHILIP WINER.—In a general way we should answer yes. But a deal depends upon the skill of the person who is able to balance the relative values of the different qualities.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

There are persons who never run into any extravagance, because they are so buttressed up with the opinions of others on all sides, that they cannot lean much to one side or the other; they are so little moved with any kind of reasoning, that they remain at an equal distance from every extreme, and are never very far from the truth, because the slowness of their faculties will not suffer them to make much progress in error. These are persons of great judgment. The scales of the mind are pretty sure to remain even, when there is nothing in them.—*Hazlitt.*

Sugar Plums.

Our readers will recall the fact that some time back the London County Council refused to allow the *Freethinker* to be sold in the Council parks. As the paper has been sold in the parks for many years, we have been trying to get from the Council the ground of this decision. But that body declines to give reasons, although, as the Council may discover on that matter, we are not in the dark. We may have more to say later. At the present we are writing to say that the whole question will shortly be raised on the Council, and our London readers can help by getting to work and seeing that their members know something of their opinions on the matter. The press censorship set up by the Council is ridiculous and indefensible. When the grounds of its action is dragged before the public, we feel sure that not even a majority of professing Christians would endorse it. Anyhow, we strongly urge all who desire to guard the right of propaganda to get busy and to see whether their members are sound on this subject. They can send the result of their enquiries to Miss Vance. We refrain from saying more until the matter has been discussed on the Council.

Apropos of the article on the St. Ives tragedy which recently appeared in these columns, one of our readers writes to say that he was in the town on the day of the funeral, and is acquainted with some of the people connected with the affair. They were all members of the Methodist Church, and he describes it as a field day for the parsons—three of them officiating. The youngest child of the woman who was burned has never ceased its cries for its mother, and all the people can say is that God has permitted the tragedy for some purpose of his own. He adds that in no part of the country is Freethought propaganda more urgently needed than in Cornwall. We suggest to our friends that they may do something by the distribution of suitable literature. We shall be pleased to help in the work.

We are pleased to hear that the Swansea Branch made a capital start of the season's work with a musical evening on the 7th by "Casey." Mr. Cohen lectures there on October 5, and good meetings are anticipated. The Secretary writes us that the members are determined to make the meetings a success, and we have every confidence they will succeed. Sixteen meetings have been arranged, and season tickets for the course are on sale at 5s. each—certainly not a striking example of profiteering. It will, however, be a great encouragement to the active workers in the Branch to find a brisk demand for these tickets before the meetings are in full swing, and we hope Swansea "saints" will take the hint. Those who think the 5s. too low can make it up in some other way. There will be a business meeting of the Branch at the Reformers' Bookshop on September 27, at 6.30.

The disgraceful concessions which the Mayor of Brussels, M. Max, and the municipal authorities are making to the religious party by refusing to replace the statue of the Spanish martyr of Freethought, Francisco Ferrer, will have the effect of arousing all sections of anti-clericals. On Monday, October 12, the National Federation of Freethought Societies of Belgium are to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Ferrer's murder at Montjuich on October 13, 1909. It is the intention of Belgian friends to make an imposing procession through the streets of Brussels, and by speeches to let the pusillanimous burgomaster Max and his clerical friends see that they mean business. We wish them the success that should attend a united effort.

Those who appreciate wit and irony of the kind that we have come to associate with Voltaire, and M. Anatole France will find an admirable specimen in *La Pensee* for August 10, where our friend, M. Eugene Hins, exercises his wit and sarcasm on the Mayor of Brussels, the too popular M. Max. It is called "The Burgomaster's Dream; or, the Statue of the Commander." Max dreams that the King of Belgium asks him to visit the Governments of the Great Powers and put

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before them the most persuasive arguments for an immediate and definite peace. The King and Queen, poor people, are not equal to the digestive exactions of never-ending banquets, and they choose Max because he is an eloquent and popular trencherman, and his friend, another limelight figure, Cardinal Mercier, is to accompany him. The scene changes, and we get glimpses of Max in England, in America, at the Vatican, in France, and at the Court of Spain, where he charms the Hidalgos with a lyrical tribute to the past splendours and heroisms of the Spanish race. He is on the point of making a guarded allusion to anarchy and the Ferrer affair, but checks himself just in time. The scene changes again, and Max is at a banquet given to his honour by a grateful country. Suddenly heavy steps are heard on the stone pavement of the anti-chamber, and there appears a man with a torch symbolizing the work of the great Ferrer. The banqueters tumble over each other in their haste to get out, and in a few minutes only the great Cardinal and the greater Max are left. The priest's *vade retro, Satanas!* has not the desired effect on the Freethinking ghost, and a flick of the bronze hand stretches the good Cardinal on the floor. Then the ghostly figure strides over to Max, who, like Don Juan, in Moliere's *Festin de Pierre*, is unable to move from his seat:—

> Mr. Burgomaster, you seem to have forgotten to invite me to your little banquet; I had thought that the commotion which my name and work, and but lately the injury done to me by the Boche, would surely have raised me to a height illustrious enough to warrant your inviting me to your feast. As you have not done so, I have invited myself, as, I need hardly assure you, I am anxious to pay an official visit to so illustrious a man as M. Max. The worst of it is, my bronze legs make it difficult for me to walk, and I must therefore take the liberty of leaning on you.

The heavy bronze hand dropped on the shoulder of our good burgomaster who had the sensation of being pushed over a precipice. With that his visit came to an end, and he is now seeking some way to deliver himself from this horrible nightmare, or, to speak more correctly, "daymare," for it is a terror that is always upon him. If he has a vestige of his old courage, he will risk the anger of Cardinal Mercier and his clerical friends, and set up the statue in its place of honour. To borrow the actual words of our good friend Mr. Hins: "Et nous le souhaitons pour vous, M. Max, sinon gare!"

A course of lectures has been arranged at the Essex Hall by the R.P.A., to take place on Monday evenings, September 29 and October 6, 13, and 20, at 7.30. Mr. Joseph McCabe is the lecturer, and the charge for admission will be: Single reserved seat ticket, 1s.; reserved seat course ticket, 3s. A full list of subjects will be found on the back page of this issue.

Our Friends, the Clergy.

Through a glass, darkly.—*Saul* alias *St. Paul.*

Jesus Christ appears to have been a transparently honest man. He wanted to make mankind better. Unfortunately, he commenced working on an incorrect premise. All previous prophets of "the chosen people" began with the belief that man is bad. Christ did likewise. This was the beginning of his great "uplift" crusade. He left man as he received him—fundamentally bad.

I have met many men. None of them are perfect. None of them are hopeless. They are in *media via.* But to say man is evil is tremendous. It is wrong. Man is good. He does not require to be made such. What is necessary is to prevent him from becoming evil.

If Christ had been satisfied with remaining a sort of Jewish Socrates, we might have found great benefit from his philosophy. That is to say, we could have retained what was good, and have ignored what was otherwise. But, unfortunately, he adopted the *role* of God.

It follows, therefore, that we must either take his teaching all in all or not at all. His thoughts are not given forth as opinions, but as undeniable and inscrutable truths. They are divine breathings.

In these days of advancing knowledge, it has become essential to modify some of his statements. They have been found to be absolutely in contradiction of established facts. The clergy has had to adopt the changes thus necessitated. They do so as far as possible without remark, and certainly without publicity. Do they not see that if they even change one word of what their Master said, they deny his infallibility, and denying that they deny his divinity.

If he is not a God, he is a man; his teaching is not a religion but a philosophy; his undeniable truths are merely opinions of one who was hedged in as we by environment.

Our dear, kind friends the clergy ignore this. They even deny the virgin birth, and continue to accept payment for teaching religion of the "Son of God."

Are they, then, ministers, that is to say, servants, or are they parasites? It is a hard word. It has an ugly sound. But truth is hard. It is not always beautiful. A taste for truth has to be acquired.

Clergymen are servants in so far as they accept pay. They are leaders in so far as they lead to nothing. Why, then, do they exist? If I had anything to do with it they wouldn't; but, unfortunately, I have very little say in the matter. They are an unnecessary evil.

This plain, undeniable truth that was given forth by the God-Christ is, apparently, so obtuse that interpreters, whose name is legion, are absolutely essential to make plain this morning sunshine of the only true God.

And how do they work? (I wish I had another word I could use instead of "work"—perhaps "proceed" would be more suitable. Certainly "work" is rather far-fetched to describe the carryings-on of these latter-day apostles). Milton hits them off very prettily:—

> They also serve who only stand and wait.

We had a rather considerable War the other day, and those ministers of the Gospel who did not shelter behind the legal exemption which was granted them—why, we can only "wait and see"—became chaplains, ranked as officers, and paid as such. Many of these gentlemen performed very gallant acts. Many won decorations. But in doing so, were they carrying out the teaching of their Master? What about turning the other cheek?

But these were exceptions. Mostly the chaplains' time was employed in less lovely and admirable occupations than risking their lives for the glory of the Old Country. Their principal occupation was dragging poor Tommies to worship God by numbers. The love of God entertained by the average soldier is well displayed on the faces of those proceeding to Church Parade. They look like a party of heretics going before an Inquisitor.

This was the parson's ideal of serving his King and Country. Of course, there were some who took other means; for instance, that gentleman who inspired the Tommies with "poetry" written under the imposing *nom-de-guerre* of "Woodbine Willie." I am glad at least that this gentleman cannot be numbered amongst the zealots who chalk up this motto in public places: "*Did Jesus smoke?*"

However, to end this digression, which may be sweet but which will certainly not ingratiate me with my brothers-with-the-King's-Commission, what have they done since they doffed the khaki?

Britain to-day is none too happy a place, and the Peace Conference, like the mountain that with much groaning brought forth the mouse, has brought forth a League of

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Nations, which is about as likely to preserve the peace of the world as the said mouse.

Never has Europe been in more perilous times. What, I ask, have the dear clergy done or what are they doing to help make things better?

Well, they are demanding larger salaries. They are asking for subscriptions for memorial halls, etc., for the immortalizing of the fallen and the present glorification of their Churches. More they cannot, in view of the teachings of their Master, be expected to attempt.

They cannot hope to do away with poverty, "for the poor always ye have with you." Thus hedged in by the divinity of one who has been called a Socialist (God save the mark!) what can the poor fellows do? They have either to stick it or look for a new job; and what else in the world are they good for?

Yet the clergy have had some rare birds amongst them. Rabelais was a priest, and Sterne a parson. These two, with all their sensuality, have told us more about life as it really is than all the sermons that were ever preached.

To-day we have amongst us one worthy of the Church: one who with all his might strives to tell us what he thinks we are, a reincarnation of Heraclitus, the weeping philosopher, and John, the voice in the desert; the one I refer to is is the gloomy Dean, the moaner, the groaner, the negative teacher.

Such are, then, the servants who would be leaders. I know not whether they are to be more blamed than pitied. We shall never know. The dust tells not its secrets.

H. C. MELLOR.

The Advance of Materialism.

> Matter really rises in dignity from physical matter in which physical properties exist, to chemical matter and chemical forces, and from chemical matter to living matter and its modes of force; and then in the scale of life a continuing ascent leads from the lowest kind of living matter with its force or energy, through different kinds of physiological elements with their special energies or functions, to the highest kind of living matter with its force—viz., nerve matter and nerve force; and, lastly, through the different kinds of nerve-cells and their energies to the most exalted agents of mental function.—*Dr. Maudsley*, "*Body and Mind*" (1870), p. 128.
>
> In fact, there is a sequence in everything, everything is connected up, *everything precedes and succeeds in nature*—in nature there are only series. The isolated fact without antecedent or consequence is a myth. Each phenomenal manifestation is in solidarity with another. It is a metamorphosis of one state of things into another. It is transformation.—*Professor A. Dastre*, "*Life and Death*"; 1911; p. 68.
>
> One revolution of the wheel of organization evolved the living vegetable world: another culminated in the creation of sentient beings. Higher and higher has arisen the type, finer and finer has grown the product, till brain has become the ruling force, and man has emerged from that darkness which hitherto had never permitted Nature to contemplate herself. —*Lester Ward*, "*Dynamic Sociology*," vol. ii., p. 74.

WE are sometimes asked how, on the Materialistic hypothesis, we account for the fact of memory. For the fact that, although the body is being constantly renewed, the old and worn-out cells being replaced with new, until, it is said—I know not upon what authority or basis of fact—the body is entirely renewed every seven years. We do not wish, nor is there any need, to dispute this renewal of the substance of the body. We simply do not know why the process should be limited to seven years instead of one, or twenty. Accepting this continual renewal of the body as a fact, say our opponents, "How do you account for the fact that the mind continues unimpaired through all these changes? In a word, how do you account for memory? Is it not a proof that the mind exists independent of the operations of body?"

Professor Tyndall, dealing with the question, "How is the sense of personal identity maintained across this flight of molecules?" answers:—

> To man, as we know him, matter is necessary to consciousness; but the matter of any period may be all changed, while consciousness exhibits no solution of continuity. Like changing sentinels, the oxygen, hydrogen, and carbon that depart, seem to whisper their secret to their comrades that arrive, and thus, while the Non-ego shifts, the Ego remains intact. Constancy of form in the grouping of the molecules, and not constancy of the molecules themselves, is the correlative of this constancy of perception. Life is a *wave* which in no two consecutive moments of its existence is composed of the same particles.[1]

Moreover, memory is not confined solely to man; it is a characteristic, more or less clear, of all living matter. The horse, the dog, the elephant, and the ape all possess it in a high degree. Nor can it be confined to organic or living matter; for, as Professor Bose observes: "A question long perplexing physiologists and psychologists alike is that concerned with the great mystery that underlies memory. But now, through certain experiments I have carried out, it is possible to trace 'memory impressions' backwards even in inorganic matter, such latent impressions being capable of subsequent revival."[2]

Perhaps the statement of Materialism which has aroused more antagonism and brought down more violent denunciation upon their author than any other deliverance on the subject, is the famous declaration of Carl Vogt, that—

> Physiology declares itself decidedly and categorically against individual immortality, as against all theories in general which include the special existence of a soul. The soul does not enter into the fœtus as the evil spirit does into the possessed, but is produced by the development of the brain, just the same as muscular activity is produced by the development of the muscles, or secretion is produced by the development of the glands,

declaring that "Thoughts stand in the same relation to the brain as bile to the liver, or urine to the kidneys." In this, as Lange points out, Vogt is only repeating substantially the idea of Cabanis, when he said that the brain produces "*la secretion de la pensee*" ("the secretion of thought").[3] Even Buchner finds "the comparison unsuitable and badly chosen";[4] although, as he points out, Vogt introduced the words with the qualification, "to express myself somewhat coarsely." M. Ribot quotes Lewes as saying that if Cabanis really regarded thought as a secretion, then "the outcry against him was justifiable." But then, Lewes, although an Atheist and Materialist, was, like Spencer and Huxley, very timid and nervous of being branded as such. M. Ribot, with French clearness, puts the matter in a nutshell. He says: "He (Cabanis) has been understood to have said that the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile. He never said anything of the sort. It is true that by a deplorable ambiguity of language he may lead us to interpret him as holding that thought is a secretion, while in reality he meant to say that it is a function. But the truth is, that he, like many biologists and psychologists, had very obscure ideas upon function."[5] Lange says: "By way of supererogation, Du Bois Raymond expressly takes under his protection Vogt's notorious expression, that the thoughts bear the same relation to the brain as the gall to the liver, or urine to the kidneys."[6] And Du Bois Raymond was regarded,

[1] Tyndall, *Fragments of Science* (1876), p. 463.
[2] Professor J. C. Bose, *The Socialist Review*, June 19, p. 145.
[3] Lange, *Hist. of Materialism*, vol. ii., p. 312.
[4] Buchner, *Force and Matter*, p. 303.
[5] Ribot, *English Psychology* (1873), p. 285.
[6] Lange, *History of Materialism*, vol. ii., p. 312.

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in his time, as the great champion of religion against Atheism and Materialism.

Certainly, thoughts are produced by the brain. *There is no thought apart from the brain.* As life arises at a certain point of the evolution of matter, so thought and consciousness arises when the evolution of living matter reaches the complexity of organization necessary for its production.

Materialism has won all along the line. No one with an adequate knowledge of Biology, Psychology, and Anthropology, doubts that Mind, Consciousness, and Life, have evolved naturally from elemental matter. The elements of Matter themselves, the foundation stones of the universe, are now known to have been evolved from the vast clouds of gaseous nebula visible in the night sky; and from their condensation are formed the Stars and Planets destined in due course to be the theatre of Life and Death, which, like everything else, have their cycle of birth, maturity, decay, and dissolution. A ceaseless circulation of Matter. The systole and dyastole of the Universe. Eternal and indestructible Matter and Force. In the glowing words of Shelley:—

> Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
> From creation to decay,
> Like the bubbles on a river,
> Sparkling, bursting, borne away.[1]

And what is the position of religion now towards Materialism? Religion has fought against Materialism with every conceivable weapon. It has attacked its teachers with the vilest innuendoes, and the most furious and malignant rancour. It is the tribute of their fear, as they see this system of thought advanced from strength to strength, out-flanking and encircling the doomed citadel of superstition. As Huxley remarked: "They watch what they conceive to be the progress of materialism, in such fear and powerless anger as a savage feels, when, during an eclipse, the great shadow creeps over the face of the sun."[2]

(To be continued.) W. Mann.

Obituary.

We regret to report the death of Mrs. Smart, wife of Mr. G. Smart, 83 Ashvill Road, Leyton, in the thirty-seventh year of her age, after a brief but painful illness. She was a highly respected woman, an affectionate, devoted wife and mother, and will be greatly missed. Mr. Smart is a convinced Freethinker, and, in fulfilment of a wish expressed by his wife, a Secular Service was conducted at her funeral, which took place on Friday, September 12, at Woodgrange Park Cemetery. We extend to the family our sincere sympathy.—J. T. L.

Many Freethinkers in Glasgow will regret to hear of the death of Mr. Charles Taylor, at the early age of 51. He was for many years employed with the Glasgow Corporation as a book-keeper. While in the Infirmary he was given a tract with a hymn on it, "Count your blessings, name them one by one." Being unable to speak, he underlined the words, and wrote "Cancer," which was the cause of his death. We tender to Mrs. Taylor and her family our sincerest sympathy in her great loss. The Secular Burial Service was read by the Secretary of the Glasgow Branch.

F. Lonsdale.

Whoever thinks that a story gains by the prodigious, by adding something out of nature, robs it more than he adds. It is no longer an example, a model; no longer a heart-stirring hero, but an exhibition, a wonder, an anomaly, removed out of range of influence with thoughtful men.

—*Emerson.*

[1] Shelley, *Hellas.*

[2] Huxley, *Lay Sermons*, 1880, p. 142.

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.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "The State and the Church."

OUTDOOR.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Band Stand): 6.15, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "How I Laid the Ghost of Charles Bradlaugh."

North London Branch N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 6, Mr. J. J. Darby, A Lecture.

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S. (near Band Stand): 3, A Lecture.

South London Branch N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. Edmund Burke, "Progress and Providence."

West Ham Branch N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, A Lecture.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Dales, Ratcliffe, and Baker.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Edinburgh Branch N. S. S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place): 6.30, Lecture, "Socialism and Religion."

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (The Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Important Business.

Leeds Secular Society (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 5.45 (afternoon). Lectures in Victoria Square at 7.15.

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Views and Opinions.

As Good as Christians!

The other day the Rev. A. Dale, Vicar of All Saints, Chorlton-on-Medlock, Manchester, declared that "We have to face the fact that a large number of people outside the Churches are quite as good Christians as those within." The vicar probably thought this a very commendable exercise in liberalism, and perhaps it is—for a clergyman. But it is all part of the colossal conceit that has grown up with Christianity, which leads Christians to assume that everything decently and properly human belongs to a particular Church, or if not to a Church, at least to Christianity. How often does one hear the remark, from a "liberal" Christian, "I think that some Freethinkers are quite as good as Christians"? The compliment is meant to be overpowering—and it is. But it is the cool impudence of it that overcomes. The assumption that one ought to feel flattered on being placed in the same category with Christians is delightful. Because, after all, one knows these Christians. We live with them, walk with them, talk with them; we see them when they are not posing, as well as when they are, and is their behaviour or their temper so overpoweringly excellent that one ought to feel flattered on being told that one is as good as they? Personally, we decline to feel flattered. We feel that the sentence should run, "Freethinkers are often no better than Christians." Then we might feel a becoming sense of humility, for we should realize that all our efforts after improvement, both of self and others, had ended in a ghastly failure.

* * *

Are Christians Superior?

Looking at the matter impartially, does the Christian really strike one as presenting a quality of conduct of such a kind that to be placed in the same category ought to be considered a compliment? Facts hardly support such an inference. Could one honestly say "as sober as a Christian," or "as truthful as a Christian," or "as tolerant as a Christian," or "as clean as a Christian," or "as honest as a Christian," and by any or all of these expressions mean that the Christian showed a superiority over the rest of the world in the exercise of the qualities indicated? Christians are less kindly and tolerant than Buddhists, less sober than Mohammedans, less peaceful than the followers of Confucius, and less truthful than anyone who places a moderate value upon truthful speaking. In actual life the Christian will lie in the name of Christ, slander in the name of Christ, rob in the name of Christ, kill in the name of Christ. And all the time proclaim—also in the name of Christ—his superiority to all others. That, perhaps, is due to the name of Christ. For underlying the professed humility and meekness of the Christian, lies the most profound arrogance and assertiveness. His arrogance is born of the belief in exclusive salvation and imagined selection. His assertiveness is a consequence of his religion having been for so long in a position of power—a place to which neither its moral strength nor its social utility has ever entitled it.

* * *

How to Get a Safe Testimonial.

We were once engaged in a debate with a Christian who read a number of passages from some book, pointing out the great strength of the arguments he had been using. After some time, we asked him who was the author of the book from which he was quoting. "I am," he replied. Excellent! He had written his own testimonials, and was taking no risks. Now, that is exactly what Christianity has done. It has written its own testimonials, and has taken all possible care that testimonials of an unflattering character should have as small publicity as possible. Practically, all the testimonials as to the overpoweringly moral excellence of Christianity come from Christians. Naturally, they are all flattering. It is the only way by which one can be quite certain that a testimonial shall be flattering. So Christians have seen to it that the histories on which the people are fed shall be written by Christians. They see to it that the press shall be provided with plenty of testimonials to Christianity—from Christians. And this game has been going on so long and so steadily that the Christian can seldom see anything wrong about it. Indeed, he propounds the canon that if you do not already believe in Christianity, you are quite disqualified from expressing an opinion concerning it. You must first of all believe in the excellence of Christianity, then you will be heard as to its goodness. A very sound rule. Indeed, it is the only rule that can secure Christianity a favourable verdict.

* * *

Christianity in Practice.

Recently, in glancing through an account of a particularly brutal murder, we found it described as "un-Christian." Of course, this may have meant no more than a desire to separate this murder from other murders of the Christian variety. But we hardly think this was the case. We fancy it was part of the Christian egotism which labels all the good Christian, and all the bad "heathen" or "un-Christian," with any other name that will disguise the fact that vices flourish with the same ease among Christians as among others. The curious thing to observe is, that this plan not only narcotizes the sheep-like mind of the average Christian, it also imposes on many who are not Christians. Often when we have had a meeting disturbed by the rowdyism of

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Christian attendants, we have heard people ask, "Where's your Christianity?" when it was fronting them all the time. During the course of the war, when some specially brutal, bloodthirsty incident was reported, we were sometimes asked, "Where is Christianity in all this?" Why, there it was, all the time. It was in operation to the same extent and in the same manner that it has always been in operation. Can anyone tell us when or where Christianity has been found unaccompanied by, or incompatible with rowdyism, intolerance, or brutality? And why should anyone be surprised on finding these accompaniments with it to-day? The world shows us Christianity in action, naturally Christians seek to disguise the fact, but this only makes it more incumbent upon non-Christians to present Christianity as it really is.

* * *

The End of a Chapter.

There are people outside the Churches, says Mr. Dale, who are as good Christians as those within. Well, the achievement does not strike us as at all bordering on the miraculous. A thousand people, taken haphazard, who could not reach the level of all-round goodness achieved by Church attendants, deserve to be handed over to the custody of a body of mental pathologists. They would be something socially abnormal. The next stage in this manifestation of Christian arrogance is the information that "many Freethinkers are as good as Christians." Again, a statement that does not involve a discussion as to whether miracles really happen. As the Christian develops, he may discover that the self-respecting non-Christian is not at all overpowered by the concession. It is not at all flattering to be told that Bradlaugh or Foote was as good as a Christian. One really had hopes that they were better, and it is a little disappointing to learn that their development had not proceeded so far as one had thought. The Freethinker who does not *know* that he is better than the average Christian is only, as yet, half developed. The Christian who fancies that he is complimenting the Freethinker in telling him that he is as good as a Christian is only exhibiting the fact that he neither understands the position of the Freethinker, nor appreciates the impertinent arrogance of his own attitude. But having brought Christians to the point of admitting that Freethinkers *may* be as good as believers, we may hope for a time when they will recognize that there is no necessary connection at all between a confession of faith in Christian doctrines and a usefully upright social life. And when we have reached that point the fight will be over. Intellectually, Christianity was long ago discredited. As a substitute for intellectual conviction, it took the ground that it was socially useful and morally elevating. Hard facts are driving them from that position; and when we have finally demonstrated to the world the hollowness of this ethical pose, we shall soon see Christianity reduced to its proper place as one of the world's many creeds with no better foundation than those other superstitions that are now so generally discredited among genuinely cultured men and women.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

We owe to the Greeks every noble discipline in literature; every radical principle of art; and every form of convenient beauty in our household furniture and daily occupations of life. We are unable, however, to make rational use of half that we have received from them: and, of our own, we have nothing but discoveries in science, and fine mechanical adaptations of the discovered physical powers. On the other hand, the vices existing among certain classes, both of the rich and poor, in London, Paris, and Vienna, could have been conceived by a Spartan or Roman of the heroic ages only as possible in a Tartarus, where fiends were employed to teach, but not to punish, crime.—*Ruskin.*

The Menace of Secularism.

I.

SUCH is the title of an important, though small, volume by the Hon. Mrs. Gell, consisting of a series of *Addresses on the Nation's Need of the National Church.* We have no desire to cast the least suspicion upon either the sincerity of the convictions expressed or the purity of the controlling motive in these published lectures. We even frankly admit that the onslaught of Materialism and Secularism upon Christianity constitutes a serious menace to all the Churches, and has already done much to undermine their power and influence. The aim of this little book, however, is to show that if the National Church were disestablished and disendowed the floodgates would fly open and the poison of Freethought would immediately flow in, and, like a devastating deluge, overwhelm the land. Hence—

> The day of decision has come. We are face to face with the greatest crisis which has menaced the Church since Cromwellian troopers preached from the pulpits of our fanes, and, as at the sack of Lichfield, chased a cat through the noble aisles and christened a calf in the font in ribald mockery of the sacred baptismal rite. And now once more the battle is set. The Church of our Fathers is the object of an attack in which certain leaders of other Christian bodies are joining forces with those who are avowedly antagonistic, not merely to the Church, but to all which the mass of Christians hold sacred—who, in a word, desire to materialize and secularize the whole gamut of human life (p. 2).

It is perfectly true that Secularists advocate the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church, but it is false to represent them as desiring and working for the materialization of life. To secularize life is a radically different process from that of materializing it. Freethinkers zealously believe in the former process but are sworn enemies of the latter.

The Hon. Mrs. Gell is, doubtless, sincerely pious and heroically loyal to the Established Church, but her arguments are vitiated by prejudice and riddled with fallacies. Pretending "to sweep aside specious arguments," she deliberately employs them. It was the dread of disendowment much more than of disestablishment that animated her lectures in opposition to the liberation of the Church in Wales, one of her chief points being that the spirituality of the Church is vitally affected by its material prosperity. She ridicules the specious arguments of those who doubt or deny that great truth—

> As though it had not been a cardinal principle of the primitive Church that they who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel; or as though our Blessed Lord himself had not vouchsafed to be dependent upon the common sustenance of his fellow-men for the maintenance of his sacred body (p. 2).

The Gospel Jesus was not supported by those who did not believe in him. He was dependent upon purely voluntary contributions. If certain people want to have the Christian Gospel preached to them, no sensible person would dream of denying them the luxury, if they are prepared to pay for it. What Anglicans evidently insist upon as a right is that the religion, or form of religion, which they accept and enjoy should be a charge upon the public funds, which is, on the face of it, a rank injustice. Mrs. Gell exclaims: "Dare we sit calmly by while the means by which her spiritual influence is maintained are wrested from the Church in Wales?" In that question we find, unconsciously embodied, the quintessence of religious selfishness. Church people in Wales are too few, too poor, or too indifferent to maintain the ordinances of their own organization, and the

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very suggestion of putting them on the same footing as other religionists, they resent as a threatened attack upon religion itself. In the Principality, Calvinistic Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Wesleyans, are self-supporting sects, but Anglicans haughtily persist in calling themselves the Church to the maintenance of which all the citizens should be compelled to contribute, whether they believe in and like it or not. Mrs. Gell argues as if religion in Wales would cease to be if the English Church there were disestablished and disendowed. She says:—

> This is no matter of party politics, nor is it a question between Church and Chapel. It is a question between the forces of good and the forces of evil, between religion and irreligion, between the things of the soul and the things of the body. Yes, it is not too much to say the very soul of the nation is at stake (p. 3).

Like most uncritical religious writers, Mrs. Gell is a blind traditionist. She waxes pathetically eloquent over our imaginary indebtedness to the Church. "All through our lives she has stood by us at the great moments of existence" baptizing us, confirming us, marrying us, and burying us, thus proving herself to be "a priceless blessing," and naturally everybody should consider it an inestimable privilege to share in supporting her. Such is the atmosphere of the whole book, in which the treatment of every question touched upon is bound to be rhetorical rather than critical. Take the origin of the Church. Relying alone upon tradition, our author affirms that "about the year 200 a Church existed in Wales, and that in all probability it was organized by Christians from France." That is a legend unsupported by a single historical fact. Surely Bede, Gildas, and Geoffrey of Monmouth cannot seriously be treated as reliable historians. The legends they record, the persecutions and martyrdoms they relate, are highly interesting, but historically of no value whatever. Gildas observes, in his *Ruin of Britain*, a work of the sixth century, that the Christian religion "had a lukewarm reception" from the British people, and in a valuable comment on that statement in his edition of Gildas, the late Professor Hugh Williams, of Bala, says:—

> That is all Gildas says respecting the evangelization of Britain. Whether he knew more as to the first preachers of Christianity it is impossible to tell, but his words imply that its spread among the native population (incolæ) of the island was exceedingly slow: they received it "coldly." Among Roman officials and foreign immigrants it may have spread early, so that the few remains which now attest an early Christian Church in Britain belong to them, and are found in the parts most thoroughly Romanized. According to the evidence furnished by Hubner's seventh volume of Latin inscriptions, we gather that Heathenism of various types continued long, even among these provincials. Mythra and Cybele, Tyrian Hercules and Phœnician Astarte, had their worshippers: at York there was a temple to Serapis, and at Cærleon, in South Wales, the Roman Legate, Postumius Varus, restores a temple of Diana late in the third century, that is, not *very* long before that Council of Arles (314) which we know so well. Christian inscriptions are more numerous in Wales than in any other part of Britain, yet neither there nor in the other parts do they indicate a date earlier than the middle of the fifth century. Of Britain, as well as of Gaul, the words of M. le Blanc are true, that the legendary stories of a conversion "by explosion" have no evidence whatever in their favour (Part I., pp. 22-3).

On this point Harnack agrees with Williams, saying that England was a province in which "Christianity could not gain any firm footing." He states that, apart from the legends, "the British Church emerges into daylight, first of all through the fact of three bishops from London, York, and Lincoln having attended the synod of Arles in A.D. 314." A natural enough inference from the fact is that Britain had more than three bishops at that time, "only," Harnack adds, "only we know nothing whatever on this point."

Now, on the assumption that the legends found in Bede, Gildas, and other early ecclesiastical historians are true, their truth would weigh heavily against the argument advanced by our author. According to her, the Church which existed in Wales in the year 200 was identical with the Church of England; but that is not true. The Church which sent three bishops to the synod of Arles in 314 was not a Latin but a Celtic organization. When the Church of England was founded early in the seventh century by Roman monks, it differed on several points from the Celtic Church already in existence, and erelong there arose a violent conflict between the two. The Welsh bishops gloried in their independence, and for a long time offered vigorous opposition to their Saxon brethren. In the end, of course, the four Welsh dioceses joined the southern English province. Mrs. Gell ignores the fact that, as Gardiner puts it, "the Church of England which was founded by Augustine has nothing whatever to do with the early British Church: in after times certain British dioceses submitted to English ecclesiastical rule, and that is all." However, on the assumption that Mrs. Gell's contention as to the identity of the Church in Wales and that in England is true, I put her own question, what has been its influence in Wales? "Is it worth preserving? Has it been for good? Would anyone be the worse for its loss?" Our author *knows* that it was in existence about the year 200. Giraldus Cambrensis was a Welsh ecclesiastic and brilliant writer who flourished in the latter half of the twelfth century and the first twenty years of the thirteenth. One of his works is entitled *The Itinerary of Archbishop Baldwin Through Wales*, in which he gives a description of the manner of life and characteristics of the inhabitants. They love their country, and are ever ready to fight for it; their life is largely pastoral, and their food is the product of their herds rather than of the land: they keep open house for all comers; they consider playing on the harp the finest of all arts, and excel in it. Finally, "they show a greater respect than other nations to churches and ecclesiastics, to the relics of saints, bells, holy books, and the cross; and hence their churches enjoy more than common tranquillity." How worthy and noble and true they must be, and how much they owe to their Church! Unfortunately, however, there is another side to the picture, and Gerald the Welshman does not hesitate to present it:—

> These people are no less light in mind than in body, and by no means to be relied on. They are easily urged to undertake any action, and as easily checked from prosecuting it. They never scruple at taking a false oath for the sake of any temporary advantage. Above all other peoples, they are given to removing their neighbours' landmarks. Hence arise quarrels, murders, conflagrations, and frequent fratricides. It is remarkable that brothers show more affection to each other when dead than when living; for they prosecute the living even unto death, but avenge the dead with all their power (*Description of Wales*, pp. 492-3).

And this was the outcome of centuries of that "priceless blessing," the Church of God.

J. T. Lloyd.

For my part, with the manifold directions in which my nature moves, I cannot be satisfied with a single mode of thought. As poet and artist I am a polytheist; on the other hand, as a student of Nature I am a pantheist—and both with equal positiveness. When I need a God for my personal nature, as a moral and spiritual man, he also exists for me.—*Goethe.*

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The Passing of the Pious Editor.

Mythology and the newspapers cannot co-exist.
—*Mr. A. G. Gardiner.*

Of all the dull, stagnant, unedifying *entourages*, that of middle-class Dissent seems to me the stupidest.
—*Matthew Arnold.*

MR. A. G. GARDINER has retired from the editorship of the *Daily News* after nearly twenty years occupancy of the chair. We do not add that the announcement will cause pangs of regret to millions of readers. That has been said by quite a number of his colleagues, who, probably, meant what they said whilst they wrote it. Our reason for writing is that Mr. Gardiner has been acclaimed as a "great editor," and, further, that he voiced the aspirations of the Nonconformists. For the *Daily News* has always represented the Free Churches, just as Mr. Blumenfeld and the *Daily Express*, and the curled perfumed darlings of the *Daily Telegraph*, have sought to exalt the Union Jack among the holy symbols of the National religion.

Indeed, Mr. Gardiner is already in a fair way to being added to the Saints' Calendar. One enthusiastic journalist went so far as to say that the retiring editor possessed "a fine intelligence, and a noble outlook on public affairs." Perhaps it is our fault, but we are not impressed. We fear that Mr. Gardiner kept his "fine intelligence" and "noble outlook" for private use only, for it is not very apparent in his printed utterances. He has unloaded his bosom of too much perilous stuff for our liking. And whilst Mr. Gardiner may be regarded as a facile writer, he is by no means a lamp to guide lowly men and women in the darkest hours of his country's history.

Mr. Gardiner has frequently expressed his severe displeasure of frivolity and sensationalism in the press, yet he is himself not unconscious of a desire to "tickle the ears of the groundlings." In a personal sketch of the King he let his "fine intelligence" have full play:—

> He is the first English King to belong to the working classes by the bond of a common experience. He moves among them not as a stranger from some starry social sphere, but as one to the manner born. He has reefed the sail and swabbed the deck and fed the fire. He has stood at the helm through the tempest and the night. He knows what it is to be grimy and perspiring, to have blistered hands and tired feet. In short he knows what it is to be a working man. He has the mechanic's interest in things, and one learns without surprise that his presents to his children are largely mechanical toys.

When we first read these lines we rubbed our eyes, as well we might. Afterwards we read Mr. Gardiner's remarks on Queen Mary:—

> The Queen, like her husband, has the middle-class seriousness and sense of duty, She is almost the only woman in society who cannot be called a society woman. When she pats an orphan on the head or gives sixpence to a beggar, I do not think she would want half a column of laudation in the newspapers to commemorate the fact that she shares the common sympathies of humanity.

What can one say of writing such as this? If Mr. Gardiner had wanted a peerage he could not have done the thing better. But the editor of the *Daily News* is a sturdy Democrat, and has a Puritan dislike to titles. Yet such prose-poetry with regard to royalty is almost a habit with him. Years ago he wrote some lines on the Kaiser which read like the deadliest irony in the light of subsequent events. This is the way he ladled out the soothing syrup for Nonconformist intellectual infants. We almost blush to transcribe the words:—

> The Kaiser is easily the foremost man in Europe. He is a king after Charles the First's own heart, "a king indeed," the last that is left, the residuary legatee of the divine right. The cause for which he fights could have no more worthy protagonist. He is every inch a king. Divest him of his office, and he would still be one of the half-dozen most considerable men in his empire. When the British editors visited Germany they were brought into intimate contact with all the leaders of action and thought in the country, and I believe it is true to say that the Kaiser left the sharpest and most vivid personal impression on the mind. No man in history ever had a more God-like vision of himself than he has. His cloud of dignity is held from falling by the visible hand of the Almighty. He keeps his powder dry and his armour bright. But he stands for peace—peace armed to the teeth, it is true, peace with the mailed fist; but peace nevertheless.

If Mr. Gardiner wrote his character sketches with his tongue in his cheek, then your hat flies off to him as an astute man of business. But it is far more probable that he regards himself seriously, and is capable of admiring these lines had they been written by another. Apart from this excessive loyalty, his atmosphere is heavy with the sentimentalism of the Free Churches. Witness his account of Dr. Clifford's theological views, with its exquisite perception of the highest and best in English literature:—

> His own faith is still as clear and as primitive as when, sixty years ago, he sat a boy in Beeston Chapel, in much mental anguish, and in his own words, experienced conversion in the midst of the singing of the verse:—
>
> The soul that longs to see My face
> Is sure My love to gain;
> And those that early seek My grace
> Shall never seek in vain,

Critically, what can be said of folk who admire this gush of sentimentality and beautiful nonsense? It reminds us of the story of a counsel who, in addressing a jury, called the defendant "a naufragious ruffian." His junior asked him afterwards what the words meant. "I haven't the least idea," said the counsel; "but it sounded well, didn't it?" Mr. Gardiner's articles read well, but they are scarcely the outcome of "a fine intelligence and a noble outlook on public affairs." Is it not playing it a little low down on the British Nonconformist thus to take advantage of his innocence and inexperience? When the Education Act has run a little longer, the readers of newspapers, perhaps, will cease to hunger for such sawdust, and will prefer the bread of knowledge, even if it is stale. And yet, we will not be unjust to Mr. Gardiner. If he would but forget his Nonconformist audience, and write only for men and women, his articles would be so much better. He can write well, and we would not unduly dispraise him. Writing on the legend of the Russian Army in England, he had some excellent remarks:—

> The true interest of the legend is psychological rather than historical. It offers the most striking instance in our time of the growth of a myth, and it throws a curious light on the origin of the myths that have developed in the past out of the terrors, anxieties, and hopes of people fumbling darkly for an explanation of an inexplicable world. It could only have survived in circumstances in which the Press had become artificially silent and had ceased to bring rumour to the challenge of definite proof. For the true twilight of the gods came with the printing press. Mythology and the newspapers cannot co-exist.

In sober truth, and not in the cant of Orthodoxy, let us wish for the conversion of Mr. Gardiner. There are

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many editors for whom the inscription, "Died of the Christian fallacy," is good, and good enough. But the man who occupied the same seat as Charles Dickens, the man who writes for the same newspaper as Harriet Martineau, should not be one of these. Let us forget that British Nonconformity ever declined upon such a period of hypocrisy and vulgarity.

MIMNERMUS.

Writers and Readers.

A Note on Herman Melville.

(Born, August 1, 1819; Died, September 28, 1891.)

Those of my readers who are happy in sharing my absorbing interest in fine letters will thank me for calling their attention to one of the most original and attractive of American writers. If they have not yet made his acquaintance through the brilliant, romantic narrative *Typee* they have a delightful experience before them, while those who have pleasant memories of Melville's impressionistic genius will be glad to be reminded of their debt of gratitude. Like Bret Harte and Whitman, Melville came of good British-Dutch stock which would appear to be an excellent artistic strain. His father died in straightened circumstances when Melville was a boy, and he was left in the charge of an uncle. His writing shows that his education was thorough if somewhat elementary. He had a natural ear for the cadences of fine prose, and assiduously cultivated his taste. About the age of seventeen he shipped as cabin-boy on a vessel sailing from New York to Liverpool, visited London, and returned in the same boat. For the next three years he did some schoolmastering, "boarding round," as did Whitman, with the families of his pupils.

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The mild excitement of schoolmastering did not appeal to his romantic temperament, and after reading Dana's *Two Years Before the Mast* (1840), one of the best of sea-yarns, he once more tried his luck as an able-bodied sailor. In January, 1841, he signed on with the *Acushnet*, an old sailing ship engaged in sperm-fishing. In the July of the same year, the boat put into Nukuheva in the Marquesas group, and Melville, with a companion, both of them "fed up" with a bad ship and a worse skipper, made up their mind to escape together into the interior. This they managed to do with great difficulty; and their adventures in the valley of the Typee, with their escape after four months, from a possibly cannibalistic issue out of their afflictions, forms the subject-matter of his first book. His sojourn in the enchantingly beautiful islands of the Pacific ended for ever when he returned to Boston in the winter of 1844.

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The manuscript of his first book, *Typee*, was brought to England by a kinsman and offered to Mr. Murray, who was willing to accept it on the assurance that it was not a fictitious narrative. It appeared in 1847 in Murray's *Home and Colonial Library*. The unusually severe reflections on the manners and methods of missionaries stirred the bile of the clergy and of their supporters, and in the first American and subsequent editions here, in England, passages were omitted, but they were retained in the main by Mr. Stedman, the editor, of Putnam's 1892 edition. *Omoo* (1847) is a sequel to *Typee*. It is excellent in parts, but it has not the shapeliness of Melville's first essay in the art of prose narrative. Some good work is to be found in *Moby Dick* (1851), and *Redburn* (1848), which records his experiences on his first voyage, has fine descriptions of sea-life. Later his style and matter dropped off amazingly, but he managed to pull himself together when some severe criticism set his back up. His *Confidence Man* (1857) is a clever, ironical, and amusing satire of the natural gullibility of the so-called 'cute Yankee. His vase, on which he set much store, is, in my opinion, poor stuff indeed in comparison with the emotional and vibrating prose of his masterpiece.

. . . . . .

I am inclined to assert emphatically that Melville is a man of one book. In *Typee* the vivid impressions of early manhood upon a mind exquisitely sensitive to the beauty of atmosphere, colour, and emotion were caught precisely at the right moment. It has the freshness, the rich brilliance, of a fine proof mezzotint. His idyllic picture of life in the happy valley of the unsophisticated Typees, fine examples of the Polynesian savage before he had been ruined by the civilization—or, shall I say, syphilization?—of God-fearing Europeans, would have delighted that lover of the natural man, Rousseau. We can see what the natives of the Marquesas Islands must have been before their country was discovered by the Spaniards, and rediscovered later by Captain Cook. With his customary good luck, Melville was made *tabu* by his savage friends, and treated as a sort of divine being. But divinity has its inconveniences; the Polynesians, like the Christians, had a fancy for eating their gods, and that is most likely what would have happened to Melville if the whaler that rescued him had not been short of hands. He escaped just in time, or he might have figured in Polynesian mythology as an eaten god, and a Lord's Supper might have been instituted in his memory. Joking apart, I can assure my readers that *Typee* is an amazingly fine piece of literary impressionism; it is so good that the critics could not make up their minds that it was true.

. . . . . .

We know from Melville's own repeated assurances and from independent testimony that *Typee* was the record of actual experience; however, if we look at all closely at his work, we are driven to the conclusion that Melville was not a creative novelist, for his characters have no inner life. We know them, not for what they really are, but for what they seem to be. For us, they are mere acquaintances, known to us by sight only, the hidden heart of them having no meaning for us. It may be objected that the characters in *Typee* and *Omoo* are picturesque, grotesque, amusing, or pathetic. That is true, certainly; but what is also true, at least in my opinion, is that they stop short of that intimate self-revelation which is the supreme effort of fictional art. The reader who knows his Conrad will appreciate the force of my criticism. And yet, perhaps, it is both ill-mannered and ungrateful to grumble when the table is spread so profusely with what most readers will consider the right stuff.

. . . . . .

I had almost forgotten to say that Melville was a Freethinker. It is excusable, perhaps, for we are all Freethinkers more or less nowadays. From his Scottish and Dutch ancestors he no doubt had his taste for metaphysics and philosophy, which in later life became an obsession, his lack of orthodoxy estranging a number of his friends. As I have noted above, he had a wholesome contempt for missionaries and their dubious and devious ways. In both *Typee* and *Omoo* he underlines the contrast between the innocence and moral uprightness of the heathen savage and the physical and moral unwholesomeness of the savage perverted to the religion of the so-called civilized world. Christian journalists, too much in a hurry, and too angry to show that he was wrong, politely called him a deliberate and elaborate liar. The Protestant missionaries at Tahiti had their revenge by burning his books, and burning the author of them in effigy.

Although Melville omitted passages from later editions of *Typee*, he held to the strict truth of his censure of the self-exiled heralds of the Cross. The picture of the missionary's wife who took her daily airings in a go-cart drawn by two islanders, one a youth and the other an old grey-headed man, is a damning indictment of Christian humility. However that may be, *Typee* and *Omoo* are stories to be enjoyed by all those who know a good thing when they read it. He knew the Polynesian Islanders more intimately than Stevenson or Louis Becke, his sympathy with wild life having not a little of the quality we find in the work of Mr. Safroni-Middleton, who is the modern poet of the wine-dark seas and tropic skies.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Ah, what a dusty answer gets the soul
When hot for certainties in this our life!—
In tragic hints here see what evermore
Moves dark as yonder midnight ocean's force,
Thundering like ramping hosts of warrior horse
To throw that faint thin line upon the shore!

—*George Meredith.*

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Acid Drops.

Mr. Lloyd George, at the City Temple the other day, professed great anxiety that everybody should set about the task of building a new world, in which peace and brotherhood should reign, and wars should be no more. That is an old song, and none have sung it more lustily than those who have done their utmost to prevent its arrival. In the very act of appealing for this new world, Mr. George gives the following:—

> Why should war always get the best out of mankind? And peace always get the poorest? War brought forth unselfishness in millons, comradeship, brotherhood.....Is peace going to call forth nothing but grasping, greed, avarice, faction, timidity, indulgence?

Now, if Mr. Lloyd George were to develop the capacity for sustained and solid thinking, he would realize the utter nonsense of such language, and that in attributing the good qualities as having been called forth by war and the bad ones by peace, he is giving encouragement to just those views of life that have helped to land the world where it is.

Mr. George presents the country as made strong by or during war, and falling the prey to sloth and vice during peace. And that is the natural view of the shallow-minded man who can see no farther than the moment, and no deeper than the passions or necessities of the hour. And if that view be true, then Prussian militarism, which taught that war made and kept a nation clean and strong and healthy, is indeed justified. But it is not true; on the contrary, quite false. It was not the War that brought forth unselfishness and brotherhood. However poorly they were developed, war found them here, and used them to their own destruction. Peace provided qualities, and war wasted them. There is at present plenty of greed and avarice, etc., in the country, but these have not been called forth by peace; they are the legacies left by the War.

We can all see what war does for the nations economically. The facts here are so plain as to be discernable by even politicians. And the facts are almost as evident in other directions. War wastes, mentally and morally, as well as economically. War used the qualities named by Mr. George, and then left the people socially and morally the worse for its presence. The deplorable features around us are partly the consequence of war. That our principal politician cannot see this says little for his ability to grapple with the facts. Probably the truth is that only the minimum of ability is needed to make war. It requires a maximum to conduct a desirable peace. That is, we think, a truth that will cast light in many directions.

Mr. Athelstan Riley was to have spoken at the Church Congress at Leicester. But Mr. George Lansbury was also to be among the speakers, and, as Mr. Riley does not agree with Mr. Lansbury's opinions on the question of Russia, he has declined to appear on the same platform with him. He asks Mr. Lansbury to publicly denounce "those bloody scoundrels, Lenin and Trotsky, and their hellish work," then he will meet him as "a Christian man and a brother." So either Mr. Lansbury or Mr. Riley will not be at the Church Congress. Again we remark on the peculiar quality of the Christian conscience.

Paul advised that the members of a certain Church should be saluted with a holy kiss. The vicar of Holy Trinity, Chatham, extended the advice to an attractive servant girl employed at the vicarage, with the result of a police court case, and a fine of £2 and £2 2s. costs. We consider the vicar is suffering from a misinterpretation of "Holy Writ."

Under the new *regime* in Hungary no newspapers are appearing, but paper will soon be supplied to the *Christian Press*. The *Christian Press* covers all papers that are given over to clericalism and reaction. We imagine our London County Council must be looking with envious eyes at Hungary. It doesn't like any but the Christian Press in the public parks, and its regret must be that the non-Christian press is tolerated outside. Now, a people which reads the *War Cry* and the *Christian Herald* would be quite safe.

There is a strain of innocence in English people which must help the clergy to bamboozle the nation. In a case at Bow Street Police Court, in which a prisoner was charged with obtaining money by false pretences, the magistrate asked a witness how he came to accept a cheque from a stranger. The witness explained that prisoner took him off his guard by selecting two gramophone records called "O Rest in the Lord" and 'Abide with Me." Is it not delightful?

In the Leytonstone baby-farming case, the woman charged received five years, while the man was discharged. Although the house was used as a baby farm, he said that he knew nothing about it. He was so busy that he had no time to take notice either of the number of children in the house or of their treatment. Even on Sunday he attended Salvation Army meetings three times. It would have been a pity to have interfered with the pious activities of such a man, even though some may think his story rather thin, and that less religious meetings and more attention to household affairs would have been all to the good.

The Wimborne Board of Guardians are having some trouble with their medical officer. The doctor wants an increase of salary, and complains that he is actually getting only about half as much as the chaplain. He also says that he considers he is doing quite as much work as the parson, and should be better paid. We think so too. If the doctor is not as much use to the guardians as the parson, he ought to be thrown out. But we should be surprised to find that to be the case. We suggest they should test the matter in the medical ward—make it a case of physic versus prayer, and see which is the more effective.

Brother Barnes and other pietists who are quite hysterical concerning the "soulless" outlook in the Labour Movement, might have the decency to remember that the Labour Movement was the outcome of the work of idealists who were Freethinkers. It is all very well to try and induce workers to believe that Christ was a trade-unionist; but to-morrow the cue might be given to instruct workers to "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's." As old Martin Luther said, the Bible is a nose of wax, and can be twisted to any shape.

The *Observer* calls attention to one aspect of Irish affairs that is of interest to Freethinkers. The Government is putting one area after another under military law, which, it has been well said, is no law at all. But in doing this, the *Observer* discerns something like a set policy at work. It knows that suppression means the growth of secret societies, and a probable increase of outrages. And by this means it seeks to drive the Church into taking a hostile attitude towards the Nationalist Movement. It says:—

> In the last resort, the traditional policy of Dublin Castle looks to eliciting support from the ecclesiastical power. Its officials know perfectly well that they cannot put an end to the mentality in the Irish people which resists them. They think that they can break up that mentality, destroy its regimented resistance, by pushing matters to a point at which the moral law must be invoked by the most disciplined of religion, and enforced by a refusal of the sacraments.

The point is of interest as illustrating what we have often said, that in the last resort the ruling classes of every country regard religion as one of the most powerful adjuncts to the police force, if not superior to it, as a coercive force. All Governments know, that to control a people effectively, the control of their mentality is essential. The *Observer* may be wrong in the present instance. With that we are not concerned. But there is a lesson in what has been said that all may read who will.

"The Church divided on Sunday Games" was the headline in a daily paper. The sport-loving public, however, is not divided in its opinion as to the game of Mother Church.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 5, Swansea; October 12, South Place, London; October 19, Weston-Super-Mare; October 26, Manchester; November 2, Glasgow; November 3, Paisley; November 6, Milngavie; November 9, Edinburgh; November 16, South Shields; November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—October 5, Glasgow; October 19, South Place Institute; October 26, Birmingham; November 16, Leicester; November 23, Manchester; December 7, Swansea.

J. McMurray (Bargoed).—You are entitled at law to withdraw your child from religious instruction. The teacher is acting quite wrongly in keeping her in the same class while the religious lesson is proceeding, and in a distinctly illegal manner in giving the religious lessons against your instructions. We advise you to send a written application for your child to be withdrawn from religious instruction, and if the thing of which you write goes on, complain to the local education authority. If the matter is not then remedied write the full particulars to the General Secretary of the N.S.S. and we will see what can be done.

Jessie C. Johnson.—We have read your letter attentively, but we find it very unconvincing. You appear to have been taking all the statements of religious apologists for granted without seeking for proof. Do you find in your own experience that Christians are invariably better men and women than non-Christians? And if not, why should you believe the results of belief to be different elsewhere?

Hilda Langelaan.—Thanks. We are obliged for information which we will keep for future use if required.

V. H. Smith.—We are never likely to measure one's interest in this paper by the amount of their contribution. Thanks for your help.

R. Terroni.—Pleased to hear again from our Italian heretic. Give us a call when you are again in London.

J. H. English.—We hope we have your name correctly. We hope to be meeting our many friends on the Tyneside very soon.

R. Allen.—*The Traveller's Guide* is one of the most monotonous pieces of stupidity that we have seen for some time. We wonder the more intelligent Christians don't stop the circulation of such things. It is an advertisement to the enemy of the kind of intelligence that keeps religion alive.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world; post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Pressure on our space prevents us giving this week excerpts from the many interesting letters received from subscribers to the Sustentation Fund, an account of the subscriptions to which appears on the next page. Mr. George Scott says that we "need never apologize for asking the help of your readers. Who should help, if they do not?" Well, we do not exactly apologize, but it is the fact of the help being given so cheerfully that makes us regret having to ask for it. It is pleasant to notice from the letters received the large proportion of subscriptions from ladies. That is the healthiest of all signs—not because we think less of the men than of the women, but because the Churches have found their chief strength in their hold on the women. And with the loss of the women naturally goes that of the children. Then we shan't be long.

One subscriber hopes that the present Fund will enable us to get back to the sixteen pages. He fears that a small paper means a lessened effectiveness. That may be so; but at the present time an increase in size would mean a serious increase in expense. We calculate that it would mean another £250 a year. Of course, paper is cheaper than it was, but it is still about three times the pre-War price, and there are other things. Compositors' and other people's wages are double what they were, with the result that the permanent increase in the charge for setting up and machining this paper has increased to over £400 per year. This is permanent, as wages are not likely to come down. But we hope to overcome this in the course of the next year or so, which is one reason why we are so anxious for new readers. It is the only sure way, and every one helps.

On Sunday next Mr. Cohen lectures in the Dockers' Hall, Swansea—afternoon and evening. His afternoon subject is "God and Evolution," and he will deal with some of the nonsense that has recently been written in connection with Haeckel's death. The evening lecture will be on "Freethought Before and After the War." These will be the first lectures of Mr. Cohen's this season, and he will then go on without a break until Christmas. As only one Sunday will be spent in London, lecturing, with literary and other work, will keep him busy for the rest of 1919.

It was intended that Mr. Cohen should pay a visit to Neath either on the road to or from Swansea. But as it was found impossible to get a hall, that project has had to be abandoned. Local friends report that the hall proprietors "cried off so soon as they knew who was coming." We are sorry we inspired so much alarm. It is a compliment in its way, but an awkward one. We suggest to local friends that they can still carry on a propaganda with literature, and this may be the means of inducing a more tolerant state of mind. Neath evidently needs waking up.

The Rhondda Branch of the N.S.S. is commencing to organize its winter work, and a meeting of the Society will be held at Morley's Restaurant, Porth, on Sunday, October 5, at 2.20. We hope there will be a good gathering of members and friends. Splendid progress was made in South Wales last year, and it would be a pity for any of this ground to be lost by lack of energy of the local Freethinkers. The local Secretary is Mr. S. Holman, 34 Lincoln Street, Cymmner, Porth, who will be pleased to answer any enquiries.

The Bethnal Green Branch brings its season to a close today with a lecture by Mr. Marshall, at 6 o'clock. The meeting is held in Victoria Park, near the Bandstand. We hope there will be a record attendance for the farewell meeting of the season.

We are pleased to hear that the Belfast Branch of the N. S. S. is now making plans for a vigorous campaign during the winter season. Arrangements are being made for Mr. Cohen to visit Belfast shortly, so as to give a send-off to the season's lectures. Further particulars later, when dates are definitely fixed.

To-day (September 28) is "Bradlaugh Sunday," and many of the N.S.S. Branches will be holding meetings in honour of their great and first President. The N.S.S. has never departed from the tradition of thoroughness that Bradlaugh bequeathed it, and to-day's meetings will, we have no doubt, duly emphasize that fact.

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"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Third List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £189 8s. 6d. C. G., 10s. C. G., jun., 10s. J. Kelsey, 3s. G. Scott, 5s. 6d. J. Carmichael, 2s. 6d. G. Smith, £1. A. W. W., 10s. T. De Vail, £1 1s. Miss M. Needham, 3s. S. Hartley, 10s. H. Green, 9s. F. E. Willis, 10s. Ex-Churchman, 2s. 6d. Ex-Churchwoman, 2s. 6d. E. Leaf, 3s. A. Goodman, £1. Jersey, £1. J. H. English (North Seaton), 5s. V. H. Smith, 5s. R. Terroni, 10s. W. H. Knight, 10s. Mr. and Mrs. Finney, £1. Sydney G. Leech, £1. W. H. Blackmore, 5s. J. Ferguson, 5s. James Dow, 2s. 6d. R. Reid, 2s. 6d. Three Boys from Cologne, 7s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Bullock, 5s. G. Brady, £5. B. Lee, 5s. Dr. A. W. Laing, £6 6s. W. F. Ambrose (3rd sub.), 2s. W. H. Hicks, £2 2s. G. Davies, 5s. H. J. Earthy, 5s. E. Truelove, 5s. M. R. V., 7s. 6d. Miss H. Baker, 10s. R. Daniell, 5s. Dr. J. Laing, £3 3s. R. B. Fowler, 5s. S. Holman, 2s. 6d. F. Hayes-James, 7s. 6d. W. M., £2 2s.

Per F. Lonsdale (Glasgow Branch):—Mr. Little 10s. Mr. Organ, 2s. 6d. Mr. Harrison, 5s. Mr. Faulkner, 2s. 6d. Mr. Neille, 1s. Mr. W. T. M., 5s. Mr. G. Gibson, 2s. 6d. Mr. W. Ewing, 2s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Lonsdale, 5s. Total, £225 16s. 6d.

Corrections.—"W. R. Minton, £5," in our issue of September 14, should be W. R. Munton. "W. J. Wilmot, 2s.," in last week's issue, should have been £1 1s. "T. Good" should be H. Good. The total has been corrected accordingly.

The Advance of Materialism.

II.

(Continued from p. 471.)

If the reports of the recent conference on *Religion and Labour* are a correct index of the discussion, they are the record of a lost opportunity. Neither the speech of Mr. G. N. Barnes, M.P., nor that of Mr. H. F. Stead, shows an intelligent appreciation of the existing stage of the problem, and both of them appear to evince the desire to base the *Religion and Labour* on the platonic metaphysical idealism now challenged in every department of modern science.

The immense debt that Labour and human progress generally owe to the "Materialists" is worthy of a more generous recognition than it has yet received. It is the futility of a religion of mere subjective metaphysical idealism that needs emphasis to-day. It has been the so-called materialists who, by the methods of scientific economic reorganization, have shown to be a fumbling idealism the method by which justice and fellowship could be woven into the physical texture of man's earthly life. And it is the accredited champions of Idealism who are the foremost defenders of the pitiless and illogical competitive system which Labour knows it must destroy, that it may rescue the soul of the world.

. . . . .

The *Religion of Labour* is going to accept the economic interpretation of history. It will be based on the belief that both man's personal development and his social progress have been shaped and moulded by his material conditions, and that all his social institutions, customs, beliefs, politics, laws, religions are the expression and the results of this process.—*R. W. Cummings*, "*The Religion of Labour*," the "*Daily News*," September 5, 1919.

To-day it is the fashion to pretend that Materialism is out of date. From the cathedral down to the tin tabernacle you can hear the preacher declare that science has discarded Materialism as a system of thought, as if by much shouting they could make it come true. This is the parrot talk that was stuffed into them at the theological seminaries at which they were trained, and they know no better. They do not follow the latest investigations of science. You do not find upon their bookshelves the great works upon biology, psychology, and anthropology which have given the death-blow to their puerile superstitions.

They do not read them, they do not want to read them, science is the enemy in their regard. Here is the testimony of a clergyman himself to this fact: the Rev. E. W. Winstanley says that whatever a few open-minded "thinkers may do in the matter of studying condemned or heretical works, the majority of the parochial clergy are little inclined to exercise their spiritual and intellectual digestion in this way. One will refuse to peruse a book because its author is 'suspect,' another will not consult any writing whose 'soundness' or 'orthodoxy' is not assured and testified beforehand, and that commonly in accordance with party standards, the straightest sect in this respect being those who claim for themselves the most comprehensive title. And if investigation tends to lead some parson who retains his studiousness to conclusions upon some point or other differing from those of an ancient council or a 'safe' modern compendium of theology, he is sorely tempted to discontinue his research, or timidly to compromise with truth, for fear of the horror and suspicion with which his ultra-traditionalist brethren will regard him as being not 'a good Churchman.'"[1] The same writer also speaks of "the *fearfulness of novelty* characteristic of Churchmen, and notably so of the clergy. It would probably be conceded that a majority of the latter seem to the plain man to be reactionary, conservative, traditionalist, obscurantist, and the judgment would not be limited to one type alone."[2]

It is true there are a few, a very few, who understand the truth of the matter, that the game is up, that supernaturalism is doomed; one of them, the Rev. H. D. A. Major, writing in the same magazine—of which he is editor—is willing to give up everything if only people will continue to call themselves Christians. He says: "You may alter your views about miracles in accordance with the demands of modern history, science and philosophy; you may change your opinion of the apologetic value of the argument from prophecy; you may part with an infallible Bible and an infallible Church in exchange for an inspired Bible and a Spirit-bearing Church; you may jettison whole theological systems; but your Christian faith will not necessarily be weakened thereby, still less destroyed."[3] That is to say, you may disbelieve in miracles like the raising of the dead, the Virgin birth, etc. You may disbelieve in prophecy. You may regard the Bible as inspired in the same manner that Shakespeare is inspired, and you may jettison all theology *en bloc* if you will declare that Jesus was a great moralist and call yourself a Christian. Another clergyman writes: "I am quite prepared to see such large developments in the coming form of Christianity that the religion of our sons and grandsons would seem to be almost another faith, if it were witnessed by our grandfathers."[4] It is another faith now, in everything but name.

In a recently published book, entitled *The Problem of Creation*, by a Bishop of the Church of England, we read: "At the outset, I would declare my conviction that the evolution hypothesis.....furnishes a master-key for understanding the How of the cosmic process." A "process in which there is no break, fresh start, or

[1] Rev. E. W. Winstanley, *The Modern Churchman*, Nov., 1917, p. 407.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 405. The italics are in the original.
[3] Rev. H. D. A. Major.
[4] Rev. Barry, *The Church in the Furnace*. Cited in the *Modern Churchman*, May, 1918, p. 85.

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stoppage." No outside interference "The curve of life is ever upward—the electron, the atom, the crystal, the cell, the amœba, the dog, the savage, Aristotle, St. Paul." Not only does the Bishop grant the natural evolution of plants, animals, and man, but the evolution of the organic from the inorganic, the living from the non-living. There are no gaps in the process, the atoms themselves have been evolved, and exist: "by virtue of their being, out of a host of possible atoms, the fittest to survive." The Bishop also accepts, and adopts, the Atheistic *ex nihilo nihil fit* (out of nothing there can come nothing), and denies the possibility of "creation out of nothing." Why the Bishop retains the word God at all is not clear; we are confident that ninety-nine out of a hundred who accept his ideas will not see the necessity. And yet the *Modern Churchman* (June, 1918) in a review of the work, from which the above extracts are taken, recommends the work to those responsible "for the intellectual equipment of Ordination candidates." And styles the Bishop "a prophet and teacher." We sincerely hope his advise will be acted upon, but fear there is not much prospect of it.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Religion or Reality?

THE other night, at a meeting, I was accused of believing in "nothing." The gentleman who made the charge was very red and very indignant, and his manner was somewhat stormy. A very few words of mine had stirred wonderfully his otherwise sluggish imagination. The result was a certain amount of turgid abuse, centering around the complaint that I "believed absolutely in nothing—neither man nor God, neither king nor Devil."

The charge was exaggerated just a little. Only three-fifths of it was true. I do believe in something. I believe in man. The remaining counts of the indictment may stand. I acknowledge my guilt. But my guilt can be sustained only if the prosecution recognize the inaccuracy and wildness of their other statements. It is precisely because I do believe in something that I am an infidel, and not a fidel. It takes a fidel to believe in nothing, which is only God's *alias* after all. It is because I do believe in man that I reject all faith in God, king, and Devil. And now, if my good Christian friend will exhibit only a thousandth part of that patience attributed to Job, I will proceed to demonstrate the truth of my contention.

"Man," truly wrote Richard Carlile a century ago from the prison cell, "has no immortal soul. The mortal soul of man is the only intelligent lord of matter." Upon this declaration of faith we Freethinkers take our stand. And we are told that, to believe in this principle of man's mortality and supremacy, is to believe in "nothing." According to the Christian outlook, then, man is nothing, and the world in which he lives, moves, and has his being is nothing. By what process of reasoning does our opponent manage to arrive at this conviction?

It is quite easy to understand. The metaphysician denies the reality of all relative existence, and pins his faith only to the absolute. But the absolute cannot and does not exist. It represents the eternally dead, the everlastingly unknowable. The absolute, since it never decays, can never ferment, create, or give birth to change. It is static, and not dynamic. Belief, therefore, in the absolute is tantamount to faith in death, and not in life. It denies all living reality, and presupposes a non-living, abstract negation of reality to be the ultimate reality. To this eternal principle of death, this useless load of faith, the pious folk address their prayers and hymns, under the invocation of "God." In the name of this God they have warred against sanitation and thought, against science and human liberty, and fettered mankind to the oppressive traditions of a mythical past.

The schoolmen of mediæval thought were conscious of God's nothingness, and actually worshipped him as being Nothing—THE NOTHING. He was NO THING. He was the denial of all reality. The real was an eternal succession of phenomena, ever becoming, ever ceasing, a stream of life. There seemed nothing final in all this; and so they abstracted from this stream of reality its apparent vital principle, and posited it as the unchanging and unchangable essence of all being. This they called "God."

But how could this God be sensed? Obviously, not at all. And what were his attributes? Obviously, he could boast of none. Attributes were passing somethings, symbols of that world which did not exist ultimately in itself. And so these pious schoolmen hailed God as the supreme nothingness, the unchangeable reality.

Modern religionists may not like to think of God in this way. But he represents, none the less certainly, the principle of negation. Bakunin often complained, quite properly, that the idealist invented God at the expense of man, as he invented spirit at the expense of matter. History is reversed; and the spiritual attributes which belong to vital matter are made to exist before all matter, and even to create the matter of which they are, in the real world, but properties. Similarly, God is but a concentrated abstraction of the qualities of man, symbolized as eternal facts, whereas, in the real world, these qualities are but passing and ever-changing attributes of man's character. This totally unreal, disembodied spirit world, presided over by a totally unreal disembodied king or god, is acclaimed as the unchanging reality simply because it is the lasting negation of reality. Precisely because it never changes, includes no contrast, and has no light or shade, it is not reality. It is, for these reasons, the eternal unreality, the everlasting nothingness.

Throughout the centuries, man has lifted his hands to it in prayer in vain. For it does not change. It cannot change. It is the unchangeable. Tears cannot move it. Joys cannot move it. It has no humour. It boasts no mood. It is deaf, dumb, and blind. It is unalterable, immovable, unchangeable. *It is not.* In other words, *it is God.*

This quest of the incomprehensible, because non-existing, absolutely colours the entire religious outlook. Want of contrast explains want of humour. The religious mind is vacuous because its faith is fixed on a vacuum.

Take its attitude towards sacred Scriptures. One, to be pious, must believe in the entire holy Word from cover to cover. There are no gems because there is no dross. There are no degrees of brilliance. The infidel goes to a "holy book" and discovers brilliants, as he might in any other book. The fidel shuts his eyes to brilliants, denies that they exist, since he fears that to exercise his wit on holy thought might be presumptuous. Hence, to him, the Bible is not sacred, not deep, not true, not pathetic. It is holy and inhuman and dead and indecipherable. It is a load, a mythical imposition. It is the wit of nothingness, incapable of creative power, devoid of purpose because inaccessible of change.

There can be no purpose without change. There can be no creation without decay. There can be no reality which is not relative. There can exist no God who was not once created and will not die, or, be, at least, "translated."

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These are platitudes begotten of experience. And in the light of these platitudes it can be seen that the religious man, the fidel, with his myths about heaven and hell, believes in nothing. The infidel believes in life, in reality, in man, in beauty, in all the ever changing facts of shade and colour, of comparison and contrast. The infidel believes in the real world of ever unfolding nature and wealth-creating man. He believes in nothing final, nothing stagnant, nothing perfect. His world is the real world without end—the ever progressive reality. Hence the Freethinker is the real radical, the eternal progressive, the regenerator, and the revolutionist.

"Nothing" is reality, not to the wise, but to the unwise. The philosopher knows that the negation of all that he knows to be is not reality but supra-reality. We discover the unity of nature in the realm of reality, of actual experience; not in an unknowable land of non-existence. When we predicate an altogether unknown and unknowable unity behind all experience, we are transcending reality and entering the world of supra-reality. But supra-reality, the beyond-reality, is but a shadow land of unreality—the realm of the stagnant, the absolute, and the altogether impossible. It is the land of God, of faith, and moonshine.

Whoever believes in this spirit-land as real, believes likewise in unreality on earth. See him mistake respectability, the unreality, for virtue, the reality. See him respect reputation where he should pay homage to character. See him worship monarchy, the stolen suit of clothes draped on an indifferent prop, for manhood, the integral principle of real majesty. See him mistake ceremony for faith, the cant of words and of gesture for the worth of sincerity and attitude. See him hail as infidels men and women of too large a faith to kneel in fear before unknown omnipotence when duty and nature calls for erectness of mind and bearing in defence of truth and the pursuit of liberty. See the self-same fidel mistake, a weird incantation of phrases for prayer, and despise the work to which nature alone vouchsafes an answer. Measure his works by his faith, and judge his faith by his works. And then inquire into the reality of his creed, the reality of his God, and the reality of his life. It will be found that the programme of the religious life which he stands pledged to defend is a practical nothingness, empty of all worth and all integrity. It will be discovered that the wisdom of the religious life is also an eternal nothingness—empty phrases of stagnant, meaningless import. His whole life, instead of being devoted to the pursuit of the ideal in the realm of the real, represents a mean attempt to attain the real-beyond-reality in the realm of the ideal. And so he continues to prate of his God, a sham in a world of shams: a nothingness masquerading as the only something, supra-reality seeming to be reality, the impossible trying to prove itself the probable.

Life, with its call to truth and reality, its eternal protest against all sham, repudiates religion and its God for this very reason, that religion is the nothing altogether above and beyond reality. Life rejects God and all that appertains to Godliness, because life is not Nihilism. And religion is nihilism—not the Nihilism of the Nihilists, which is but a protest against shams, but the nihilism of theology, the conspiracy of hobgoblin and of ghost against the natural well-being of man.

Life, the eternal infidel, with its living faith in progress and the coming commonwealth on earth, spurns the fidel with his deadly faith in the supernatural, and the paradise that can never be in the land of nothing beyond the stars, where nothing dwells in isolated communion with itself. Life leaves the fidel to decay amidst his stagnant fidelity, and marches onward with the infidel to establish the republic on earth which the Devil pioneered in Eden.

GUY A. ALDRED.

On Dying Like a Dog.

Alas for love! if *thou* wert all,
And naught beyond, O Earth!

So, at the end of her beautiful "The Graves of a Household," wrote the pious Mrs. Hemans, an early and still a favourite poetess of mine, but one whom I often think might have been a greater writer had her facile genius not been vitiated by orthodox conventionalism and religious emotionalism. Thus far but no further could her sweet genius, in those songs of the affections, soar; the sanctions all of earth, but the sentiment only complete in some all-compensating heaven beyond; and yet not complete—dissipated, rather, for it was a theme for rejoicing, not for sorrow, the passing of the immortal soul to those abodes of eternal and unimaginable felicity. But, ah, was it? Was not the good lady consciously but conveniently deceived, and passing on to others, quite conscientiously, and certainly religiously, the conventional deception? The point is quite fine—subtle, indeed; the vague, unlocalizable line between doubt and belief, the sublime haze of holy and happy minds. But the vulgar Atheist has no such polite illusions. He grovels in the abyss of the actual. He dies like a dog. Gentle Christians, hypersensitive to sceptical criticisms, will not scruple to tell the unbeliever he will "die like a dog," which, in the average Christian's poverty of vocabulary and imagination, expresses the antithesis of dying like a Christian. And yet we have seen dogs make a most edifying end, suffering heroically, gazing on their human friends with dumb affection's eloquent appeal. After all, there is no reproach in dying like a dog; the reproach rather lies on the human side, with the man who "claims himself a sole exclusive heaven." The dog has no such hope or desire, no such illusion. Its home and happy hunting-ground was, and would be, here; and were it caught up to the seventh heaven with its lord and master, man, it would only be heaven because he was there! and were there no man, no mess of pottage, no rabbits, sheep, and cows to chase, no door to guard, it would, if possible, instantly escape, rejoin its human companions below, and, fawning and crawling on its belly, beg to stay! Which reminds me of little Scotch Jimmy, who asked: "When I dee, mither, will a gang to heaven?"

"O, aye, Jimmy, if you're a good boy."

"An' will I get back to see you, mither?"

"No, no, Jimmy; ye'll no get back."

"Ah, weel," quoth Jimmy, frowning abruptly and defiantly, "*A'm no gaun!*"

James was human, all too human, and in danger of dying like a dog; but, just like dogs and Christians, where his treasure was, there was his heart also.

A. MILLAR.

Why, all the Saints and Sages who discuss'd
Of the Two Worlds so wisely—they are thrust
Like foolish Prophets forth; their Words to Scorn
Are scatter'd, and their Mouths are stopt with Dust.

Myself when young did eagerly frequent
Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument
About it and about: but evermore
Came out by the same door when in I went.

—*Omar Khayyam (Fitzgerald's).*

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Correspondence.

"TRUE" CHRISTIANITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of July 13 you very wisely ask the question, What is "True Christianity"? and presumably you expect a solution of the problem to be volunteered by one of your readers; and on this assumption I venture to submit it, for the benefit of all who find the question perplexing. True Christianity, then, must obviously be the *reality* as opposed to the *sham* or false variety, this latter being what passes muster for Christianity to-day throughout the world.

Christianity has no more mysterious significance than the utterance and practice of "*common sense*," which, although a rare trait, cannot be regarded as novel, mysterious, or objectionable, except by those who do not possess the boon.

Did anyone, I ask, ever hear common sense uttered from any pulpit or by any statesman, by any politician, lawyer, or partizan press proprietor? If any of your readers think they have done so, they would confer an immense boon upon suffering humanity by recording the instance and by furnishing the name of the happy orator or scribe.

True Christianity implies consistency between thought and action, or between speech and action, and therefore means the performance by the occupant of the pulpit, or by the orator or scribe concerned, of all the virtues recommended for the salvation of flocks and the numerous suggestions put forward for the public weal, and the rigid avoidance by those same would-be public guiders of all those sins and errors which sham Christians make a hobby of.

When, may I ask, has any clergyman, politician, lawyer, judge, or partizan scribe ever given an example in this direction, whether called Primate, Pope, Bishop, President, Premier, or Chancellor of the Exchequer?

Again, "*true*" Christianity is opposed to *dishonesty*, whether by the unlicensed pickpocket, burglar, or highway robber, or by the licensed commercialist, financier, lawyer, judge, police, municipalities, M.P.'s, or statesmen; nor does the innocent titles of "*Necessary taxation*," "*Poor and general rates*," "*Guildhall collections*," "*Fines*," and "*Charitable contributions*" serve to diminish the gravity of the act, nor does the killing and torture of dumb animals represent a correct interpretation of Christianity. "*Thou shalt not steal*" and "*Thou shalt not kill*" are two of the cardinal principles of Christianity; and are not both of these common-sense injunctions ruthlessly and shamefully violated by the War in progress?

Let me ask: Where is the prelate, politician, statesman, lawyer, judge, financier, or alderman who, styling himself a "*Christian*," has had the courage and honesty to denounce this monstrous antichristian, because senseless, *expose* of savagery and barbarism, and who, at the same time, has taken consistent steps to put a stop to the insensate pastime?

Again, can anyone in his sane senses imagine that a state of open or occult warfare is consistent with those well-known utterances ascribed to Christ, and which represent the essence of common sense, to wit: "*Love thy neighbour as thyself*" and "*Do as you would be done by*"? In other words, "Respect others as you respect yourself," and "Respect the life and property of others if you wish to be treated in a reciprocal sense."

How, in the name of Goodness or soundness, can those who patronize war and pillage, and who violate every tenet of what is known as "*Christianity*," have the temerity and impudence to call themselves "*Christians*"? The presumption is too ridiculous for words to express.

Hence the obvious necessity for discriminating between the reality and the sham; between a sensible actor and a silly pretender.

The truth is, my dear Sir, that Christianity died with Christ 2,000 years ago, and cannot be revived until after the War, when all antichristians or insensate savage barbarians will have gone to join the great majority.

Thus "*out of evil cometh good*," because peace could never be established without the present War; nor will peace treaties avail.

Savoy Hotel, Madeira. A. WATTERS.

Obituary.

We regret to record the death, from drowning, of George Dean Billing, at Witley Park, on September 10. The deceased was attached to the Liverpool Scottish Regiment, and was bathing with some companions, when he suddenly sank and was drowned. He was the son of George and Lavinia Billing, of Birkenhead, both of whom have been for many years associated with the Liverpool Secularists. The loss of their son, at the age of twenty-one, is a heavy blow, and they will have the sympathy of all Freethinkers. The funeral took place at Haybrick Hill Cemetery, the Secular Burial Service being read by Mr. McKelvie, Secretary of the Liverpool Branch of the N.S.S.

In Memoriam.

IN affectionate remembrance of Charles Stuart Hayes-James (2nd Batt. Inniskilling Fusiliers), the beloved eldest son of F. and G. Hayes-James, of Southern Cottage, Mutley, Plymouth, who fell in action September 29, 1918, aged 19 years 7 months.

Heaven's but the vision of fulfilled desire
And Hell the shadow of a soul on fire
Cast on the darkness out of which ourselves
So late emerged from, shall so soon expire.

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.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Mordaunt Shairp, B.A., "Hugh Walpole, Novelist."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 6, Mr. Marshall, A Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 6, A. D. Howell Smith, A Lecture.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S. (near Band Stand): 3, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Charles Bradlaugh"; Mr. R. Norman, "Wake up, Secularists!"

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, Mr. E. Burke, "The Task of Secularism."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Saphin, Baker, and Ratcliffe.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Free Gardeners' Hall, Picardy Place): 6.30, A Lecture.

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 5.45 (afternoon). Lectures in Victoria Square at 7.15.

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Views and Opinions.

Are We Getting Superstitious?

"Has superstition increased since the War?" asks the *Daily News*, and points to the large number of people who are now wearing charms of various kinds. Personally we do not think the number of charms worn indicates in a large number of cases anything more than a following of fashion, even though the fashion may have been set by some few who were themselves superstitious. People are imitative to an enormous degree, and the reverse of this capacity for imitation is, with most, a disinclination to do anything that others are not doing, or to refrain from anything that others are doing. The older one gets the more one is impressed with this sheep-like quality of men and women, their fear to separate themselves, either in thought or in act, from the crowd. Mr. Augustine Birrel once said that children would rather be wicked than singular. It was a perfectly truthful remark, and it applies with hardly less force to adults. Everyday experience shows that large numbers of people have no invincible dislike to taking part in a piece of rascality. Devise such and you shall hardly have walked the length of your own street before you will have found an accomplice. But formulate an unfashionable or an heretical opinion, and you may search a good-sized town to find a dozen backers, and even then may discover, like the New Testament Jesus, that the larger portion of them will desert you should a really critical moment arise. Singularity in opinion is the bugbear of the commonplace-mind.

* * *

What the War Has Done.

That the War has resulted in a genuine increase of superstition we do not believe. But it has strengthened those conditions which encourage a more open and unashamed manifestation of whatever superstition exists. The strain and stress of the War, the rule of brute force, the general reversion to more primitive levels of thought, naturally lend encouragement to whatever superstition exists. But it would certainly be a great mistake to conclude that because the superstitious type has become temporarily more assertive therefore superstition has become more common. There are always large numbers of people who will have a superstition of some sort, and, like the drinker who, when deprived of whisky, flies to brandy, having got rid of one form of superstition immediately adopt another. With this class the War may well have given an added impetus to their superstitious inclinations, but to another, and one fancies, a growing class, the War has resulted in a definite abandonment of all forms of religious belief. And the War has had this effect, because it brought the claims of all organized religions to the sharp test of reality. We have thus had a dual effect flowing from the War. On the one hand it has driven the naturally superstitious type more directly to its folly. And, on the other hand, it has produced a firmer and more decided temper with those who are really emancipated. The line of demarcation is clearer, and the sharpness of the division has made more sustained progress possible.

* * *

"Tailed" Minds.

But there is more in the *Daily News* question than whether superstition has increased since the War. It opens up the subject with which we have dealt more than once, namely, the amount of superstition current in all ranks of society, and the degree to which it serves as a centre and a source of reaction. Very few, except those engaged in the traffic, have any conception of the trade done in charms, dream-books, fortune-telling, and the like. And very probably very few reflect on the significance of the prevalence of the many superstitions one may come across in an ordinary day's experience. We have heard so much of the progress of science, and of the conquests of science, and the evidences of our scientific knowledge are so numerous, we are inclined to overlook the fact that, so far as the general mind is concerned, our scientific culture is of the shallowest description. Animistic modes of thinking are not without their representatives within even the ranks of science itself. The truth is that our minds are "tailed" as well as our bodies, and we carry into our social practices modes of thinking which belong to the primitive ages of the world. It is the fact of this that gives to Freethought its great social importance. For it means lifting the whole of our social thinking on to higher levels. And it is perhaps the perception of that which makes Freethought more dreaded by the forces of reaction than anything else. It is the one thing which works for the sure destruction of the religious type of mind, and so makes genuine progress possible. It is not for nothing that the quack, in religion, in medicine, and in politics is so frequently found in close association with religious organizations. His appeals touch the religious mind; they are apt to leave unaffected the critical and informed intelligence.

* * *

The Power of the Crowd.

Most men love to move in a crowd, and their thinking —such as it is—follows the line of the herd. A large part of their courage is really little more than a disguised fear of being very different from the rest of the people. At all events, they demand the presence of a sufficient number to keep them intellectually warm.

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There are in this country millions of people who, if they proclaimed their real opinions without any sort of disguise, would acknowledge themselves Atheists. Instead of that, we find them adopting all sorts of half-way descriptive titles for themselves, as a religious friend of ours observed, paying an unwilling homage to the creed they have forsaken. At any rate, if it is not that, this habit of clinging to the name of religion, or of adopting some name that will hide the fact that genuine religion has been rejected, can but strengthen the superstitious mind in its superstition. It implies that there is something, after all, in the superstition that is being attacked; and if there is, the real religionist feels that he may as well be on the safe side. Thus the superstitious practices affirm, on the one hand, the currency of a mass of crude superstitions; and, on the other hand, it is proof that there exists no genuinely organized social opinion against it. It is proof that mental courage is as rare today as ever. And the moral, to us, is that until the Freethinkers of this country have the courage to cease paying "unwilling homage" to religion, to throw off all forms of "respectable" disguise, and proclaim themselves for what they really are, Freethought will never occupy the position it should have in the land. Carlile, Hetherington, Bradlaugh, Foote, the men who broke the bitterest opposition of the Churches, did it, not by concealing their antagonism to the fundamentals of religion, but by proclaiming it. If we would have moral courage in the mass, we must set the example in the individual.

* * *

The Savage in Our Midst.

The mass of superstition to which the *Daily News* draws attention embodies one of the real dangers which front modern civilization. Professor Frazer informs us that in society "the higher human intelligence sways the lower, just as the intelligence of man gives him the mastery of the brute." In a general way that may be true, but in reality the intelligence that sways society need be neither high nor enlightened in a cultural sense. All it needs is to be strong, and directed towards a clearly perceived end. The intelligence of the leaders of the old Roman society was certainly superior to that of the Christians who gained control. And their success—a success which brought civilization to ruin—was achieved through an energetic and unenlightened minority appealing for support to a mass of superstition that was current in Roman society. And what has occurred once may occur again. Culture is more diffused now than it was in the days of old Rome, but its greatest danger still comes from the presence of widespread superstition, to which the reactionist may at any time appeal. Scientific formulæ are accepted by all, but they are only assimilated by a few. In action and in fundamental thinking, animistic and primitive modes of thinking are strongly in evidence, and represent fires that are damped down rather than extinguished. Weakened from within by Christianity, old Rome went down finally before the invasion of the barbarians. Today we are secure from such an attack. Our barbarians are not without, but within. It is the savage in our midst that is our ever-present danger. Our real task is to civilize *him*. And until we see clearly and proclaim boldly that all forms of religion are no more than survivals of primitive animism, we are ill equipped for this educational work.

Chapman Cohen.

The dark night has ended and dawn has begun;
Rise, hope of the ages, arise like the sun,
All speech flow to music, all hearts beat as one!

Whittier.

The Menace of Secularism.

II.

The Hon. Mrs. Gell's book, bearing the above title, was published in 1912, prior to the passing of the Welsh Church Disestablishment Act, as a vigorous protest against the wicked, criminal principle alleged to be involved in the Bill, which was then so heatedly discussed by the parties immediately concerned. It was dedicated to the "Churchwomen of Wales," and to "Our Fellow-Workers, Pledged to Resist the Menace of Secularism." It is well known that the agitation against the measure proved a total failure, and soon now the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church in Wales will become an accomplished fact. In reality, this Act is a further step in the secularization of the State and in the disintegration of supernatural religion in the land. So far as Wales is concerned, however, Secularism, as such, has had but little to do directly with disestablishment, nor is it likely to reap much benefit therefrom. It is only indirectly that the Act is a gain to Secularism, though the benefit it confers upon the Welsh nation is very substantial. But Mrs. Gell's apotheosis of the Church is ludicrous in the extreme. For example, she glorifies the Church as "the great *Almsgiver*," which, in actual fact, should be set down to its discredit. Almsgiving has always been one of the greatest social evils, conducive only to the perpetuation of poverty. What the poor need is not charity, but justice, the granting of which would ultimately result in the complete obliteration of poverty. One of the Church's proverbs is: "The poor ye have always with you," and they exist in order that the rich may enjoy the privilege of "caring" for them, and thereby contribute to their own already high favour with heaven. For the removal of the conditions which render poverty an unavoidal necessity the Church has never taken or encouraged a single action. In Wales, particularly, it has always been pre-eminently the Church of the rich. From the Report of the Royal Commission on Land in Wales and Monmouthshire, which was appointed on March 27 1893, we learn:—

> That on the most typical estates in Wales the landlord and his family belong to the Established Church, while the bulk of the tenants belong to one or other of the Nonconformist organizations. We are not aware that a similar state of things exists in any English county, and there can be little doubt that this remarkable fact has had a powerful influence in creating a marked divergence between the opinions of the landowning class and the mass of the people, and in emphasizing the opposing interests of landlord and tenant (*The Welsh People*, p. 455).

In the parish with which I was most familiar fifty years ago, which was an entirely agricultural one, there were no landowners nor rich people, and all the farmers, with one exception, were Nonconformists, with the result that the Church was attended only by the vicar's family, the sexton's, one farmer's, and a few poor folk who were in receipt of parish relief.

Mrs. Gell tells us that the Church was "the great Teacher" of the Welsh people. She naively admits that there were no provided and secondary schools, no colleges nor evening classes, except such as were carried on by the clergy, but claims that "the education they gave was true education, for while it prepared young people to be useful citizens, it was based on the only sure foundation: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding.'" Be it borne in mind that, according to her

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testimony, the Celtic Church was in existence as early as the year 200, and yet that at the beginning of the eighteenth century there were scarcely any schools in Wales. Ignorance and superstition prevailed everywhere, not only in Wales, but in England and Scotland as well. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge founded two thousand schools for the benefit of the poor; but the education given in them was of a most remarkable character. In 1714 the Bishop of London preached a charity sermon, in which he stated that these schools had been established to fit the child for its "inferior station," or "to order itself lowly and reverently to all its betters." In Wales, at this time, a clergyman here and there, such as Griffith Jones, of Llandouror, and Thomas Charles, of Bala, worked hard in the cause of popular education; but the Church, as a whole, did practically nothing, and the people lay in a state of the grossest intellectual darkness and moral apathy. In Denbighshire there was an old man who suffered severely from asthma and insomnia. Someone told him that if he placed a Bible under his head in bed for three nights he would get relief. His wife wandered about from house to house in search of the Holy Book, but none was found until she got to Henllan Palace, where she obtained an old English Bible, which the sufferer put under his head and slept soundly. On one occasion a young girl went to church and heard a sermon. On her return she asked her mother, "Who was that Jesus Christ the preacher talked so much about?" "I really don't know," answered the mother; "I never knew anyone of that name. Very likely he was some kind-hearted Englishman." A clergyman, accompanied by his sexton, went to administer the Communion to a bedridden farmer. The sexton arrived first, and the old woman asked him, "What have you got in that green bag, Tomas?" "A Bible and a Common Prayer," Tomas answered. "Let me see the Bible," said she. "Here it is, aunty," said Tomas. Whereupon she remarked: "Well, praise the Best Person; there never was one in our house before, nor any need for it either; thanks be to God for that." There was another farmer, one of whose cows was ill on a Sunday; and after giving her some medicine, he thought she was dying. He ran into the house for a Bible, and then read a chapter to her. These are illuminating evidences of the marvellous success of the Church as "the great Teacher" of the Welsh nation, after a trial of sixteen hundred years!

Another fallacious claim put forth on behalf of the Church in Wales is that it has been the custodian and inspirer of morality, "religion and morality being so closely intertwined that the two cannot be dissociated." It is oracularly asserted that "it is through vital, active religion that the moral sense is developed, by the personal action of God the Holy Ghost." We give Mrs. Gell full credit as an orthodox theologian and sincere believer in the Church; but the fact cannot be disguised that she is not well versed in either history or logic. It is the tritest of truisms that religion and morality in many instances have been and still are as far apart as the poles. Saintliness is not necessarily accompanied by elevation and nobility of character. Mrs. Gell proudly asserts that "in the mighty Empires of Greece and Rome philosophy was found incapable of safeguarding the sanctity of homes and the virtue of women." Without fear of intelligent contradiction, we give that assertion the direct lie. To Pagan Greece and Rome the sanctity of homes and the virtue of women were fully as precious and as carefully protected, to say the least, as they are in Christian Britain to-day. Even Lecky admits that in Rome "the ideal of female morality was placed as high as among Christian nations" (*European Morals*, vol i., p. 104). If Mrs. Gell would study such scholarly works as Dill's *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, she would realize how incompetent she is to sit in judgment on ancient Greece and Rome, and how steeped in ignorance or perverse Christian prejudice much of her tiny book is. She says that "morality severed from religion is a machine without a soul," forgetting that the most religious people are often the most immoral; and we have the authority of so orthodox a divine as Professor Peake for the statement that "morality and religion are radically distinct and often mutually antagonistic." He frankly admits that there are "people who have genuine religious feelings and desires, but combine with them a low moral standard" (*Christianity: Its Nature and its Truth*, p. 17). Professor Peake says further:—

> I have heard of a director who was so religious that he would not read a newspaper on Monday because it had been printed on Sunday, who yet was responsible, with his colleagues, for a colossal financial disaster which plunged thousands into ruin (*Ibid.*, p. 18).

Then he accounts for so unpleasant a fact by falling back upon the principle of "the radical distinction of religion and morality, and the frequent antagonism between them."

Following the example of the late Bishop Wilkinson, Mrs. Gell grossly misrepresents the results of the adoption of secular education in France. She gives neither "facts nor figures" in support of the assertion that "juvenile crime of the worst and most degraded type" has increased to an alarming extent in France under the secular system, whereas the latest statistics show that juvenile crime in that country has been steadily diminishing since the year 1889. At the end of 1896 there were 5,023 boys in French reformatories, but by 1901 the number had fallen to 3,037. In 1889 there were 4,080 boy offenders and 728 girl offenders, but by 1894 the numbers had gone down to 3,582 and 620. Has our author not read Dr. Lacassagne's and Fouillet's works on this subject? But while so wickedly falsifying the state of things in France, Mrs. Gell discreetly says nothing about the moral condition of Great Britain and Ireland, and other countries in which religious education is still in full operation. She is silent because she dares not face the facts, which are most discreditable to the Church, Catholic or Protestant, established or free.

But what about the menace of Secularism?

J. T. Lloyd.

A Voice Valedictory.

> Spirits are not finely touched
> But to fine issues. —*Shakespeare.*
>
> To bear all naked truths
> And to envisage circumstance, all calm;
> That is the top of sovereignty. —*Keats.*

In the September issue of the *Humanitarian* it is stated that the Humanitarian League will be "wound up," and that its useful career of over half-a-century is over. The periodical finishes with the Society, and the editor fittingly makes the number a memorial issue. In a dignified farewell to his readers, he says, "the *Humanitarian* will be able to take its departure without any of those idle compliments that on such occasions are apt to be bandied to and fro," and he remarks that he rejoices that the paper has never been popular, for, as Thoreau said, to be popular "is to go down perpendicularly."

Yet, the *Humanitarian*, unpopular as it was, will not disappear "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung." Unlike

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so many advanced papers, it was edited without the least fanaticism, although it challenged convention at so many points. The editor, Mr. Henry S. Salt, ploughed a lonely furrow, but he was never morbid nor intolerant. Taking things at their true worth, he was never surprised by views he could not accept. He merely acknowledged urbanely that they were so entirely different from his own. From the first number to the last of the *Humanitarian*, the leading ideal which has guided Mr. Salt has been that all cruelty is abhorrent, and, to this end, he advocated a wide and comprehensive system of humaneness. For a quarter of a century this brave reformer carried on a crusade against the numerous barbarisms of our civilization, ranging from the cruelties inflicted by men on men to the no less atrocious ill-treatment of animals. Brutal Sports, Criminal Laws, Prison Treatment, Errors in Diet and Dress, Bad Education of Children, and many another subject of reform, came within the scope of this fearless writer. Those who think that he was in advance of his time will note that positive results were achieved, chief among which were the discontinuance of birching in the Royal Navy, the abandonment of the tread-wheel, and the passing of the Criminal Appeal Act. The League had the support of such well-known leaders of opinion as Herbert Spencer, Bernard Shaw, George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, and G. W. Foote, who wrote and spoke on behalf of many of its objects. Indeed, this advocacy of a humanitarian ethic was very dear to our dead leader, and he was never happier than when helping the Humanitarian League, which he described as "one of the noblest and most useful organizations in England."

We have a very real admiration for Mr. Salt's striking talents and widespread philanthropy. Throughout a lengthy career of public usefulness, he has taken as much pains to avoid publicity as most other men do to ensure it. And we cannot allow him to vacate his editorial chair without a tribute of praise, which gives us unalloyed pleasure to pen. At the moment there is a wave of reaction throughout the world, but the time will come when a real civilization, a true humanistic morality, will arise; and on what principles can it be founded but on those which Mr. Salt has proclaimed, with so much earnestness, for so many years.

Unlike those noisy preachers who, in inviting men to be saved, imply that mankind is damned, Mr. Salt conceives human society as a great brotherhood. He sees that the underlying unity is not merely economic, not merely the apotheosis of an enlightened selfishness, but an ethical fraternity, where love and mutual service are to be confidently expected. This faith is not to be limited to one race or species, but extended to the whole world of innocent beings.

"You make steps in our civilization," wrote George Meredith, appreciatively, to Mr. Salt. These steps in civilization have not been easily made. It is, therefore, fitting that the part played by the editor of the *Humanitarian*, and the prime mover in the Humanitarian League, should be recognized.

Mimnermus.

"What is my faith?" I do believe
That ladies never would deceive
And that the little fault of Eve
Is very easy to retrieve.

"*She lost us immortality!*"
Well, so she might; and what care I?
Eden and paradise are nigh
As ever: should we pass them by?

—*Landor.*

The New Testament.

III.

The End of the First Century.

The Gospel narrative, as we have it, must be regarded as the growth of many decades—perhaps as much as three-quarters of a century. The nucleus must have been put together before the end of the lifetime of at least some of the earliest followers of Jesus: on no other assumption can we explain the presence in all three Synoptics of such a prediction as: "There are some of those who stand here, who shall not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come with power" (Mark ix. 1; Matt. xvi. 28; Luke ix. 27). On the other hand, the Gospels, as we have them, cannot have existed until well into the second century. The ecclesiastical historian, Eusebius, quotes from Papias (A.D. 140), the bulk of whose writings are lost, only two fragments in support of the authenticity of the Gospels: one fragment says that Matthew compiled the sayings of Jesus in Hebrew (Aramaic), and that various Greek translations of these existed in Papias' time; the other records a statement made to Papias by a person known as "John the Presbyter," that Mark, a follower of Peter, wrote a disordered account of the doings of Jesus based on Peter's teaching. This is practically all the external evidence that matters. It shows that both Luke and John were either unknown to Papias, or regarded by him as so recently written as to be not worth mention; if Papias had mentioned them at all favourably, Eusebius would surely have quoted his testimony. It shows, further, that the only Gospel narratives generally known early in the second century were Mark (presumably our second Gospel) and some matter attributed to Matthew, which was certainly *not* our present Gospel of that name. Now, as a matter of fact, all the obviously early matter in our Gospels—the passage quoted above is an example—occurs either in Mark, or in a stratum of material common to our Matthew and Luke, called "Q" by the critics. The obvious conclusion is that "Q" represents *one* of the Greek translations of the collected sayings of Jesus which Papias mentions; that the compilers of our Matthew and Luke used it; and that whatever is not in Mark or "Q" must be assigned to the second century.

"Q" and Mark, therefore, are valuable, not as giving the real history of Jesus, but as showing what was put down as authentic about him towards the end of the first century. The discourses in "Q" include the Sermon on the Mount and other material, and give a picture of his teaching very similar to the Epistle of James. In "Q" and Mark together we get the impression of a prophet, exorcist, and faith-healer, denouncing riches and exalting poverty, who preaches the immediate coming of a millennial kingdom, gets into difficulties with the Pharisees on the question of the Sabbath and ceremonial washing, is spurred on by fanatical adherents to proclaim himself the Messiah, attempts a *coup de theatre* at Jerusalem, and is crucified by Pilate as a seditionist. This is about all we can say of Jesus with any degree of certainty. The narrative of Mark, apart from this skeleton of fact, is packed with the impossible. It ends abruptly with the discovery of the empty tomb: the summary account of the appearances of the risen Jesus (xvi. 9—end) is a second-century addition, the real ending having been destroyed.

These Gospel strata are conspicuous by the almost total absence of the distinctive doctrines of Paul. "Q" was most probably first put together in Palestine, and Mark at Rome. Both were, therefore, composed in non-Pauline surroundings, for the Roman Church was not of Paul's foundation. The only Pauline traits in Mark

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are the small gloss in vii. 19 (regarding the permissibility of meats forbidden by the Jews), and the account of the institution of the Eucharist. Of the incarnation and similar doctrines there are no trace.

Mark must have written in the years immediately after the fall of Jerusalem. With the reign of Domitian (A.D. 81-96) a new period of persecution began. This Emperor, a gloomy reactionary, was remarkable for his efforts to restore the old Roman religion in all its austerity. He revived, it is said, the punishment of burying alive a Vestal Virgin convicted of unchastity. Both Jews and Christians, therefore, came in for persecution. To this reign belong the anonymous "Epistle to the Hebrews," the so-called First Epistle of Peter, and the uncanonical Epistle of Clement.

The "Epistle to the Hebrews" is addressed to the Roman Church by a person unknown, temporarily absent from Italy ("Those *from* Italy salute you," xiii. 24), with the object of strengthening the faith of his readers in view of an impending prosecution. The writer is a Paulinist, and a friend of Paul's disciple Timothy (xiii. 23); but the ascription of the letter to Paul himself is now universally admitted to be unfounded. The epistle itself makes no such claim. Whoever the author is, he is a more unpleasant person than Paul—an arid rhetorician and sophist, without a touch of human sympathy—the Calvinist of the New Testament. Paul is occasionally very human; the writer of Hebrews never. His letter is notable for its assertion that wilful sin after conversion to Christianity entails damnation without hope of pardon (Heb. x. 26-31). What a self-righteous Chadband he must have been!

1 Peter is very little later than Hebrews; the persecution then threatened is now raging. The epistle cannot be Peter's, as it is a mere rehash of some of Paul's teaching, with a little topical exhortation thrown in. Moreover, it is not a real letter at all. It purports to be addressed by Peter to the Dispersion (*i.e.*, to Jewish believers) in Asia Minor; yet, in the body of the document, he refers to them as converts from idolatry (1 Pet. iv. 1-5); so that the whole does not hang together. The document must rank as the first of the notorious forgeries which mark the history of Christianity from this time on. Peter, of course, was a favourite name for such forgers to employ to lend credit to their productions, while Paul, Barnabas, James, John, and other apostles were greatly in request.

We have now reached the close of the first century. The Christian Church is ceasing to be a scattered collection of small circles of visionaries, living in ecstatic anticipation of the Second Advent. It has become a "going concern," with a distinct hierarchy of presbyters exercising discipline over the many, and a tendency even, in some districts where converts are numerous, to erect an arch-presbyter or "bishop" as chief wielder of authority. The Judæo-Pauline feud has died down through the superior attraction of Paulinism as a new "mystery," and the complete failure of the Nazarene sect to establish itself outside Palestine, except temporarily and partially at Rome.

The persecution of Domitian ceased with his death in A.D. 96. Christianity, now recognized as distinct from Judaism, was an "unlawful religion" in the eyes of the authorities. There was, however, no great determination on their part to enforce the law; the Roman temper was tolerant; and an edict of Trajan, preserved among the correspondence of the younger Pliny, strictly forbids inquisitorial measures against the Christians. Such persecution as occurred at this time seems to have been due to the fanatical zeal for martyrdom of some Christians, who regarded it as a short cut to glory, and went out of their way to insult publicly the pagan worship in order to win it. The strange case of Ignatius (A.D. 115), who was sent from Antioch to Rome under Trajan to be thrown to the wild beasts, must have been of this nature.

We have a picture of the internal state of the Church at the opening of the second century in the so-called "epistles of Paul" to Timothy and Titus. These writings are totally unlike Paul's in style and vocabulary, and cannot be his. They are, in fact, forged in the interests of ecclesiastical discipline. The fabricator has a low opinion of most of his fellow-believers; he quotes the verse of a Greek poet, "The Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy pot-bellies," as applicable to Cretan Christians—and I daresay he was right! He is concerned about the spread of heresy, and strongly supports Paul's doctrine of the inferiority of women to men. There was no persecution raging or impending in his time; on the contrary, he wishes prayers offered for the Emperor and the Roman governors, "that we may live a quiet and peaceful life in all piety and sobriety." A long way, truly, from primitive Christianity as revealed in the Apocalypse, with its fury against Nero as Antichrist and its denunciations of fire and brimstone!

Robert Arch.

Acid Drops.

The *Manchester Daily Dispatch* reports the principal Wesleyan chaplain to the forces as saying that Sir Julian Byng had told him that "God had blinded the eyes of the enemy," and that "several generals" had told him that it was a "God won war," though they had not prayed before they would pray now. We gather from this, assuming that the chaplain is telling the truth, that some of our generals like a joke, even when practised on one with so poor a sense of humour as the chaplain-general appears to have.

Evidently they take an interest in sport in heaven. At least we assume as much from the action of the Rev. F. M. Millan, Pastor of the Walnut Hills Presbyterian Church, Cincinnati. This gentleman has given out a form of prayer in which God is asked to permit the Cincinnati team to win the baseball championship of the National League. God is also given a few tips how to help. He is to grant "speed and deceptive curves" to the Cincinnati players, with "frequent and timely hits." That is very thoughtful, as we suppose there is some danger of the angels being out of practice. Hitherto we have been under the impression that the only amusements in heaven were singing and music. Perhaps it is not so dull a place as we have thought.

The *Daily News* has published a number of letters on the "Religion of the Soldier." A large number of the letters appear to be written by clergymen and ultra-pious laymen, and they are remarkable for their unanimity in attributing a lot of religion in the soldier. The writers seem to know more of the Army of the Lord than the British Army.

Mr. Israel Zangwill, the famous novelist, says that "the whole anti-Zionist agitation is a Franco-Catholic intrigue." Perhaps Papa, at Rome, and the Cardinals, are thinking of the value of the Holy places as side-shows of the Roman Catholic Church. It would never do to let theatrical speculators get control of Adam's tomb and other sacred relics.

Speaking at the Brotherhood Congress at the London City Temple, the Rev. F. B. Meyer said "the War has killed Atheism." As Mark Twain said on a similar occasion: "the report is greatly exaggerated."

The Religious Tract Society has sanctioned the filming of some popular religious stories published by them a generation ago. When will pious folk be brave enough to film the

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story of Jonah and the Whale, and Noah's Ark? A procession of the animals marching two-by-two ought to provoke smiles from a Brotherhood meeting.

The clergy are a caste apart. But sacrosanct as they are, they are still men, and subject to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. Recently, Father Edward Smith was drowned while bathing at Mount Nugent, Co. Cavan. At Linsdell Parish Church, the Rev. W. Roulston fell dead at the altar when administering communion.

"I know a young man who has been offered £4 10s. a week, but he won't work," plaintively says the Rev. F. W. Roberts, of Uxbridge. We know plenty of parsons, with far better salaries, who work only one day a week.

Cuthbert Shepherd, a well-known Southend pastor, has been committed for trial on a charge of perjury. There is no moral—at present.

There is an unconscious note of humour in an article in the *Daily News* by the Rev. R W. Cummings, a Lancashire parson. Criticizing the average clerical attitude towards Materialism, he says that "the immense debt that Labour and human progress owes to the Materialists is worthy of a more generous recognition." And, then, he adds, "we had better accept the modern Materialist movement as of God." This is pure, unadulterated fun. Only, as old Euclid puts it: it is absurd.

In a leading article the *Daily Mirror* (London) complains that there are too many money-makers at church doors. The writer mentions that in one church a charge of a shilling was made for taking photographs, and in several places of worship charges are made for admission. In one instance there was a ticket office and a postcard and guide-book stall. Then follows the pertinent question: "In other words, after a thousand years of established Christianity in this country, the Church has so little influence over her people that they are prepared to sacrifice their places of worship rather than part with the money necessary to keep them going."

Providence may watch the fall of sparrows, but appears indifferent to the fall of parsons. The Rev. O. Legge-Wilkinson was fatally injured by being run over by a motor at Allington, near Maidstone.

A newspaper paragraph announces that Mrs. "General" Booth will head a Salvation Army procession from the Embankment riding on a white horse. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem, he was riding on an ass. It would have been more fitting had Mrs. Booth kept to the same animal, and infinitely more suggestive to the intelligent onlooker.

A newspaper cutting reaches us advertising "Anti-Atheism Leaflets" at 3½d. per doz., Christmas cards at 4d. Evidently the seller has a shrewd idea of the comparative value of his wares.

There is still a good deal of religion left in South Wales. Thus the *Cambria Daily News* reports the following prayer in a Porthcawl chapel: "O Lord, we hear there are some men playing golf here to-day. Lord, open the earth, and swallow them out of the way, as the earth did with those other men centuries ago." And yet there are some who doubt the power of Christianity to appeal to the higher qualities of man!

There is dissatisfaction among the Nonconformists of Fulham. It seems that of late a number of them have been buried among Church of England people, and the Nonconformists do not like it. These Christians will not even be buried together if they can help it. There really is nothing like Christian love and brotherhood, if one only understands it properly.

The Pope has nearly been frightened to death. Six hundred Bohemian priests have asked for permission to marry, and a large number have left the Roman Catholic Church in order to enter the holy estate of matrimony. Other husbands will welcome the news, in spite of Papa's grief.

The Rev. A. T. Guttery, President of the Free Church Council, complains that pugilists earn greater incomes than Prime Ministers. Brother Guttery made no reference to ecclesiastics. Two score archbishops and bishops share annually the modest sum of £181,000. Besides, pugilists fight real men, and not an imaginary devil.

The journalists are seeking to impress their readers with the very democratic character of the clergy. A paragraph states that the pastor of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, was once a boy who sold articles in the streets. Tradition has it that the Christian Trinity was once a carpenter, but that doesn't alter the fact of the Bench of Bishops.

In an article in a literary contemporary we are informed that "the present-day prophet always shouts." The old Hebrew prophets screamed like parakeets—and with the same brain-power.

The Wesleyan Methodists, Primitive Methodists, and United Methodists are organizing central schemes for raising the salaries of their ministers. It is to be noted that these Christians do not rely solely upon prayer, but pin their faith to the worldly subscription list.

In an article on the "Penurious Clergy," by "One of Them," the writer says "the vast majority of livings to-day are worth only £200 to £250," with a vicarage. That's something like penury! Four or five pounds a week and a house, invitations galore, and presents from the congregation, may not spell wealth, but neither is it the life of a beachcomber.

The remains of the late Bishop of Lincoln were cremated. When the Judgment Day arrives it should be anything but easy for his lordship's grave to give up its dead.

The Rev. T. Pym, of Camberwell, complains of "that Monday yawn." Surely, the unhappy folk in the pews during sermon-time must yawn worse on Sundays than Mondays.

The Rev. S. C. Tickell, of Stainton-cum-Hellaby, is quite in favour of Sunday games in the villages. It would enable village boys, he declares, "to kill time without killing anything else." In the good old days of Faith, the clergy nearly killed folk who tried to kill time on the Sabbath.

A London clergyman writes indignantly in the columns of a contemporary that he was charged ninepence for a glass of home-made lemonade. We can imagine his excitement, for that was about the price that used to be paid for "communion port" in the pre-War days.

Criticizing the Church of to-day, a Nonconformist writing in the *Daily News* says: "the clerical collar does form a barrier." Bless his innocent heart! what would he say if he lived in a Continental country where the priests wore petticoats?

In a *Daily News* book review, the writer says: "Chief crime of all, man has laid his children, generation after generation, as sacrifices before religious stupidity." Freethinkers have said this for very many years.

The dear clergy appear to have quaint ideas concerning destitution. One doctor of divinity publishes a piteous letter in a daily paper, in which he says, "with a net income of about £500 and rising rates, how can one live in these days?" If he took the trouble, he would find the majority of his parishioners existed on a smaller sum.

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G. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 5, Swansea; October 12, South Place, London; October 19, Weston-Super-Mare; October 26, Manchester; November 2, Glasgow; November 3, Paisley; November 6, Milngavie; November 9, Edinburgh; November 16, South Shields; November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 5, Glasgow; October 19, South Place Institute; October 26, Birmingham; November 16, Leicester; November 23, Manchester; December 7, Swansea.

H. J. EARTHY.—We should like to do as you would like—to advertise in a really large way; but we must wait awhile before we can launch out in that direction. Perhaps that will come one day, and then the *Freethinker* will come into its own. It has had nearly forty years of struggle, and deserves some relaxation.

G. DAVIES.—Mr. Lloyd thanks you for your good wishes, which he reciprocates. We hope to be down your way before the winter is over.

H. SPENCE.—Thanks; we are keeping quite well. We suppose we get through what you call "an enormous amount of work" simply because it has to be done. We *can* be lazy with ease, but we haven't time at present.

GAMALIEL SENIOR.—We will gladly visit Huddersfield if a hall can be secured. The Bishop of Wakefield is a funny man, although not perhaps funnier than other bishops. Still, it might have occurred to him that the "mystery" of pain is of his own making. His difficulty is how to harmonize it with a good God. And as that cannot be done, he calls it a mystery. The proper conclusion is that the theory of God does not fit the facts.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges:—H. Reeve, 2s. 6d.

S. HICKS.—Thanks for good wishes. We are pleased to have your appreciation.

A. J. MARRIOTT.—We read the "Profits of Religion" when it appeared in one of the American papers. Sorry you were unable to get a hall in Reading.

"JOHN'S PARENTS."—We are very pleased to receive the support of "John's Parents" as well as that of his "Grandpa." We consider John a fortunate young gentleman, and we hope he will grow to reward them both in the way they would desire. Shall hope to have the pleasure of seeing you both at our next meeting at South Place.

V. C. JAMES.—Thanks for subscription, and the news that you have gained us a new subscriber. We hope all our readers will follow your example. Then we can snap our fingers at Fate.

J. PALPHREYMAN.—Sorry we were not at the office when you called. Hope to see you next time.

E. E. STAFFORD.—MSS. to hand. Thanks. We hope that your expectations will soon be realized.

R. NORMAN.—You say that the existence of your own intelligence is proof of a God. The argument is unconvincing to us, and not complimentary to the Deity.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Special.

WE must ask our readers all over the country to exercise their patience with regard to the receipt of this week's issue of the *Freethinker*, and of subsequent issues, until such time as the Railway Strike is at an end. At the time of writing, we are unable to send the weekly parcel to our Scotch agents, Messrs. Menzies, and those newsagents who are supplied through them will understand the cause of the delay. Messrs. W. H. Smith are taking only half their usual supply, owing to inability to handle their weekly consignment of this and other journals. We presume that all are suffering in a similar degree.

We are printing the usual quantity, and we hope that our readers will see that they get all their back numbers when train services are running. It is certain to mean a serious loss to us in any case, and we must rely upon the goodwill of all *Freethinker* readers to make that loss as light as possible.

Sugar Plums.

Provided there is the ghost of a possibility of getting there—even by aeroplane—Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (October 5) in the Dockers' Hall, Swansea, afternoon at 3, evening at 7. "Saints" in Swansea and district will please note.

To-day (Oct. 5) the Glasgow Branch commences its lecture season with two addresses from Mr. Lloyd, also assuming the possibility of his getting there. We hope that all our Glasgow readers will see that the meetings are well advertised among their friends and acquaintances. There is nothing like commencing the season in good style.

On Sunday next (October 12) Mr. Cohen opens the course of Sunday afternoon lectures at South Place Institute. We are relying upon our London friends to see that the meetings are widely advertised, and we hope they will do their best to secure the attendance of as many enquiring Christians as possible. The following Sunday Mr. Cohen will visit Weston-super-Mare. These will be the first Freethought lectures ever delivered there, and we are looking forward to the experiment with some interest. Thanks to the activity of a local friend, the large Grand Pier Pavilion has been taken for the day and the "Cove (Ladies) Orchestra" engaged. The meetings are pretty certain to arouse considerable interest, and should bring together all Freethinkers in the district. Bristol friends will, probably, make it a point of being present. As the Pavilion seats 2,500 there will be room for all.

We are again able to give only the briefest notices to the letters we are receiving in connection with our "Victory Fund." Mr. G. Brady sends his congratulations on "the splendid fight" that has been put up this last five years. Mr. W. Hicks wishes he could make his subscription twenty times as large, and regrets that we have to give so much and receive so little. Mr. E. Truelove hopes for a shower of that rare but useful friend "John Bradbury." Mr. S. Dorman thinks we are over sanguine in thinking that we are nearly at the end of our troubles, and fears there are hard times ahead. He backs his opinion by doubling his subscription of last year, and hopes that others will follow his example. Mr. A. V. Templeman also thinks we are over sanguine as to the future. Both these friends may be right, but we shall try to show that they are wrong. We recognize that the future is a bit of a gamble, but if we can get that other 1,000 subscribers we are after we have no fear.

The Profiteering Act, it is announced, is to be extended so as to include books. We are glad to see this. Everyone knows how greatly the cost of printing has increased, and one can understand the increased price of *new* books. But when we find publishers working off their stocks of books

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published *before* the War at twice the pre-War prices, it is evident that they are simply taking advantage of the occasion to line their pockets. We speak feelingly as a buyer of books, and we should be glad to see some committee go into the profits of those publishers who are selling their pre-War stocks at two, and even three times, the pre-War prices. Such a policy bleeds those who *will* have books, and makes those who ought to have them less likely to get what they need.

The Manchester Branch has arranged a good course of special lectures for the forthcoming autumn and winter, and is looking forward to a good season's work. Special lectures are arranged for two Sundays each month from October 26 to March 1. The intervening Sundays will, we presume, be filled with local speakers. We wish the Branch success in its endeavours to break its previous records.

The Birmingham Branch has again taken the Repertory Theatre for the season 1919-20, and held its first meeting on Sunday last. Mr. Clifford Williams gave a specially interesting address to a good audience, and the meeting augured well for the autumn and winter. The Committee of the Branch makes a special appeal for the help of all members and friends in the district, and the Secretary, Mr. J. Partridge, 245 Shenstone Road, Rotton Park, Birmingham, will be pleased to hear from all who can give help in any form.

Now that the lecture season is commencing, we wish to impress upon Branch secretaries the need for getting lecture notices, etc., at this office as early as possible. We cannot promise insertion unless they reach us by the first post on Tuesday morning. Some time ago we tried the experiment of having a column devoted to Branch news. That only met with indifferent success owing to only a few of the Branches sending in reports. We are quite willing, however, to give the column another trial if Branches care to co-operate in the matter.

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Fourth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £225 16s. 6d. A. J. Marriott, 10s. W. Bailey, £1. H. Spence, 5s. T. Teasdale, 2s. S. Hicks, £1 10s. Gamaliel Senior, 2s. 6d. A. V. Templeman, £1. V. C. James, £1. Miss M. Pitcher, 10s. J. O'Connor, £1. Allan Jones, 5s. John's Parents, £1. Duncan Stewart, 10s. S. Dorman, £1. K. Palmer, 2s. W. P. Kensit, 5s. Mr. and Mrs. W. Waymark, 5s. Alfred and Andrew Harvey, £2. W. F. Ambrose (4th sub.) 2s. J. Burrell, 2s. 6d. T. C. Riglin, 4s. S. Crowther, 6s. 6d. Postman, 2s. 6d. Blue Black, 2s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Dobson, 10s. C. McLachlan, £1. C. C. Schmitz, 2s. 6d. Total, £240 15s. 6d.

North London Branch N. S. S.—To-day, October 5, North London reopens its winter session at St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, Kentish Town. Miss Evans, of the Land Nationalization Society will speak on "The Land Blockade," and, as Miss Evans is at home with any subject she tackles, we are looking forward to an enjoyable evening. Mr. Harry Jones will take the chair at 7.30. At the time of writing, aerial locomotion is scarcely adequate for our needs; and although we hope that the mists will have rolled away before Sunday next, one never can tell. Will all members and friends make a determined effort to be present at our first meeting on Sunday? and if those within walking distance of the Club will make two efforts, we shall be grateful. Our gratitude will be very much increased if members and friends will try to be in time for the meeting, to commence at 7.30 sharp. Please note—Sunday, October 5.

F. Akroyd, Hon. Sec.

The Advance of Materialism.

III.

(Continued from p. 481.)

In the *Contemporary Review* for June, 1919, there is still more important testimony, from an opponent, as to the growth and strength of Materialism in an article, entitled "Hindrances to Belief in Immortality," by the Rev. Dr. Samuel McComb. In the second part of that article dealing with "The Rise and Influence of Materialism," Dr. McComb deals with this question of the supposed collapse of Materialism, and reaches identically similar conclusions to our own.

Tracing modern Materialism from the time in 1874, when Tyndall startled his contemporaries by declaring that in matter he discerned the promise and potency of all life, which, along with Darwin's revolutionary doctrine of man's development from pre-human ancestors, which, says Dr. McComb, seemed to complete the materialistic argument, and "threatened to sweep the last generation off its feet; and to make materialism triumphant among all educated people." It is now claimed, he goes on to say, that idealism has turned the tide, "and on all sides we are assured that materialism is dead or dying. He cites the testimony of an ethical culture lecturer that "Science herself has sounded its death knell." Of an Anglican theologian (V. Storr, *Christianity and Immortality*, p. 23), who asserts of Materialism: "To-day it has ceased to be fashionable and is thorougly discredited." Also the article on Materialism in Hasting's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, by Dr. Tennant, who declares that "materialism is to be found to-day, perhaps, only in the literature of secularist 'free' thought." And, lastly, the article on Materialism in Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, the writer of which avers that "materialism as a dogmatic system hardly survives in philosophical circles, although in alliance with Secularism and Socialism it is, no doubt, influential among certain sections of the working classes, and often forms the creed of the half-educated specialist." Dr. McComb observes of these deliverances:—

> There can be no doubt that these writers are serious thinkers who not only believe what they say, but have grounds for their belief. Yet it is no less certain that materialism was never more rampant in scientific circles than it is to-day. It was an ancient saying that when three physicians met two were found to be atheists; substitute the word "materialists" for "atheists" and you will not be far from the truth. Owing to the ill odour now attaching to materialism, as though it involved a certain opprobrium, scientific men do not care to label themselves with the name, but that they are firmly persuaded of the doctrine and teach it to the youth who attend our medical schools may be reckoned as certain. Almost any of our young psychologists will tell you, says James, "that only a few belated scholastics, or possibly some crack-brained theosophist or psychical researcher can be found holding back, and still talking as if mental phenomena might exist as independent variables in the world."—*Human Immortality*, pp. 9, 10.

Which quotation from Professor James, being translated, means that only a few crack-brained theosophists or psychical researchers still believe that mind can exist apart or independent of matter. "But," goes on Dr. McComb, "the matter has been recently put to the test in a genuinely scientific style. Professor J. H. Leuba, the well-known American psychologist, sent out a *questionnaire* to groups selected from published lists of American scientists and psychologists and philosophers, with a

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view to discover how far the belief in God and Immortality still prevailed among the educated classes, more particularly in college and university circles. Of those who answered the questions it was found that 49.4 per cent., among the physical and biological students taken together, declared themselves either disbelievers or doubters in regard to belief in immortality. Of the more eminent as distinguished from men of lesser reputation, only 36.9 proclaimed themselves believers. The biologists produced a much smaller number of believers than the physicists, 50 per cent. being credited to the latter, 37 per cent. to the former. Of the men of greater standing among the biologists, only 25 per cent. avowed their belief in a future life. Another interesting and significant fact emerged. Whereas among the physicists and biologists the number of believers in immortality was substantially larger than that of the believers in God, among the psychologists the number of believers in immortality was clearly less than that of the believers in God, 24 per cent. asserting their belief in God, and 19.8 per cent. their belief in immortality. Among the greater psychologists, the number of believers in immortality sank to 8.8 per cent. Professor Leuba concludes that 'in the present phase of psychological science, the greater one's knowledge of psychic life, the more difficult it is to retain the traditional belief in the continuation of personality after death.' To put the matter briefly, more than half of all those who replied to the questions addressed to them, and over two-thirds of the more eminent of these rejected belief in immortality. These ascertained facts prove that the reassuring of men of philosophical distinction as to the passing of Materialism requires critical discrimination. Inquiry and statistical study prove the prevalence of denial of survival in scientific circles as the result of psycho-physiological knowledge implying Materialism, and yet sincere and thoughtful men assure us that this doctrine is thoroughly discredited among the half-educated and scientific circles."[1] And he adds: "Materialism as a psychological-physiological solution of the problem of mind and brain was never more alive in scientific circles than it is to-day." Of course, the Rev. Dr. McComb, who is an idealist and a Doctor of Divinity, cannot admit that Materialism has really vanquished Idealism and Spiritism, and declares that "The old doctrine that nothing is in the mind except what enters through the senses was shown to be false by proving that mind had powers which the senses were not adequate to explain." Even if this were true—and Dr. McComb advances no proof whatever for this contention—he admits that it does not meet the case.

> The scientific materialist does not wince at this philosophic victory. For he is not concerned about the nature of knowledge; such a problem he hands over to the metaphysician. What concerns him is to frame an hypothesis, in harmony with scientific method, which will render intelligible the relation of mind to the bodily organism. And this hypothesis can be expressed in a sentence: *Consciousness is a function of the brain.* It cannot be denied that the facts are on the materialistic side. Universal experience testifies that consciousness is always associated with a physical organism, weakens when the organism weakens, is impaired, and finally disappears when the organism perishes under the stroke of death. It is true that the materialist cannot prove that consciousness is destroyed by death, but why, he asks, should consciousness persist when the other functions, the various chemistries of the body, are stilled for ever?[2]

And he cites Professor Clifford as saying: "If an individual feeling always goes with an individual nerve-message, if a combination or stream of feelings always goes with a stream of nerve-messages, does it not follow that when the stream of nerve-messages is broken up, this stream of feelings will be broken up also, and will no longer form consciousness."[1] And of Haeckel: "That the organization of mind advances with even pace along with the organization of brain, is the merest commonplace. The fortunes of mind and brain are so interwoven at every moment that to the scientific observer it is incredible to suppose the escape of consciousness from the shattered elements of the physical organ. The general thesis of the mind's dependence on the body is buttressed in detail by the researches of the physiologist and the psychologist."[2] And of Duhring that: "The phenomena of consciousness correspond, element for element, to the operations of special parts of the brain. .....The destruction of any piece of the apparatus involves the loss of some one or other of the vital operations; and the consequence is that, so far as life extends, we have before us only an organic function, with a *Ding-am-sich*, or an expression of that imaginary entity, the soul. The fundamental proposition carries with it the denial of the immortality of the soul."[3]

(To be concluded.) W. Mann.

[1] Rev. Dr. McComb, *The Contemporary Review*, June, 1919; pp. 686-7.
[2] *Ibid.*

[1] Clifford, *Lectures and Essays*, vol. i., pp. 247-249.
[2] Haeckel, *The Riddle of the Universe*, p. 65.
[3] E. Duhring. Cited by W. James, *Human Immortality*.

Freethought in Unusual Places.

II.

The Songs of the Southern Syncopated Orchestra.

The unique character of the musical performance of the Southern Syncopated Orchestra is not spoiled by the conventionality of the words of the performer's songs. The *ensemble* of the performance has been transferred from the place of its birth to a London hall, and it has been transferred without the curse of modification, in order to avoid offence to a people of a different character.

Such a transference of an indigenous artistic output to another soil rarely meets with unprecedented success, but the moment was ripe for a definition by respectable musicians of the future of syncopation as a musical vehicle. Apart from merely harmonic considerations, however, the performance has virtues which do not lie altogether upon the surface, but are inherent in its origin.

The influence of the classical nature of the English of the Jacobean version of the Hebrew Scriptures, and its slightly archaic mode of expression, have done as much as anything to create the modern indifference to that work. Similarly, the less classical but better known phraseology of the Christian hymns have nullified any influence in the direction of which they were written. The words are sung by the congregations of the various chapels and churches, where such congregations still exist; but what little meaning these words may once have had is lost now to the people who repeat them. Such is always the result of repetition. The sentences tend to develop into an holy incantation, with a forgotten meaning, but an accepted efficacy.

It is hardly credible, however, that even the sparse congregations of the chapels and churches regard the hymns they sing in the light of an entertainment, and it is consequently somewhat surprising that the Southern Syncopated Orchestra should be able, without offence, to present the songs of the simple race of American Negroes to a cosmopolitan London audience. But it is not quite correct to call the songs hymns. They are not

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precisely sung in praise of God; though the whole life of the negroes in the Southern States is so bound up with religion that the songs are nearly all of a religious tenor.

The less civilized races accept less questioningly the religious truths which the medicine-men of the human race inculcate, and the race whose songs are now being sung in London were no exception to the rule. They accepted the religious truths, and these truths have become just as important in their lives as the Ju-Ju of the African forests undoubtedly was to their ancestors. But combined with the simplicity of this people is a strong flavour of cynicism, which savours almost of disbelief. Life was not so soft for them that they were unable to accept it with equanimity, but even its severity becomes a matter for jest when the limit of human endurance is reached without the possibility of improvement. An identical spirit was that of the Armies in the Field in the late War. They, with no thought for the morrow, or as little as could be managed in that direction, ate, drank, and were merry to-day.

Such a spirit is bound to engender cynicism, and cynicism freshly expressed is an influence which destroys the worship of accepted forms. Thus was some of the quaintest blasphemy of these songs greeted by the audience with bursts of laughter and applause, which was so insistent that encores had to be performed again and again. Like a flash of inspiration, the audience were made to realize that once perhaps there had been a meaning in their own forms of worship, but that the meaning had vanished, leaving behind only a deposit of verbiage.

The complete absence of crystallized phrasing, as we know it, is perhaps the essence of the appeal of these songs to the London audience. Possibly to the performers and to their own people the songs are familiar to boredom, but if so that boredom does not appear. The performers are as interested as the audience, or if they are not really interested, they very successfully create the illusion of that emotion. They come of a people who have not yet arrived at the stage of civilization which demands the stultification, or, at least, the concealment of feeling, and they consequently dramatize their songs by a perfection of physical motion which illustrates the subject of the song. This is quite unconventional from the point of view of European singers, who may feel the passion or pathos of the song, but who merely use hackneyed and stiff gesture so that the onlooker is forced to the impression that they do not know nor can they express emotion. And the success and unconvention of this dramatization by the Southern Syncopated Orchestra, which is seen at its best in conjunction with the song, "Joshua fit the battle of Jericho," is another factor of assistance in pushing aside the garish curtains which we have set up to shield our feeble eyes from the blinding light of truth.

The wording of the title of this song, which was so excellently received that it was not only sung twice during the performance, but was even then encored again and again, is a sufficient indication of the character of the regard for the Biblical topic of the people whose songs these are. To us, accustomed as we are to the Scriptural account of the incident, it had hardly occurred as an ordinary battle in which ordinary human beings were engaged. It was just a story of one of the incredible miracles in the Bible, but these words put the affair in quite a new light as do the dramatic actions which accompany the song. Indeed, if the battle really took place, it was a struggle between two peoples for the possession of a city, and was doubtless conducted with all the pain, and blood, and dust, and sweat, which even modern battles correlate. But from the beginning of time the occupants of the city were doomed to give way before the God-assisted children of Israel, who marched round the city and shouted, when "the walls came tumbling down."

The effect of de-standardization is the beginning of all reform. The apathy and indifference, which are shrouded in the use of conventional actions, habits, phrases, gestures, methods of presentation of artistic work, and all other activities of a civilized people, must be stirred into a bright and consuming interest in their life and all its connotations. It is not sufficient for the people to be merely indifferent to the progress of their race. It is not sufficient for them to allow outworn customs to decay by lack of use. They must awaken to the fact that life is most intensely real and quite thrillingly earnest if an endeavour to live it completely is made. And such novel and surprising entertainments as that of the Southern Syncopated Orchestra are one of the means of jolting the apathetic intelligence. Moreover, the jolt is received with vivid acclaim, and there is an intense Twistian demand for more, but, unfortunately, on the morrow there is the "common round, the daily tasks," with its dulness and routine, its lack of interest, and its mind-maiming method, so that the effect of the extraordinary is almost blotted out in the quantity of the ordinary. But, thankfully, it cannot be quite obliterated, for we are ever more prone to remember our trivial happiness than our vast and everlasting dulness.

G. E. Fussell.

Notes From Ireland.

I know a certain cod of a fellow of no less than sixty years of age. Very pious and cadaverous he is in the face, of which the expression is rarely anything but one of conscious benevolence and inch-thick holiness. He looks as though he subsisted entirely upon blue-bottles of his own catching. I saw him in a small confectioners the other day, his devout jaws making fine inroads upon a pennyworth of black Chester cake. And the noise of his eating was awful—like a calf crunching turnips. Dangling from his watchchain I noticed a small cross upon which a man was stretched—a man with a beard—a brown beard.

Why doesn't suffering breed scepticism? A middle-aged man of my acquaintance lives in spite of a lot of things. These are: As a result of diving, a bone, hard as concrete, grew in his left ear. His doctor recommended a hazardous operation. He underwent the operation which burst the drum of the ear and left him, after four days of dreadful agony, utterly deaf in that ear. Subsequently, he learnt that the operation should not have been performed, and that a certain cure could have been effected in another way without the slightest risk. The same operation paralyzed the whole left side of his face. He is without sense of taste. He suffers from polypus. Three years ago when wrenching out some of the growth, the doctor tore out pieces of the membrane, or something as well, depriving him of all sense of smell. Now, Jesus Christ was crucified. But he didn't undergo half the sufferings of this poor man. Yet he is one whose soul is stunned by the magnitude of our Saviour's pain, and who rears his children in reverence of the scarlet tears of Christ's artificial heart. Truly, as a French poet has remarked, in religion one must not know by the forehead.

The other day I saw a man get into five feet of water. His naked neck was adorned with a beautiful brown scapular. It was a public bath. He dipped his thin white fingers into the salt water and blessed himself several times. He was a good swimmer too.

I know an old man, the father of a family, who is a Freethinker, and who, *moreover*, has never been to Mass for he last twenty years. He took ill a short time ago, and I

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called to see him. The first thing inside his house that confounded my vision was a small card, affixed to the centre of the inside of the hall door, depicting Christ with breast exposed, and an ugly dagger sheathed in his marveilous red heart.

In this little island we haven't much of the Salvation Army business. Some years ago a few of their assistants and harmonium players did embark upon a crusade to a few towns in the south-west. But they were speedily run into the Shannon. Thank God! for no matter how we may pitch into Romanism, we cannot but admire the spirituality and the longing for starlike beauty it often instils. But this Salvation Armyism! it is nothing more than a great, big lump of Puritanism that sees in eternity a banquet "seasoned and perfumed only with blood." It never points to the mists of eternal beauty; it never points, with fingers white and trembling, to shining pictures that artists have painted. No, no, no! It hates the stars because they are beautiful; it hates churches because of the music of their organs. All it does is to stand blackly and bid people shelter under the strength of the dark clouds of the blood of the lamb. Poor fools, why cannot they see that their precious blood is as weak as barley water?

At the same time, the Roman Catholicity of Ireland is not the same as that of the Continent. There it is fundamentally an æsthetic influence. Here it is rather superficial. Indeed, it is hardly more than a complete acceptance, in the most literal manner, of all the Scriptural cycle of legends. Were the wonder tales of the Bible ten times more wonderful, I am convinced that the Irish Roman Catholic's capacity for belief would not even then be strained to incredulity. One of the results of this is that we have no really great Catholic artists. Katherin Tynan is, perhaps, the finest of them; but her stuff is a simple fabric devoid of the profound emotion, and intellectual depth, and exhaltation of the whole being one meets with among the French and Belgian believing-sceptics.

Desmond Fitzroy.

THIS WORLD-ISM.

Seeing that the Power, whatever it be, that created the world (which, I think, certainly cannot have created itself, has, for the present, while using us as its instruments) reserved to itself the privilege of knowing why it has made us and whither it is leading us—seeing that this Power (in spite of all intentions attributed to it, in spite of all the demands made upon it) appears even more and more determined to guard its own secret—I believe, if I may say all I think, that mankind is beginning to cease to try to penetrate that eternal mystery. Mankind went to religions, which proved nothing, for they differed among themselves; it went to philosophies, which revealed no more, for they contradicted one another; and it will now try to find its way out of the difficulty by itself, trusting to its own instinct and its own simple good sense; and since mankind finds itself here on earth without knowing why or how, it is going to try to be as happy as it can with just those means the earth supplies. —*Alexander Dumas (Fils).*

Obituary.

By the death of Mrs. A. Berkeley, which took place on September 13, the Birmingham Branch has lost a very old and earnest worker in the cause. She had suffered long and painful illnesses which had been borne with fortitude. Fearless to a degree, she had never failed on all opportune occasions to express her opinion of and contempt for the Church and all it stood for. With her mental faculties good, she adhered to her Freethought principles to the last, and death was welcomed rather than feared. It was at her express wish she had a Secular funeral, and a Secular Service was read at the grave side. The funeral took place at Witton Cemetery on September 18.—J. Partridge.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

Indoor.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Miss Dorothy Evans, "The Land Blockade."

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, S. K. Ratcliffe, "The Redemption of England."

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Ratcliffe, Baker, and Dales.

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S. (near Band Stand): 3, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Are German Socialists Sincere?"; Mr. R. Norman, "Our Christian Isles."

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "Real Education the Hope of the Future."

Failsworth Secular Society (Secular Sunday-school, Pole Lane, Failsworth): Mr. F. J. Gould, 2.45, "The March of a Million Years"; 6.30, "England s Need."

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (The Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 12 noon, "Religion and Morals in the Light of Science"; 6.30, "Dream Life and Real Life." (Silver Collection.)

Leeds Secular Society (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 5.45 (afternoon). Lectures in Victoria Square at 7.15.

Swansea and District Branch N. S. S. (The Docker's Hall, Swansea): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "God and Evolution"; 7, "Freethought Before and After the War."

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Views and Opinions.

Socialism and Religion.

In the pamphlet, *Socialism and the Churches*, we noted that, while on the Socialist platform there were plenty of assertions as to the identity of Socialism with Christianity, one looked in vain for an equally clear declaration that Socialism had no connection with religion. The comment was meant to call the attention of those Socialists who are Freethinkers to the way in which their platform is being used by Christian preachers and time-serving politicians to bolster up Christianity, and to urge upon them the need for asserting their own beliefs in relation to religion. As we explained in the course of the pamphlet, we did not mean by this that Socialists should spend their time in preaching Atheism, or that Atheism and Socialism were always convertible terms. It was part of a statement that scientific Socialism was Atheistic, inasmuch as it had nothing to do with the belief in God, and that so long as Christian preachers and others were busy trying to identify Socialism with "true Christianity," or "true religion," self-respect seemed to demand from those Socialists who really understood their case a distinct repudiation of the attempted identification. If Socialism, or any other "ism," is to be of permanent benefit to the people, those who advocate it must have clear ideas as to what it is and what it is not. Clear thinking is even more important than good intentions. The world has never been lacking in the latter; it has, time after time, gone wrong for want of the former.

* * *

God and the Socialists.

In the course of a very friendly notice of our pamphlet, *Justice* remarks that when Socialists speak of the religion of Socialism,—

> They mean that the democratic fraternity which Socialism aims at realizing by economic emancipation and a corresponding political emancipation is, to them, an inspiration as all-compelling as was the love of God in the ancient form of faith.....With that borne in mind, we can meet friend Cohen by declaring that social democracy is in no way dependent upon or associated with the Christian religion, or the Jewish, or Hindu, or Buddhist, or Moslem.

If all that is meant by the platform identification of Socialism and Christianity is that Socialists feel their faith as inspiring as that of any religion, there can be no disagreement. This is no more than an Atheist would say about his Atheism. But we think they mean more than this. If their statements mean anything at all, they clearly mean that Socialism is religious in such a sense that it is in full accord with Christian teachings, and is even based on those teachings. To say that Socialism is as good as religion, would be such a harmless remark that it would not be worth the saying. Everyone who rejects one form of belief for another believes the new to be at least as good as the old, otherwise there would be no change. What these Socialists mean is that Socialism is in some sense based upon the Christian belief in God, and has in some way grown out of Christian teachings. That they make these statements with their tongues in their cheeks is quite possible, but one must take public utterances at their face value, or not at all.

* * *

An Implied Atheism.

We will return to that point in a moment. Meanwhile, we will take another point that is touched upon by our friendly reviewer. Our claim was that, while Socialism and Atheism were not convertible terms, inasmuch as Socialism was in no way based upon the belief in God it was properly described as an atheistic system. On this our critic remarks:—

> Yes, but this amounts to affirming that Socialism, chemistry, geography, the theory of ether, bookkeeping by double entry, and cricket are all atheistic. They are in a philosophical sense, but one must talk the tongue of daily life when engaged in daily life. Your ordinary citizen thinks of an Atheistic institution or system as one that deliberately sets out to attack Church doctrines. We cannot allow that, on that interpretation, Social-democracy is Atheistic.

Well, we do affirm that geography, chemistry, etc., are atheistic. That is precisely part of our case as an Atheist, and precisely why we object to all those half-hearted tactics and compromisingly "respectable" plans which consist in first of all rejecting all that is really religious, and then taking enormous pains to assure the religious world that one is still *truly* religious, or that we retain the spirit of true religion, even though we may have rejected its forms. My only demand is when people believe in God they should say so. When they do not believe in God they should say so. And when a man does not believe in a God we know of no other word than Atheist that properly and honestly describes his position. So, when a system is not based upon, does not involve, and makes no appeal to the belief in God, we know of no other word than Atheist that properly and fairly describes it. And we can see nothing either intellectually admirable or socially useful in using a word such as religion—which has a well recognized meaning to the ordinary man—in one sense, while they who hear it cannot fail to understand it in another.

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From God to Man.

The evolution of society is from some form of belief in God to its rejection. In other words, the progress of thought is from Theism to Atheism. This is so general, so universal, that one may fairly describe it as a law of social growth. Those illustrate it who are least conscious of its operation. And its effect is seen in the transition of geography, chemistry, and all other forms of mental and social activity from a Theistic to an Atheistic basis; that is, from a form in which some appeal to God is involved, to one in which the idea of God is altogether discarded. We paid Socialism the compliment of assuming that it had outgrown the religious or fetishistic frame of thought, and had reached the positive or scientific one. We assume that, because Socialism, whether it be sound or unsound, sensible or silly, really has nothing to do with religion. It is, as we have said, and as we now repeat, an Atheistic system. And when we talk of Atheism, we mean what responsible Atheists always have meant by it—without belief in a God. That a large number of people who are as much without a belief in God as we are, and therefore are as much Atheists as we are, choose to call themselves by some other name, something a little less definite, and a little more pleasant to the religious world, because no one is quite sure what it means, is their business. It is only one more illustration of the fact that moral courage is a rare thing in the world, and is not to be acquired by merely disowning the orthodox faith.

* * *

The Need for Plain Speech.

We quite agree with our critic that we must talk the tongue of daily life when we are engaged in daily life. That is precisely our case. It is quite certain that when someone on a platform or in the press talks of Socialism as being religious, and as being essentially Christian, and when that carries with it a repudiation of Atheism as though it were some sort of a moral plague, it is certain that the ordinary man will take religion to mean, not the possession of an inspiration equal to that of the religious one, but that Socialism really is religious in the legitimate and proper sense of the word. And we have no hesitation in saying—while freely making an exception in the case of our critic—it is intended they should have that impression. Intellectual insincerity is, indeed, one of the afflictions of our public life, and makes it the more necessary that those who are aiming at something more than a mere political shuffle should set an example in the right direction. A "democratic fraternity," or any other fraternity worth having, will never arrive until we have taught people clearness of vision and courage of speech. We are far more convinced of the need for clear and informed thinking than we are of our need for moral endeavour. The world has never been short of the latter, but when undirected by the former it has been as productive of harm as deliberate villainy. Ignorance is not merely the mother of devotion, it is the seed-plot of some of the gravest of our social evils. The greater need for those who stand forward as teachers is to see that their message shall be put forward without subterfuge, and as free from ambiguity as deliberate and considered speech can make it.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Covet not overmuch. Let the strong desires come and go; refuse them not, disown them not; but think not that in them lurks finally the thing you want.

Presently they will fade away and into the intolerable light will dissolve like gossamers before the sun.

—*Edward Carpenter.*

The Menace of Secularism.

III.

IT is indisputable that Secularism is a formidable menace to all forms of supernaturalism. Some divines pretend to ignore its existence altogether, while a few others treat it with silent contempt. The majority, however, regard it as their arch-enemy and denounce it in the wildest and most scathing terms at their command. What Secularism is and endeavours to achieve they do not seem to understand. Sometimes it is defined as blatant Atheism; but both the noun and the adjective are wholly inaccurate and misleading. Secularism is not Atheism, though most Secularists are openly avowed Atheists; and certainly it is no more blatant than the Christian religion. Without defining it at all, Mrs. Gell characterizes its "results" as most ghastly. She gives examples:—

> What do we find in Wales? We find that, whereas about one-third of the marriages take place in church, and considerably under a third in Nonconformist chapels, the average number of marriages celebrated *without any religious ceremony at all* is 6,238. Think what this means. There are nearly 13,000 people every year in Wales who deliberately decide that they will enter on what should be the most sacred human relation without the consecration of God's blessing. How can it be expected that a union from which God has been purposely excluded can be regarded as other than a mere civil contract, in which the law, having bound them together, the law can loose them should they desire it? Is it not heart-breaking to contemplate such a lowering of ideals, such a Pagan attitude towards a Divine institution, affecting as it does the whole future of the race? (pp. 55-6.)

It never occurred to the author, evidently, that in penning such a passage she was piling up evidences of the utter impotence of both Church and Chapel to check the gradual secularization of life in Wales. Organized Secularism there was not then in any part of the Principality; but the Secular spirit was all the time silently working and almost imperceptibly creating a Secular atmosphere. In other words, Mrs. Gell herself furnishes abundant proof of the complete failure of the Church in Wales. She declares that it is pre-eminent among the forces which make for righteousness; and yet she is forced to recognize the fact that in Wales, where it has been in active existence since the year 200, it has never succeeded in winning the people to its way of looking at so important a subject as marriage.

Now, why is Secularism regarded as a menace? Our author does not take the trouble to tell us. That it is a serious menace to Churches and Chapels is undeniable; but one naturally infers from certain expressions in her book that in Mrs. Gell's opinion it is a menace to truth and righteousness, and to the decencies of social life as well. Curiously enough, although the Church is pre-eminent among the forces which make for righteousness, and despite all the advantages it derives from its connection with the State, righteousness is conspicuous by its absence from most of the relationships of life. "One cannot take up a newspaper," Mrs. Gell says, "without reading of grievous wrongs and evils in our midst, crimes of violence, of intemperance, of impurity," after fully seventeen hundred years of the Christian Church. Clearly, such a woeful state of things, so far from being the outcome of the prevalence of Secularism, is a most damaging witness against the efficiency of the Body of Christ. As yet Secularism has never had its innings, except once in India under Buddhism, when the result of its reign

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was pre-eminently satisfactory, and we are convinced that when it gets a fair trial in the West it will be justified of all its children. For Secularism is simply a philosophy of life in this world, based on the principle of universal brotherhood. It is a philosophy of this life without any reference to another. Instead of undermining morality, as many Christians aver, it lays its whole emphasis upon every individual's duty to make his or her life a contribution to the sum of social welfare. Mrs. Gell finds fault with M. Paul Bert's *Moral Catechism*, because it forbids instructors to teach that there is a God; but surely she is aware that God is not an object of knowledge, and that in the absence of knowledge teaching is not morally allowable. To teach children that there is a God is to be guilty of a species of immorality. To Secularism, God is a purely imaginary Being with whom it can have absolutely nothing to do; but while it has nothing to do with the supernatural, it revels in the natural, making it the only subject of study, the sole standard of duty and arbiter of virtue. As the late G. W. Foote, in his famous debate with Dr. McCann, well said:—

> Secularism is the philosophy of this life, without reference to another; it recognizes no providence but science, and no saviour but human effort, and it regards the public welfare as the criterion of right and wrong. The ground and guarantee of morality exist in human nature. All real progress is Secular, not Christian (p. 58).

Secularism, as thus defined, is doubtless a menace to all forms of Christianity; but it is the glowing hope of humanity, and one can address it in the fine words of the poet Campbell:—

> Auspicious Hope! in thy sweet garden grow
> Wreaths for each toil, a charm for every woe.

The late Hugh Price Hughes once referred to "those truths of Secularism which are happily no longer neglected by Christian teachers;" but the reverend gentleman was radically mistaken, because the Secular or natural truths found in Christianity are vitiated by their unnatural incorporation in a system essentially supernatural. Secularism urges us to pursue virtue in the strength of our own nature; but Christianity assures us that virtue is attainable alone when supernatural grace fills our hearts. Secularism says to everyone: "Save thyself and become the saviour of thy fellow-beings"; but Christianity says, "Salvation is impossible except through wholehearted trust in the finished work of Christ; come to him and be saved." Thus the Secular Gospel appeals to us as members of society, and as being individually and collectively responsible for all social conditions. It addresses us not as fallen and sinful, lost and ruined, but as imperfect, undeveloped, endowed with magnificent possibilities and promises which are capable of conversion into actual fulfilments by our own efforts alone. Such a Gospel, enthusiastically believed and acted upon, would inaugurate a new era in human history, abolish all artificial class distinctions, enthrone justice and fairplay in all departments of life, and out of the present social hell evolve a paradise aglow with peace and prosperity. As thus understood, Secularism is a menace to nothing except unreality and superstition, while it offers encouragement and cheer to all endeavours after a higher and nobler standard of social behaviour.

The Hon. Mrs. Gell expatiates with pride upon the witness of the Church for Christ, upon its summons of the faithful, Sunday by Sunday, to the worship of the Most High, and upon the services of intercession constantly carried on for all classes and conditions of people, even for the thousands of colliers whose work will not permit them to attend themselves. Then she significantly adds:—

> Tried by whatever test we like to apply, whether the number of baptisms or of confirmations, or of new churches built, or of increase in the staff of clergy to cope with the growing population, or, above all, of those who kneel in humble faith at the sacred feast of Holy Communion, these poor Welsh dioceses show a record which puts many of our wealthy English Sees to shame. The history of the Church in Wales for the past half century is one of steady, continuous upward growth. During the last eighty years no less than 800 new churches and mission-rooms have been built; the number of resident clergy has been more than doubled; the number of Sunday services has nearly trebled, and wherever Welsh is the most familiar language of the people they are held in that tongue. Confirmations and baptisms show a steady increase, while the Easter communicants, which were 134,000 in 1906, had gone up over 10,000 by 1909. It is impossible with these figures before us to doubt that the Church is deeply rooted in the hearts of the people of Wales (p. 57).

We are quite prepared to admit the truth of every statement, except the last, in that long extract, and that thus judged the Welsh Church has latterly been an unqualified success; but that standard of judgment is fundamentally wrong. Ostensibly the Church exists as God's instrument to redeem the world, reorganize society, right all wrongs, and redress all grievances. Wales is chock full of churches and chapels, vieing with one another in zeal and devotion, and yet Wales, like other parts of the country, is in a state of disastrous unrest, as far below the ideal of justice, brotherhood, and charity as it well can be, the fact being that towards the solutions of the vexed problems confronting it organized Christianity makes no contribution whatever. Mrs. Gell seems fully satisfied with the fact that the number of Easter communicants went up over ten thousand in two years, and that confirmations and baptisms show a steady increase. This evidently indicates that the kingdom of God is in a flourishing condition in poor old Wales; but what the Principality needs above everything else is the firm establishment in its midst of the kingdom of man, for the coming of which churches and chapels have done and are doing practically nothing. This is the kingdom which Secularism teaches us to seek with all our might, but the coming of which the Church has often, not only discouraged, but openly resisted, and the preachers of which it has generally persecuted and sometimes put to death. And yet, in spite of all opposition and wicked delays, man's kingdom is coming slowly, and it is on exclusively Secular lines that its advances are being made. Yes, Secularism is a serious menace to priestcraft in all its stages, to other-worldism of every form, and to all the silly vagaries of sacramentalism, but it advocates the essential brotherhood of mankind and the solidarity that should grow out of it, and lays its supreme emphasis upon the need of loving and sympathetic co-operation in the grand mission which has the purification and ennoblement of human society as its sole aim.

J. T. Lloyd.

> Would but some winged Angel ere too late
> Arrest the yet unfolded Roll of Fate,
> And make the stern Recorder otherwise
> Enregister, or quite obliterate!
>
> Oh Love! could you and I with Him conspire
> To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
> Would we not shatter it to bits—and then
> Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's Desire.
>
> — *Omar Khayyam (Fitzgerald's).*

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"Chartered Libertines."

Literature and art have in all ages required a strong moral supervision and restraint.—*Canon Horsley.*

"Do you bite your thumb at us, sir?"
"No, sir, I do not bite my thumb at you, sir; but I bite my thumb, sir."—*Shakespeare, "Romeo and Juliet."*

How pleasant it is for the cultured clergy to have a resident scapegoat on hand to be "damned for the sins they're not inclined to." Whether the victim enjoys it so much is no matter. When, however, the shocked virtue of a Canon of the Established Church utters shouts of prudery concerning modern novels, the feeling of hopelessness that must follow any attempt to instil facts into such muddled brain-matter leaves us again defeated by the outcry of Philistine pruriency.

Canon Horsley has been employing his ample leisure by writing a two-column article in a Sunday paper on the "Evil Influence of Modern Novels," and this is what he says:—

> No list of the causes of low morality in the upper and middle classes would be complete if it excluded the influence of very many of our popular novels.

And then he quotes from Bishop Porteus, who lived before the days of the novel-readers, and when the standard of public decency was so much lower:—

> The contagion of a licentious publication knows no bounds; it falls into the hands of all ages, ranks, and conditions; but is peculiarly fatal to the unguarded minds of the youthful of both sexes, and to them its breath is poison and its touch is death.

Bishop Porteus, it is to be noted, knew nothing of modern novels. He addressed our great grandparents, and the books he had in mind may still be seen in the British Museum Library, provided that the applicant is a man with a strong constitution. To associate, however, such allusions to the present-day novelists is ridiculous. When such insults come from a priest, who thrusts the open Bible into the hands of innocent childhood, our sense of justice is outraged. For there are things in the sacred volume which are eminently calculated to bring the blush of modesty on any face except that of a clergyman. Raw, naked filth, which cannot be read aloud to a mixed congregation, is compulsorily forced into the hands of every child and every maiden; but masters of fiction, who would fain present their puppets as sentient beings, must emasculate and etherealize them until they are the mere shadows of shades of men and women, swayed by motives and temptations that would be held blameless by the Rev. Mr. Stiggins, and gain the approval of Mr. Samuel Pecksniff himself.

For a writer must not even suggest, with Shakespeare, that man is, in sober truth, "the paragon of animals," and that man is no more able to cast off his body than he could sprout the legendary wings which are the recognized attributes of a church-window angel. That a clergyman should go out of his way to denounce modern novels as immoral, is an illustration of the extremely loose meaning attached to words the clergy fling about so recklessly. How such a man can read the account of Ezekiel's banquet, or the story of Onan, and the adventures of Lot and his daughters, without remark, and exhaust the vocabulary of vituperation with regard to present-day fiction is inexplicable, except on the hypothesis that he has the same extraordinary notions of morality as the great Tartuffe.

We are quite satisfied that Canon Horsley's indignation is overdone. All public libraries have committees of selection, and the censorship in the circulating libraries is very drastic. How can the shelves of such places be crowded with "guides to seduction," or "palliatives to adultery"? If Canon Horsley has any real reason for safeguarding the morality of young people, he will see at once that, if the ordinary novel would corrupt a young reader, the Bible would corrupt a regiment. No present-day novelist would dare to disfigure his pages with salacious details of Oriental vice. He would be imprisoned and his books destroyed by order of a magistrate. Yet Canon Horsley and his colleagues force the Bible, which contains all this nastiness, into the hands of every child. Instead of prating of indecent literature, let the clergy themselves set an example. Let them cease to force into the innocent hands of little children a volume which they dare no longer read in its completeness to a mixed audience of adults. Until they consent to do this, they merit the title of "Chartered Libertines."

MIMNERMUS.

Holiday Notes and Discussions.

One of the greatest assets of the Christian religion is a sense of humour.—*Dr. H. Lynn Hough.*

DURING the glorious month of August I wandered about in the land of the British Jack Tar—viz, Portsmouth—the man who saved this country from the invasion of the enemy by his ceaseless vigilance and labour on the high seas, and later in the training land of the British Tommy at Aldershot. In both places I found many Freethinkers. Sailors, as a rule, are very superstitious; but the modern Jack Tar is a very intelligent and genial sort of fellow, not so easy to be imposed upon as the sailor of former generations. In the course of his career, Jack sees a good deal of the world, and, as he keeps his eyes wide open, he does not miss much of interest. It is no good trying to impose upon Jack. Tell him that Jesus once walked upon the sea, without Boynton boots, and he will give you a sly dig in the ribs and chuckle with delight, and you can see at once that such stories for him are but pious puerilities, unworthy of his serious attention. On the other hand, the modern Tommy is affected differently by such a story; he has not such a large knowledge of the sea; and, while he might think that Jesus, as a supernatural being, might perform such an extraordinary feat—or should I say feet?—he would know that, so far as the performance of a human being was concerned, it was quite outside the range of probability.

During my stay at Aldershot I met quite a large number of soldiers, some of them demobbed, who, when I got into conversation with them, confessed that they were out-and-out Freethinkers, and what they had experienced while in France convinced them that there was no "good, kind Heavenly Father" who looks after his children; at least there was no evidence of it in the time of war, and plenty of evidence to the contrary.

Out Farnham way I met a dear old lady of the old-fashioned school, who, hearing that I was "a wicked infidel," wished to say a few kind words to me concerning her blessed religion. She was quite a character. The poor old soul belonged to the Primitive Brethren of the old original sort, and she assured me quite confidentially that she knew that her name was written in "the Lamb's Book of Life." I felt inclined to call her a *Lamb Dyer*—a term invented by the late Fred Leslie while acting in one of the Gaiety burlesques to describe people who have little or no regard for the truth—but compassion for her age, her sincerity, and her manifest ignorance, restrained me. However, I let her down lightly by expressing the hope that the book would not be lost or mislaid before the Day of Judgment, for her sake.

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When I returned home, I spent a week of my holidays in visiting the various parks in the South-East of London, such as Greenwich Park, Blackheath, Southwark Park, Peckham Rye Park, and Dulwich Park; and one evening, after having passed a delightful afternoon in the latter place of recreation, I called on Uncle Joe on my way home. He had been playing bowls during the afternoon, and was rather tired, and at first distinctly opposed to anything in the nature of controversy; but I led him on gradually, and at last he fell into the trap. Knowing his strong aversion to Free Trade, I led him, by an artful device, to admit that, under the present Government, the prices of all commodities had gone up, and that the only way to bring them down was to get an "open market" for all goods coming into this country and plenty of competition, and let the law of supply and demand settle the matter. This he would not admit, but confessed that he was heartily sick of the subject, and would sooner talk upon any subject rather than "Free Trade *versus* Protection." So I sprung upon him the subject of "Some Humorous Aspects of Christianity."

"Uncle," said I, "did you see what Dr. Lynn Hough said the other day?"

"No, my dear boy. What was it?"

"Well, it was this. I don't pretend to know what it means, but he is reported to have said: 'One of the greatest assets of the Christian religion is a sense of humour.' What do you think of that, Uncle?"

"If the learned divine thinks that there is anything humorous or funny in the Christian religion, I don't agree with him. I think that the Christian religion is serious and tragic. But if he means that many Christians have a good sense of humour, then I cordially agree, for I have met many of them with this characteristic in the course of my travels."

"Christians may have a good sense of humour when they are discussing any other subject than that of their own religion; but the Christian religion itself seems to me to be a deplorably miserable and gloomy subject. I grant that there are many things unconsciously funny in it, but they are not meant to be, and Christians, as a rule, are very much annoyed if a Freethinker points them out."

"What do you mean? Give me an illustration."

"Certainly. For instance, I think it is decidedly funny for Jesus to have had either two fathers or only a ghost of a father."

"Come, now, don't be funny at the expense of truth. You know perfectly well that the Church Service says that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Ghost."

"But one of the Gospels (Matthew i. 16) gives the genealogies of Jesus, and traces him back through Joseph to Abraham. Now, if Joseph was not the real father of Jesus he was no relation at all. And then you have the incredible story of the Virgin Birth."

"Oh, for goodness sake, don't go into that. Freethinkers are always harping upon that string. Give that a rest."

"But has it never struck you, Uncle Joe, that assuming the old story of 'The Fall of Man' to be true, God allowed four thousand years to elapse before he decided to send his only Son, who was really as old as himself, down on earth to die, who couldn't die because he was eternal, to blot out the sins of mankind. God seemed to be quite willing to allow all the millions of human beings that were born and died between the time of Adam down to Jesus to be damned before he thought it was time to send his only begotten Son."

"Yes, that is one of the mysteries of the Christian religion," said Uncle Joe. "I don't pretend to understand it, nor do I know anyone that does. But let me tell you that I do not believe that all these people who know nothing about Jesus—never even heard his name—will be damned. No that will not do, and it would not be just, and God must be just before everything."

"Well, but how unjust it would be to damn people who did hear about Jesus and yet were unable to believe in him. Passing over a good deal of the alleged career of Jesus without criticism, come to the story of the alleged betrayal of Jesus by Judas Iscariot. If Jesus came to die to save the world, did it matter how he died? and if it was necessary for him to die on the cross, then Judas was the real Saviour of mankind, for if he had not betrayed Jesus the masses of mankind would have gone to their doom unrepentant and unredeemed. What do you say to that?"

"I say that's nonsense, my dear sir—absolute piffle. Somebody was sure to have betrayed Jesus, and no doubt God used Judas as his instrument."

"Oh, then, poor Judas was an innocent victim in the hands of God? Poor Judas! I always thought he was the villain of the piece, but according to you he was the hero in spite of himself. But, Uncle, Judas came to an awful end."

"Yes, the poor devil hanged himself," said Uncle Joe, with a sigh.

"No he didn't, Uncle."

"What did he do, then?"

"Why, according to 'The Acts,' he purchased a field and had an accident—a fall and burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out"—(Acts i. 18).

"Good God! I don't remember that passage, although I remember that Judas bought a field as the result of his iniquity; but I quite thought that he was hanged. Anyway, he died, and that was an end of him."

"Perhaps he died in both ways."

"I say he died," said Uncle Joe, with indignant emphasis, "so let the poor devil rest!"

"Oh, I don't suppose we shall disturb him after all these years, especially as he had a double death—was hanged and then met with an accident and his bowels gushed out. Poor beggar, he had his deserts."

"Let him rest, I say," repeated Uncle Joe.

"But Christians won't let him rest. Do you know, the last time I saw him, he was on the cinema."

"Good God—what next?"

At that moment Aunt Jane entered the room and informed us that supper was quite ready, and Uncle Joe was spared any further expostulation.

Arthur B. Moss.

The Religion of William Michael Rossetti.

I can hardly have been fourteen years of age when the Christian faith, as a scheme of mysteries and miracles—and with this and every form of faith involving a supernatural mythology—became inoperative upon my mind; and so it has always remained.....The term "Agnostic" was not invented in those years. As soon as it got invented, I found it to be the clearest and the simplest definition of my mental position in relation to the supernatural—a position which amounts to this: that a number of things are affirmed by many people concerning matters beyond their observation, and beyond mine, and that as I know nothing about those things, and am not conscious that anything can be known about them, I likewise profess to know nothing. The affirmations may be true, but I do not know or particularly surmise them to be so.

It appears to me natural that an Agnostic should be more or less a necessitarian or fatalist; such is the case with me. The one thing that seems pretty clear to an Agnostic as regards the constituent parts of the universe is that they are a series of effects arising from causes. The theologian may

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say: "Yes, causes going to a First Cause, namely, God, then why will not you, the Agnostic, openly entertain and avow your belief in the First Cause?" But this will not quite do for the Agnostic. He replies: "I postulate a cause for every effect; therefore I must postulate a cause for your professed First Cause." And I rejoin: "If there was not any cause for the First Cause, then I will stick to the ultimate cause that I can with any clearness trace, namely, the universe as cognizable by the senses and the intellect; and I acknowledge (it is the very essence of my agnosticism) that I don't know whether there was or was not a further cause beyond the ultimate-traced-cause. There may have been; but I, unfortunate and limited creature, know not of it."—*William Michael Rossetti*, "*Some Reminiscences.*"

Acid Drops.

Are the "impecunious clergy" turning to journalism? We ask this question, because the *Times Literary Supplement* has lately developed a theological bias worthy of a parish magazine. In a recent issue it is announced that "Darwinian evolution is no longer counted synonymous with improvement." In a review of a book by a German writer, the reviewer writes: "Whatever his fate in the next world, Providence has already commenced his punishment." This sort of writing should be more suited to *Comic Cuts* than the *Times*.

We wonder who is behind the "League of Truth and Freedom," whose offices are in Essex Street, Strand. It has published for some time, in a leading newspaper, some daily "reflections," more or less topical, and more or less nonsensical. Here is a gem of purest ray serene: "Remember Russia! The Materialism of the World makes it at present impossible that any new Industrial System can meet with success."

A £3,000 organ is to be built for St. John's Church, Southend-on-Sea, as "a War-memorial." The organist will be a lucky man if he gets anything like that sum.

In the Children's Corner in the dear *Daily News*, the adventures of the Noah family are being illustrated in a series of humorous pictures. Where does that unhappy editor expect to spend eternity?

A picture paper has an illustration of a "woman-gardener of 90" years of age. In Bible days folk kept their hair on at the spectacle of a man-gardener aged 900, and without any old age pension either.

The Rev. F. B. Meyer says that modern church life depends too much upon "cultured sermons." In hundreds of chapels there is very little culture, but you can hear "the bells of hell go ting-a-ling, a ling."

The sufferings of the clergy are notorious. The Bishops of Dover and London have been holiday-making in Sutherlandshire, and making record catches of salmon. Dr. Paget, Bishop of Chester, states that he will not live in the episcopal palace.

The modern, up-to-date, parson is a very different individual to his sedate predecessors. The popular clerical flat-catcher can talk of God, Christ, and the Holy Bible amidst drink and smokes and jokes, but becomes very solemn at cross-examination on "sacred" subjects. Recently, a group of four Twickenham clergymen, sitting in a public-house, and fraternising with the inmates, was published in a London paper. In the photograph, these men of God are drinking, but whether it is gooseberryade or "fire-water" the letter-press does not disclose. Anyhow, it seems a very pleasant method of soul-saving.

Because the vicar discharged the organist, St. Paul's Church choir, Grimsby, went on strike. The vicar will remember those choristers in his prayers.

"Working men are the moneyed people of the congregation," said Canon Marriott at Worcester. The preacher knew that there were very few in the pews. The Christian working-man is so often represented in church by his female relations.

"What's in a name?" asked Shakespeare. At Old Street Police Court, Mahomet Baba, a seaman, was charged with stealing money from Julius Cæsar, a fitter, of Grays, Essex.

"It is easier to grow sweet peas than a sweet disposition," sagely remarks the Rev. F. L. R. Lowe, at Uxbridge. And, the man of God might have added, it is as easy to deceive people as to shell peas.

The War revealed the latent superstitions of the English people. Mr. Edward Lovett, the folk-lore specialist, declares that "nearly every soldier, sailor, and airman carried a mascot in the War. The price of children's cauls, supposed to be a safeguard against drowning, reached £3, as compared with 1s. 6d. before the War." Yet the dear clergy still insist that Christianity is the religion of educated people.

An old woman at Bethnal Green was fined £34 and costs for telling fortunes. Nobody fines the clergy for telling folk what will happen to them in the next world.

The War Office is one of the most extraordinary organizations. It forced soldiers to attend religious services; it permitted able-bodied parsons to escape military service; and now it proposes to issue War Medals to the camp followers who handled tea and buns in Y.M.C.A. huts at a safe distance from the fighting lines.

A strange letter was left by Lily Brown, a clerk, of Forest Hill, who committed suicide. In the letter she stated that "her coward heart would not serve the Saviour." Another testimonial to the value of religion.

Judge Crawford, at Edmonton County Court, declared it was "a blot on our civilization" that a Church of England parson should have received "only £204 in thirteen months," after paying away £70 due on a bankruptcy order. Tens of thousands of families are kept on less than £274 for thirteen months, but that fact rarely excites judicial emotion.

A thirty-nine line paragraph, with bold headline, was devoted by the editor of the *Daily Herald* to an account of a letter received from the Pope by the Secretary of the "Save the Children Fund." The editor could do little more if the Holy Father had joined the Fabian Society.

Mr. Robert Smillie declares that "had it been possible to bottle God's sunshine, someone would have charged so much per cubic foot for it."

An evangelical mission is to take place at Cambridge University, which, according to the promoters, "should issue the challenge of Christ" to the Undergraduates. The Cambridge "Heretics" should be trembling in their shoes.

"Christ and the New World" is the fascinating title of addresses to be given at the Queen's Hall, London, and the Bishop of Exeter is announced as the Chairman. "The New World" may be the title; but the Old Gang will be on the platform.

Bishop Golding Bird says "the Church has ceased to touch the imagination and the life of the ordinary man. Just so! But the Church still "touches" the pockets of the ordinary woman.

Writing in *Lloyd's Sunday News*, Mr. Arthur Mee says plain men "are sick to death of the rubbish we are asked to believe in the name of God." Excellently put! We wish every editor in the kingdom had that printed on a card and hung on his desk.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 12, South Place, London; October 19, Weston-super-Mare; October 26, Manchester; November 2, Glasgow; November 3, Paisley; November 6, Milngavie; November 9, Edinburgh; November 16, South Shields; November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—October 19, South Place Institute; October 26, Birmingham; November 16, Leicester; November 23, Manchester; December 7, Swansea.

Owing to the Editor's absence from London over the week-end, a postal packet, which included a number of letters, missed him at Swansea, and has not been returned in time to be dealt with in this week's issue.

Capt. Latham.—We are very appreciative of your congratulations on what you call our "courage and success in bringing the paper through the War without raising its price or lowering its quality or circulation." Perhaps we had better call it a constitutional dislike to being beaten.

T. Harting.—We quite share your view as to the value of the opinion of bishops in a general way, but our note upon the matter to which you refer was based upon a desire to help a cause in which a very large number of Freethinkers are keenly interested. We are certainly not inclined to go out of our way to advertise the patronage of a bishop. We are naturally suspicious of advocacy of even a good cause from such quarters.

J. L. Lewis.—We cannot advise as to a "line" without knowing what is the aspect of the subject with which you wish to deal. But in any case we should say that Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought* and Lecky's *History of the Rise of Rationalism* would help. The first is published in the Home University Library, and the second, at 2s. 6d. (?), by Longmans. Meredith's book is quite good, but can now only be obtained second-hand.

Robert Clarke.—We are pleased to hear from a reader of so long standing as yourself that you find the *Freethinker* more interesting than ever. We should say that the majority of our new readers are gained by the plan of personal introduction. Thanks for your good opinion of our own efforts.

W. P. Kernot.—It was acknowledged as "W. P. Kensit." Sorry, we have made the necessary correction.

H. C. Clausen.—There is something distinctively humorous about a church magazine depending upon the "law of averages" for the arrangement of its pious outings. Thanks for compliments. Hope you are well.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

The curious thing is the orthodox world insists that all men and women should obey the injunctions of Christ; that they should take him as the supreme example, and in all things follow his teachings. This is preached from countless pulpits, and has been for many centuries. And yet the man who does follow the Saviour, who insists that he will not resist evil, who sells what he has and gives to the poor, who deserts his wife and children for the love of God, is regarded as insane.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

Special.

The strike is settled, but we are not yet able to say whether we shall be able to send out this week all the copies ordered. We shall, however, do our best; but much will depend upon the extent to which the railways are working. Those who do not get their paper will, if they see this, understand the reason why.

Last week we were not able to send out more than half the usual number. We had the full quantity printed, so that everyone will be able to get what is required. We rely upon each of our readers seeing that the newsagent gets the back number, and if any difficulty is experienced, and they will let us know, we will send on the number from the office. But they should insist upon it coming through the usual channels.

The strike was unfortunate for us, as we had last week several demands for supplies of this paper in new quarters. Our friends are evidently at work getting us that thousand new readers, and we mention the fact of the increase in order to let them know that their efforts are bearing fruit.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Oct. 12) Mr. Cohen opens the course of Sunday afternoon lectures at South Place. His subject is "Christianity, the Army, and the Nation," and, in view of recent occurrences, the lecture should prove interesting. It is difficult to advertise London meetings, but some lecture slips have been printed, and we hope those who can, will apply either to Miss Vance or at the *Freethinker* office for some for distribution. The lecture commences at 3.30, so there will be time for all to get home before dark.

"By devious ways and strange devices" Mr. Cohen succeeded in getting to Swansea on Sunday last, although it took him two days to get there. Swansea was like a besieged city, the centre of the town filled with soldiers of very boyish appearance, wearing tin hats, which made one think of boy scouts who had been put into military uniform. However, Sunday showed that it would have been a pity not to have gone. The uncertainty of the situation prevented the Branch advertising the meetings, but in spite of that the hall was packed to the doors, while many crowded into the entrance. It was a good opening for the season, and it was good to know that the Branch, which has a number of very earnest workers, is as determined as ever to see that the movement makes headway.

On account of the strike, Mr. Lloyd was compelled to abandon his journey to Scotland. There would have been a strong probability of his being held up somewhere on the line, and to attempt a 400 mile journey under prevailing conditions might have had unpleasant, and even dangerous, consequences. So Mr. Lloyd had to postpone the pleasure of meeting his Scotch friends and admirers till later in the season.

A Forgotten View of War, by Lieut. Trevor Berry (Blackwell, 1s.), strikes a note that is very much above that usually made by those who have as much faith in Christian teaching as has this author. There is scope for a very elaborate article in the questions opened up by Mr. Berry, and we have room only for a few lines. Mr. Berry's thesis is that the mediæval theologian hated war, and to the mediæval Christian mind war was penal in its nature, and was justifiable only when waged for the purpose of vindicating justice. Later there emerged what he calls "materialistic views," which regarded the needs for national self-development as adequate ground for the waging of war. On this our comment is (1): It is a trifle dangerous to take the views of certain theologians and proclaim these to be the mediæval Christian mind; (2) the general mind was certainly not hostile to war, and wars were never so brutal or so bloodthirsty as they were during the dominance of the mediæval

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Christian mind; (3) in all ages writers have denounced war, and no more credit is due to Christians than to others; (4) the great fact remains that not only were wars constantly waged with the approval of the Church, but all those features of war that Mr. Berry denounces have grown up in Christian times, and under Christian auspices.

Mr. Berry must, we think, search further for the explanation of the prevalence of the "penal view" of war which he praises as a product of the Christian mind. It was nothing of the kind, and its practical decay was proof that even a good thing decayed under Christian influences. Here, again, we have room for only a line when we need a chapter. Christianity inherited from old Rome the conceptions of world empire, of universal social justice, and of clusters of different peoples living under the same laws and central government, modified by local traditions and circumstances. The consequence of this was that war naturally assumed the character of "vindicative justice" which a central government exercised towards unruly members of the world State. Had Christianity possessed sufficient moral force of its own there was here the groundwork of an era of universal peace. But this was precisely what it lacked. Under its rule the Pagan empire went to pieces, and there was left, as its ghost, the universal Church. Petty nationalities began to develop, and war as an avowed instrument of national development made its appearance. The fruits of all this is before the world to-day. At present we can only say that the features which Mr. Berry finds so admirable in mediæval Christianity, were really the afterglow of the old Roman Empire which the Christian Church lacked the moral and intellectual greatness to perpetuate. For those who wish to know the best that can be said on behalf of Christianity in its relation to war, we commend Mr. Berry's pamphlet.

The discussion between Dr. Lyttelton and Mr. Cohen is now, we hope, almost ready, and we are expecting to have it on sale in the course of two or three weeks. Mr. Cohen has written a brief preface, and Dr. Lyttelton a rather lengthy appendix. The whole covers about 150 pages, and we hope to be able to make the selling price 1s. 6d. That would be a low price in ordinary times; under present conditions we can safely call it a marvel of cheapness. Mr. Cohen has also revised and enlarged his *Determinism or Freewill?* and that also will be on sale within the next few weeks. This has been out of print for some time, but there is, we are glad to say, a constant demand for it both here and abroad. The book has taken its place as one of the standard works on the subject, and has received praise from the most diverse quarters. Other works are also in preparation.

Will Birmingham friends please note that Mrs. Bayfield, of Manchester, will lecture in the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, at 7 e'clock, on "Gods and Humanity." This is Mrs. Bayfield's first visit to Birmingham, and we hope the theatre will be well filled.

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Fifth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £240 15s. 6d. Miss A. M. Baker, £1. Robert Clarke, 5s. Willingly, £1. E. G. Baskerville, 10s. Capt. J. Latham, £5. John and James McGlashan, £2. A 17th Lancer, 5s. H. C. Clausen, 10s. V. Massey Crosse, £1 1s. L. Campbell, £1 1s. J. Ekins, 5s. F. Reed, 5s. P. and J. P., 10s. W. Dobson, 2s. 6d. W. F. Ambrose (5th sub.), 2s. T. J. Thurlow, 2s. 6d. M. Beale, 5s. H. Russell Phillips, 10s. H. Tucker, 10s. A. G. Hann, 2s. 6d. H. McC., £1 1s. D. S. MacDougall, 2s. 6d. E. Donat, 10s. R. Bell, 5s. A. Shepperd, 10s. D. Porteus, 5s. J. Chapman, 2s. 6d. E. Chapman, 2s. 6d. A. G. Lye, 5s. Total, £259 6s.

Correction.—"W. P. Kensit, 5s.," in last week's issue, should have been W. P. Kernot.

The Advance of Materialism.

IV.

(*Concluded from p. 493.*)

What, then, is practically the notion which most people seem to have of the relation of Deity to Nature? It is that of a great master-mechanic far away above us and beyond our reach, who once upon a time, long ago, and once for all, worked, created matter, endowed it with necessary properties and powers, constructed at once out of hand this wonderful cosmos with its numberless wheels within wheels, endowed it with forces, put springs in it, wound it up, set it a-going, and then—*rested*. The thing has continued to go of itself ever since. He might have not only rested but *slept*, and the thing would have gone itself. He might not only have slept but *died*, and still the thing would have continued to go of itself. But, no, I forget. He must not sleep or die, for the work is not absolutely perfect. There are some things too hard even for Him to do in this masterful, god-like way. There are some things which even He cannot do except in a 'prentice-like, man-like way. The hand must be introduced from time to time to repair, to rectify, to improve, especially to introduce new parts, such as organic forms.

Such was the state of the compromise until twenty-five years ago. Nature is sufficient of itself for its *course* and continuance, but not for *origins* of at least *some* new parts. Such was the state of the compromise until Darwin and the theory of evolution. But, now, even this poor privilege of occasional interference is taken away. Now origins, as well as courses, are reduced to resident forces and natural law. Now, Nature is sufficient of itself, not only for sustentation, but also for creation. Thus, Science has seemed to push Him farther and farther away from us, until now, at last, if this view be true, evolution finishes the matter by pushing Him entirely out of the universe, and dispensing with Him altogether. This, of course, is materialism.—*Professor Le Conte, "Evolution"; 1891; 298-299.*

In the face of these statements, Dr. McComb admits that:—

> It must be confessed that the answers made to this contention are far from satisfactory. The familiar argument, that matter is not an independent something prior to thought and a production of thought, but is real only in so far as it appears to mind, so that, if you abstract mind from matter, matter ceases to be—this argument appears to the scientific materialist to be a mere metaphysical puzzle or quibble, and he takes his stand on the principle that for practical purposes reality is directly perceived. The idealist's reasoning seems an airy nothing when confronted with the world of objective facts.

Therefore, to meet the new situation, says Dr. McComb, "the materialist is pointed to the elements of mental and moral experience. No physical facts, it is maintained can explain moral values and ideals.....But, much as it appeals to the student of ethics and philosophy, it fails to persuade the scientific materialist. For the demand of the student of physiology is for facts, observed phenomena which may compel him to modify his thesis of the mind's functional dependence on the body. In the absence of these facts, his hypothesis holds the ground, and no assertion of man's moral and spiritual dignity will avail. But the curious and startling feature of the present situation is that the idealist acts as if he had achieved only a seeming victory over his antagonist. For, of course, materialism denies immortality, and if idealism had really inflicted ruinous defeat on its antagonist, would not the idealist proclaim to the world the fact of survival, and bid all men rejoice with him in the sure and certain hope that death is not the end? As a matter of fact, the idealist draws no such inference, in the great majority of cases. On the contrary, he warns us that undue emphasis on a future life augurs an unhealthy spiritual temperament; that, at best, the belief is secondary and inferential, and might even disappear, leaving all ethical and religious interests unaffected! The scientific materialist may well smile

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as he sees the *impasse* in which the philosopher finds himself, and he goes on his way, more than ever convinced that philosophy is a will-o'-the wisp, and that for him the path of wisdom is that of observed fact and inductive method. Out of this deadlock there is only one way. It is to refute the materialist by giving him what he professes to crave—that is to say, facts open to observation and experiment."[1]

Dr. McComb does not offer any such facts, but declares that only by the slow and tedious accumulation of psychic research, "to show that mind works independently of the physical organism, can the scientific materialist be met on his own ground, and be compelled to surrender." Well, the Materialist will welcome all the facts of psychical research when he has convinced himself by actual experiment that they are facts, and not dreams and fancies, and he has not the smallest doubt as to the result. He has "sounded forth the trumpet that shall never call retreat." As Huxley so eloquently remarked: "The majesty of fact is on their side, and the elemental forces of Nature are working for them. Not a star comes to the meridian at its calculated time but testifies to the justice of their methods—their beliefs are 'one with the falling rain and with the growing corn.' By doubt they are established, and open inquiry is their bosom friend."[2]

We are now in a position to appreciate the statement in Hasting's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics* that Materialism to-day is only to be found "in the literature of Secularist 'Free' thought." And in Baldwin's *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology* that "in alliance with Secularism and Socialism it is, no doubt, influential among certain sections of the working classes, and often forms the creed of the half-educated specialist." These writers seem to be infected with the same snobbishness which caused Heine to give up Atheism when he found it was being adopted by working men.

These gentry sneer at Materialism because it is adopted by Secularist working men, as if that alone was sufficient to condemn it. And yet when they wish to recommend their creed they mouth about their Christ being a working man. What unspeakable cant and humbug.

Secularists can justly pride themselves upon the part they have played in the conflict between religion and Materialism. The whole strength of the Secular party has been on the side of Materialism. Our organ, the *Freethinker*, has ranged itself on that side from the very first, nearly forty years ago, in the face of the most sinister campaign of calumny, persecution, misrepresentation, and ostracism, connived at, and sometimes instigated by the Government, backed by the Churches, as in the prosecutions of Bradlaugh, Foote, and Holyoake. The object of the Government being, as Professor Bury rightly declares: "to prevent the spread of Freethought among the masses. The victims have been either poor, uneducated people, or men who propagated Freethought in a popular form.....

The unconfessed motive has been fear of the people. Theology has been regarded as a good instrument for keeping the poor in order, and unbelief as a cause or accompaniment of dangerous political opinions. The idea has not altogether disappeared that Freethought is peculiarly indecent in the poor, that it is highly desirable to keep them superstitious in order to keep them contented, that they should be duly thankful for all the theological as well as social arrangements which have been made for them by their betters."[3]

It is the Secularists who have fought for and vindicated the right to popular free speech and publication in matters of religion. The Secularist has never cloaked his opinions under the discreet veil of Pantheism or Agnosticism, he has boldly adopted the secular trinity of Atheism, Materialism, and Determinism. In this sign we conquer. As the late Dr. Maudsley well said:—

> There is always a fund of wisdom in the common sense and practical instincts of the common people, the instruction whereof philosophy misses when it neglects or disdains to take sufficient account of it. Having to deal with the stern realities of life, working men are compelled to have working beliefs in order to act; feeling instinctively that the best test of the value of a belief is—Will it work? They turn their backs impatiently upon empty abstractions and demand beliefs with real contents. For example, persons of culture who make for themselves the dismayful discovery that they cannot go on believing in a personal God, are happy to take refuge in more general terms and abstractions, such as Deism and Pantheism, and make mighty use of them; but the labouring classes, rejecting such barren metaphysical abstractions, either repudiate God altogether or demand that, if there be a God who ruleth the earth, He shall be a real living God, working in the events of the world as they do themselves; not any abstract absolute, emptied of contents and living only in the misty regions of speculative thought, but "a literal, personal, and eternal God." Thus they by their practical instincts, escape those self-deceiving effects of abstractions by which philosophers sometimes seek and discover the explanation of a concrete fact in what is no more than the abstract statement of the very same fact."[1]

As to the disdain and contempt expressed by these lowly followers of Jesus, for Secularists, we may cite the testimony of Dr. Flint, a Scotch Professor of Divinity, who made a special study of Secular and Atheistic literature for the purpose of refuting it. He says:—

> There is an impression in some quarters that Atheism is advocated in a weak and unskilful manner by the chiefs of Secularism. It is an impression which I do not share. Most of the writers who are striving to diffuse Atheism in literary circles are not to be compared in intellectual strength with either Mr. Holyoake or Mr. Bradlaugh."[2]

That is to say, that the educated literary men who advocate Atheism in the upper circles, are not to be compared with the leaders of Secularism.

The future historian of scientific Materialism will pay tribute to the heroic efforts of those Secularists who, in the face of every discouragement, calumny, and persecution, devoted their lives, without hope of gain or fame, in popularizing the philosophy of scientific Materialism.

W. Mann.

Apologetics from the Heathen.

The other day a Catholic weekly, the *Universe*, in a paragraph under the above heading, referred to an item of news which it had from a French religious journal—*Le Croix*. It would appear that a delegate of the Chinese Republic had presented a decoration to Mgr. Reynaud, the Vicar Apostolic of East Che-Kiang, and had taken the opportunity to say some complimentary things about the Roman Church. The Chinese politician, a Mr. Soun, was, at one time, an uncompromising and active opponent of Catholicism; but, for reasons best known to himself, had been converted, not, of course, to Christianity, for the religion of Paul makes no headway among the educated classes in the Far East, but to a

[1] Dr. McComb, *The Contemporary Review*, June, 1919; pp. 688 689.
[2] Huxley, *Lay Sermons*, p. 279.
[3] J. B. Bury, *A History of Freedom of Thought*, p. 222.

[1] Maudsley, *Natural Causes and Supernatural Seemings*, pp. 11-12.
[2] Dr. Flint, *Anti-Theistic Theories*, pp. 518-519.

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more indulgent view of the superstitions of Western Europe. We are not surprised to find our contemporary making childish capital out of what he impolitely, if not impudently, calls the testimony of the *heathen*. Our Western religionists have deplorably obtuse ideas as to the relative values of the words they use so glibly. For them heathenism seems to imply a low stage of civilization. But the Chinese have ages of culture behind them. Their ideals of conduct spring from a wide and profound knowledge of human nature, and provide for all contingencies of social life. Their poetry, an art which is the supreme test of the culture of a race, reveals a subtlety of imagination, both in the writer and the reader, that seems to us strange and wonderful in comparison with the coarser intellectual and emotional texture of our Western verse. On a lower plane, this mental fineness is manifested as wilyness, the chicanery of statesmanship and commerce, the artfulness of the celestial card-sharper whose bland smile and vain tricks were celebrated by the greatest of American humourists.

. . . . .

Evidently the artful and complimentary Mr. Soun had some object at the back of his subtle Oriental mind when he forced himself to say nice things about Catholicism. Now, our religious friends must be badly in need of comfortable words if they can find a palatable truth in the egregiously untrue assertion that "Catholicism is the foundation of the purest patriotism, and an unfailing source of self-sacrifice." This, surely, is to lay on the butter just a bit too thick. Only the religiously prejudiced and ignorant can believe that the patriotism of British Protestants or Freethinkers was in any way less pure than that of French, Belgian or (shall I say?) Austrian Catholics. Indeed, what has most struck intelligent observers everywhere is that the majority of soldiers have no interest in and no use for religion of any kind. This is the conclusion reached by the modernist theologian, M. Loisy, in *The War and Religion*, and he suggests that the eloquent paragraphs in the clerical newspapers about the great revival of religion in France are rhetorical fictions invented by unscrupulous journalists and their friends who are interested in political and religious reaction. What the millions of French Freethinkers fought for, and what they went cheerfully to certain death for, was the safety of their best and dearest, the preservation of their beloved country from the unclean hands of the Boche. In point of purity the very sacrifice of the Freethinker was not less than that of the Catholic. They were both fighting for the august life of the country, which life, as M. Loisy well says, was of a more supreme value, even for the believer, than a "blessed immortality in the company of Christ and the saints." The narrow and parochial religion of Jesus was absorbed in the far nobler, the far broader religion of patriotism. As with the French so with our British troops, there was a noticeable absence of religious feeling of any interest whatever in truth as it is in Jesus. Father Dominic Devas, who was a Roman Catholic chaplain in the British Army, notes the prevailing ignorance of Catholicism, but he has nothing to say about the "purest form of patriotism." The ideal of equal justice for all civilized people, for which so many of our brave fellows fought and died, was, for them, something above and beyond the creeds of Christianity. It put fire into the blood, and stirred up emotions which the religion of the Churches was powerless to reach.

. . . . .

Our artful and bland Chinese diplomat had evidently taken the exact measure of his Catholic friends, and knew what would please them. The bravest and most intelligent officers and generals were all practising Catholics, and, of course, their patriotism was purer than that of anti-clerical officers and generals. Then he introduces the usual claptrap about the religiosity of Marshal Foch, who "prays, goes to mass, and has a brother a priest." Now, of course, if Marshal Foch tells us that he is a devout believer, we see no reason why we should doubt him; but the fact of his brother being a priest is hardly conclusive evidence of his orthodoxy. We seem to remember that Cardinal Newman had two brothers, one a Theist and the other an Atheist. Are we to use this fact as an argument to prove his scepticism, or their belief? We are afraid that the wily heathen had a poor opinion of the intelligence of the average practising Catholic, and, from what we can see, he seems to have had good cause.

. . . . .

Again, in France as here in England, many men of prominent position lend their support to the national religion without being themselves pious. They go to church at times, and their presence is used to extend the credit of religion. When discussing the Catholicism of the converted Freethinker, M. Paul Bourget, M. Dimnet reminded us that, while there are many practising Catholics among the members of the *Action francaise*, some of the most prominent are avowed unbelievers; but the latter, he goes on to say, uphold Catholic principles quite as much as the former, from patriotic, or, as they say, positive principles. Bourget himself praised Fustel de Coulauges, the famous historian, for writing in his will the following passage: "I wish to be buried according to the customs of the French, that is to say, religiously. It is true that I neither practise nor believe in the Catholic religion, but I must remember that I was bred in it. Patriotism demands that if we do not think as our ancestors, we may at least respect what they held to be the truth." It comes to this, that a man may be an open infidel and yet act as a believer without incurring opprobium; indeed, he may be praised for his duplicity. There are many political Christians here who regard the Church as a useful element in the State, much in the same way as Voltaire insisted on the social value of a belief in God. It is not impossible that Foch, like M. Bourget, may be a Catholic from "political necessity postulating higher principles."

. . . . .

It is obvious, then, that the Catholics who read *The Universe* and *Le Croix* are in need of comfortable words, or they would have asked themselves what the Chinese politician had up his sleeve. From testimony on all sides, it is common knowledge now that in both the French and English armies the rank and file were ignorant of and indifferent to the teaching and dogmas of Christianity, while the more intelligent were openly sceptical and anti-clerical. Among the officers in our own Army, the unthinking were Christians not from earnest, thoughtful conviction, but because their school-training had impressed it upon them as good form. Officers of a more disciplined and more independent turn of mind regarded religion as a more or less amiable, emotional vagary, which could do no harm if it did little good; they would even assist at superstitious functions from mere politeness. In fine, if we assume that the armies of France and England represent the people as a whole in its most vigorous form, we notice an almost complete lack of religious feeling. And it is curious that the only testimony in a contrary direction should come, not from the chaplains who were at hand, but from an astute Chinese politician, who, we may be sure, had good reasons for flattering his European friends.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

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"Mixed Marriage."

This term is used by the Catholic Church to indicate that it has given permission (or dispensation) to one of its members to marry another of a different faith. What really follows is that refined human nature is to be defiled or defied, or that the outside party of the Church is to be conjoled into the Church Rites. We will say that a young man, brought up in a good independent atmosphere, happens to make the acquaintance of a young woman who has been brought up in the Catholic religion—the man is not warned or does not know of the young woman's religion, and when the time comes that he feels he ought to marry her, he is brought into contact with her Catholic relations, and if he is naturally of a peaceful disposition, his frame of mind does not allow him to raise any objection to meeting the wishes of the young woman's religion. When he agrees to marry, papers are put before him to sign, first, that he will not interfere with her religion, and, secondly, that all children of the union shall be brought up in the Catholic faith—these he considers small items, for on his part he does not want to lose the girl, and he wants to be fair to his lady love. It is not until the actual wedding ceremony is performed—that he wakes up, and probably leaves the Church, already sick at heart and a broken man.

In the married life that follows, his ideals are shattered, and he finds it very difficult at times to live a straight and useful life; his children, if he be unfortunate enough to have any, become a mockery to him; he cannot consider them his own. He is hounded about by his wife's relations, who never cease to remind him of their considered superiority, and he is tackled at every conceivable opportunity by the priests of the Church, to whom his wife at all times appeals, in preference to him.

If he still retains his independence at middle age, it speaks much for his determination; but it is very rarely he survives to enjoy old age as it should be enjoyed.

Much more brutal and indecent is the case of a young woman who agrees to marry a Catholic. Probably she has attended, in her girlhood, chapels and Free churches, which, with all their faults, at least do, to a degree, educate. She is humiliated directly the marriage service is performed. Her body ceases to be her own, her husband considers her a long way beneath him, and she leads a life absolutely at her husband's dictation, and according to his nature and desires. Her children are brought up to ignore her.

Sometimes, at some crisis in her life—say at childbirth—she gives in, and enters the husband's Church; but even then she is given to understand that converts are inferior to born Catholics. She may retain her independence until the end of her life, but in all probability she is tackled on her death-bed, and entered into the Church. Her husband then announces to his friends that she was always at heart a Catholic.

Of all problems connected with the rites, privileges, and doings of various religions, there is nothing to equal the livelong misery of the mixed marriage. Young women contemplating a mixed marriage particularly should be warned of the danger, and given to understand plainly that they are to lose, first, control of their own bodies, and then possession of their children, by these alliances.

"Horresco Referens."

Man can paint, or make, or think nothing but man.
—*Emerson.*

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.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Joseph H. Van Biene, "Lessons to be Unlearned."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Debate, "Does Materialism Supply an Adequate Philosophy of Life?" Affirmative, Mr. T. F. Palmer; Negative, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A.

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Laurence Housman, "Ideals of State Service."

OUTDOOR.

Regent's Park Branch N.S.S. (at Regent's Park or Parliament Hill): 3, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Socialism and Secularism in Germany"; Mr. R. Norman, "The Holy Strike."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Birmingham Branch N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mrs. B. Bayfield, "Gods or Humanity."

Leeds Secular Society (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 5.45 (afternoon). Lectures in Victoria Square at 7.15.

South Shields Branch N. S. S. (at residence of Chairman, Mr. J. Hannon, 14 Hunter Terrace): 6.30, Meeting of Members and Friends.

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Views and Opinions.

Is Religion of Importance?

There are no questions of so vital importance to man as those that cluster around religion. So said a daily paper the other day. And we meet the assertion with a flat denial. Really, there is no subject of so little intrinsic importance as that of religion. Everyone finds they can quite safely treat other people's religion as of no consequence. The Christian treats his own religion with the utmost gravity, and laughs at that of others. The only reason he has for thinking a particular religion is of importance is that it happens to be his own. And the other man never fails to return the compliment. Each one laughs at the other's absurdity—and cherishes his own with the utmost affection. The awe-inspiring narrative of one religion becomes the laughter-making material of another. What is revered and what is laughed at are largely a matter of geography. If Old Mother Hubbard had been in the Bible, it would have been treated with the same gravity as Jonah and the Whale. It is a mere accident that we have not as many solemn commentaries dealing with the esoteric significance of Jack and the Beanstalk as we have dealing with the Song of Solomon. So long as we only know one religion, we may talk of their transcendant importance. It is when we contemplate religions as a whole, and note how one cancels the other, that we begin to realize how easily the lot might be dispensed with.

* * *

Does Religion Help?

What justification is there for the often expressed opinion that it is of profound importance to have sound views concerning God and a future life? Does it really matter? How can a belief in God—for the presence of which no one is the better, and for the absence of which no one is the worse—how can a belief of this kind be said to be of importance? Other things equal, the student, the scientist, the "man of the world," gets no help from the belief. The belief in God never made a wise man of a fool; it has often helped to make a fool of a wise man. It has never made an honest man of a rogue; but it has often made the road from honesty to roguery easier than it would have been otherwise. No one, where there is anything at stake, say, a house to let, business credit to be given, or an assistant to be employed—ever takes religious belief as an adequate guarantee of character. Long experience has removed all delusions on this head. In all the practical affairs of everyday life we look to a man's recorded character, not to his professions of faith. And it is manifestly absurd to call of importance beliefs that may be, and are, so easily and safely set on one side by all.

* * *

Practical Atheism.

To-day there is not even the theoretical importance that once attached to religious beliefs. While natural forces were believed to be either supernatural in character or under the direct control of supernatural beings, there was at least a theoretical importance in forming right beliefs concerning these assumed powers. The gods then punished or rewarded men as their beliefs concerning them were sound or unsound. But this view is no longer held by the great mass of educated believers. God, they say, no longer interferes with the action of natural forces. He works through them, and their effects on believer and unbeliever alike are identical. And what is this but saying in a roundabout manner that the belief in God does not matter? If natural forces operate on all alike, if prayer is powerless to alter them, if God does not modify their incidence to meet the needs of believers, if these things are true, in what essential does the position of the believer in his dealings with Nature differ from that of the unbeliever? I do not believe in God, says the Atheist. I believe in God, but he does nothing, says the Theist. What substantial difference is there between the two positions? Practically none. Our whole welfare depends upon our knowledge of Nature and its processes. The theory of God *minus* this knowledge is of no value. The knowledge *minus* the theory of God is none the worse. And all history enforces this lesson. Individuals and nations flourish or decay in proportion to their understanding and use of natural forces. Nothing else matters. The God who sent harvests and plagues, health and disease, victory and defeat, was someone to reckon with. But a God who does nothing may safely be set one one side in a world where the need for intelligent action is great.

* * *

An Inculcated Desire.

The sober truth is that religious doctrines never trouble those whose minds have not been specially prepared for their reception. Left alone, no one born in a modern society would experience any difficulty concerning them. If such questions occurred at all, it would only be as men discuss the habitability of Mars, or the question of an atmosphere in the moon. The professed interest in religion is an artificial, a manufactured one. It is the result of thousands of preachers impressing it upon the public; of parents, acting as the unconscious tools of the pulpit, impressing it on their children. The prominence given to religion in State functions helps to perpetuate the illusion, and the result is, not the creation of a living conviction of the value of religion, but a divorce between theory and practice that

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makes our public and political life a mass of insincerity and mental crookedness. Long ago Emerson said:—

> Our young people are diseased with the theological problems of original sin, origin of evil, and the like. These never presented a practical difficulty to any man—never darkened any man's road who did not go out of his way to seek them. These are the soul's mumps, and measles, and whooping cough—a simple mind will not know these enemies.

But a simple—that is a free mind—is precisely what we are not allowed to have. Our education, our social environment, is so arranged that the dice are loaded against us from the start. Our enemies wear the garb of friends, and our friends are unconsciously made our enemies. The "Black Army" is in occupation, and our chances of a free life in a free city are small while we give the leaders of that Army an honoured place in our homes and in the schools.

* * *

Why We Forget God.

It is an old complaint with the clergy that people "forget God." The wonder is that it is never asked *why* God is forgotten? A God who did something would not be ignored in this way. People could not, even if they were inclined to do so. But the suggestive thing is, not that God is ignored, but that no one is the worse for ignoring him. In every other direction the pressure of insistent facts is such that they command attention. Society cannot retain bad drains and keep free from disease. We cannot eat bad food and drink impure water without paying the price. Natural facts, real facts, cannot be ignored with impunity. Sooner or later we are brought up against the actualities of existence. Why is it, then, that people can go on year after year, not merely blind to God's existence, but convinced that their disbelief in his existence is justified by the facts, and feeling no need for the assumption of his being? That is the real question the believer has to face, and never does. The truth is that God is not forgotten, he is found out. People have become aware of the fact that "God" is no more than one of those primitive ideas that were framed in the childhood of the race, which have become utterly discredited by more mature thought. It is the hypothesis of God that is ignored, and the cause is precisely the one that justifies the rejection of witchcraft or demoniacal possession, and for exactly the same reason.

* * *

Our Suicidal Policy.

It is not true then, that the question of religion is of vital importance. It is only needful that people should understand it, and that chiefly because to understand it is the surest way of leading to an appreciation of its proper value. For the rest there are a hundred and one things in life that are of greater importance than religion. The land question, the housing question, sanitation, education, are all of infinitely greater importance than any of the questions about which theology concerns itself. Yet we put on one side matters of "great pith and moment" while we discuss questions of vestments, and lights, and baptism, and the other grotesques that go to make up the phantasmagoria of theology. We starve our scientific workers while we squander millions on a priesthood that has left its evil impress on every page of European history. We allow that priesthood to retain a footing in our schools, and thus deliver up the new generation mentally shackled and ready for exploitation. We cry out for reform, and refuse to recognize that the most pressing reform of all is to learn to take things in the order of their importance; to deal with this life while we have it, and with any other in the order of its emergence.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Facing the Facts.

THE Rev. Sidney M. Berry, minister of Carrs-lane Congregational Church, Birmingham, is a man who has the courage to face at least some of the religious facts of the day. In a sermon entitled "The Spiritual Groundwork of a New World," published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for October 8, Mr. Berry is impelled by his sense of honesty to make a few highly significant admissions. One of his wholly sensible utterances is as follows: "To imagine that the new world will appear as a result of the greatest war in history is to misread the situation and to write the preface of another book of disappointed hopes." Time was when certain evangelical divines, such as the Bishop of London, Dr. Horton, and for a while Dr. Orchard, almost deified the War, calling it "a day of the Lord," "an operation of God," and generally one of the most signal blessings conceivable. One man of God declared, at an early stage, that it had sounded the death-knell of Rationalism, and would without a doubt bring about the return of the nations to God. Another confidently assured us that the trenches were so full of God and his glory that Atheism could not live in them. "If you know of an Atheist at home whom you wish to see converted, send him to the front, and his Atheism will fall away from him like an outworn, useless garment." But Mr. Berry harboured no illusion of that kind. Though he laboured for months among the soldiers in France, he did not speak of any mighty work of God accomplished upon them, dramatically putting an end to their indifference and even antagonism to religion, and converting them into thoroughgoing, exemplary saints. The truth is that the oft-repeated story of a religious revival at the Front so remarkable as to be well-nigh incredible, was purely legendary, as is now proved beyond dispute by the book edited by Dr. Cairns, of Aberdeen, called *The Army and Religion*. In this exhaustive work we learn that to the majority of men in the Army "the Living Christ was a mere phrase," the term "the kingdom of God had little meaning," and that they "missed Christ through lack of reliable information about him." Mr. Berry says that this is a factor to which he drew his people's attention again and again on his return from France. Dr. Cairns' book, he tells us, "amounts to nothing less than an inquiry as to how the manhood of the nation stands with regard to religion," and "one of the outstanding facts which emerge will probably startle many people at home." Then he states the startling fact thus:—

> It is that the majority of men do not know with any clearness the things for which Christ stood, what he taught, and what is the meaning for them and for the world of his Person and work. In other words, the most essential thing in the Christian Gospel is not widely known to day.

Mr. Berry's statement is entirely true, and the only rational comment on it is that its truth is the severest and completest condemnation of the Christian religion that its worst enemy could conceive. There is no agreement among the divines at this late day as to what Christianity really is. The theories of Christ's Person are amazingly numerous, while those concerning his work are beyond count. But is not this the saddest, most humiliating confession a minister of the Gospel can make? The people are ignorant because their teachers have no knowledge to impart; and because of this utter lack of knowledge the teachers themselves are split up into multitudes of hostile and mutually destructive schools, devoting much of their time to the degrading task of anathematizing one another. All they have to

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offer to their respective followers is a cluster of opinions, and the consequence is thus described by Mr. Berry :—

> The manhood of the country is widely ignorant of the essential thing in the Christian message. The Christ to whom men are invited is not known. As an experienced chaplain puts it, it is of no use to tell men like these to have faith, to be saved and born again, to come to Christ, because "they have not the foggiest notion as to what that sort of thing means."..... The life which is the light of men is veiled.

Mr. Berry holds the Churches responsible for this gross ignorance to which the manhood of the country is so unfortunate an heir. It is the mission of these organizations to make Christ known to men, but they "are to-day in a state of weakness." Speaking in their name, the reverend gentleman sorrowfully admits that "in our present form we are not equal to the situation." While making this dismal confession, however, he forgets that he has already referred to Christ as omnipotent, as "having command of the human situation," and as "equally having the power to give to his followers which will make them capable of victorious realization." The question naturally arises, What is the use of Christ being all-powerful if the Churches are weak? But after all, this is not the point. The fact is that if Christ is omnipotent and can make the Churches capable of victorious realization, their notorious impotence is not their fault, but his. It is he who has failed, not they. As merely human institutions they have done wonders, but as his appointed and inspired instruments they have been and are stupendous failures. In a surprisingly *naive* fashion Mr. Berry virtually makes that admission. He says :—

> We are the instruments of that life which is the light of men, the life once manifested in Christ which in us gives the power to become children of God and to open the gates of the kingdom to others. The Kingdom is the authentic picture of the new world. We shall never realize it by ourselves. There is only One who can bring it in, One who uses us for his tasks and empowers us to face all the difficulties of the way.

The wonder is that the reverend gentleman does not see the glaring inconsistency of his position. Either his portrait of Christ is false, or if Christ himself is real, he is culpably neglectful of his duty. It is said of the men in the Army that they "reverence Christ, but do not look on him as living." Why do they regard him as not living? Simply because he does not do the work which he is spoken of as living on purpose to do, and naturally the living Christ is a mere phrase to most of them, and to some only a myth. It is perfectly true that "character is the foundation of everything"; but character is not a Christian product. Some of the most shining saints have displayed exceedingly defective characters. Character is an exclusively human growth, and is to be found in Heathendom as well as Christendom.

What is the essential Gospel of which the manhood of Britain is declared to be so deplorably ignorant? According to Paul the essential thing in the Gospel message is "the faithful saying that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and, in order to do that, he had to be made to be sin for us, to die a sacrificial death, and rise again; but Mr. Berry finds the heart of the Gospel in the two fundamental notes of righteousness and love. These two fundamental notes, however, are by no means peculiar to Christianity, nor have they ever formed the burden of the Gospel message. Righteousness and love are fundamental notes in Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, and Mohammedanism. A finer eulogism on love was never seen than the one pronounced by the Buddha five hundred years before Jesus was heard of, and he was equally insistent on justice and fair play as between man and man. According to Mr. Berry, Jesus excels all other teachers in that in him alone light and power are joined together, "for at the very heart of his Gospel is the assurance that out of moral weakness and failure he has the power to bring men to moral strength and victory." That is true enough, but it is also true that the very heart of his Gospel is historically a lie. As Carl Snyder, in his *New Conceptions in Science* well says :—

> Neither mentally, morally, nor physically has the race varied greatly in six thousand and perhaps ten or fifteen thousand years. The intervening period has meant less change than is represented, say, in the advance from a bushman or a cave-dweller to a Zulu chieftain (p. 20).

As John Sparrier, in Temple Thurston's *Evolution of Katherine*, observes: "Christianity is only a word—so is Christ—so is Jones; believing in a name won't save you" (p. 17), an observation of the truth of which the history of the Church furnishes ample evidence. Christ has not drawn mankind to himself, and the majority of those who call themselves by his name are not one whit superior to the majority of those who do not. The transforming power of his indwelling Spirit in the soul is the creation of an empty dream. Writing some time before the War, in that same *Evolution of Katherine*, Temple Thurston maintained that "Christianity has done away with duelling, and (that) it is gradually doing away with War," your martial type of man being well nigh effete, worn out, dissipated. We know to-day how absolutely false that statement is, militarism being still held in high esteem by all, except by comparatively small bands of despised Socialists. Indeed, Mr. Berry himself affirms that even now "all the hard barriers between classes and nations remain on the ground which we have to cultivate," the War having, not only failed to destroy them, but actually intensified many of them. As Tennyson tells us: "progress halts on palsied feet," and one's hope often grows dim and misty. A local preacher once exclaimed: "The world is upside down; the world needs to be turned downside up, and, by Heaven, *we* are the chaps to do it." That was a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, and the world is lost until we begin to act upon it. The bottom dog's only chance lies in self-assertion, not in resignation and self-denial. The weak will always be more or less cruelly exploited by the strong until as the outcome of education and persistent struggle they succeed in shedding their weakness and gaining strength. Waiting upon the Lord has never resulted in any good, and nothing is nor can be more futile than trust in Christ.

Mr. Berry recognizes many facts ignored and even denied by the majority of his brethren, but the most momentous of all facts he, too, ignores, or fails to face. It is that the Christ preached in all the Churches is the most gigantic and tragic of failures.

J. T. Lloyd.

DOGS AND MEN.

Of all the beasts that graze the lawn or hunt the forest a dog is the only animal that, leaving his fellows, attempts to cultivate the friendship of man; to man he looks in all his necessities with a speaking eye for assistance; exerts for him all the little service in his power with cheerfulness and pleasure; for him bears famine and fatigue with patience and resignation; no injuries can abate his fidelity, no distress induce him to forsake his benefactor; studious to please, and fearing to offend, he is still an humble steadfast dependant, and in him alone fawning is not flattery. How unkind then to torture this faithful creature who has left the forest to claim the protection of man; how ungrateful a return to the trusty animal for all his services.—*Goldsmith.*

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Concerning Thomas Paine.

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.—*Blake.*

CARDINAL NEWMAN should have been well acquainted with Freethought, for one of his brothers was a Theist, and another was an Atheist, whilst in many pages of his own inimitable writing he shows a delicate appreciation of the sceptical objections to orthodoxy. The Cardinal's biographers, however, do not appear to possess much knowledge on the subject. In a sketch of Cardinal Newman, published under the auspices of the Catholic Truth Society, and written by Dr. James Barry, it is stated that Newman, at the age of fourteen, "read Paine's tracts against the Old Testament, and found pleasure in thinking of the objections they raised."

It would be difficult to find a better specimen of "Catholic Truth." Thomas Paine wrote no "tracts" against the Old Testament, and his famous *Age of Reason*, which attacks the whole Bible, is a substantial volume. It has been on sale for over a century, and has been sold by the million. Many replies have been published, but Paine's book has outlived them all, and may be regarded as a Freethought classic. It took the religious world by storm. Whether men applauded or anathematized, none could deny its vitality. Professors might gibe, clerics might rail, judges might imprison. It survived all attacks, and the world of Orthodoxy has had to reckon with it. Not even the hindmost of the reactionaries, not even the most orthodox of subsequent commentators on the Bible, have written as they would have written had it never been published. Freethinkers have found it a rich mine of ideas, a full fountain of inspiration. For Paine's practical common sense was as fatal to religion as the smile of Voltaire.

There were critics of the Bible, it is true, long before Paine's time, but they were mainly dry-as-dust scholars, whose erudite works were not easily understood by plain men and women of ordinary education. Paine himself, a man of genius, had sprung from the people, and he spoke their tongue and made their thoughts clear and articulate. But, boldly as Paine might write, his book would never have been read at all but for the superb courage of the Freethinkers. In that battle for free speech and Freethought, Richard Carlile, his wife, and friends, divided between them about fifty years' imprisonment. Think of it! One small circle of Freethinkers serving between them over fifty years in prison for the right of free speech. Daniel Eaton, besides being prosecuted seven times, had the pillory inflicted, and thousands of pounds worth of literature destroyed. Christian apologists, who never tire of boasting of the tolerance and democratic nature of their fanatical and intolerant superstition, need to be reminded of these things. Although trials for blasphemy have been numerous, the comparatively enlightened nineteenth century holds the record for the number of blasphemy and free speech prosecutions, and it is extraordinary in how many instances Paine's book has figured. The reason is not far to seek. Paine woke the working classes to intellectual issues, and since Church and State have united in an unholy alliance to strangle Liberty.

Paine has written his name for all time to see. In a generation of brave men and women, he was one of the boldest and noblest. No wrong found him indifferent; and he used his swift, live pen not only for the democracy which might reward him, but for animals and slaves. Poverty never left him, yet he made fortunes, and gave them to the cause he loved. The *Age of Reason* was the bravest thing he did, for it threatened his name with an immortality of insult. "Where Liberty is, there is my country," said Benjamin Franklin; and Paine's magnificent answer was, "Where is not Liberty, there is mine." He was always thinking of the poor and the oppressed. In his superb reply to Burke's tirade against the French Revolution, in which he reserved his compassion too exclusively for the sufferings of the nobility, Paine said: "Mr. Burke pities the plumage, but he forgets the dying bird." Even Edmund Burke himself might have envied the felicity of the illustration. Shelley, no mean judge, thought this so excellent that he used it as part of the title of one of his own pamphlets. Fine writing as it is, the idea is far finer. It embodies the watchwords of Democracy, the marching music that sent Paine himself forth as a knight-errant, that sent Lafayette to America, and Byron to Greece, and inspired generations of poets from Shelley to Swinburne.

Out of the charnel-vault of Kingcraft and Priestcraft, Rousseau and the other great Freethinkers saw in vision the ideal society of the future. Of this new evangel Paine was one of the prophets of the rights of man. It is precisely because his heart was aflame with human sympathy that his works have vital and permanent effects towards hastening the coming of the day when the world will be one country and to do good the only religion.

MIMNERMUS.

The New Testament.

IV.

THE SECOND CENTURY.

THE dogmas of Christianity grew by the progressive absorption of various elements of Paganism. We have already seen how Pauline Christianity was modelled on the "mysteries" of Asia Minor and Greece, in which a dying and rising God was conceived as redeeming his worshippers and enduing them with eternal life. The myths of Attis, Adonis, and Osiris, however, were not the only type of Pagan mysticism. They represented orginally the annual revival of corn and vegetation. Another type of "mystery" was based on the alternation of light and darkness, and the life-giving power of the sun. The old Persian religion, Zoroastrianism, recognized two antithetic powers in the world—light, or Ahura-Mazda, the source of all goodness and truth; and Ahriman, or darkness, the source of all lying, evil, and sin. Ahura-Mazda was worshipped in various forms; but his principal embodiment was Mithra—the unconquered sun, the source of all life and strength. In the course of centuries Mithraism spread from Persia over the Greek and Roman world, and underwent a transformation similar to the other "mysteries"—becoming, instead of a symbol of wonderful natural processes, an esoteric doctrine of individual salvation and future life. Along with the spread of Mithraism proceeded a parallel intellectual movement, derived from the philosophy of Plato. Plato, in the fourth century, B.C., had arrived by an abstract logical process at the doctrine that only the general qualities of things could be said really to exist, the particular or material element being an illusion. General qualities, or (as Plato termed them) "forms," or "ideas," could be apprehended by reason—the source of truth; matter was only apprehended by the senses—the source of error. As intellectual truth was attained by following reason rather than the senses, so moral goodness was attained by subjecting the irrational parts of our nature, desire and anger, to the sway of pure reason. The highest thing that could be apprehended by reason was the general quality, or idea, of

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good. As the sun was the source of all life in the unreal, material world, so this abstract *good* was the source of all that was real in the intelligible world; and as the eye, the organ of sight, resembled (as Plato thought) the sun, so reason, the organ of truth, resembled, and, in fact, emanated from, the supreme and universal *good*, or God. Reason, goodness, and God are in the Platonic philosophy really convertible terms.

This doctrine—sufficiently "sloppy" at its best, by the standards of modern rationalism—became in the hands of dreamy Alexandrian Jews, like Philo, a portentous source of theosophical fantasies. The Greek word for reason (logos) meaning at the same time a "word" or "saying," the Pentateuchal story of God creating the world by *words* ("Let there be light," etc.), seemed to them to anticipate the whole Platonic philosophy. God himself, it was said, was an unknowable and incomprehensible being; only his *word*, the divine *reason* (logos), could be apprehended by man, since human reason was its offshoot.

This incipient Neo-Platonism, as well as the light-and-darkness symbolism of Mithra-worship, crossed the path of Pauline Christianity at an early date, and a remarkable fusion resulted. The Fourth Gospel is an attempt to restate Christianity as the latest thing in Alexandrian Platonism. Only in the light of Platonism and Mithraism can it be rendered, I do not say sensible, but susceptible of any meaning at all. Read in this light, it remains indeed hopelessly remote from any historical event that ever happened, but becomes, at the same time, something of a work of art. Read the opening:—

> In the beginning was Reason (logos), and Reason was with God, and Reason was God. It was in the beginning with God. All things were made by it, and apart from it not one thing, that has been made, was made. In it was life, and the life was the Light of men. And the Light is shining in the Darkness, and the Darkness has not comprehended it.

In this Gospel the divine reason or light, the principle of goodness and truth, descends and inhabits the body of the man Jesus, and through him appeals to the world for recognition and obedience. The world, being the offspring of darkness and falsehood, rejects the message, and crucifies the incarnate deity. The latter rises from the grave and returns to his divine home, leaving behind him his faithful followers to continue his work against the forces of darkness under the guidance of his spirit. Out of this plot the author weaves a not unreadable romance—spoilt, like many good stories, by too much talk. The New Testament contains three epistles by the same writer, all bearing on the topic. Throughout all these writings runs, like a musical *motif*, the Mithraic light-and-darkness formula. "Light has come into the world, and men loved Darkness rather than Light; for their deeds were evil."

The Fourth Gospel (apart from its appendix, chapter xxi., an editorial edition) does not explicitly lay claim to any particular authorship. The introduction, however, of a mysterious and unnamed "disciple whom Jesus loved," whom the author cites as witness to the truth of his story, led the interpolator of the appendix to attribute the whole work to this person, traditionally identified with John the apostle. John, as a matter of fact, must have been dead long before the Fourth Gospel appeared. Even the Apocalypse (A.D. 69), which professes to be his, is probably a forgery; much more certainly, therefore, is the Fourth Gospel by another hand than his. If, on the other hand, the Apocalypse is a genuine work of John, the apostolic authorship of the Fourth Gospel is flatly inconceivable; for two more dissimilar writings do not exist. Our only clue to the real authorship is the writer's description of himself in his two shorter letters (2 and 3 John) as "the presbyter." Whether this presbyter is identical with John the Presbyter, the informant of Papias respecting the authorship of Mark and other matters, we can only conjecture. The Fourth Gospel seems to have been put into circulation in Asia Minor near the beginning of the second century. It was not generally accepted, however, till the latter half of the century; and some members of the non-Pauline church of Rome rejected its authority as late as the time of Irenæus (A.D. 190).

Taken as an allegory, the story of the rejection and persecution of reason by a perverse world has a significance which Freethinkers should be the last to overlook. Reason, the highest faculty of man, is indeed despised, rejected, and crucified from generation to generation. But to take the personification of reason, by this writer, as a walking and talking human being as anything but a literary artifice, and a crude one at that, is to show oneself as dense as the densest of the unbelieving Jews whom he sets up as foils to his incarnate Deity. The Fourth Gospel is a work of conscious fiction, nothing more nor less.

There is no evidence that any Christian writer, up to the date of the Fourth Gospel, regarded Jesus as having been born otherwise than by the ordinary process of human generation. Everything shows that the earlier Christians, including the Fourth Evangelist, held the incarnation, so far as they believed in it at all, to have occurred, not at the conception of Jesus, but at his baptism by John, when the Divine spirit was seen descending on him according to the legend. Inevitably, however, a "Virgin Birth" was invented for Jesus, as for other extraordinary personages of antiquity. Ignatius (A.D. 115) refers to it. When the compilers of our Matthew and Luke undertook their work, perhaps a few years later, they included in their Gospels four contradictory elements—a genealogy of Jesus through Joseph (different in each case) and a narrative of the "Virgin Birth" (also different in each case). With these Gospels we have entered decidedly on a new style of composition, consisting mainly of the maximum accumulation of the marvellous. Nothing can now happen without a miracle. Jesus must not even pay his taxes by merely resorting to Judas and his bag, but must send Peter to catch a fish and find a coin in its mouth! Luke is a better writer than Matthew from a literary point of view, but the constant distortion of his material goes to even greater lengths. His Gospel is compiled from Mark, "Q," and various apocryphal sources—Mark and "Q" being very freely treated and improved. The Acts are another instance of Luke's method. He seems to have written them with the Pauline Epistles before him, but he embellishes or alters their statements without scruple. Particularly determined is he that Paul shall never appear to disagree with the twelve apostles, or to claim an apostleship independent of them. A comparison of Acts xv. with Galatians ii., of which it is a "written-up" version, will exemplify this, and show the measure of credibility in Acts generally. Acts is an unfinished work: it ends abruptly *in mediis rebus;* and the "we-narratives," derived from some older account of the journeys of Paul and his friends, are left high and dry in the text without introduction or explanation. The view that the whole work is by a companion of Paul, is rendered highly unlikely by its manifold inconsistencies with Paul's own version of affairs, and by other considerations of date. Acts is posterior to the Third Gospel; the Third Gospel cannot have been compiled long before or long after the First; and we know that the First Gospel, in its present form, was unknown to Papias (A.D. 140).

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The remaining two books of the New Testament, Jude and 2 Peter, are of little interest. Jude is a ferocious invective against second-century heretics, and bears clear evidence of post-apostolic date (verse 17). 2 Peter is an amplification of Jude, and little more; it is the latest-written portion of the New Testament, and its canonicity was disputed down to the fourth century.

The New Testament is vastly inferior to the Old as literature. Its language, "Hellenistic" Greek—the dialect of Levantine Jews—bears the same relation to the Greek of Plato as Babu English does to the English of Shakespeare. Its writers, with the partial exception of the Fourth Evangelist, display neither knowledge of nor interest in the best Pagan thought of antiquity. Not one rises to any great height of literary art. Above all, not one, from beginning to end, evinces one gleam of the saving grace of humour.

Robert Arch.

Acid Drops.

Dr. Fort Newton is giving up the City Temple, and returning to America. He says there is a certain prejudice in England against American preachers, which we take as Dr. Newton's way of saying that his ministry has not been a success. The question now is who is to succeed Dr. Newton, and several male names are suggested. It may be noted that Dr. Newton's assistant preacher at the City Temple has been Miss Maud Royden, and we understand that the lady has been more successful than the gentleman—which, when we are dealing with the clergy, is not paying Miss Royden a very great compliment. At any rate, it would seem that the proper course is to appoint her as minister in charge. But that would be to give a woman a first position in a Christian Church, and there are limits to Christian endurance. Women have been kept in a subordinate position in the Church, and they will be kept there just as long as it is possible.

Trust the Churches to attempt to turn everything to their advantage. St. George's (English) Church, Paris, is troubled as to what kind of a War memorial it can raise to those who "laid down their lives in the great war." And the Rev. F. A. Cardew decides that the best way would be to provide the church with a new organ. He has, therefore, issued an appeal for funds to this end. Whatever happens the Church always sees in it a reason for an appeal for funds. War or peace it is all the same.

The Bishop of Exeter, who, in private life, is Lord William Gascoigne-Cecil, considers prayer a suitable method of solving economic problems. In some parishes they are calling on the Boy Scouts to assist the Almighty.

The dear clergy was far too proud to fight the Germans, Austrians, Bulgarians, or Turks. They do not object, however, to fighting their own countrymen. The Rev. W. Pollock-Hill, formerly President of the Oxford University Athletic Club, has been acting the part of a railway porter, and the Rev. T. G. Pearson, a Cambridge vicar, has been wielding a stoker's shovel. Indeed, there never has been such work done by parsons since some of the twelve disciples mended their own fishing nets.

A newspaper paragraph states at the Great Western terminus the Bishop of London's chaplain, in cap and apron, loaded up trolleys. A truly touching instance of the modern democratic trend in religion.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton declares that "when there was a common creed individualism was called avarice and imperialism was called pride." "A common creed," indeed! The only place where there was a "common creed" was when Robinson Crusoe said his prayers on his island.

There are 50 000 parsons in this country. Out of this number about a dozen have expressed a carefully guarded sympathy with the Trade Unionists during the industrial crisis. At a railmen's meeting, the Archdeacon of Plymouth put the case against the strike, and was answered by the strikers. At another meeting, the Bishop of Peterborough and Canon Donaldson attended, and the latter said "his heart was with the men and their cause." What the Bishop said is not reported. A very different attitude was taken by Canon Pearson, of Ely, who acted as fireman on a Peterborough-Cambridge Great Eastern train.

There is a discussion going on among the clergy as to whether they should go on strike or not in order to secure a living wage. A Dorsetshire parson is the leader, and he suggests a minimum of £500 for all beneficed members of the union. We wonder what would happen if the clergy did go on strike. Would the Government call for volunteers, and declare the community to be in danger? We doubt it. At any rate, if the clergy are called out, we will volunteer to occupy the pulpit at St. Paul's, so that the people will have something to which to listen. And it shall be quite free, too. But it is interesting to notice that no great prayer-meeting has been called in order to get the living wage for the clergy. That is only recommended for laymen when they are in trouble. When it is the clergy who wish for something tangible, they know better than to trust to their own remedy. It would be like expecting a quack to seek health by swallowing his own medicines.

This is how the Salvation Army announces it: "139 men and women saved from sin. Among these were two Atheists, one Bolshevik, two daughters of shame." We are a trifle curious about the two Atheists, but it is noticeable that out out of the 139 sinners there are only two Atheists. This is a very small proportion, and it looks as though the overwhelming majority of the "sinners" are still Christian.

During the railway strike, a newspaper announced that a duke drove a motor-lorry, a countess worked with her sleeves turned up, and other titled folk actually took their coats off. This ought not to be staggering information to people who believe that a real live God wielded a plane in a carpenter's shop.

The British Government is getting less intolerant. During the pilgrimage of the Mohammedan Holy Carpet, the relic is received with British military and naval honours. The Pope has received Count de Salis, the British envoy to the Vatican. In the process of time, doubtless, the existence of Freethinkers will be duly noted and recognized.

The Rev. J. D. Roberts, of Wimbledon, points out in the *Daily News* that "when trade unions were struggling for recognition, the Church opposed them. Now that they are established, it would follow. That is neither logical nor Christian." On the contrary, from the Church point of view, such conduct is both logical and Christian, for it has been pursued on so many occasions.

The Magistrate at the South-Western Police Court decided, in the case of a woman charged with fortune-telling, a Spiritualist, that, provided the accused person believed she could foretell the future, the charge must be dismissed. For ourselves, we do not see that good is done in any case by these prosecutions for fortune-telling. So long as there are people who believe in that kind of thing, there will always be those who will take advantage of their folly. And to prosecute the few who make a business of telling the future in a Spiritualist meeting, and permit millions of money to be extracted by the charlatans of the Churches, is an exhibition of both humbug and folly. The cure for fortune-telling is not the policeman, but the cultivation of common sense. And after all, the seed plot of Spiritualism is Christianity. It is that which keeps alive the type of mind on which these subsidiary superstitions exist.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 19, Weston-super-Mare; October 26, Manchester; November 2, Glasgow; November 3, Paisley; November 6, Milngavie; November 7, Falkirk; November 9. Edinburgh; November 16, South Shields; November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—October 19, South Place Institute; October 26, Birmingham; November 16, Leicester; November 23, Manchester; December 7, Swansea.

W. W. Barton.—Very pleased to hear of the success of your son. Thanks also for your successful efforts on getting new readers.

C. Lewis.—More articles from the same pen will probably appear. We do not know what chance there is of a Branch of the N.S.S. being started at Finchley. We would certainly do all we could to assist it. Are there any likely halls there?

E. H.—Not specifically; but both have written on such subjects many times in connection with their ordinary work.

F. S. Keeble.—We shall look forward to meeting you when we visit Edinburgh. Please make yourself known to us.

T. R.—We do *not* know mind as a thing, nor do you. What we know is mind as a function. That it is more than that is an assumption. Materialism is not in the least concerned with the existence of the atom, nor even with that of "matter" as the term is popularly understood. We advise you to pay some attention to the beginnings of Materialism, as well as to its developments, if you wish to properly understand it.

One of our readers, Mr. W. Easterbrook, would like to hear from Corporal Wycherley, one time of the 9th Devons. If this meets his eye, perhaps he will be good enough to send on his address to this office.

C. White.—There is no evidence that we know of that would lead one to believe that had Mohammedanism conquered Europe the result would have been very different from what followed the conquest of Christianity. It could not well have been worse, and it would not have required a miracle for it to have been better.

J. Anderson.—Thanks for what you have done. We hope to see your Branch make good progress this winter.

Mr. J. Edwards writes: "Congratulations to the Editor on the success of his lectures at Swansea, which have provoked widespread interest." We are glad to hear it.

A. C. Rosetti.—Thanks for good wishes, but we can hardly hope to be free from financial worries—which are the only worries we have in this work—yet awhile.

J. Thornton.—Will appear next week. Crowded out of this issue.

J. Cain (Liverpool).—We have no agent in Liverpool. The shopkeepers are supplied through a wholesale agent; and as your newsagent gets his other papers, there should be no difficulty in getting the *Freethinker*. Messrs. W. H. Smith supply at Liverpool as elsewhere. We are sending you the copies required.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Oct. 19) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Grand Pier Pavilion, Weston-super-Mare. The afternoon lecture is at 3 and the evening lecture at 8 o'clock. The Cove (Ladies) Orchestra will play before and after each lecture, and we are hoping to hear of a good muster of all Freethinkers in the district. Bristol is only about thirty minutes' train journey, and there should be many from that city. The Pavilion seats about 2,000 people, so there will be room for all. On Sunday next (Oct. 26) Mr. Cohen visits Manchester. Then he will spend eight days lecturing in Scotland.

The Manchester Branch will inaugurate its lecturing season with a "Social" on Saturday evening at the Co-operative (Small) Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick. There is to be a full and varied programme, including part-songs by the Failsworth Secular School Choir, a farce in one act, whist drive, and dancing. We should say that more could not well be got into one evening. No doubt members will be present in force, and will bring their friends.

A good beginning was made last Sunday with the course of lectures at South Place. The afternoon turned out very wet, and that had its effect on the attendance, but for a wet afternoon the gathering promised well for the remaining meetings. To-day Mr. Lloyd lectures, and his subject is one that should prove both attractive and interesting. We hope that all London friends will do their best to make the meetings widely known.

We have received five new publications from Messrs. Watts & Co., all of which are of interest to Freethinkers. Mr. C. T. Gorham is responsible for *A Plain Man's Plea for Rationalism*, which, in spite of a definition of Rationalism that even a Roman Catholic cardinal might subscribe to, puts what ordinary folk understand by the case for Freethought in a way that is well calculated to arrest the attention of thoughtful men and women. The price of Mr. Gorham's essay is 1s. 3d. Mr. T. F. Palmer, in *Does Man Survive Death?* (6d.) goes over, in a general way, most of the reasons for giving a negative answer to the question. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, in *Christianity and Conduct* (1s. 6d.), gives a kind of supplement to Mr. Gorham by providing an indictment of the influence of Christianity on morals and social life. Mr. F. J. Gould, in *Health and Honour; Sex Light for Younger Readers* (1s. 6d.), provides an interesting attempt to lift the subject of sex out of the atmosphere in which Christian impurity has plunged it; as Mr. Gould's facts of sex are not, and there is no need that they should be, topics of regular conversation, but information concerning them should be ready when required, this information is supplied by him in a clear, clean, and healthy manner.

The last on our list is a more bulky volume—*The Faith of an Agnostic*, by Sir G. G. Greenwood (pp. 366, price 12s. 6d. net). This is a reissue of a work published some seventeen years ago, but is now rewritten and enlarged. Sir George discusses at some length such topics as Determinism, Agnosticism, Materialism, and Spiritualism, etc., and devotes a special chapter to that pseudo-scientific writer, Mr. Benjamin Kidd. Without being precise enough to be considered a handbook of Freethought, or elaborate enough to be ranked as a complete philosophy of the subject, *The Faith of an Agnostic* provides plenty of thoughtful reading for all who are interested in such subjects. The character of the work quite bears out the author's description of it as the effort of one who "has for many years honestly and with the sole desire to arrive at a truthful conclusion and to avoid all pretence and self-deception, directed such reasoning as he is endowed withal to the consideration of the great problems of life."

The R. P. A. is responsible for a photogravure reproduction of the portrait of Bradlaugh that was recently painted by the Hon. John Collier. The cost of the painting was defrayed by subscription, and it is intended that it should finally repose in some public institution. The copies now prepared are in two sizes. One measuring 18 by 15 on paper 32 and 34 is being sold at 12s. 6d., postage, 1s., and a smaller copy 8 by 6 on paper 14 by 10 at 1s., by post, 1s. 4d. Orders should be sent to 5 and 6 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, E.C.

It will not come as a surprise to those of our readers who have noted the peculiar brilliance of Mr. H. C. Mellor's occasional contributions to our columns to know that he is a

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poet. We have received from his publisher a lyrical drama called *Aboudahur* (Stockwell, 29 Ludgate Hill, E.C. 4, 1s. net.). It is quite an interesting example of a very difficult form of the poetic drama. We recommend the literary Freethinker to sacrifice a shilling at the altar of the dramatico-lyric muse.

Our critical objection to Mr. Mellor's little work is that he does not seem to have thought out his subject or the treatment of it. The fusion between drama and lyric is not complete. The characters do not live in our imagiation as creatures of flesh and blood, and Mr. Mellor's power as a lyrical poet is not sufficient to project them into the golden and remote atmosphere of pure imagination. His blank verse has certain irritating metrical faults which we are sure that he will correct when they are pointed out. We have noted a number of instances where the breaks are so arranged that the verse runs into the ballad fourteener. But example is better than precept. How is this for a section of an iambic pentameter?—

But kings are born immortal, and their deeds are not their own.

Or this:—

For ever lose the music that the listening worlds await.

This is a defect which turns up all too frequently, and indicates that the poet's ear is not tuned to the more complicated harmonies of blank verse. We commend to Mr. Mellor's serious attention the poetic plays of the two ladies who wrote under the pseudonym of "Michael Field." We note, however, in our poet a distinct gift for shorter flights of song which, we suggest, he should cultivate assiduously.

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Sixth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged £259 6s.:—J. Lazarnick, £1 1s. W. W. Barton, 2s. 6d. A. Waymark, £1. W. Milroy, 5s. J. Milroy, 5s. Mr. and Mrs. R. Ralston, 10s. E. A. H., 2s. 6d. M. Pankhurst, 5s. F. S. Keeble, 1s. S. A. Pinnock, £5. S. Gimson, £2 2s. Mathematicus, 10s. 6d. J. F. Aust, 10s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Bowman, 5s. R. Wood, 10s. J. H., 2s. T. Mercier, 2s. 6d. H. Irving, 10s. J. Brodie, 3s. J. Hardie, 5s. J. Chappell, 2s. 6d. W. F. Ambrose (5th sub.), 2s. A. C. Rosetti, 10s. Capt. G. B. Taylor, 4s. F. M. Grieg, 4s. H. Lessnoff, 5s. E. J. Rose, 5s. Miss Janet Parkin, 5s. Ivor Rowlands, £1. Ernest, 2s. An Atheist, 5s. A. H. Smith, £3.

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Total, £283 18s. 6d.

North London Branch N.S.S.—On Sunday last Mr. Joseph H. Van Biene lectured on "Lessons to be Unlearned" to the North London Branch in his usual entertaining and thought-provoking style. From many different angles, Mr. Van Biene showed that there is no darkness but ignorance. On Sunday next, October 19, Miss Rosamond Smith, of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child, will speak on "Illegitimacy." As this is Miss Smith's first visit to North London, we should like to give her a good audience in her attempt to throw some light on this pressing question.

World-Poverty.

Has it ever occurred to you that the world is very poor as compared with what it might be? This poverty is what strikes me more than anything else. True, the progress made since primeval man roamed the forests has been very great; but when we think of what might be, and what, I think, will be, we are sickened by the vulgar poverty we meet on every hand. I am not now thinking particularly of the poor *persons* who crowd the human pigsties of our large cities. The sight of them is certainly horrid, and the smell of them is even worse. I have sat down and talked with them in their wretched pens (more cheerless than the cells of criminals, more comfortless than the quarters of the old chattel slaves) until I grew sick and faint from the foulness of the place, and was forced to seek relief in the open air.

These poor persons are the scandal of the world. Every minister of the pretended Gospel of Jesus ought to wear sackcloth, every church should be draped in mourning, and if there is a personal God he should deluge the earth with his tears until this disgrace of personal poverty is purged away. Nay, the Devil himself, if there were a Devil, would have protested long ere this that into whatever wickedness he may wish to draw men, he is not mean and low enough to have conceived of the vileness of our East-end slums.

So long as such places and their helpless inmates exist, the idea of a supervising God is an offence to the sound mind, the Church is an imposture, religion is a failure, and justice and mercy are unrealized dreams.

But I am not now thinking particularly of the phenomenon of poor *persons*, although they are so many microcosms of the world-poverty I am considering. One reason why there are so many poor persons is because there is not enough wealth to enrich each one, even if it were equitably distributed. The curse of world-poverty is twofold. That which is most apparent is, that what wealth there is, is very very unequally, and inequitably, distributed; but the most important is that there is too little wealth, and it is the cause of this last fact that I wish to make plain.

And it is not only material wealth, such as good houses, food, clothing, and furniture, which is so sadly lacking, but also the mental wealth we might have but for the causes which rob us also of mental riches. How poor the world is in thought! True, there are books innumerable, all full of thoughts indeed, but the same thoughts are in all of them for the most part. There are only a few real books—books full of *original* thought—and these are the thought mines from which all the rest have been quarried. What thought there is has been the product of a few intellectual giants—Plato, Shakespeare, Goethe, Haeckel, Darwin, and a few more. The average run of men to-day are mental paupers. Talk with them, and you will soon get tired. Their minds go round and round in a little circus ring, and you soon get all the way round. You soon find that every time you meet them it is the same performance—now a somersault, now a jump through a hoop, but most of the time just jogging along. The vast majority think of nothing but how much money they made or lost, or expect to make or lose, or have or haven't; or else where they went or what they did or who they were with. Dollars and sayings and doings not worth talking about make up the sum of most men's speaking and thinking to-day.

Poverty of thought! I listen to most of the people I meet, and wonder how they can live in their confined range of thought, just as I wonder how the poor can live in their single room with a bed, a chair, and a table.

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Now, why is the world thus poor in thought? Why is it that a mere handful of intellectual giants rear so high above the crowd? The answer seems to me plain enough. We do all we can to repress thought and discourage thinking. Your intellectual circus rider is considered the great man. He who merely repeats what others have said, who goes round and round in the beaten track, who smiles upon the crowd as much as to say: "You need not be afraid. You can come right up to the ring without danger. I and my horse go round and round always inside the ring." This is the sort of thinker that is considered a safe man. He becomes your prime minister, your college president, your Pope, your bishop, your judge, your editor, your leading politician, your great and much-prized after-dinner orator. But if a man announces a new thought, if he goes outside the circus ring, he is ridiculed as a crank, or denounced as a dangerous innovator and corrupter of youth. If his new thought threatens vested interests he runs the risk of being fined or imprisoned. In short, if any man has a new thought, we announce to the world that he shall express it only at the risk of his reputation, his liberty, or even his life.

If a parson expresses a new idea, the Church brings all her accursed machinery to bear against him, and he must either shut up or get out. If a public man—an economist, an editor, or a statesman—sees a new truth and speaks it, he is relegated to private life. Is it any wonder that the world is a mental poor-house when all the so-called leaders of the human race are urgent to kill every new idea before it is fairly born? Luckily truth cannot be suppressed, as otherwise our present rulers would run the world back to barbarism by mental breeding in and in. So also the world is poor in love, because every effort is made to cherish hatred of every nation but our own. We are taught from childhood that patriotism is one of the noblest instincts; that we should love and exalt England and everything English at the expense and to the detriment of foreign lands and their peoples. Ah, yes. If it were not for that silly cry: "For God and Country!" how would despots and plutocrats maintain their sway? It is to the interest of the rulers only that the various peoples should hate each other. It is to the interest only of the trade magnates that the workers of different lands should regard each other as competing rivals. This bastard patriotism is but the repression of that love of all men which would make of the world one people. And just as the clergy repress thought and the rulers repress love, so the profiteers repress the production of material wealth. The millionaire thinks that he increases his own happiness by being over-wealthy in the midst of poverty. He does not understand how much better off he would be with a fairly-earned competence in the midst of general wealth. But the great wealth reducer is he who holds vacant land out of use, and he who limits the supply of money. There are thousands of acres of land lying vacant in this and every other country, and thousands of unemployed and starving men. Put those men on that land and supply them with capital at a fair rate of interest, and they will begin to enrich the world at once. This world will always be poor until men are free to use the vacant land, and to trade together without any restrictions on the medium of exchange. There is no mistake about who keeps it poor. It is the vacant land-owner, and he who puts restrictions of any kind upon trade. These are the real causers of world-poverty, who should be held up to public shame and contempt. And these are they who indirectly also repress thought and love, because when men are freed from the fear of poverty they will think and say what they please, and love each other regardless of the interests of rulers and monopolists. I like to think of that rich world wherein thought will be free and full; wherein love will overleap its present artificial boundaries; wherein it will be so easy to get food, and clothes, and houses, that they will no longer seem worth the sacrifice of everything else to attain.

G. O. Warren.

Superstition and Religion.

M. Brieux, in that fine drama of his, *La Foi*, shows us the success of Egyptian priests in deceiving the faithful, in working up popular fanaticism by means of trickery; he also shows us a young priest whom reason and experience have made sceptical, and at the end done to death by the poor fools whose eyes he had tried to open. The fraud of the automatic statue has been worked over and over again. We know that General Championnet had the blood of Saint Januarius liquefied very quickly after the priest had told him what would happen if he didn't. It was to this blood that the Neapolitan populace attributed a mysterious influence. De Nava has proved that the so-called blood is a chemical mixture which is liquefied by the warmth of the hand, a certain movement of the phial, and the temperature of the place of the miracle, a temperature raised by the breathing of a crowd of people. But is it possible that at the present moment the crowd can believe in a weeping statue? Yet this is what happened a month or so ago at Nantes and Bordeaux.

There was a statue of the Virgin at Nantes, and a rumour went about that this statue wept for the awful depravity of the world. The ecclesiastical authorities, to prevent a scandal, had it removed from its environment of hysterical women, and presented it to a monastery, where it no longer wept. But a sort of religion had grown up around this weeping statue, and a certain lady became its woman pope. This lady, whom we will call X., mingled spiritualistic practices with religious dogma. As a co-worker, she had, at the beginning, an Abbe Z., a Syriac priest, an Ex-Grand-Vicar of the Archbishop of Lebanon, but later she broke with him, it would seem, through religious rivalry. The religious authorities sent him to Nantes, the lady remaining at Bordeaux. Here the story takes a curious turn. After the priest had gone the lady began to waste away, and to be tormented with sensations of grievous bodily pain. At one time she felt her flesh pierced with needles. At another she was bitten by an invisible mouth, and once the invisible mouth actually left one of its teeth in the flesh. The good lady had not a shadow of doubt that these things happened to her through the sorcery practised by the wicked priest. As we are aware from similar stories of magic charms, the priest must have made a wax figure of the lady, with magical incantations and rites he must have maltreated the figure at Nantes, the prickings and bitings being felt at Bordeaux by the lady who had been his friend.

Four devout members of the little community of the weeping Virgin, among whom was a stockbroker and an inspector of police, decided to put an end to the poor lady's martyrdom. One night they arrived at Nantes, and the next morning, when they had confessed and communicated, the four of them, armed with bludgeons, went to the abbe's lodgings. The priest was ill, and in bed. Binding him with cords, they threatened him, with the object of getting him to give them the magic figure. He was wholly ignorant of what they meant. He was bruised and broken with blows, and when they had secured his keys, they found nothing save a ball of

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red wool and one of white thread. They asserted that the wax figure had been melted down, and that the wool and the thread were its clothes. They took away the ball of thread, which the priest claimed was his mascot, and now he sues them for trespass and personal violence. The trial is to take place at Bordeaux.

The above account is taken from the well-known Milanese paper, the *Corriere della Sera.*

We see here how far human imbecility can go when it is nourished by religion. You will notice that the four blackguards were not ignorant and uneducated men, since one of them was a public servant and the other a financier. It is therefore not education alone that will destroy superstition. We must strike at the root, that is, at religion—religion of all kinds. It is only by science that we can protect humanity against the vampire of superstition.

G. Brocher.

—From *La Pensee Internationale* (Englished by G. U.).

Correspondence.

THE CHURCH AND SCIENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—The objéct of this letter is to examine critically the attitude apparently taken up by Freethinkers in regard to science. According to their view the greatest triumphs in the sphere of science or pure philosophical thought are exclusively the legitimate monopoly of atheists or unbelievers. May I point out that as a matter of fact the reverse of this contention is the truth. Strictly speaking, of course, we ought not to expect to find that the great masters of science, or, indeed, of philosophical speculation, would turn out to be Churchmen or theologians, for the same reason that it is foolish and out of place to read the Old Testament as a document of genuine historical authenticity or to regard the story of Genesis—which is only true allegorically and in the spiritual sense—as a thoroughly up-to-date scientific treatise. The Christian Church is not primarily concerned with the advancement of human or purely secular knowledge. It is merely the divinely appointed custodian of the deposit of revealed truth alleged to have been given to the world by Christ and his apostles as the "New Commandment." By its very nature and constitution the Church is essentially a spiritual institution. It is, therefore, non-scientific, and in this sense it must be understood and interpreted. Christ taught us a rule of faith for our spiritual salvation. He was not a purveyor of philosophic systems, though the theologians subsequently constructed a definitely Christian philosophy. Christ taught us about "Our Heavenly Father"; but he told us nothing about the "eternal fitness of things." Thus, we might expect Churchmen, whether ecclesiastics or laymen, to teach us none of these new things, but to rest content merely with the work of representing and interpreting the Gospel of spiritual salvation. Such, however, we find is far from being the case. Valentine, Linacre, Kircher, Stensen, Hauy, Roger Bacon, Nicholas of Cusa, Spallanzani, and of more recent times, Breuil, Obermaier, Secchi, and Mendel, the famous Augustinian abbot whose researches in the study of heredity have so greatly influenced the whole of modern biology, these are all great names borne by eminent Catholic ecclesiastics who are chiefly known to posterity for their important scientific works. In addition to these distinguished priests, Vesalius, Galvani, Volta, Bacon, Newton, Lænic, Muller, Corrigan, Pasteur, De Lapparent, and Kelvin as laymen are names to conjure with, and all these great scientists, together with many others whose names I have omitted to mention here, were sincere believers in the truth of Christianity. These facts speak for themselves. The services rendered to the cause of science and civilization by these men are inestimable. The verdict of history in this matter is indisputable, and, to my mind, overwhelming as a confirmation also of the argument that there can never really be any contradiction between religion and science, because Truth cannot contradict Truth. This is the view commonly maintained by the most learned theologians. It is, moreover, the view endorsed by the Vatican Council. Thus, the theologian acting as custodian of the Faith, cautiously refuses to notice the numerous scientific hypotheses ostensibly at variance with some point of dogma which are from time to time proclaimed as scientific facts. If such hypotheses should ultimately assume the importance of facts, as often happens, the theologian must either reconcile these with the pre-existing dogmas of religion or else he must accept these facts as true, even though by so doing he is bound to submit to an inevitable curtailment of dogmatic belief. The Church is justified in attacking what is doubtful, provided always that it does not tilt against scientifically established facts. Such facts will not be found to contradict any dogma of religion. Frequently, of course, hypotheses, which have been labelled dangerous by the ecclesiastical authorities, have subsequently to be abandoned as inadequate or untenable; hence a cautious non-committal reticence on the part of the theologian is usually the best policy. An admirably straightforward rule is laid down by St. Augustine, who says:—

> Whatever they can really demonstrate to be true of physical nature, we must show to be capable of reconciliation with our Scriptures: and whatever they assert in their treatises which is contrary to those Scriptures of ours, that is Catholic Faith, we must either prove it as well as we can to be entirely false, or at all events we must, without the slightest hesitation, believe it to be so.....

This, it must be admitted, is sound enough advice, and it would greatly simplify matters if theologians would always act upon it in the event of any dispute of this kind. Enough has been said, I think, to show that the supposed opposition of the Church to science is really more of a fiction than a fact. In reality, most of the greatest thinkers have declared themselves to be pronounced Theists, and have unreservedly accepted the doctrine of Design. Let us glance briefly at the testimony of a few, whose claim to scientific eminence will not, I think, be disputed. Bacon's opinion was: "Philosophy, where superficially studied, excites doubt; when thoroughly explored, it dispels it." Similarly, Newton said: "This I dare affirm in knowledge of Nature, that a little natural philosophy, and looking lightly into it, doth dispose the opinion to Atheism; but that much natural philosophy, and wading deeply into it, doth turn about man's mind unto religion....."

These quotations are sufficiently striking and significant to warrant notice here. The late distinguished physicist, Lord Kelvin, was definitely on the side of the angels. He considered that science endorsed the view that matter was created and endowed with its special powers by God. He definitely rejected Monism as an inadequate solution, and believed in the idea of Creation. In a famous article to the *Nineteenth Century* he declared: "Science positively affirms creative power.....which she compels us to accept as an article of belief." In conclusion, I would like to draw attention to the most significant fact that Maxwell, P. G. Tait, Balfour Stuart, Sir W. Crookes, Sir O. Lodge, Sir J. J. Thomson, Sir T. Larmoor, and Professor Poynting held, or hold, the opinion that the purely mechanical interpretation of the Universe is quite incapable of explaining satisfactorily the life-processes of organisms. The Creation idea, so carefully developed by Christian philosophers in past ages, is ratified by the conclusions of science. The Church has nothing to fear from the genuine progress of science. But the dabbler is ever her most vigorous assailant.

Trevor T. Berry.

SOCIALISM AND RELIGION.

Sir,—There can be no doubt (and I speak as a member of the I.L.P. and B.S.P.) that the attitude of the average British Socialist to religion is not as clearly defined as it ought to be amongst British Socialists. They forget that postponing difficulties is not to overcome them. The determination not to make a pronouncement on religion is done to placate Christians whose Christianity must later on bring them, if they are in favour of established State religions, into opposition to any Socialist Government. It is the most laughable thing in this world and the most imbecile to argue that Christ was a Socialist. The foundations of Christianity

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are faith and charity. Both these are anathema to the Socialist, unless by faith is meant what can be proved by evidence before it is believed. As to charity as generally understood, the Socialist hates it. In one tale in the New Testament, Jesus accepts a young man who gave up half his possessions. This won't do for Socialism.

The fact is Jesus hadn't the remotest notion of Socialism, which in essence is Secularistic. Christianity is a very mischievous other worldism. Socialism is this worldism. As far as my opportunities go, which are now rather limited, I make these doctrines clear.

A. J. Marriott.

REJUVENATION AND IMMORTALITY.

Sir,—I notice that Dr. Serge Voronoff, Director of the Laboratory of Physiology at the College de France, has been experimenting with a view to prolonging human life. He has grafted a vital part of a young kid on to an old goat, who became quite frisky, and resumed his "nights out" as in the days of his youth.

The suggestion is to graft the interstitial gland of a young monkey on an old man, and thus restore his youthful powers and vigour. Now, Sir, I take it that in time even the rejuvenated old man will die and go before his Maker, and, as a sincere believer, I object in the strongest possible terms to go to heaven 95 per cent. man and 5 per cent. monkey; for are we not all taught that in our flesh we shall see God? Ordinary Christian papers will, alas, not insert this protest; but you, Sir, I feel sure will.

J. W. Wood.

The Broken "Amen."

In the early days of the settlement of the city of Pasadena, California, U.S.A., there was a Methodist minister named "Father" Solomon Dunton, who happened to be fond of chewing tobacco. Mr. J. W. Wood, historian of the colony, tells the following touching story about Solomon:—

> Upon a certain occasion in the later history of the Colony he attended a revival service at the Methodist church and was one of the most fervid worshippers present. Rev. P. F. Bresee was the dominie in charge of the services, and anyone who knew him will recall his uncompromising attitude to sinners. On this occasion, he was preaching against the sinfulness of bad habits in general. At each characterization, made in a stentorian voice, the Reverend Dunton emitted an approving and emphatic "Amen"! The reverend preacher stormed against backsliding. "Amen!" shouted Dunton. Against the frivolities of social life. "Amen"! again exclaimed Dunton. "God punish the wicked who imbibe intoxicating drink." "Amen, amen!" came once again in resounding approval from Father Dunton, and with it an approving thwack of his hands.
>
> "And, Lord, chasten those who defile themselves and defy thy law *by using tobacco!*"
>
> The Reverend Solomon's hand had been upraised in order to give additional emphasis to his approving "Amen." But it remained suspended in the air; his exclamation died in a struggling gurgle, languished amidst the "cud" stowed away for safety in his cheek. A convulsive, strangling noise expired in his throat as his hand slowly descended, while his head was bowed in humble embarrassment. There was no further demonstrations from his corner that night. It is not reported that the old gentleman ceased using the "weed," but doubtless he refrained when under the Rev. Bresee's eye (*Pasadena, Historical and Personal*, pp. 94-95).

The melody was broken.

Obituary.

We record with regret the death of Mr. Alexander Orr, one of the oldest of Edinburgh Freethinkers. He was known to Holyoake, Bradlaugh, and later lecturers, and his death removes a link with the heroic ages of Freethought activity. Of recent years he has not been able to take an active part in the work, advancing age being the cause. But when a man reaches the eighties he may well be excused if he leaves the work of propaganda to younger and stronger hands. Our tribute of respect is to the work done, and by one of those whose strenuous labours have made our own task the easier.

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.

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Miss Rosamond Smith, "Illegitimacy."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, "Christianity's Harmony with Science—Anthropology."

South Place Chapel (Finsbury Pavement, E.C.): 3.30, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "Dream Life and Real Life."

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "The Moral Responsibility of Citizens."

Outdoor.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Saphin, Dales, Ratcliffe, and Baker.

Regent's Park Branch N. S. S. (near Band Stand): 3, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Socialism and Secularism in Germany"; Mr. R. Norman, "Peace, Perfect Peace!"

COUNTRY.

Indoor.

Glasgow Branch N. S. S. (The Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): 12 noon, Mr. P. Kane, "Roman Catholicism from the Workers' Standpoint." (Silver Collection.)

Leeds Secular Society (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 5.45 (afternoon). Lectures in Victoria Square at 7.15.

RATIONALISTIC EDUCATION.

MR. W. H. THRESH has re-opened School in temporary premises, and will be pleased to receive a few Day Scholars and Boarders. Next Term he will have accommodation, in a commodious house (not now available), for Forty Pupils. Freethinkers who wish to place their children in this school are asked to make their arrangements at once, as the success of the enterprise will depend upon the support of sympathisers. It will be remembered that Mr. Thresh conducted a similar school (closed by the War) for thirteen years in Southend-on-Sea.—Address W. H. Thresh, c/o 23 Weston Road, Southend-on-Sea.

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Evolution.

Evolution began as a formula and, with many, ends as a fiat. On the one hand, it is invoked with all the solemnity of a mediæval magician commanding the presence of his attendant spirits. On the other hand, it is approached with a hushed reverence that is reminiscent of a Catholic devotee before his favourite shrine. It has acquired the characteristics of the "Kismet" of the Mohammedan, the Beelzebub of the pious Christian, and the inspiration of glory to the born soldier. It is used to dispel doubts and to awaken curiosity. It becomes a formula that may express comprehension or merely indicate vacuity. Decisions are pronounced in its name with all the impressiveness of a "Thus saith the Lord!" We are not even sure that some will not object that to talk about evolution in this light way is "irreverent," and should be avoided. For there are crowds of folk who cannot separate profundity from solemnity, and who continually mistake a long face for the sure indication of a well-stored brain. The truth is, of course, that what a man understands thoroughly he can deal with easily; that he laughs at a difficulty is not necessarily a sign that he fails to appreciate it—it may be a consequence of his having taken its measure. The chief reason why people will not laugh at religion is due to a perception of the fact that it will not stand it. The priest everywhere maintains his hold largely because of the narcotizing influence of ill-understood phrases, and in this he is matched by the pseudo-philosopher, whose pompous use of imperfectly appreciated formulæ disguises from the crowd the mistiness of his own understanding.

* * *

The Ghost of God.

A glance over the uses made of the word "evolution" will well illustrate what has been said. These sometimes make one wonder what on earth the writer thinks "evolution" stands for, and at other times one feels sure that its prime function is to cover up mere want of comprehension. For example: in a recent issue of the *Daily Express*, Mr. Shaw Desmond, writing on the subject of the demand for equality, asks, What do people mean by it? and, after discussing the probable meanings, remarks: "If it is a demand for a levelling of mankind down to the average, every good citizen will fight that, and he will have evolution with him, for all evolution is a levelling up." Now, it would be quite unfair to pillory Mr. Desmond as being peculiar in this conception of evolution; he is one of a very large group, and this specimen is selected only because it is representative of a group, and because it has some very important bearings on social and religious as well as on scientific questions. And here we must, paradoxical as it may sound, be discursive in order to keep to the point. Primarily, this ascription of what one may call a moral element to evolution is no more than a carrying over into science of the Theistic spirit and temper. Quite naturally, the Theist was driven to find some ethical justification for what he said was the divine government of the universe. And he proceeded to argue that it was morally and intellectually admirable. From the Godite's point of view that was a sound position. The world was God's world; he made it; and we were ultimately compelled to judge the character of the workman by the quality of his work. But now comes the non-Theist, and he, although rejecting "God," and substituting the formula "evolution," frequently proceeds to claim for his formula all that the Theist had claimed for his. That also had to be shown to be moral, and noble, and just, etc. We don't marvel that the Christian often says to the Freethinker that he has a God. Substantially, some of them have. That is, they carry on with the same pseudo-scientific reasoning that is characteristic of apologetic Theism. They have given up God, but they cumber themselves with his ghost.

* * *

Adaptation.

Now evolution, we repeat, is not a fiat; it is a formula It does not decree; it describes. It has nothing to do with morality as such, nor with progress as such, nor with a levelling up, nor with a levelling down. It is no more than a special application of the principle of causation; and whether the working out of that principle has a moralizing, or an ennobling, or a progressive effect, is not "given" in the principle itself. Cosmic phenomena presents us with two things, difference and change. And the law of evolution is an attempt to express those differences and those changes in a more or less precise formula. It does for phenomena in general precisely what a particular scientific law does for its own special group of phenomena. But it no more has a moral implication, or a progressive implication, or a levelling up implication than has the law of gravitation or the law of chemical affinity. It may result in one or the other, it has resulted in one or the other; its operations make here for progress, and there for stagnation or retrogression, but it is only called the one or the other *by us*. Evolution knows only adaptation and equilibrium. Whether that adaptation spells a levelling up or a levelling down is quite another matter.

* * *

The Direction of Evolution.

Confining our attention to animal society, how is evolution expressed? Primarily, what we have is adaptation. If an animal is to live it must be adapted to its surroundings to the extent of being able to

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overcome those forces that threaten its existence. That is a commonplace; all it says is, that if an animal lives it must be able to live; but all truths are commonplaces—when one sees them. Still, if we only had adaptation to consider, and if the environment in relation to which adaptation was to be secured remained constant, all we should have would be the deaths of all not able to live, the survival of better endowed specimens; but there would be no movement that could be called progression or retrogression. This arises because the environment itself changes. Either the material conditions undergo a change, or the pressure of numbers on the means of subsistence initiate a struggle as to their possession. The consequence is the introduction of a new quality into the process of adaptation. It becomes a question of a greater endowment of the particular qualities that spell survival. And that paves the way to what we call progress—or the reverse. For one must observe that evolution is as evident whether the movement is in the direction of, or away from, what we call progress. It levels neither "up" nor "down"; what it does is to secure a certain measure of accommodation between an organism and its surroundings. Up and down is as relative in biology as it is in astronomy. In nature there is neither better nor worse, neither high nor low, there are only differences, and if that had been borne in mind a great many theistic apologies would never have seen the light, nor would non-theists have so often weakened their case by using a watered-down form of the theistic argument.

* * *

Evolution and Progress.

What ground is there, then, for speaking of evolution as "levelling up," or of its being a progressive force? None whatever. Retrogression (if one must use these terms) is as common in nature as progression. On the one hand we have aquatic life giving rise to mammalian life. On the other hand, we have mammalian life taking again to an aquatic existence. Here, we have a "lower" form of life giving way to a "higher" form; and, there, we have the higher being supplanted by a lower. And, on the whole, lower forms are more persistent than are the higher ones. There are certain lowly forms that were in existence long before the appearance of man, and which will most probably be the last form of life to disappear from a worn-out globe. The argument with which the Theist seeks to meet a mechanistic conception of nature, namely, that evolution is a law of progress, that it implies a goal, and is the realization of a plan, is wholly fallacious. From a scientific point of view it is meaningless chatter. Science knows nothing of a plan, or an end, or even of progress in nature. All these are conceptions that we humans create for our own convenience. They are so many standards of measurement, of the same nature as our agreement that a certain measure of space shall be called a yard, or that a certain quantity of liquid shall be called a pint. It is sheer anthropomorphism. It is the ghost of God imported into science.

* * *

In my next article I will deal with the more concrete applications of the principles on which I have been dwelling.

Chapman Cohen.

Every country must be instructed either by *writers* or *preachers;* but, as the number of readers increases, the number of hearers is proportionately diminished, the writer becomes more useful, and the preaching Bonze less necessary.—*Goldsmith.*

The Great Drift.

For upwards of twenty years it has been the heart-breaking wail of the Churches that they are steadily losing the power which they wielded with such terrible effect in days long gone by, and ever since the Reformation, Protestant Christianity has been passing through a slow process of disintegration. Indirectly, it was the revival of learning that rendered the Reformation possible, whilst the Reformation itself has been indirectly making for the emasculation of the Christian religion. Even within the Catholic Church there has been at times a distinct trend toward intellectual emancipation, only in that communion it has been resisted and checked with a considerable degree of success. From a Christian point of view, the Reformation was a false and disastrous movement. Its substitution of the Bible for the Church as the supreme, final authority was in itself a mistake; but when the right of private judgment in its interpretation was admitted, Christianity received a blow which, in the end, was bound to prove fatal. Consequently, the Catholic Church and the Catholic party in the Anglican Communion are perfectly justified in pronouncing the Protestant Reformation the biggest religious blunder ever committed. From a Freethought point of view, however, it was the first effective onslaught upon the chief stronghold of the Christian superstition, being the first successful assertion in Christendom of the rights of the human Reason. It was an extremely crude and more or less unconscious assertion, no doubt, and certainly not one of the Reformers contemplated even the possibility of its eventually resulting in the dissolution of the Faith.

The *Church Times*, as is well known, is the able organ of the Catholic Party in the Church of England, and the foregoing remarks were suggested by several recent articles and letters in its columns, and particularly by a leading article, entitled "The Passing of the Evangelicals," in its issue of October 10. It may be interesting to recall the origin of the Evangelical Party in the Anglican Church. During most of the eighteenth century "the general remissness and negligence" of the Church must be regarded as a notorious fact. Arian views prevailed, and the clergy had no sense of the sacredness and importance of their profession. Many of them found their chief pleasure in hunting and carousing, knowing little and caring less about spiritual religion, and naturally neglecting their duties as ambassadors of Christ. When at last a reaction set in from Oxford, it was vigorously resisted. The two Wesleys and Whitfield were persecuted; and out of that bitter persecution arose the Wesleyan Church and the Calvinistic Methodism of Wales. This was what is known as the Evangelical Revival, which, towards the end of the century, had a reacting effect upon many of the Anglican clergy, who became distinguished for their piety and zeal, making preaching their forte and attending with diligence to their pastoral duties. Under their influence the Church Missionary Society, Bible and tract societies, and Sunday-schools were founded. During the nineteenth century the Evangelicals were noted for their orthodoxy and earnestness, and great was their influence everywhere. But before the close of last century it was evident that their power was on the wane; with the result that now, the *Church Times* says: "As the older men pass away their places are not filled, except nominally, for the new Evangelicalism is very different from the old." It was almost exclusively an emotional movement, dwelling mainly on the love of Christ for lost souls and his atoning work to make their salvation legally possible. There were mission preachers whose

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fiery eloquence stirred the masses mightily, and numerous conversions were their reward. As the *Church Times* rightly observes, the new Evangelicalism—

> claims to have a more liberal, a more scholarly, outlook on the world; but does it start really from the same principles? That there should be a cooling of fervour, indeed, proves little. Fervour is not what it was among High Churchmen either. More than half a century ago a saintly Evangelical lamented, "Our school is dying of exinanition"; nevertheless it is not yet dead. But the Bishop of Durham deplores the decay of old ideals of the unworldly life, separated from what is earthly and secular, the disappearance of the note of solemn warning and the hope of glory from evangelical pulpits, the far feebler impact of spiritual religion upon the life of the nation, the withdrawal into the background of the necessity of the new birth.....This is true, no doubt, of the modern, "socialized" pulpit generally, from which words like "salvation" have almost disappeared, and in which heaven is almost as unpopular a topic as hell.

That is an accurate diagnosis of the state of supernatural religion at present generally, not excepting the High Church Party. A great drift towards Secularism is in progress in all the sects. This is sorrowfully admitted by all religious leaders, even by those of Wesleyan Methodism, for many years the most fervently evangelical of all the denominations. Almost imperceptibly Reason's claims to be heard and to dominate all life are being well-nigh universally recognized, with the inevitable result that supernatural belief is being gradually undermined. Reason and credulity cannot long coexist. It is generally known that Dr. Hensley Henson, the present Bishop of Hereford, has strong leanings towards Rationalism, and our contemporary calls attention to the significant fact that, "except the venerable Dean of Canterbury, scarcely any Low Churchmen dissociated themselves from the Hereford scandal, and the new Bishop has been warmly supported by the Low Church Press." The *Church Times* goes further still, and declares that "in Convocation the defence of Holy Scripture and the Creeds has been left to a small band of High Churchmen."

At one time Evangelicals and Low Churchmen represented two distinct schools, and the latter persecuted the former with great fierceness; but, eventually, the two parties practically amalgamated, so that now "Evangelical" and "Low Church" are synonymous terms. Referring to the great Tractarian agitation our contemporary says:—

> It was not Evangelicalism, but the anti-supernatural temper of the Reform era, which was assailed by the Oxford Movement; indeed, a passionately evangelical spirit breathes through the writings and teachings of the Tractarians. It is a word which no Catholic would willingly surrender to a party, for if ours is not Gospel Christianity it is not Christianity at all.....There is very little of the Calvinistic spirit in neo-Evangelicalism, or of the higher Puritanism either. It has accommodated itself to the temper of the age, getting rid of hampering *impedimenta*. It still retains more of the devotional *ethos* than Liberalism does, but its future seems to lie in an eventual coalition with the latter, on the basis of resistance to any Christianity which is ecclesiastical and sacerdotal, authoritative and doctrinal.

So far so good. The present tendency in all the Churches is to magnify secular interests to the detriment of supernatural belief. The religious cry of the day is for a new Christianity; a Christianity for this world instead of for the next, a Christianity concentrating on social problems, and on righting economic wrongs; a Christianity that will "level down Churchmanship to the least common denominator of civil citizenship; in short, a Christianity that will only be another, more polite word for Secularism. Just now there is little, if any, of this kind of drift in the Catholic Church. In its case it is not the Church that drifts, but the people who drift out of the Church towards pure Naturalism. In Italy, in Spain and Portugal, even in France and Germany, the minds of the people are getting impregnated with the seed of Secularism, which is simply Rationalism in practice, and, in consequence, they tire of the Church and leave it severely alone. Even the *Church Times* candidly admits that the future of Christianity is extremely dark and doubtful. It also declares: "That Low Churchmen will be able much longer to keep out of the vortex of Rationalism we fear is unlikely." Time will soon show whether it will or not.

Meantime, while the great drift is going on, one naturally asks, is Christianity worth preserving? Would its disappearance be a loss? There are things in it of priceless value, but these were in the world centuries before it was ever heard of, and will undoubtedly survive it. As to the value of Christianity itself, some wonderfully outspoken utterances were delivered at the recent Church Congress held at Leicester. According to a report in the *Daily Herald* for October 15, a paper by Lord Eustace Percy was read, in which it was boldly declared that "war, as we have known it in the past, and as it threatens in the future, is the product of Christendom," and that "it was by no accident that the history of Christendom had been a history of wars." The President of the Congress, the Bishop of Peterborough, delivered a remarkable address from the chair, in which he lamented the fact that at present God does not count in the lives of the people, and asserted that it can never be well with us either individually or nationally, either industrially or economically, until there is a revival of the sense that he does. At the moment there is no sign of such a revival. Everywhere the great drift is seen to be taking place. On the one hand the Churches are on the move, and, on the other, the people are leaving the Churches; and there are but two goals—Catholicism and Secularism—the latter appears to be by far the more attractive for the bulk of the drifters.

J. T. Lloyd.

Shelley the Sempiternal.

O cease! must hate and death return?
Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past,
O might it die or rest at last! —*Shelley.*

It is related of the youthful Robert Browning that, browsing among the bookstalls, he saw a volume labelled as "Mr. Shelley's Atheistical Poems, Scarce." Badly printed, shamefully bound, this despised book of verse touched young Browning to new emotions. This contact with the dead poet proved the dawn of a new life to the clever lad. From that time Browning's prolific poetic production began. The result is not surprising, for Shelley was one of the surpreme singers of his century. To him song was natural speech. With labour, special education, and careful selection of circumstances, many have purchased their poetic rights, as the chief captain bought the name of Roman, but Shelley was a born poet. He was the revelation of a new world; and it only wanted the remove of a century to show him in his colossal proportions.

So surely as Shakespeare is the first of our dramatic and Milton of our epic poets, so certainly is Shelley one of the greatest of our lyric poets. He had the voice of a syren, and his music is irresistible. Like Shakespeare, Shelley saw sylphs and fairies, and heard the ding-dong bell of the water-nymphs, and he could turn from the witcheries of elf-land to the stern realism of *The Cenci.*

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As generation succeeds generation, Shelley emerges more and more as one of the great figures destined to immortality of fame. Many of his contemporaries who overshadowed him whilst he was living have almost faded into nothingness, but this Freethought poet has a message for unborn generations.

"Shelley's fame has probably grown more in the last generation than that of any of our poets," declares a critic in the *Times*, discussing "Foreign Critics and Shelley." "Translations of his poems, as well as books, pamphlets, and articles about him have greatly increased in most of the European countries during the past twenty or thirty years. It seems likely that he will soon definitely rank in foreign opinion as the third of the English poets. No one will dispute the pre-eminence of Shakespeare and Milton." And the critic goes on to say that "there are ten or twenty times as many recent foreign books about Shelley in the British Museum catalogue as there are about Keats."

How strange it all seems! Shelley's transformation has passed through three stages. First, he was regarded as a fiend; second, as a "beautiful but ineffectual angel"; and, third, as the prophet of a new and nobler humanity. But the *Times* scribe is nothing if not critical. In such a case as that of Shelley, there is bound to be a fly in the ointment. Shelley's most terrible crime seems to have been that he had no humour, which the reviewer contends is necessary "for the mixing of the cup of universal and enduring fame." How often this nonsense has figured in Shelley criticism. Byron was a great humorist, and even he could hardly have bettered Shelley's satirical lines on Wordsworth in *Peter Bell the Third*. And the translation of the *Hymn to Mercury* is an exquisite piece of humour; whilst in Shelley's letters there are very many touches of delicate humour, which are sufficient to disprove the critic's silliness.

With regard to Shelley's religious views, a Spanish Catholic critic is quoted in the *Times* as saying that Shelley's lyrics are a constant lament over his own misery and the world's wrong. But this is as absurd as the statement that the great English poet had no humour. Lamentation is not the only note. Witness the noble lines beginning:—

> The world's great age begins anew.

Or, perhaps, the lines in *Prometheus Unbound*:—

> To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy Power which seems omnipotent;
> To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates.

How often must it be repeated that literature was not a pastime with Shelley. There was a close connection between his writings and his life. Ever a pioneer, from the days of *Queen Mab* to his last poem, his pen was a weapon which he wielded for Liberty. Except that the later verse shows greater mastery, and strike deeper chords than he had used in his youth, there is no change. His Freethought was never disputed during his unpopular days, when men and women were imprisoned for selling his works. Florence to the living Dante was not more cruelly unjust than England to the living Shelley. Only some thirty years after his untimely death was his poetic glory acknowledged by his own countrymen. Now, a hundred years after his death, Shelley arouses more interest abroad than any other English poet, except Shakespeare. The reason is not far to seek. It is because Shelley is the poet of Humanity who looked beyond the tumult of revolt to the peace of a new society, and who voiced the hopes and fears of the Young Generation against the cruelties and stupidities of the Old.

MIMNERMUS.

Prostituted Brains.

IT has been well said more than once that there are cases of legalized prostitution which are worse than some cases of prostitution upon which the Law frowns. Can there be anything more shocking to the moral sense than to contemplate the innocent young daughter of an ignorant, coarse-minded, but ambitious couple being given in a *marriage de convenance* to an elderly, wealthy *roue?* Surely not.

Now, we have to recognize that it is quite as possible to prostitute the mind and the faculties and qualities of the mind, as it is to prostitute the body and the faculties and qualities of the body. And you may find people who prostitute both, as well as people who prostitute the one or the other. The only brain, for example, that is acceptable to the Churches is the dependent and subservient brain. The brain that presumes to be independent and to think for itself is banned and denounced by the Churches. The very word "theology" is a contradiction. But it was a very astute clerical move to call divinity an "ology," to attempt to dignify it as a science—nay, as the Queen of Sciences! The clerical mind always aims high in the matter of nomenclature and appellation. We are the people, and wisdom and goodness shall die with us!

The satisfactory feature of the second decade of the twentieth century is that the best brains are *not* entering the Church. This general statement must be made, of course, comparatively, and with the qualification that you do still find men of considerable—even great—intellectual power in the Churches. Still, the bulk of the best brains of our land is going past the Churches. But even if all the best brains did not enter the Church, we must not for that reason imagine that the Church would cease to exist. In the minds of some simple believers, this would be an advantage to pure religion and to the power of the Church Universal, because they firmly hold that much learning has driven many professed Christians spiritually mad, and given scope to the jesuitical policy of the Higher Criticism, with all its appalling implications.

There is nothing new under the sun; and certainly the uneducated believer has no faith in new facts or new ideas. They are disturbing; and mentally he abhors disturbance. It is amazing with what a grip the vacant mind holds on to two or three cardinal propositions; with what fervour and eloquence it can proclaim them as truth; with what self-denying diligence and sedulous care it seeks to induce others to embrace the same beliefs. The methods of the highly educated clergyman who presides over a wealthy and fashionable congregation are entirely different from those of the uneducated advocate of the simple truth as it is in Jesus. But the big man does not condemn the methods of the little man. Not at all. On the contrary, he approves benignly and blandly—from a distance; because, after all, the little man is a fisher of men, and what comes to his net adds to the numerical strength of the believing community. Besides, some of the individuals netted by the little man may grow in knowledge, wealth, and influence, to be as big as the fish that accommodated, without inconvenience, the prophet Jonah; and having so grown, he will naturally want more congenial surroundings than those afforded by the Little Bethel, the tin mission hall, or the street-corner meeting. By insensible gradations he will reach the soothing and scented atmosphere of the great dim building where his pacific soul will be unmoved or irritated by bellowed "Amen!" or "Glory!" the tramp of hob-nailed boots on bare boards, or the beastly rattle of a vulgar collect-

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ing-box. Nay, his soul will be hushed to soft slumbering acquiescence by the low and placid intonation of well-trained voices and the purr of the huge hidden pipe organ. The accessories will have improved and the believer will pay accordingly.

Though all the brains of the country refused to enter the Churches, bless your heart, the Churches would not cease to exist! Don't think it! There are myriads of "kind hearts" and professors of "simple faith" who would sit still under the expansive wings of Mother Church. Why? Because the pious rich continue to endow the Church with immense fire premiums, and every rich man and woman has a crowd of parasites in his or her train. The Feudal System is only extinct in name.

It is the effect of prostituting the brain, of belittling the brain, of concurrence in the false cry and damnable lie that the heart is better than the brain. As an old gentleman once observed to the present writer: "You might as well speak of loving with your liver as loving with your heart." No one merely thinks with the brain. He or she does *everything* with the brain. The brain is your mainspring of speech and action. "The greatest thing in the world is man, and the greatest thing in man is mind." It is to be supposed that when Hamilton said he knew as well as anybody else about the doctrine of the immanence of God, but it did not prevent him from doing justice to man.

He who belittles, or slanders, or injures, or impairs the brain is the arch-enemy of humanity. All this clerically engineered, emotional rubbish about the heart—the heart—the heart! must be consigned to the dustbin. It has been a source of misery for human beings, and it has carried with it as an inevitable and indispensable corollary the prostitution of the greatest thing in the world—the brain of man. The brain feels as well as thinks. It loves and hates as well as schemes and plans. It quivers with emotion in the presence of great beauty. It recoils from pain, and is responsive to what is pleasant and joyous. It rejoices with those who rejoice, and weeps with those who weep. It admires the sunrise and sunset. It fills the being with a flood of glory when it receives first knowledge of some great master in art. "Heart" is only a figure of a part of the brain. It means the feelings as distinguished from pure reason. But they cannot be ever fully separated. The brain is a composite of feeling and intelligence.

Brains that will not be subservient are at a discount. But the brain that is employed in advancing something or advocating something that it either does not believe or positively disbelieves is a prostituted brain, and the being in whom it is found has allowed himself to be degraded to the lowest possible level. He who respects the independence of the brain—the brain of others as well as his own—is capable of the highest order of moral courage when the test is applied to him. But if you can compel people to use their brains as *you* choose to direct, you rob them of their personality, their manhood and womanhood, their honour.

IGNOTUS.

I have always distrusted chimeras. Nothing is less wholesome for men and nations than illusion; it stifles effort, it blinds, it is the vanity of the weak. To repose on legends, to be mistaken about all realities, to believe that it is enough to dream of force in order to be strong—we have seen well enough to what terrible disasters such things lead. The people are told to look on high, to believe in a Higher Power, and to exalt themselves to the ideal. No, no! That is language which at times seems to me to be impious. The only strong people are those who work, and it is only work that gives courage and faith.—*Emile Zola.*

Acid Drops.

The *Christian World* thinks the London magistrate gave a dangerous decision in ruling that a Spiritualist medium was not guilty of fortune-telling if she believed in it herself. To our mind, we consider he acted sensibly enough as matters stand. Will someone please tell us on what ground a fortune-teller should be fined or imprisoned while others are allowed to do a roaring trade in the sale of charms and mascots, etc.? And will someone also tell us what substantial difference there is between a Spiritualistic medium taking money for telling about the future and a Roman Catholic priest taking money for getting souls out of Purgatory, or saving other souls from getting in? or the ordinary clergyman getting money for telling us about the next world? If fortune telling and reading the future, and trading on people's love of the mystic and the marvellous, is a crime, then let it be a crime all round. But for a parson crying out against these things, and meantime following his own craft, strikes us as professional jealousy more than aught else.

As we said last week, the real cure for this kind of thing is education. And we don't mean by that the kind of thing that anyone can get at any school. We mean education in the sense of a real broadening and enlarging of the mind. And the moral we draw from this craving for consulting mediums is that we are still very little removed from savages. One reads of members of the Royal family wandering round with mascots, of regiments taking away their mascot, of banners being blessed, and of guns being consecrated. What is all this but savagery pure and simple? How much better is the prince or princess who wears a charm than the savage chieftain or chieftainess with a string of magical ornaments prepared by the local specialist? And how is this general form of savagery to be killed while we have churches and chapels all over the country which are doing their best to keep superstition aive? The savage is with us all the time, we spend a deal of our national energy in seeing that he is ready for use when wanted, and then we prosecute some poor devil of a fortune-teller who is only taking advantage of the harvest that society has sown for him. Well, if the law does suppress him, there is always the Church or the revival platform on which he may exercise his talents.

The "vicar of a large and poor parish," writing in a daily paper, suggests £500 as a "minimum wage" for parsons. This is very modest for men who work one day weekly.

Pity the sorrows of a poor old Deity! In view of the industrial crisis, a four days' series of prayer-meetings took place at the Mansion House, London. Under divine guidance, perhaps City magnates may find out that Trade Unionists are human beings.

The beautiful nonsense printed in the papers is taken for granted, but a choice sample deserves to be rescued from oblivion. In a literary contemporary, a writer discourses on "Bolshevik Taste in Literature," and says "Milton's *Paradise Lost* is still a great favourite with the Russian peasants." Prodigious! And the vast majority of these peasants are illiterate. Even the educated peasants in "God's own England" have not yet reached the giddy literary heights of Charles Garvice and Ethel Dell.

Few people know what "Bolshevism" is; but it has a fine sound. Writing in *Lloyd's Sunday News* on the growth of divorce cases, Lady Beecham entitles her remarks "Matrimonial Bolshevism." The article is full of pretty platitudes and some downright nonsense. The following is a good example: "It is exactly 1919 years ago since motherhood was raised from the dust, when the infant Child in the mother's arms inspired Western civilization." And Lady Beecham is "honorary secretary of the Marriage Defence League," too. Such pills as this will never cure the nation's matrimonial troubles.

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A writer in the *Star*, referring to Voltaire's ending of *Candide*, "We must cultivate our garden," says: "It sums up the theme in a phrase, and offers us a modest philosophy that solves most of the riddles of life." Such pretty compliments are not usually paid to Freethinkers until they have been dead a hundred years.

"A clerical nonentity," writing in a daily paper on the subject of "The Church and Social Unrest," declares that the clergy do little but talk to bring about harmony between labour and capital. Even "a clerical nonentity" should be aware of the attitude of the bishops on such questions. How can we expect the subordinate clergy to flout their superiors —and keep their jobs?

A definite start has been made in the formation of a trade union for the clergy. A Dorsetsbire vicar is the moving spirit, and he is already asking for subscriptions. It is strange that if the dear clergy want more money that they should overlook the value of petitioning the Throne of Grace. And, particularly, in view of the suggestion that the Second Person of the Undivided Trinity was a working-carpenter.

Lawyers are very busy untying the knots tied by Holy Mother Church. There are nearly three thousand divorce cases in the list. A striking proof that the clergy are losing their hold on the nation.

"Power of speech in these days is almost terrible in its range," declares the Bishop of Peterborough. Yet present-day speech is very modest in comparison with the "cursing Psalms."

Dean Inge told the Church Congress some home truths about the state of religious belief. He told the Congress that people had lost all interest in a future life. He said:—

> I am not speaking of the irreligious, but of the religious. The belief in another world was fading out of our teaching and out of our life. We had first a revolt against the doctrine of reprobation, and a shallow, good-natured assumption that even the wicked and impenitent will not fail of ultimate happiness. Then all future reference to a future life gradually disappeared from popular preaching, except as a rather perfunctory consolation to mourners. I have noticed again and again how a congregation loses its interest in a sermon if one begins to talk about heaven and hell.

It sounds like, "We are among friends; let us tell the truth."

The Vicar of St. Mark's, Marylebone, in dealing with Spiritualism, said there was a "wave of psychic feeling passing through England." This seems to us a very grandiloquent name for a very common thing. The interest of, we should say, 99 per cent. of the people who go in for Spiritualism is not much higher or more "psychic" than the feeling that takes one to see a clever conjuring entertainment. That they may think it is real instead of being a trick makes no difference to the quality of the animating motive. Consider the number of people that one could collect to stare for hours at a house that is said to be "haunted"! Or the crowds that will gather to gape at a house in which a murder has been committed! One might as well call this a wave of "psychic feeling." If we except the few whose minds are overwrought by grief, all we have left with Spiritualism is idle or morbid curiosity. But with everything into which religion enters, the first step is to use a crowd of humbugging terms. The rest is easy with a population the larger part of which knows no more stimulating mental food than a scrappy morning or evening newspaper.

The Bishop of Peterborough said that the people at large did not know what God was like or what God can do. That is certainly true, and one wonders whether the Bishop is any better informed. There is nothing easier than to talk about God; any fool can do it, and most fools take advantage of the opportunity. Not only fools though—others with a more sinister purpose to serve find the name of God their most valuable asset. In all ages: "Thus saith the Lord" has been a prelude to knavery or folly.

As the people do not know what God is like, the Archbishop of Dublin proceeded to explain. He said that the laws of nature are "a revelation of God's trustworthiness." We are not quite sure what that means, it sounds much like the curate who praised God for decreeing that death should come at the end of life instead of in the middle of it. God, we presume, is trustworthy, because he does not interfere with nature acting uniformly. He might have made death come in the middle of life instead of it always coming at the end, or he might have made 2 and 2 equal 5 instead of them always equalling four. Oxygen and hydrogen might have produced water to-day and whisky to-morrow instead of producing the same thing all the time. Therefore the Archbishop writes God a testimonial of trustworthiness. We feel inclined to add yet another proof. If God had made theologians sometimes talk like men of sense and sometimes like fools, we should never have been able to tell a theologian from an ordinary human being. But he always makes them talk in much the same way, therefore, we are not deceived. Nature is uniform, the theologian always talks—like a theologian. Therefore, thank God for being trustworthy, for the mark of the maker is on all his works!

Canon Peter Green says that "bishops' palaces, motor-cars, and incomes, are a real stumbling-block to the working man in accepting Christianity." The Canon must be green, indeed, if he really thinks that this exhausts the objections of the working-classes to the Christian Superstition.

The Rev. B J. Bourchier, of Hendon, is not satisfied with green apples, hard plums, anæmic tomatoes, and faded cabbages as gifts for the harvest festival at his church. He wants useful articles, such as tobacco, cigarettes, scrubbing-brushes, blacking, firewood, and other homely articles. A year's subscription to a paper is suggested also. Just imagine the clergyman's feelings if some enthusiastic and youthful Churchman handed in a packet of Woodbines and a year's subscription to the *Boys' Boomerang!*

A son of a rector was sentenced at Dorset Sessions to twelve months' imprisonment for passing worthless cheques. It was stated that he recently escaped from Canterbury Gaol. This is not a valuable testimonial to the value of a religious training.

The Bishop of London has a plan for the union of the Government Religion with the Wesleyan Body, which includes the creation of twelve Wesleyan bishops. A pleasant prospect for the new bishops, but an unpleasant one for Democracy.

Prebendary Rudolf, founder of the Waifs and Strays Society, has been presented with a cheque for £1,000 by his admirers. The Church of Christ has always seen that there are a large number of waifs and strays for such societies to look after.

According to a legend, Saint Simeon Stylites passed many years of his life on a pillar. We hope that the Vicar of Hampton Wick does not meditate anything so drastic. Writing in the parish magizine, he says he will be compelled to vacate the vicarage, but "I shall be located somewhere at hand, and my address will be affixed to the church-board."

The Rev. J. H. Ellison, who will be chaplain to the new Lord Mayor of London, is rector of St. Michael's Church, the income of which is £1,350. He is brother-in-law to the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose income is £15,000.

The British and Foreign Bible Society has issued the Scriptures in the Adamawa language. Better late than never! People are beginning to leave off reading the Bible in English.

The Rev. S. S. Shergold says that the town of Brighton is "ungodly." Last time we visited the place we noticed a very large number of places of worship. Mr. Shergold had better try again.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

October 26, Manchester; November 2, Glasgow; November 3, Paisley; November 6, Milngavie; November 7, Falkirk; November 9, Edinburgh; November 16, South Shields; November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—October 26, Birmingham; November 16, Leicester; November 23, Manchester; December 7, Swansea.

J. H. O. (South Africa).—The only reason why we did not print your letter is that our space is very limited, and the topic was one that we did not care to have discussed at the time. From a mass of material, every editor is compelled to select what he considers of the more immediate importance. He may be unwise in his selection and rejection, but it must be done.

H. Spence.—Thanks. Shall appear as early as possible.

Tara.—We are neither elated nor downhearted. We have been pegging away at the work of weakening superstition for nearly thirty years, we knew it was no easy job when we started, and really don't expect to finish our work within the next month or two.

J. Travers.—Quite candidly, now; would it really be an unmixed blessing to know that *everyone* would live for ever? Think of some people we all know wandering around for ever and ever. The prospect is too awful for contemplation.

E. Allured.—Thanks for cuttings. Discussions in the press are certain to do good. They form an introduction to Freethought to many people.

W. R. Edwards.—Pleased to hear from so old a friend. You are not very far from London, and there seems no great difficulty to our seeing you in the flesh one day.

J. F. Williams.—With the help of our friends we have no doubt of getting over all our difficulties—one day.

N. Lawson writes:—"Please find herewith a small subscription to your Sustentation Fund. I have been a reader of your paper for only two-and-a-half years, having first had a copy given me while in France. Some pamphlets, which, I believe, came from your office, gave me further enlightenment, and now there is no paper I would more reluctantly give up than the *Freethinker*. I feel it would be a disaster for anything to happen to it, and I hope that the response to your appeal will be such as to relieve you from financial worries for some time. My own regret is that I am unable to do more." We are pleased to hear from one of our War-time converts.

"A Friend" writes to say that Mr. J. Cain can get the *Freethinker* outside the Ranelagh Street Railway Station. It is sold by a newsboy who was induced by the writer to commence selling, and he now has a number of regular customers.

F. Begley.—We cannot say offhand what was the value of General Booth's property at his death, but believe it was small. But the whole of the Army's assets was practically in his name.

W. Scott.—Sorry we have not the space to open our columns to a discussion on the subject of inter-racial marriages.

W. G. Smith.—If the preacher at Frinstead Parish Church on October 12 said that all Atheists, including Charles Bradlaugh, were converted before they died, we are not surprised that your son felt inclined to call him a liar. He deserved it. But lying in the pulpit is quite a respectable occupation. We do not know anything of the conduct during the strike of the person you name. We should say that his Freethought could not be of a very robust kind.

E. Hopper.—If "people" in the paragraph, to which you refer, meant *all* people, your reasoning would be conclusive. Unfortunately, it refers only to those who know, and they are in the minority. To the majority, "God" is still a term with a certain hypnotic power. And there is the spell and power of organized religion that must also be broken.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Owing to the editor's absence from London over the week-end, we must hold over until next week the list of acknowledgments to the Sustentation Fund. It is unsatisfactory to give an incomplete list, and the matter will not hurt by the delay. We continue to receive many kindly letters along with the subscriptions, which we greatly appreciate. It is well to know that the readers of the paper are so keenly interested in its welfare, and so ready on all occasions with their help. Nothing but the feeling that we could depend upon them would have enabled us to struggle through the War-period. We hope to soon announce a closing date for the fund.

To-day (Oct. 26) Mr. Cohen lectures, afternoon and evening, in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick, Manchester. We believe the meetings are being well advertised, but there is always room for our friends to do a little personal advertising among their more orthodox friends. Next Sunday Mr. Cohen opens a week's campaign in Scotland. He will lecture at Glasgow on Nov. 2, Edinburgh on Nov. 9, and spend the week in lecturing in the district.

On Saturday, October 25, the Manchester Branch commences its "Social" season with a gathering in the Co-operative (Small) Hall, Downing Street. There will be music, dancing, whist drive, and a dramatic performance. The function commences at 6 o'clock, and tickets will be 2s. each, including refreshments. Secretary's address: H. Black, 446 Great Cheetham Street, Higher Broughton.

Last Sunday London lay in the embrace of a thick fog, so thick that traffic, for a time, had to be suspended. In the circumstances, the audience at South Place was not so large as it would otherwise have been; but those present greatly enjoyed Mr. Lloyd's lecture. To-day (Oct. 26) Mr. W. H. Thresh will lecture. The title of his address, "From Savage to Shakespeare," ought to be enough to secure a crowded hall.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (October 26) at the Repertory Theatre at 7 o'clock. We hope that all Birmingham friends will do their best to see that the hall is crowded, and with as many Christians as is possible.

We cannot say that we are fond of funerals, particularly Secular ones. Indeed, if a funeral must be, we think we would rather see a Christian than a Secular one. But as Secularists will die, it is well that their funerals should be carried out in accordance with their desires. To secure this, we have been asked by the Propaganda Committee, appointed by the Executive, to help in compiling a list of all those people, in various parts of Britain, who would undertake the reading of the Secular Burial Service if called upon. There should be at least one person in every district, and we hope there will be. Branch Secretaries can help in the matter by seeing that some names are forthcoming, and we hope that no mistaken feeling of modesty will prevent volunteers from sending in their names. These should be sent to Miss E. M. Vance at the National Secular Society's office. Any help that can come from headquarters will be given.

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Mr. Cohen's meetings at Weston-super-Mare on Sunday last were not large, but the interest of the audience was marked and their manner appreciative. These were the first Freethought meetings ever held in the town, and they may result in more systematic propaganda in the future. Mr. Collette Jones was present from London, and officiated as chairman on both occasions. We are indebted to him for putting himself to the trouble of travelling so far for that purpose.

It was always difficult to get the case for Mohammedanism as against Christianity fairly presented in the English Press, and since the War commenced it has been more difficult than ever. The British Press has become more venal than it was ever before, and sheer lying has become a quite respectable quality. So we asked Mr. Marmaduke Pickthall, a gentleman who is as well informed on matters connected with Mohammedanism as any other man in London, to write us an article on the subject. The result appears on another page. We hope to publish more from Mr. Pickthall on the same topic.

The Wisdom of the Serpent.

The pernicious influence of clericalism takes effect in various directions, and manifests itself in many ways. Not long ago in one of the Scottish counties opportunity arose for making an advance towards the secularization of education in the public schools of the district. At a meeting of the Education Board a motion was put forward calling for the withdrawal of the Shorter Catechism from the schools under the jurisdiction of the Board. The motion was so favourably received that it would have been carried had it not been for the votes of four Roman Catholic clergymen on the Board who supported the continuance of the Catechism. Their votes being given against the motion the result was a tie, and the chairman exercised his casting-vote by recording it against the motion, which was therefore lost.

There is no fault to be found here with the action of the chairman, which was in accordance with well-established usage. Where the votes of an elected body are equally divided for and against a proposed change of procedure, it seems only right that the chairman's casting-vote should be given in favour of the *status quo*. What we are concerned about is the position of the four priests.

It should be borne in mind that the reverend gentlemen who assisted in rivetting the Shorter Catechism round the necks of the children in the public schools of the county of Renfrew do not represent the parents of the children affected. The Roman Catholics have their own schools, where, of course, the Shorter Catechism dare not enter. As a matter of fact, to the Roman Catholic clergymen, the Shorter Catechism must be an utter heretical work, yet they were quite willing to vote in favour of its continued imposition on the children attending the Board Schools. Had the priests any sense of fairness they would have abstained from voting on that particular motion, and have left the matter to be decided by the representatives of the parents and guardians of the children concerned. It was (or should have been) no affair of the priests; the motion did not affect *their* schools.

When the conduct of the priests in this connection was adversely criticized in the press, it was urged in justification that the priests in voting for the maintenance of the Shorter Catechism (in somebody else's school) were confident they were correctly interpreting the wishes of the community. This is a quite gratuitous assumption, and it is effectively disposed of in this instance by the fact that, eliminating the official Roman Catholic representation, a majority of the Board favoured the dropping of the Catechism. The other members of the Board represent that section of the community for which the Board Schools were provided, the Roman Catholic members do not.

It has been remarked above that the question of excluding or not excluding the Presbyterian Shorter Catechism from the public schools should have been no affair of the priests; but, of course, Secularists need not be surprised at the action of the priests in thus taking advantage of their position on the Board to bolster up Protestant religious teaching in the nation's schools. In spite of the acrimony which frequently enters into the relationship between Catholic and Protestant clerics, when it is a question of opposing Secularism the interests of priest and presbyter are one. The above-chronicled episode merely furnished additional proof—if additional proof were needed—that the priests are quite agreeable that what they consider a false religion should be taught in the public schools rather than no religion at all.

Another form of what looks very like sharp practice on the part of the Roman Church has given rise to a considerable amount of caustic comment. Under the Education Act of 1918 provision has been made for taking over financial responsibility for the upkeep of the voluntary schools by the local educational authorities. This arrangement is the natural and necessary price payable by the community to the voluntary schools in return for the latter consenting to come under public control so far as the secular side of their training is concerned. One Section of the said Act provides that the teaching staff in the transferred voluntary schools shall from the date of transfer be placed upon the same scale of salaries as teachers of corresponding qualifications appointed to corresponding positions in other schools under the same authorities.

This is an obviously just regulation. The managers of the Roman Catholic schools were, however, not content to allow the Education Boards to make any requisite and reasonable adjustment of salaries *after* the transfer had been effected. They forestalled this by doubling, and in some cases trebling, the salaries of their teachers before the date of the transfer, with the evident expectation that the Education Boards would take over their teachers unquestioningly at the revised valuation which had been so suddenly made. It might be urged that no great harm can result from this procedure if the various Boards correctly and impartially interpret the plain sense of the Act of Parliament as cited above, and decline to sanction any excessive salaries that the astute managers of the voluntary schools may have passed on to be paid by the ratepayers. This contention, of course, is true so far as it goes; but the consideration must be carried a little further.

We are far from saying that the voluntary school teachers, even with the belated advances so generously awarded by the clerical managers, are being overpaid. But the whole controversy resolves itself into this: If the hugely increased salaries which the managers of the voluntary schools granted to their school staffs on the eve of their conveyance to public control represent nothing more than the remuneration to which they are justly entitled, then the inevitable deduction must be that the Roman Catholic teachers have previously been grossly underpaid. This, of course, is the fact; and we do not grudge them their advancement, which is long overdue. The charge of sweating, however, still lies at the door of the Roman Catholic authorities. This is met by the plea that the managers of the voluntary schools, not having the rates at their back, could not

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afford to pay their teachers adequately. It is singular that lack of funds has not prevented the country being covered with R. C. churches, schools, and clerical domiciles. It is only when their employees ask for a decent living wage that the ecclesiastical authorities discover they cannot afford it.

This is quite in keeping with the traditions of Roman Catholicism in these countries. Those who work for the Church in a subordinate capacity are expected to reckon as part of their reward the reflection that they are labouring for the glory of God and of Holy Mother Church. But the glory of God does not pay for food or raiment, even at Government controlled prices; and there are no showers of heavenly manna to nourish hungry sojourners in the modern industrial desert. Luckily, the Roman Catholic teachers will in future, with the State as paymaster, be able to secure a larger share of the meat which perisheth, and this, after all, is a more tangible asset than the blessing of God, of which the Church can be so lavish.

The wisdom of the serpent is further exemplified by the quietly persistent efforts that are being made in this country to "nobble" the labour vote. The advanced Labour Party (with capital letters this time) fancies it is capturing the Irish vote; but the tail never wags the dog. On this point a warning note has been sounded in these columns more than once. The leaders in the Labour world are indeed blind to all the lessons of history if they think they can accelerate the emancipation of the worker by an alliance with clericalism. When we see a well-known protagonist of clerical obscurantism standing as official Labour candidate at a Parliamentary election, it may well be asked if the Labour leaders realize whither they are drifting. They may win a few seats in Parliament with the aid of a clerically influenced vote, but the price ultimately exacted for such measure of success will be a bitter one. The Roman Catholic Church is branded in history as the enemy of freedom and progress. There is no convincing indication to-day that the leopard has changed its spots, or has any desire to do so. No one who has studied the methods of Roman Catholicism can doubt that when the Church acquiesces in any approach to co-operation with political democracy, she does so for her own ends. Now, as ever, clericalism is the enemy, and leaders of advanced movements who intrigue with it do so at their peril, and are playing a game in which they are certain to be worsted.

Geo. Scott.

The fantastic notions which the Christian Church disseminates as to the eternal life of the immortal soul after the dissolution of the body are just as materialistic as the dogma of "the resurrection of the body." In his interesting work on *Religion in the Light of the Darwin Theory*, Savage justly remarks: "It is one of the standing charges of the Church against science that it is materialistic. I must say, in passing, that the whole ecclesiastical doctrine of a future life has always been, and still is, materialism of the purest type. It teaches that the material body shall rise and dwell in a material heaven." To prove this one has only to read impartially some of the sermons and ornate discourses in which the glory of the future life is extolled as the highest good of the Christian, and belief in it is laid down to be the foundation of morality. According to them, all the joys of the most advanced modern civilization await the pious believer in Paradise, while the "All-loving Father" reserves his eternal fires for the godless materialist.—*Haeckel.*

Sir, in carrying on your government, why should you use killing at all? Let your evinced desires be for what is good, and the people will be good. The grass must bend, when the wind blows across it.—*Confucius* (to Emperor Ke Kang).

Islam and Christendom.

It is the fashion for our politicians nowadays to scoff at the Oriental policy of Disraeli, and to speak of the period which was dominated by his personality as one of aberration in our country's history. Comparatively few people seem to realize that Disraeli's Eastern policy was merely the historic Eastern policy of England systematized and directed to a creditable end. That end was the contentment, education, and eventual emancipation of the subject races in the British Empire in such manner that England could command their loyalty for centuries to come. It was a scheme which would have been approved by all our earlier statesmen who perceived that England's greatness depended not on these islands on the edge of Europe, nor on the annexation of new regions on the outskirts of the inhabited world, but on the possession of rich countries in the East which many nations coveted. It was Britain against Europe in those days, and Europe, from the point of view of Muslims, is still Christendom.

But when Disraeli, at a moment of great personal triumph, made the old unreasoned policy complete and gave it an ideal, there had already grown up unofficially a school of thought in opposition to such purely British tendencies—people who thought that the chief aim of England ought to be a better understanding with those European countries which still preserved an ecclesiastical structure, people who esteemed the fate of subjects of the British Empire of trivial account compared with the apocalyptic vision of a reunited Christendom. Mr. Gladstone epitomized the views of this new anti-British party neatly upon one occasion, in a public gesture. When on a mission to the Ionian Islands, at an official reception he, to some extent the representative of England, stooped to kiss the hand of an obscure Greek bishop. Terrific was the outcry in official circles, delirious the triumph and amusement of the Greeks, over an act which everyone regarded as un-English. The ecclesiastical party was not popular in England then. It is not popular in England now under its true colours. Yet furtively, and unsuspected of the people, it has won the day: witness the inclination of our rulers to back the claims of Greece and Italy against the wishes of some eighty million British Muslims and against our own pledged word.

According to Disraeli, England should have held aloof from European squabbles, relying on the peoples of her Empire—rendered loyal and contented by progressive measures, and considered on a par with England in our foreign policy—to defend her against all assailants. She should have had upon her side popular opinion in every country because of the good fortune of the peoples subject to her sway, and because her empire was the home of liberty.

According to Gladstone, Europe, *i.e.*, Christendom, should have united to impose the will, and eventually, of course, the creed of Christians on the world.

For Disraeli, the Sultan of Turkey was a better ally than the Czar of Russia, because his alliance gave great satisfaction to the British Muslims, and because his aims were not opposed to those of England. For Gladstone the Czar was preferable to the Sultan, even though his aims were dead opposed to ours—why? Because the Czar had been baptized. He was a "Christian." But that is anti-British, being dead against the spirit of the British Empire. This, from the moment it became an Empire, has had more in common with the Muslim Empire—based on tolerance—than with Byzantium, or Spain, or Portugal, or any technically "Christian" Empire of the past. It is true that we do not forbid by

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law, under the death penalty, attempts by any member of the dominant religion to turn the subject-peoples from their faith, as was done in the Muslim Empire. It is true that the British Government does, even to this day, permit, and, apparently, in some cases, encourage the activities of Christian missionaries to the annoyance of non-Christian British subjects. Yet, speaking in a general way, it may be said that every subject has full liberty of conscience, and that religious communities other than Christian are tolerated in the British realm. But the British Empire is still far behind the Turkish Empire in the measure of *political* liberty which it allows to subject peoples of another faith. And this defect Disraeli's policy was meant to remedy. We had to improve the condition of "our own people," to make the British Empire a league of nations exempt from barriers of creed and even colour, an example to the world, before we bothered about foreign nations. Was not Disraeli's vision of a league of independent nations united by enthusiasm for the British flag a better goal of policy for British statesmen than the reunion of Christendom, which has brought our Empire to this pass: that the most important of the subject-peoples, both in numbers and intelligence, are furiously discontented with the Empire as it is, while loyal to the old tradition of that Empire as embodied in Disraeli's Eastern policy?

Gladstone once said in a public speech that so long as there were followers of "that accursed book" (the Coran) Europe would know no peace—a curious perversion of the truth when Europe had been relentlessly attacking El Islam for centuries. In the Coran I find this text, among a host of others to the same effect:—

> Verily those who believe [*i.e.*, the Muslims] and those who follow the Jew's religious rule and the Christians and the Sabæans—whosoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, *and does good works*—their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve.

From the Islamic point of view, a Christian or a Jew or a heathen *who does good works*—or, in other words, obeys the law of God as set forth in the Coran, although unconsciously—is better than a Muslim who does evil. Muslims enjoy no privilege; the mere recitation of their creed or fulfilment of its rites is not the way of salvation. There is no special test for any creed or race. The same test will be applied to all mankind—the test of works.

One can imagine the horror which such tolerance arouses in the breasts of men who think salvation is for Christians only, the magic consequence of certain rites and formulæ. Such men must dread Islam, because it makes a wide appeal. To quote again from the Coran:—

> And they say: None enters Paradise unless he be a Jew, or a Christian. These are their own desires. Say: Bring your proof (of that which you assert) if you are truthful.
>
> Nay, but whosoever turns his face entirely towards God while doing good to men, his reward is with his Lord; and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve.

The challenge to ecclesiastical Christianity is frank, and quite unanswerable; and the hatred of Islam by the Church is thus explained. But Europe of to-day, enlightened by Freethought—which has more in common with Islam than with Christianity—does not judge by the test of faith, but that of works. It is no use to tell a modern Englishman that the Turk deserves to be wiped out because he has never undergone the rite of baptism. You must demonstrate that he is worse in conduct than his Christian neighbours, which is not the truth; but that does not matter to the ecclesiastical mind convinced that a non-Christian is intrinsically worse than a Christian. It is an affair of faith, not works. Well, we have all been witness of the demonstration. We have heard the praises of the Russian Czardom, and the violent abuse of Turkish government, by which the present situation has been brought about. Most of us now realize that the praises were quite undeserved; but do we realize that the abuse, coming from the same political workshop, was equally undeserved? It was.

One half the truth concerning Turkey has been religiously withheld from us for years. The trick of advertising massacres of Christians by Mohammedans, and hushing up the previous massacres of Mohammedans by Christians, has given to the Christians of the East a false aureole of martyrdom, has given a false air of justice to our anti-Turkish policy. So the triumph of the ecclesiastical party is complete. It may appear complete, but it is not enduring. A most important factor in the situation has been quite ignored. Europe is satisfied, but what of Asia? Disraeli thought of Asia as the ultimately decisive factor, but no British statesman since his day has given serious thought to it. From the Bosphorus to the Great Wall of China and beyond all Asia is revolting at this moment against the foul injustice, as they think it, of our treatment of the Turks, against our exaltation of the jackal Christian races whom every Asiatic loathes and despises. The Muslim judgment of men by their works extends to governments. A government of Christians which did justice is more worthy of a Muslim's loyalty than a government of Muslims which did wrong. It is our justice which has made the Muslims loyal to us in the past. The British Government, in its tolerance and fair dealing, appeared to them essentially a Muslim government—a government apart from Christendom at any rate, above sectarian zeal, and on the higher level ordered by Islam. Now that it is seen that we are one with Europe, that we give sly preference to Christian races, that we put forth with a solemn air assertions which every Asiatic knows to be false, the sentiment throughout the East has turned against us. We have hammered Asia nearly solid in dislike of us. If we pursue our anti-Turkish, "Czarist" policy—why on earth should we pursue it now the Czardom is defunct?—sooner or later there will be a great explosion of the hate against us, which can hardly fail to end the British Empire in the East.

I was asked to write an article upon the present relations of Islam and Christianity. All that I have done, I find, is to show in a roundabout way the present state of feeling of the Muslim nations of the world against the Christian nations. The relations of Islam with true Christianity are unchangeable. They are essentially the same religion. A difference of opinion betwen the Prophet Mohammed and Jesus Christ appears to me unthinkable. But Islam, which enjoins free thought and free examinations of all doctrines as a condition of faith, is necessarily opposed to dogmatic Christianity, regarding sacerdotalism as the opposite of true religion.

Marmaduke Pickthall.

North London Branch N.S.S.—The loyal supporters of North London, who braved the fog on Sunday, heard a very interesting lecture by Miss Rosomond Smith on "Illegitimacy." Miss Smith speaks from an inner knowledge of the workings of the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child, and gave a very hopeful account of the efforts of this body to create a more tolerant and humane attitude towards the woman who has to bear her own punishment. On Sunday next, October 26, Dr. Charles Porter will speak on "The Prevention of Venereal Diseases."—F. Akroyd, Hon. Sec.

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Correspondence.

SOCIALISM AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am writing this to express my appreciation of your front page article in the issue for October 12. Like you, I feel it is high time a strong protest was made against the constant association of Socialism with religious terminology by many of our platform speakers, who, very often, do not in the least believe in any form of supernaturalism. The Socialist movement is cursed with far too many people, who, although having themselves discarded any Theistic belief, nevertheless use its terms and idioms in the foolish idea that by so doing they placate the feelings of the orthodox. Much of this business is done deliberately for vote-catching and electioneering purposes, and anyone who denies this evidently does not know so much about labour politics and politicians as I do. Another cause of this attitude is the fear of that odium and association of Atheism with wrong or vicious conduct that the "unco guid" are clever enough to work for all it is worth. Although writing quite unofficially, I am glad to say we have had little of this spirit at our Institute. The *Freethinker* is regularly taken and appreciated by our more literary members, and although we have had to fight local prejudice, because we allow all forms of recreation and social enjoyment on Sunday, we have steadily ignored the Prudes and Puritans until now—all this is regarded as a matter of course. We have all types of characters in our membership, including Roman Catholics (one of our best workers was a Salvationist); but we have always held that Socialism means *this world-ism;* and whilst respecting every person's private convictions, we will not accept the idea that any pious humbug is in any sense essential.

How can we expect to kill intolerance and mental slavery so long as even those who are personally free from religious bias, pander to it through fear of losing support, influence, or respectability?

This is the first time I have ever written you, although I have read your journal for many years, but I feel that I must add my little mite of support to your appeal for candour and intellectual honesty.

J. THORNTON (Leeds).

Obituary.

Frequenters of our Outdoor Stations, especially in North London, will learn with deep regret of the sad death of Harold Storey, the fourteen-year-old son of Mr. Headley V. Storey, as the result of an accident in the football field. Full of life and spirits, and a lad of great promise, his untimely death awakens in us all heartfelt sympathy with the bereaved parents. A Secular Service was read at the graveside on Wednesday, October 15, by special request, by Mr. J. T. Lloyd.—E. M. V.

RATIONALISTIC EDUCATION.

MR. W. H. THRESH has re-opened School in temporary premises, and will be pleased to receive a few Day Scholars and Boarders. Next Term he will have accommodation, in a commodious house (not now available), for Forty Pupils. Freethinkers who wish to place their children in this school are asked to make their arrangements at once, as the success of the enterprise will depend upon the support of sympathisers. It will be remembered that Mr. Thresh conducted a similar school (closed by the War) for thirteen years in Southend-on-Sea.—Address W. H. THRESH, c/o 23 Weston Road, Southend-on-Sea.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Dr. Charles Porter, "The Prevention of Venereal Diseases."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Miss Kough, "Does God Count?" (Bishop of Peterborough at Church Congress).

SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL (Finsbury Pavement, E.C.): 3.30, Mr. W. H. Thresh, "From Savage to Shakespeare."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Why London is not England."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Saphin, Baker, and Ratcliffe.

REGENT'S PARK BRANCH N. S. S. (near Band Stand): 3, Mr. H. Brougham Doughty, "Socialism and Secularism in Germany"; Mr. R. Norman, "Count Your Blessings."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "Dream Life and Real Life."

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 5.45 (afternoon). Lectures in Victoria Square at 7.15.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street): Mr. C. Cohen, 3, "Evolution and God"; 6.30, "Christianity, the Army, and the Nation."

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Views and Opinions.

Woman and Christianity.

According to the New Testament, Christianity began with a woman, and certainly women were among its earliest supporters. According to many of its present-day critics, it will end with women as the last adherents of a decaying cause. Only a very small proportion of the population attend church, and of these a considerable majority are women. The phenomenon arouses reflection. Why should this be so? The ideal society is one in which men and women march side by side—not merely in a physical, but in a moral and intellectual sense. Their functions in life are not contradictory, but complementary. The one cannot be held back without injury to the other. Why, then, should women continue to give their support to Christianity in a much larger measure than men? If the reasons for the rejection of Christianity by men are adequate, why are they not equally powerful with women? That the feminine mind is less logical than the masculine, we do not believe. Its social training has been different, but that only means its present state is the product of male egotism and domination. Some tell us that while man can get on without religion, woman needs it. That also we refuse to believe. We do not believe that woman is the perpetual child of the human race—always to be held in tutelage by the male, either husband or priest. Religion is essential for all or none. Growth is as true of the female as of the male mind. Woman no more needs Christianity than man, and there is even less reason why she should continue to support it than man.

* * *

Woman and the Church.

What have the Christian Churches done for woman that she should do so much for the Churches? The favourite pulpit plea is that to the influence of Christianity woman owes her improved position and release from a position of degradation and inferiority forced upon her in the old Pagan world. Nothing could be farther from the truth. During the whole of European history it has been Christian influences more than any other that fixed upon her the stamp of inferiority, and insisted upon her subordination to the male. From the ancient Roman world Christianity took over a tradition—legal and social—and a practice that went far towards placing the two sexes upon an equality. Christianity created a public opinion and formulated laws that for nearly a thousand years arrested progress in the matter of sex equality. She was regarded as the source of all evil, a centre of contamination ever threatening the spiritual safety of man. In the whole of the feudal legislation, woman's rights were curtailed, ignored, or destroyed. The freedom conferred upon her by the later Roman law was wiped away. She was made incapable of holding property when married, was deprived of rights and privileges that were conferred upon men; and wherever the influence of Christianity has been strong, the opposition to the emancipation of woman has been vigorous. Nor was any improvement effected in her position until the growth of Freethought towards the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century forced the question to the front. A mere list of the names of the men and women who have fought for the equality of the sexes—from the time of Mary Woolstonecraft onward—is enough to prove that the movement owes its being and its strength to the growth of Freethought.

* * *

Woman and the Bible.

How could Christianity make for the emancipation of women? Look at the position of woman in the "Holy Bible." It is one of subserviency throughout. Woman forms no part of the original plan of creation. She appears on the scene as an afterthought. In the Ten Commandments she is lumped in with her husband's oxen and asses, and "other things that are his." She is early made responsible for the introduction of evil, and whenever a discreditable bit of business is required a woman is brought in to do it. She is not numbered among the "congregation of the children of Israel," nor is her presence required in any religious service. In the period of purification ordered after childbirth, the days of purification after the birth of a girl are twice as many as in the case of the birth of a boy. Wives are bought and sold, and there is no sign that the consent of a girl to marriage is necessary. If the husband required divorce, he obtained it by giving the woman a "bill of divorcement," and sending her away. Polygamy is general. Nearly all the Biblical characters have more than one wife, and in later times many eminent Christians—Luther, Milton, Bishop Burnet, and others—held that Christianity did not condemn polygamy. In the New Testament we have the old story continued. Twelve disciples are selected, but there is not a woman among them. The association of women with Jesus is to serve, not to teach or to stand as the equal of the men. Paul lays down the law concerning women with a dogmatism and a narrowness that is almost amusing in its crass stupidity. Marriage may be permitted, but only as the lesser of two evils. Women are to keep silence in the Churches, and if they would learn anything to ask their husbands at home. Man is the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the Church. Man was not made for woman, but woman was made for man

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and she must not usurp authority over him. And wives are to obey their husbands, "even as Sarai obeyed Abraham." Were Paul's injunctions carried out the number of careers for women would be very few indeed. As it is, every woman teacher and preacher is a direct negation of the Pauline injunctions.

* * *

Christianity in History.

The consequences of these teachings are seen in the subsequent course of European history. For vituperative extravagance the early Christian writings stand without a peer. Woman became the synonym for all that was evil and spiritually dangerous. A clergyman of the standing and scholarship of Principal Donaldson is driven to confess that the influence of Christianity was to lower the character of woman and restrict the range of her activity. In the very early Church she was allowed to perform the functions of doorkeeper, but even this was taken away from her before long. Woman, to cite Principal Donaldson, became in the eyes of the Christian Church a mere female animal with no other purpose in life save that of rousing the passions of man and wrecking his immortal welfare by her wiles. In Germany, Luther said that woman should confine herself to the kitchen and the cradle. In Scotland, Knox thundered against the "monstrous regiment of women," and declared that Scripture had formally withdrawn from her all power of rule or control over the affairs of the State. In other parts of the world her political incapacity was asserted and backed up by lavish quotations of Scripture. Professor Karl Pearson not inaptly sums up the general influence of Protestantism on woman by saying that it offered her "domestication or prostitution, subjection or social expulsion." It took years of struggle to induce the Wesleyan Methodist Conference to admit women as delegates—a favour only conferred upon them in 1909. In this the Wesleyans had the Church of England in sympathy with them as was seen by what occurred as late as 1916. Here a number of London clergy actually threatened to go on strike if women were allowed to preach in Churches in connection with the "National Mission of Repentance and Hope." It was declared "contrary to the teaching of holy scripture and to the mind and general practice of the whole Catholic Church." From the time of Christ to 1916 the story is continuous. Woman was the inferior animal. Scripture authorized the practice, and practice supported the teaching.

* * *

How Long?

Woman is awakening at last. One half the human race is in revolt against the dominance of the other half. And it is important to note that a very large proportion of those in revolt are not blind to the existence of the real enemy. These see that religious prejudice lies behind, and is responsible for the major part of the disabilities under which she has suffered. "Thus saith the Lord" has been the enemy to reform here as elsewhere. "I suffer not a woman to teach" is the command that has been hurled at woman whenever she strove to take her place by the side of man as a fellow-worker for the improvement of the race. How much longer will women shut their eyes to the lessons of the past, and their ears to the call of the present and the future? How much longer will she permit herself to be made the tool of a priesthood from the control of which man is rapidly freeing himself? Thousands of women, among the best and the brightest of their sex, have already taken the forward step. The time is ripe for the rest to follow their example. When that takes place we shall see the triumph of a real and useful trinity—that of the man and the woman, wide-eyed and open-minded, treading life's path as real companions on the greatest of all journeys, with the child as the living symbol of their confidence in the future of humanity.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Do the Bishops Believe?"

SUCH was the title of Mr. Horatio Bottomley's article in the *Sunday Pictorial* for October 19. The article was suggested by the fact that at the recent meeting of the Church Congress at Leicester the fundamental doctrines of Christianity were not boldly reaffirmed. Why such pronouncement should have been made is not at all clear. Ought it not to be taken for granted that the bishops and their clergy believe? Have they not all accepted the Thirty-nine Articles as accurately embodying their working creed? Mr. Bottomley is not a theologian, and there are expressions in his article which betray his ignorance on certain points. He says, for example, that "the central personality of Christ was the subject not of metaphysical refinement, but of categorical assertion," the truth being that the latter was distinctly the offshoot of the former. Even the so-called Apostles' Creed, despite its apparent simplicity, is rooted in "metaphysical refinement," and did not receive its final form for many centuries. Every "categorical assertion" in it implies a metaphysical hypothesis insusceptible of historic verification. Later creeds, it is true, are much more metaphysical in form, though not in substance. The Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the decree of Chalcedon, and the various Protestant Creeds, are all steeped in metaphysics. We do not know how many cores Christianity is supposed to have. Mr. Bottomley evidently imagines that it has several, for he refers to its "central" core. Be that as it may, it is beyond doubt that Mr. Bottomley wholly misrepresents Christianity when he says that its "central" core is "the grandest ethic that the world has seen." So-called organized Christianity, the Christianity of the New Testament and the orthodox Church, is not an ethical system at all, but a supernatural scheme whereby "sinners lost and ruined by the fall" can be saved through faith in the finished work of Christ, who is God manifest in the flesh. Besides, a comparative study of religions has clearly demonstrated that what is styled the Christian ethic is by no means "the best that the world has seen."

Mr. Bottomley seems to infer, chiefly from their silence, that the bishops do not believe the cardinal doctrines, or historic principles, of the Christian religion; in a word, that they no longer accept as historical events the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Ascension. He does not wish them to believe. He concludes his article thus:—

> I return to my question, "Do the Bishops Believe?" If so, the evidence, much of it from their lips, is sadly misleading. If not, then I have indicated a line of honest action that may convert what is now a mere sectarian body into a true Church of England—a Temple of Brotherhood, broad as the bounds of man's eternal need.

Mr. Bottomley is one of the latest converts to the Christian Faith; but it does not yet appear how much of it appeals to him as true. What orthodox divines regard as its core, he regards as false, and he fancies that the bishops and clergy generally stand where he does. Some of them do. Dean Inge, in the course of his paper on "The Christian Doctrine of the Future Life," read at the Church Congress, said: "We can no longer believe in a localized heaven and hell, and I cannot pretend to

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myself that the belief in a resuscitation of our bodies stands where it did." There are multitudes, however, who still swallow all the great creeds, among whom is the Rev. D. Kennedy-Bell, M.A., B.D., who, in the *Sunday Pictorial*, replies to Mr. Bottomley's article. Mr. Kennedy-Bell is as yet neither a bishop nor a dean, but one of the "humble curates"; but he asserts that he believes, "without reservation, in the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ," and he further asserts "that this is the belief, equally without mental reservation whatsoever, of the overwhelming majority of the Bishops." To what extent the reverend gentleman's declaration is true we cannot determine. Naturally, the bishops themselves will take no notice of Mr. Bottomley's challenge, nor any other of the dignitaries of the Church. We are persuaded, however, that the curate is nearer right than the popular journalist. Touching the Apostles' Creed, Mr. Kennedy-Bell affirms:—

> Every time that creed is recited each individual member of the Church signifies his adhesion, if he is an honest man, to the miraculous nature of the Faith which has come down to him as a heritage from the past.

There are those who recite the Apostles' Creed without believing it. Matthew Arnold did so, so did R. H. Haweis, and so do hundreds of thousands to-day. To Liberal Christians everywhere Jesus is only a man, and miracles are non-existent. Mr. Kennedy-Bell is, doubtless, a whole-hogger of a believer; he can believe without rhyme or reason, and false enough many of his beliefs are. Here are a few examples:—

> The Founder of the Christian religion remains to-day, in spite of the progress of nineteen centuries, the Ideal of the social reformer. Even those who cannot accept the statement of his divinity are prepared to admit that no such life has ever been lived in the world before or since. His character has never been equalled, let alone surpassed, in history or fiction. His Sermon on the Mount remains the inspiration of statesmen and rulers, and offers the only basis upon which to achieve the realization of the brotherhood of man.

Reason and history unite in characterizing such utterances as at once wholly untrue and absurd. The reverend gentleman is blinded by prejudice and cannot see the world as it is. The Jesus he depicts is the most dismal and tragic failure that the world has seen. He says that "every attempt to explain Christianity away as a purely human system of morals has singularly failed." Of course it has, for Christianity is *not* a human system of morals, but an alleged Divine plan of salvation by faith, and, as such, it has proved the most gigantic farce conceivable, as the facts of life abundantly and infallibly testify.

Mr. Kennedy-Bell prides himself upon possessing a deeper and more accurate knowledge of Rationalism than Mr. Bottomley can possibly have, because, as he puts it, "I have been down to the lowest depths of Rationalism myself." So far as his reply to Mr. Bottomley is concerned he supplies no evidence whatever that he even understands what modern Rationalism really is. Liberal Christians are not Rationalists. They may deny the miraculous, even the supernatural, in its relation to the person and life of Jesus; but they believe in God and in Jesus as God's chosen revealer to the world. Professor Harnack is a Liberal theologian, but he is not in any degree a rejector of the supernatural as such. The same thing is true of the Rev. Dr. Bacon, Professor of New Testament Criticism and Exegesis in Yale University. Both are scholars of acknowledged width and depth, but they are not Rationalists, and would strongly resent being taken as such. Judging Mr. Kennedy-Bell by his own account furnished in his article, he was never a Rationalist. He admits that he always retained "an intense reverence and admiration for the character of the Christ," and that "by holding on to that, full, complete, perfect faith came." Of that one "prop" he never let go, and so never touched "the lowest depths of Rationalism." Let us see what that one "prop" means:—

> That one final proof is the living Power of the living Christ to do just the same for men to-day that he did in Galilee of old. The one final test of Christianity lies in the religious experience of believers themselves. That Unique Personality can attract, control, and change lives to-day.

So important does the reverend gentleman consider the passage that he put the first sentence in italics; but he does not realize that he gives the case for Christianity completely away. If Christ can do no more for men to-day than he did in Galilee of old his cause is doomed to extinction. The men of Galilee rejected him, and at Jerusalem he was condemned and put to death. His followers numbered less than two hundred, and with one or two exceptions the very names of these perished with them. The great theme of the Church Congress, held in 1913, was the Kingdom of God, and the President of the meeting of the Congress recently held at Leicester sorrowfully said:—

> A decisive chapter of history has been written since 1913. This lends a striking significance to the fact that the theme of the last Congress was the Kingdom of God. For the events that have happened since would seem to announce its failure.

That is profoundly true. The events of the last five years do announce, in the completest and most emphatic manner, the utter failure of the Christian religion. There are a few fanatical people, chiefly clergymen, whose livelihood is derived from it, who reap a rich harvest of joy from their glowing faith, and Mr. Kennedy-Bell *naively* affirms that this is "the one final test of Christianity." He is right. There is absolutely no other test, and under this test it wholly collapses. For the life of the world, for the welfare of society, it has never done anything. Its moral and social impotence is colossal.

Mr. Kennedy-Bell's claim to superior knowledge is disproved by his own statements. He asserts that "the passing of the nineteenth century witnessed the breakdown of the old Materialism." As a matter of fact, Materialism, as a philosophy of the Universe, was never so rife as it is at this moment. We could introduce him to hundreds of ardently avowed Atheists in almost any moderately large town in Great Britain. Is he not aware of the fact bemoaned by so many of his brethren that churches and chapels are rapidly emptying? Does he not know that the power of the priest is a thing of the past? How groundless, therefore, is his contention that "there never has been an age in the world's history more favourable for a sympathetic presentation of the message of the Church than the present one"? If that were true churches and chapels would not be large enough to accommodate the crowds eager to hear it. Instead of that it is the cinemas and the concert-halls that are thronged on Sunday evenings. Christianity has had its day, and is now passing through a process of disintegration.

J. T. Lloyd.

I need no priest to promise me a second life, for I can live enough in this life, when I live backwards in the lives of those who have gone before me, and win myself an eternity in the realm of the past.—*Heine.*

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The Triumph of Secularism.

But John P.
Robinson, he
Sez they didn't know everything down in Judee.
—*J. Russell Lowell.*

THE long-promised revival of religion has never materialized. Dean Inge, no mean authority, declares bluntly that "Religion remains as impotent as it was before the War." The recent Church Congress endorsed this view. The most important matter agitating the clergy, apart from the question of their salaries, is the unpopularity of the Church. And the clergy are prepared to do almost anything to turn this unpopularity into popularity.

The clergy recognize the fact that the Church is hopelessly behind the times. The Bible for example, is full of things that startle the modern reader. And the rising generation can no longer be coerced into submission to clerical authority. Young men are interested in such matters as labour unrest and social questions, and they cannot be attracted to the Church by special hymns and oleaginous sermons on Brotherhood. Even such drastic action as to convert a parish hall into a debating hall for one evening a week does little except to wake up the few remaining young men in the congregations.

Nor is this unpopularity of the Church to be wondered at. The votes of the bishops in the House of Lords are sufficient to rouse the lasting hostility of all right-thinking persons, and their shameful opposition to all progress shows how antagonistic the Church has been to all Democratic aspiration. The bishops voted against admitting Nonconformists to the Universities of their own country, and against removing the civil disabilities of Roman Catholics, Jews, and Freethinkers. They opposed the introduction of free education, and voted against admitting women as members of London borough councils. None voted for the abolition of flogging women in prison, or the use of the lash in the Army and the Navy. Scores of measures for the bettering of the conditions of the working classes have been opposed by these purse-proud prelates, thirty-nine of whom share £180,700 a year. Indeed, their record carries its own condemnation. No Democrat can view with satisfaction a powerful caste in the country that saps the very springs of morality, that encourages mental and moral confusion, and that hinders the wheels of progress in the way that the State Church, with its Bench of Bishops and its 25,000 clergy, does. It is the enemy of democracy, and should be unpopular.

The plain, blunt truth is that Christianity is found out. Men are no longer able to accept upon mere trust the religious ideas that satisfied their remote ancestors. Over the pulpits of the fast-emptying churches is inscribed "To the glory of God." That is the voice of the past. Secularism sounds the triumphant note of the future, "To the service of man." Based on fables, supported by brute force, trading on ignorance, the clergy will find the conscience of the race rising above their outworn ideals. Christianity has long enough darkened the earth, and separated man from man. A new impulse is at hand to make men join hands and hearts. This impulse is Secularism, which marches to certain victory under the banners of Liberty and Fraternity.

MIMNERMUS.

'Tis education forms the common mind;
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.
—*Pope.*

Atheism and Agnosticism.

Tracing the origin of things to their furthest ken on orthodox lines, we arrive, it is alleged, at an author who did the impossible and inconceivable thing of creating the present system of visible things from nothing. But, unfortunately for this deduction, it also warrants us, who see further than our fathers, to ask the equally legitimate and more pertinent question, "Who, amid the eternal sequences, was the author of this author?" and the mere fact that we can ask such a startling genealogical question, and get no intelligible answer, disposes of the supposition in its entirety.—*Redcote Dewar, "From Matter to Man,"* p. 3.

Many a sleepless night of my childhood has been passed fretted by the question: "Who made God?"—*Professor Tyndall, "Fragments of Science"; 1885;* vol. i., p. 383.

I tell you there is no God; that the creation is a chimera; that the eternity of the universe is no more inconceivable than the eternity of the spirit; that because I do not know how motion has been able to engender this universe, which it knows so well how to conserve, it is ridiculous to remove this difficulty by the suppositious existence of a being that I know less.—*Diderot, "Philosophic Thoughts,"* p. 4.

Millions of prayers have been vainly breathed to what we now know were inexorable laws of nature.—*Lecky, "History of European Morals"; 1886;* vol. i., p. 55.

AGNOSTICISM was invented to camouflage the Atheism to which the philosophers stood committed by their exclusion of all supernatural intervention in the evolution of the universe. It seems desirable to make our position with regard to Agnosticism perfectly clear.

The clergy, by long, persistent, and systematic lying, had succeeded in making the word "Atheism" stand for everything evil, vicious, and depraved. To give only one example: they declared that the crimes committed during the French Revolution were wholly due to the Atheism inculcated by the French philosophers, whereas every student knows that the revolutionists never broke with religion. Robespierre, the ruler during the "Terror," during which the worst crimes were committed, was fanatically religious. He established the worship of the Supreme Being throughout France, and, at the opening ceremony instituting that worship, caused a colossal group of emblematical figures, one of them representing Atheism, to be publicly burned. Robespierre declared: "If God had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent him"—which a witty Frenchman declared was exactly what had been done. Lamartine, the historian, in his *History of the Girondists*, from which the foregoing facts are taken, although himself a profoundly religious man, cannot disguise the facts. He observes: "Robespierre felt these truths profoundly. It is necessary to state, however repugnant one may be to believe it, that he did not only feel them as a policy which borrows a chain from heaven to fetter men more surely with it; he felt them as a convinced sectary, who himself first bows down before the idea which he desires to make the people adore."[1] As John Morley observes: "The Committee of Public Safety despatched Hebert, and better men than Hebert, to the guillotine for being atheists. Atheism, as Robespierre assured them, was aristocratic."[2]

St. Just, known as "The Exterminating Angel," was of the same opinion, and declared war on Atheism. Chaumette, says Morley,—

was accused of conspiring with Hebert, Clootz, and the rest, "to destroy all notion of Divinity and base the government of France on atheism." "They attack the immortality of the soul," cried Saint Just, "the thought which consoled Socrates in his dying moments, and their dream is to raise atheism to a worship." And this was the offence, technically and officially described, for

[1] Lamartine, *History of the Girondists*, vol. iii., p. 434.
[2] Morley, *Diderot and the Encyclopædists*, p. 349.

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which Chaumette and Clootz were sent to the guillotine (April, 1794), strictly on the principle which had been laid down in the Social Contract (of Rousseau), and accepted by Robespierre."[1]

Marat, who contributed as much as anybody to the massacres of the Terror by his constant demand in his paper, the *Ami du Peuple*, for heads for the guillotine; Marat, the "obscene spectrum," as Carlyle calls him, "had written a work in favour of the immortality of the soul," and was a devoted follower of Jesus Christ. Lamartine says: "The Gospel was constantly open on his table; and when this was noticed, 'The revolution,' returned he, 'is in the Gospel. Nowhere is the cause of the people more energetically pleaded, or more maledictions heaped on the head of the rich and powerful of this world. Jesus Christ,' continued he, bowing reverently when he uttered the name, 'Jesus is our Master.'"[2]

The Girondists, on the other hand, who were exterminated in their efforts to put a stop to the massacre, counted several Atheists among their number. Brissot, their leader, refused the consolations of religion offered by his friend, the Abbe Lambert, before his execution, declaring that nothing could be more holy than to die "for having refused the blood of his fellow-men to scoundrels." Condorcet, the great philosopher; Clootz, the humanitarian; and Andre Chenier, one of the greatest of French poets, all perished in the same cause, and were all declared as uncompromising Atheists.

Yet, in the face of these stubborn facts, we find the Rev. Robert Hall, in his sermon entitled "Modern Infidelity Considered," declaring "that the reign of atheism was avowedly and expressly the reign of terror; that in the full madness of their career, in the highest climax of their horrors, they shut up the temples of God, abolished his worship, and proclaimed death to be an eternal sleep; as if by pointing to the silence of the sepulchre, and the sleep of the dead, these ferocious barbarians meant to apologize for leaving neither sleep, quiet, nor repose to the living."[3] And Hall was not a common ranter, but was considered by many good judges as the best preacher of his time, his works even finding a place in Bohn's Classical Library of Standard Works.

This is only one sample of the campaign of lies which has been carried on from time immemorial against Atheism and Materialism. Among others are the Infidel Death-bed lie, the free-love lie, and legions besides. They have come from the cathedral and the tin tabernacle; from the archbishop down to the street ranter; a perfect Niagara of lies. All manufactured by Christians who pretend that it is impossible to be truthful, honest, and charitable without religion!

It was, as we have said, to avoid this stigma, that the English philosophers declined to adopt the title of Atheist and coined the word Agnostic.

But, literally, the two words have the same meaning, both are derived from Greek words. The Greek word Gnostic means to know or one who knows. The prefix A—without, turning it into Agnostic—without knowledge.

The word Theist means one who believes in a God, the Greek prefix A—without, turning it into Atheist—without God. Taken literally neither involves a denial of God, but simply being without knowledge of God. Mr. Foote, our late leader, used to say that the difference between an Agnostic and an Atheist was that one wore a pot hat and the other wore a cap. However, the popular idea of an Atheist is, and always has been, that of one who denies the existence of a God or Gods.

For my part, I do not believe in the existence of any God or Gods, meaning by God or Gods, a being or beings who created the universe and exercise a guiding and controlling influence over it. If by the word God people merely mean the universe as a whole, then I say they are merely playing with words. You cannot endow the universe with personality by labelling it God, any more than you can get nourishment out of chalk by labelling it cheese.

W. Mann.

(To be continued.)

[1] Morley, *Rousseau*, p. 206.
[2] Lamartine, *History of the Girondists*, vol. ii., p. 444.
[3] Robert Hall, *Miscellaneous Works*, p. 277 (Bohn's edition).

Acid Drops.

The honours were to the ladies in a discussion before a recent meeting of the Dundee Education Authority. One of the teachers at Broughty Ferry referred to the Bible as "A book of tricks." In Scotland this could not pass without notice, and the matter came before the Religious Instruction Committee which decided to relieve Mr. Davie, the teacher, of the work of religious instruction. On the matter coming before the superior authority, the Dundee Education Authority, Mrs. Hubbard moved that the action of the Committee be disapproved. She said there were things in the Bible which the clergy never brought up and other things which they forgot. Miss Hubbard supported and objected to religious instruction in the schools. But the motion found only three. We don't know who was the third, but we suppose three sensible people on one Council of twenty is a very large proportion. And the honours are with the ladies. They ought to be members of the N.S.S.

According to the Bible, the prophet Elisha sent some bears to gobble up some very naughty children who called him "baldhead." It is a good thing for the little folk of to-day that they do not live in Bible times, for a daily paper assures us that "the present generation will undoubtedly go bald before its time," and no exception is made in favour of the men of God.

The loaf is to cost more, and the "Bread of Life" will also prove more expensive if the parsons get larger salaries.

The Summertown (Glasgow) United Free Church, in announcing a change of service, remarks dolefully that "men who have been on service are not likely to come to an ordinary Bible class," and so hopes that others will attend. And this after that much-boomed religious revival!

The Chinese labourers, who did work behind the lines in France during the War, are now being sent home. They ought to be able to inform their heathen relations of the manner in which Christians love their enemies.

The King has presented a Bible to a scholar at Sherborne Elementary School. There is no mention in the alleged report that he echoed his illustrious grandmamma's words: "This is the source of England's greatness." Perhaps that myth is at last dead.

The Bishop of Liverpool's suggestion that the highly paid ecclesiastics should devote a large portion of their incomes for the relief of their poorer brethren should be specially addressed to the Bishop of London. Although the Bishop of London receives £200 weekly, he contends that he is travelling towards the workhouse. As he is a bachelor, we tremble to think what would have happened to his lordship if he had a wife and nineteen children.

Bishop Chavasse, speaking at the Liverpool Diocesan Conference, declared that "a bishop's income at the present time is an anxiety to himself, a butt for the scorner, and an embarrassment to the Church." As the bishop's income is

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about £80 a week, it is an "anxiety" that many would shoulder willingly.

Owing to a compositor's slip, an advertisement in a London paper read: "Capital wanted. A god, sound proposition, requires further capital." That compositor set better than he knew. Gods do require a lot of money, and their representatives are anything but absent-minded beggars.

The *Christian* has an article, "The Way Out from the Higher Criticism." Most Christians prefer "the old, old story" told in the old stupid way.

The Vicar of Westbury-on-Trym, Glos., during a church service, protested against the form of War memorial chosen for the district, saying that an obelisk was a heathen symbol. One of the choristers rose and said: "I protest against your statements without information and without knowledge," and then walked out of the building.

Pity the poor clergy! The late Miss M. J. Lawford, of Leighton Buzzard, left £500 to the Rev. D. H. Jones, whom she requested to conduct her funeral. The parishioners of Thorney, near Peterborough, have raised £2,000 for increasing the vicar's stipend. Canon Dyke, of Sheffield, died and left a miserable £15,421.

Oh, those journalists! Writing on the subject of "the new poor," the abject wretches who die of want in £80 a year houses, the yellowest of the yellow press remarks: "The case of the clergy is the saddest of all." This is very sad. Do these dear parsons disguise themselves as vagrants and sleep in the open spaces and under railway arches? Or is Crockford's *Clergy List* compiled by idealists?

Dean Inge says: "Religion remains as impotent as it was before the War." No wonder the orthodox considers he is "the gloomy dean."

The serious mining accident which recently happened at Levant, Cornwall, led the vicar of the place to reflect that during the War other places were bombed while Cornwall escaped. Therefore they should thank God "from the bottom of their hearts that they had been kept safe from those awful disasters." Apparently the Lord had meant to give Cornwall a turn so soon as he got through with the War. Nothing like trusting oneself to the Lord. He is bound to hit you sooner or later.

It is ancient jest that the English take their pleasures sadly, but for innocent irony the book, *Mr. Punch's History of the Great War*, is worth remark. It is as odd a combination as Ally Sloper's *History of the Twelve Disciples*.

After thirty-five years' service as Chaplain of the Cane Hill Lunatic Asylum, the Rev. C. J. Crawford has retired. He will now address the feeble-minded in ordinary places of worship.

The Lord's Day Observance Society had a bolt from the blue recently. A complaint was sent in that circulars, issued for the Society, had been addressed on Sunday on account of pressure of work. The matter was explained satisfactorily, and the management saved from damnation.

A South London "miracle" has been very quickly discounted. The case was quoted with others in an account of alleged cures at the Church of the Most Holy Trinity, Bermondsey. It was claimed that a crippled boy's feet were cured through visiting a shrine; but it was subsequently ascertained that the boy was a patient at the Orthopœdic Hospital, and had been operated on twice.

The Rev. J. C. Gibson, of Christ Church, Kennington, announces his intention of answering from the pulpit questions that may be put to him. Most parsons prefer the safety of the coward's castle.

A return shows that the population of the City of London, excluding the County Council area, is a very small one. In the City the Church of England has fifty-five rectors and vicars, who divide amongst them about £45,000 a year, without reckoning their parsonages. A large proportion of the resident population are Jews, policemen, and caretakers.

The Rev. Percy Dearmer has made the great discovery that nearly all churches are ugly. "It is beauty that is wanted," he adds, pathetically. Maybe that is true. But pious folk will keep on erecting thirty-pound iron buildings, with four-and-sixpenny bells.

"Some priests' wages are lower than porters," declares that staunch Catholic, Sir W. Dunn. He should have addressed that remark to the Throne of Grace, and not to the pampered congregation at Rotherhithe, where he spoke.

What Secularists these Christians are! At Brotherhood meetings, and in churches and chapels, they discuss labour unrest, social problems, politics, cold weather, and colds in the head, but seldom a word about religion itself. Presumably, it is too much to expect them to bring an out-worn superstition up-to-date.

The Eton hare hunt, which was stopped during the War owing to the need of food economy, may be revived. Who was it said that the ideal of Eton College was "brawn, not brains"?

"Parsons Hit by the War" was a headline in a London paper. This sounds ironical, for the clergy did not hit anybody during the War.

One leader-writer in a daily paper, referring to the alleged poverty of the clergy, quotes Goldsmith's line about the village preacher who was "passing rich on forty pounds a year." It does not alter the fact that actual cases of starvation amongst Church of England parsons are as rare as penny eggs.

Be Content.

SAID the parson, "Be content;
Pay your tithes due, pay your rent;
They that earthly things despise
Shall have mansions in the skies.
Though your back with toil be bent,"
Said the parson, "be content."

Then the parson feasting went
With my lord who lives by rent;
And the parson laughed elate
For my lord has livings great.
They that earthly things revere
May get bishop's mansions here.

Be content! Be content!
Till your dreary life is spent.
Lowly live and lowly die.
All for mansions in the sky!
Castles here are much too rare,
All may have them—in the air!

THOMAS MAGUIRE.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N.S.S.—"Stick to the Freethought of Bradlaugh, and fight the lot," was the prevailing note of the discussion which followed an eloquent address by Mr. A. D. Howell Smith on "Some Approaches to a New Religious Synthesis" on Sunday last. Although Mr. Howell Smith placed a very appealing ideal before North London Freethinkers, they remain unconvinced that Secularists, who work for the abolition of all religions, should attempt to instal yet another. May we ask for a good attendance on Sunday, November 9, when Mr. Cyril E. M. Joad will give an address on "Thought and Temperament"?—F. AKROYD.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 9, Edinburgh; November 16, South Shields; November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—November 16, Leicester; November 23, Manchester; December 7, Swansea; December 21, Glasgow; December 22, Paisley.

H. Meadows.—It would be easier to advise if you would let us know the particular course you feel inclined to follow. We were glad to see your article in the Press. It is stimulating, and will do good.

L. Mayland.—We have never issued a challenge to anyone in our life. Neither have we ever refused a challenge to debate when the opponent was worth spending time on. But we neither write, lecture, nor debate for the fun of the thing.

J. A. Tomkins.—Next week. Crowded out of this issue.

H. Young.—We do not think it advisable to keep the Sustentation Fund open for an indefinite period. It is bad enough to ask once a year. To ask all the year round is too much.

A. Palmer (Madeira).—Our Shop Manager is writing you. Pleased to learn that the attempt of your friend to convert you to Christianity has led to his becoming a Freethinker.

C. Harpur.—We have a pamphlet in hand on another subject by Robert Arch, which we hope to soon publish. There is a Government Report on Prisons which should contain the information you desire.

Dr. N. Wilson writes: "Accept my thanks for your two fine articles on Evolution. They emphasize points that are too often overlooked, and make one wish that you would write an exposition of the whole subject, with applications to current sociological and ethical questions." We may act on the suggestion when we have cleared other things out of the way.

C. Heaton.—Quite a good way of calling attention to the *Freethinker*. Thanks.

S. Hudson.—Sorry to hear you have been unwell. Hope you are now quite recovered.

V. Caimlar.—We remember the occasion. Hope to meet you again in pleasanter circumstances.

W. Thomson.—Knowledge Publishing Co., Ltd., 42 Bloomsbury Square, W.C.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (November 9) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Free Gardener's Hall, Leith Walk, Edinburgh. The morning meeting will be at 11.30 and the evening one at 6.30. We hope that our friends in the district will do their best to see that the meetings are well attended. There are plenty of heretics in Edinburgh, and room there for a very energetic propaganda. Next week Mr. Cohen pays a visit to South Shields. A larger hall than usual has been engaged, and the Shields friends seem determined to fill it. We hope they will succeed.

Mr. Cohen had splendid meetings at Glasgow on Sunday last. A full hall in the morning and a very crowded one in the evening, with keen interest during the lectures and a number of questions afterwards. The Branch is preparing for a strong forward movement in the West of Scotland, and we think the time is quite is quite ripe for it. New members were made at Sunday's meetings, and there was a brisk sale of literature. Mr. Hales made a very able chairman at both meetings, and musical selections before the evening lecture was a pleasing feature of the proceedings.

We were pleased to see a letter in *The Times Literary Supplement* from Mr. Eden Phillpotts, protesting against the use of the expression "Tom Paine." Mr. Phillpotts well says: "We do not speak of Tom Huxley, or Tom Carlyle, or Tom de Quincey. Doubtless some subtle disparagement was originally implied; but is it not time that the author of *The Rights of Man* should receive the common courtesy paid to his peers?" That is well said, and we hope that the protest will have some effect. But while Paine was the author of *The Rights of Man*, he was also the author of *The Age of Reason;* and that, we fancy, made his offence unforgivable. So came the policy of disparagement, and references to Paine as crude, and coarse, and brutal, etc., which have now become a tradition with those who know nothing of Paine, and whose hatred of him is proportionate to their ignorance.

That is a very old and a present practice of religion. And it is illustrated in regard to this journal. The *Freethinker* has the honour of being called all the names that Paine is, or was, called. How true they are readers will know. Still, they do serve their purpose. They keep Christians from reading the *Freethinker*, and even succeed in getting some very timid heretics to repeat the cry. For people are terrible cowards, and if you give a movement or a paper a bad name, there are always plenty who will fight shy of it because of that. The policy is: Don't mention the *Freethinker*, or, if you must do so, refer to it as crude or coarse, and that will be certain to keep people off. Yet we venture to say that even the friends of the *Freethinker* would be surprised to discover into whose hands the paper goes week after week. For pure Freethought, we venture to say that no paper in this country has ever wielded the influence that does this journal. It has readers among all classes, from the Universities down to the man in the street. And its enemies know its power. Hence their hatred.

Apropos of the above, it will be remembered that last week we printed in the report of the discussion on the L.C.C. relating to the sale of literature in the parks, some remarks by Mr. Walter Reynolds in which he said that he voted for the prohibition of one issue of the *Freethinker* because it contained a paragraph which "no decent man could read in a public assembly." Now, we happen to *know* all the passages on which the action of the Parks Committee was based, and we have no hesitation in saying that anything more stupid—from even the standpoint of an intelligent Christian—it would be impossible to conceive. No passage of that kind was in any copy of the *Freethinker* under consideration. And the remark of Mr. Walter Reynolds was one of those vulgar slanders that have their birth in an essentially vulgar and not too clean mind. We challenge Mr. Reynolds to produce any passage from the *Freethinker* that answers the description used by him. One day, when the moment arrives, we may print all the passages to which exception was taken At present we let the matter rest where it is.

But the one thing that comes out of the discussion is the hatred of retrogressive, and the fear of compromising, minds for a paper such as the *Freethinker*. They know that we cannot be either frightened or bribed, and these poor, stupid, people, who are mentally away back a couple of centuries or so, imagine we can be suppressed. One of the good things about the reactionary is that he will *not* learn, and is thus always exposing himself to defeat. The influence of the *Freethinker* is growing, growing, growing, and the bigots know it. But its influence is not a tithe of what we hope to

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one day make it. The sun is rising, and all the bats and the owls are feeling uncomfortable.

To-day (Nov. 9) Mr. A. B. Moss is renewing his acquaintance with a Birmingham audience, after a lapse of some years. Mr. Moss is now one of the oldest speakers—in the sense of years of service—on the Freethought platform, and we hope that he will have the audience he deserves. He lectures in the Repertory Theatre, and that is an environment in which he will feel quite at home. Local "saints" will attend to the rest. Mr. Moss has been a member of one of the London Councils for twenty-five years, but has not this time sought re-election. He will, therefore, be able to devote the more time to Freethought. For our part, we desire to place on record the fact that during the time he has been on the Council he has never failed to keep his Freethought well in evidence whenever opportunity offered, and has never in the slightest degree concealed or minimized it in his public work. And that is the highest compliment we can pay him. So many forget their Freethought when they seek public support at the ballot-box.

Now that the propagandist season is with us we hope that our readers will not forget that extra thousand readers for which we asked some time ago. We have no fault to find with the increase in circulation, except that we want more in order to keep pace with the increasing cost of production. Paper is cheaper, but costs have advanced in other directions, and another substantial rise in wages is imminent. We cannot economise more than we have done, and the only other way is to increase sales. This can be done with the aid of our readers. And there should be no difficulty in getting copies when needed. The *Freethinker* is now taken by all the wholesale agents in England and Wales, and by Messrs. Menzies in Scotland.

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

A FULL statement of the reason for this Fund was given in the *Freethinker* for September 7. It is only necessary to say now that it owes its existence to the greatly increased cost of production resulting from the War. War conditions still prevail, but it is hoped that the present will be the last occasion on which it will be necessary to issue an appeal for this purpose. The future is cloudy, and no certainty can be felt in the present state of the country. But we are very hopeful. The circulation and the influence of the *Freethinker* are growing, and we are therefore encouraged to believe in the brighter days ahead. If we find we have been over sanguine, we shall not hesitate to say so. But one must needs be hopeful to carry on the fight for Freethought.

Eighth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged £304 9s. 6d. F. Cresswell, 10s. C. J., £3. Old Reader, 5s. T. Y. R., 10s. H. Young, 5s. A. Taylor, £1. Miss Black, 10s. Valentine Caimler, £1 1s. S. Hudson, £1. C. Heaton, 5s. N. A., 2s. 6d.

Per H. Black (Manchester Branch N. S. S.): Mr. and Mrs. Pulman, £1. G. Bailey, £1. D. Mapp, 12s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Monks, 10s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Black, 10s. 6d. Miss E. Williams, 10s. W. V., 10s. T. Storey, 6s. J. W. Drake, 6s. English, 5s. J. Booth, 5s. Mr. and Mrs. Emery, 5s. Freethinker, 5s. Mr. Ramsden, 2s. 6d. T. Greenwell, 2s. 6d. J. Smith, 2s. 6d. S. R., 1s. J. T., 1s. A. Baker, 5s.

Total, £319 18s.

Some acknowledgments are held over till next week.

Duty grows everywhere, like children, like grass.—*Emerson.*

Heaven's Methods of Publication.

FROM the legend of Heaven, as usually told, we may gather that the angels and saints in Super-cloudland only talk one language, and interpreters are not required. As soon, therefore, as a Czecho-slovak enters the pleasant grounds, of which St. Peter has the key, he is able to converse at ease with a Japanese or an aboriginal Patagonian. The tourist needs no Phrase-book, and the inhabitants never have to run (as I have seen school-children run in the class-rooms in the United States) to the dictionary on the desk. No language difficulty exists in Heaven.

On earth, things are different. We have no universal language in practice. To be sure, there is the admirable tongue, Esperanto, created out of the radical elements of Western and Central European tongues by the genius of Dr. Zamenhof. I learned it a year or two since, and would cordially commend it to the attention of the 16,000,000,000 of my fellow-citizens on the earth, if it were possible for this issue of the *Freethinker* to reach them all. Unfortunately, though Esperanto has already a considerable vogue, it is not yet available for publishing important news to everybody and everywhere. And here I may remark upon the singular fact that this excellent language was invented by a man of Jewish race, though I fancy Zamenhof was not an orthodox Hebrew in the faith of the Torah and the Synagogue. One might have expected Esperanto to be born from the brain of a Catholic or Baptist missionary—a Xavier or a Carey—who would have seen in it a more rapid means of propagating the Gospel on a world-basis.

But one would imagine a far better plan for promoting a saving faith for all mankind would have been to institute a universal language at the beginning of our history, and to have kept it free from corruption, and from the competition of rivals. If Heaven had messages to dispatch to earth, it was of the highest consequence to ensure that everybody should hear and understand. No doubt a Theological College could provide very many reasons for our unhappy variety of speech. Theological Colleges are maintained in order to explain what cannot be explained, and they do it with zeal and perseverance. But to those of us who live on another plane of intelligence than that of Theological Colleges, it is perplexing to learn that the supreme Yahweh confounded the speech of our fathers, and made it so hard a task for his messengers to carry his proclamations and special communications to the tribes and nations. If Heaven had decided to make its announcements known directly to each person, as happened in the days of Adam, Cain, and Noah, the public would have had no reason to question the ways of Providence. But, after the confusion of tongues at Babel, the method of direct manifesto from Super-cloudland was less and less employed. The New Testament notes a few survivals, as, for example, when two angels, in white clothes, appeared to the Eleven Apostles just after the Ascension of Jesus, and told them their Leader would return. Ten days later, at the Feast of Pentecost, a language-miracle did indeed take place, and the Christian disciples were able to relate the Gospel story to strangers who came from various foreign lands to Jerusalem.

As years went on, and the earth became more populated, and languages and dialects actually increased in number, the obstacles to publishing the tidings of salvation were seriously multiplied. America was colonized, perhaps from the Pacific islands and the east coasts of Asia. The American Indians, Aztecs, and Peruvians added to the total of the world's tongues,

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and therefore added to the barriers between their salvation and themselves. When the Spaniards arrived, and (according to some accounts) were prepared to do their best to enrol the Indians in the Catholic Church, the language difficulty fatally intervened, and, like impatient teachers, the Spaniards beat their wretched pupils. In fact, they often massacred them.

In 1919, when the Christian evangel has existed for the best part of 2,000 years, its publication to the human race is still impeded by this extraordinary, and, one ventures to say, unnecessary difficulty. It is certainly true that the inconvenience of diverse languages is a Godsend to the British and Foreign Bible Society, which is enabled to give comfortable employment to troops of secretaries, translators, printers, and agents. Moreover, the public meetings convened by the Bible Society have a great use in sustaining, in the breasts of our British middle classes, feelings of superiority, mingled with pity, towards the Heathen. In this respect, the Society has rendered a contribution towards moulding our national character. It does occur to some of us, however, that it would have been better to arrange a plan of salvation which would have built up the British character without involving such serious delay in redeeming the Heathen.

Would it not have been a more rational method if, on the Day of Pentecost, some such language as Esperanto had been miraculously and officially established all over the inhabited world? The first Christian lecturers and plenipotentiaries would then have been able to train a band of converts, who, in turn, without any labour of learning a fresh vocabulary and grammar, would have passed the life-saving message on to other nations, and so, in a very short period, the publication would have been universal and complete. Church services in the Middle Ages would not then have been performed in a language (Latin) unknown to the common people. I grant that this would have deprived the clergy of the privilege of appearing more learned than the vulgar crowd; just as the modern lawyers (and, I rather think, many representatives of science) would have been obliged to state ideas and facts in a plain and simple manner, understandable by the Man in the Street. Both Law and Science, as well as Theology (the Queen of Sciences), have been heavily loaded with Latin and Greek pomposities. This style of talk has tended to make Theology, Law, and even Science, into the monopolies of small cliques, who earned large fees. But the welfare of the people ought to prevail over the delights of a few monopolists.

I affirm, then, that the confusion of tongues at Babel was a mistaken policy. I affirm that the opportunity of introducing a universal language on the Day of Pentecost was missed, with lamentable effects on the destinies of mankind; for larger masses are still unreached in consequence of difficulties of language. I do not blame the Lord of Heaven for the miscalculation and the failure. We know, from many accounts, that Heaven strongly resembles earth in its fashions, procedure, and even its imperfections. I suspect that Super-cloudland is plagued with a bureaucracy. Clerks who like an easy job, and officials who write lengthy notes to one another's Departments, are no doubt responsible. They have wasted the centuries. There is not the slightest sign of the globe becoming Christianized. And the creator of Esperanto was a Jew—a very noble Jew, indeed, but hardly the man to do the work of the Christian evangelists.

F. J. Gould.

The veneration we have for many things entirely proceeds from their being carefully concealed.—*Goldsmith.*

Pages from Voltaire.

II.

Instructions of the Superior of the Capuchins at Ragusa to Friar Pediculoso on his setting out for the Holy Land.

(1768.)

(*Continued from p. 541.*)

XIII. When from the kings you shall go on to the prophets, you will experience, and make us experience, ineffable joys. Don't forget the slap in the face which the prophet Zedekiah gave to the other prophet, Micaiah.[1] It was not merely a problematical slap in the face like that of the Jesuit of which Pascal tells us.[2] It was a slap in the face certified by the Holy Ghost, whereof we may deduce important consequences for the cheeks of the faithful.

When you are in the company of Ezekiel your soul will expand more than ever. You will behold at first (chapter i.) four animals with the face of a lion, of an ox, of an eagle, and of a man; a wheel with four faces like unto the water of the sea, each face having more eyes than Argus, and the four parts of the wheel going along at one time. You are aware that afterwards the prophet made a meal by God's order of a whole parchment volume. Be careful to ask all the prophets you may come across what was written in this volume. But that is not all; the Lord God laid hands on the prophet to bind him.[3] Bound as he is, he traces the plan of Jerusalem on a tile; then he lies on his left side for three hundred and ninety days, and for forty days on his right side.

XIV. If you should breakfast with Ezekiel, dear brother in God, take care not to alter his text, as you have already done; it is one of the sins against the Holy Ghost. You have had the temerity to say that God commanded the prophet to bake his bread with cow-dung. It is much better than that. Read the *Vulgate Ezekiel* iv. 12: *Comedes illud, et stercore quod egreditur de homine operies illud in oculis eorum.* "Thou shalt bake it with dung that cometh out of man in their sight." The prophet ate of the defiled bread and cried out: *Pouah! pouah! Domine deus meus, que anima mea non est polluta.* "Ah! Lord God, I have never tasted such a disgusting meal." And the Lord God accommodatingly made answer, "Lo, I have given thee cow's dung for man's dung."

Always preserve the text in its purity, dear brother, and alter not the smallest point.

If Ezekiel's meal was a trifle high in smell, the Israelites' dinner of which he tells us was rather cannibalistic[4]: "The fathers shall eat their sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers." You will notice that the fathers eat the children who are plump and tender; but that the children eat their hard-rinded parents; is this the new cookery?

XV. There is a great dispute among the learned over the thirty-ninth chapter of this same Ezekiel. It involves the difficulty of deciding whether it is to the Jews or to every beast of the field that the Lord promises that they shall drink the blood of princes. We believe that it is to both man and beast that the promise was made. Verse 17 undoubtedly refers to the beast of the field, but verses 18 and 19, and following, refer to the Jews: "Ye shall be filled at my table with horses..... and mighty men." They eat not only the horse, like the Scythians in the army of the Persian king, but the riders also, like worthy Jews; therefore what goes before refers to them also. You will see the use of intelligence in the study of Holy Writ.

[1] 1 Kings xxii. 24. [2] *Lettres provinciales* (xix.).
[3] Ezekiel iii. [4] Ezekiel v. 10.

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XVI. The passages in Ezekiel that are most essential, the most consistent with public morality and virtue, the most apt to inspire modesty in young women, are those where the Lord speaks about Aholah and her sister Aholibah. You cannot too often repeat these admirable passages.

The Lord said to Aholah:—

> Thou has increased and waxen great, thy breasts are fashioned, thine hair is grown[1] (*Grandis effecta es, ubera tua intumuerunt, pilus tuus germinavit*). Behold thy time of love was come. I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; I clothed thee also with broidered work, and shod thee with badgers' skins, and girded thee about with fine linen and with silk. And I put a jewel on thy forehead and earings in thine ears .....But thou didst trust in thy beauty and played the harlot because of thine own renown and pouredst out thy fornications on every one that passed by.....(*Ædificasti tibi lupanar!*) Thou hast built unto thee an eminent place.....Thou givest gifts to all thy lovers and hirest them.[2] *Omnibus meretricibus dantur mercedes, tu autem dedisti mercedes cunctis amatoribus tuis, et seq.*, therefore thou art contrary from other women, etc.

Her sister, Aholibah, was still more corrupt[3]: "She doted upon her paramours whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is like the issue of horses: (*Et insanivit libidine super concubitum eorum quorum carnes sunt ut carnes asinorum, et sicut fluxus eqorum fluxus eorum.*" The term for seed is much more expressive in the Hebrew. We are not certain that we ought not to render it by a forcible expression which is used at court, by the ladies, on certain occasions. That is a point we leave wholly to your discretion.

After a candid examination of these fine passages, we advise you to pass lightly over Jeremiah who ran stark naked through Jerusalem harnessed with a pack saddle;[4] but we ask you not to pass over in silence the prophet Hosea whom the Lord God commanded to take to wife one of the loose women of the city[5] for a reason which may seem frivolous to you. Some time afterwards the Lord God commanded him to love an adulteress, and he bought her for fifteen pieces of silver and an half homer of barley.[6]

Nothing could be better adapted, our dear brother, *to form the minds and hearts* of young people than learned commentaries on these texts. Do not omit to give the value of the fifteen pieces of silver given to the lady, we take it to be equal to seven-and-a-half francs; as you know, we Capuchins buy in a much cheaper market.

Englished by GEO. UNDERWOOD.

[1] Ezekiel xvi. 7. [2] Ezekiel xvi. 33. [3] *Ibid.*, xxiii. 11. [4] Jeremiah, xxvii. 2. [5] Hosea i. [6] Hosea iii.

Correspondence.

TRADING MISSIONARIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am sending you by this mail a copy of *On Guard*, from which you will see the agitation afoot with regard to German Missions. It is, like all the other correspondence and articles on the subject, informative from our own particular Freethought point of view.

With the particular animus against the Germans I am not concerned. What interests me, and I feel sure will interest you also, is the trading and exploitation of the native under the guise of religion. The Bible is used as a booster for business—so much so that *all* missions are alike in this respect.

Recently I trekked for three months in the low country, and came across several flourishing Swiss Missions, the members of which arrived among the natives penniless. Religion, clothed in zeal and humility, secured from the natives the erection of huts for the missionaries, besides gifts of food, etc. So soon as the latter acquired a working knowledge of the language, the transition from spiritual servants for the honour and glory of God into masters and merchants for personal gain took place. The Gospel was preached for profit, and salvation sold for monkey-nuts or other produce.

The native in charge of my wagon told me that his missionary levied on him a number of bags—I think one-fifth—of monkey-nuts, and also 10s. in gold, per annum. The native kicked at the 10s. The missionary, however, was determined on getting the monkey-nuts, so told the native: "No monkey-nuts, no Jesus."

I would much have preferred that these missions were attacked on their merits, and not partaken of a purely anti-German character, because *all* these inland missions are seen on the same lines, and are a disgrace to those who promote them, however conscientious they may be in their contributions, in contradistinction to the missionaries themselves, who are one-eyed apostles of profit, open and unashamed.

With the best of wishes that you may long live to promote the best of all causes in the brilliant manner that you are now doing.

E. P. BEER (South Africa).

[The letter which our correspondent cites states that the missions are so many trading stations, owning many thousands of acres of land, and utilizing the religious object as a means of exploiting native labour. In the letter German missions are selected as examples, but there is no reason for believing that, in many cases, there is any distinction between German and other missions. Only a day or two ago we had a long letter from a correspondent in the New Hebrides pointing to the trading concerns carried on by the Presbyterian missions there. In trade or at the back of the trader is true of many missions, and it is highly significant that missionary activity is always greatest where the commercial possibilities are most obvious. It is the religious analogue of the desire of this and other countries to carry the blessings of civilization where oil, and rubber, and coal, etc., abound. The dividends express only the Lord's blessing on the enterprise.—EDITOR.]

SOCIALISM AND RELIGION.

SIR,—Just a few lines on your recent charges lodged against Socialists and the Socialist Party.

In the first place, I observe a large proportion of your pamphlet is taken up in criticizing the hypocritical attitude of Ramsay Macdonald in regard to Religion and Socialism, but I very seriously question whether Macdonald can be regarded *as a Socialist at all.* The founders of Socialism *have always* declared as part and parcel of their system of Society the "Class War," the "Social Revolution," and the "Materialist Conception of History." These Socialist principles (which, being a critic of Socialists, you will of course thoroughly understand) were laid down by Marx and Engels, and accepted as part of Socialist principle by the Liebknechts, Bebel, Bonger, Lassalle, Larfargue, and at the present day by *all Socialist* parties all over the world. Ramsay Macdonald accepts *neither* of these principles; so I fail to see where you are even justified in representing him either as a typical Socialist or in any way truly representing their ideas. In fact, practically all these apologists for compromise between Religion and Socialism might be subject to the same criticism. The only three Socialist parties in England to-day—*i.e.*, the B.S.P., the I.L.P., and the S.P.G.B.—are all three Marxian, and therefore definitely Materialist; so I arrive at the conclusion that your criticism is only effective against sham "Socialists" and "Labour Fakirs," and not at all applicable the the Socialists who maintain the Socialist principles of Marx and Engels.

But now I will change my tactics from defence to attack. The Socialist maintains that it is only by the establishment of a system of Society based on the common ownership of the means of distribution. manufacture, and exchange that the human race can be emancipated from the thousand and one social evils and oppression inherent in all societies based on the private ownership of property. That private ownership, in turn giving rise to the establishment of a privileged class, that class, by controlling political machinery at hand lives by *exploiting* the labour of the toiling majority, and this creates what the Socialist calls "The Class War" from which proceed all "Strikes" and social discontent. The Socialists

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have thrown over religion as "the opium of the people," they have identified their cause as *the* cause of the people, they are the avowed enemy of hypocrisy whether religious or temporal, and they have consistently maintained the overthrow of the present system of society as the *only* means of salvation for the people. The Secularist is always saying: "help me kill religion first," but why should not the Socialist say to the Secularist: "come and help me destroy the vampire from which not only the *power* of religion but of which ALL social evils proceed. And, indeed, what guarantee have we that if the world became Secularist to-morrow that the condition of the working classes would thereby improve.

R. F. TURNEY.

[We have been compelled to abbreviate Mr. Turney's letter, but we have not interfered with his argument. For ourselves we need only point out that what we are concerned with here, and in our pamphlet, is to expose the fallacy that Socialism is in any way religious or connected with religion. Mr. Ramsay Macdonald is only one of a crowd of leading Socialists who play to the Churches in this way. For the rest, Mr. Turney agrees with us that religion *is* used to blind men to their real interests in life. But he says, if we awaken them to their real interests, religion will die. "If." There is much virtue in that "if." For our part, it seems plain that the way to remove blindness is to restore sight. And we really don't see how working men, or others, will realize their needs until the blinkers of religion are taken off.—EDITOR.]

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON OCT 30.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Moss, Neate, Palmer, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Miss Pitcher, and the Secretary.

Minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed. The Monthly Financial Statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for Birmingham, Edinburgh, Falkirk, South London, Swansea and the Parent Society (17 in all).

The report of the Propagandist Committee Meeting was received and their various suggestions adopted. Mr. Cohen was asked to draw attention to these through the medium of the *Freethinker*.

Reference was made to the report in the current number of the *Freethinker* of the services rendered to the Committee of Protest against Prohibition of Sales of Literature in the L.C.C. Parks by Mr. Harry Snell on the occasion of the recent report of the L.C.C. Parks Committee on these sales. It was resolved that the thanks of the Executive be made to Mr. Snell for his splendid defence.

It was reported that, despite the unfavourable weather, the experiment of afternoon lectures at South Place had resulted in three meetings which decidedly warranted the attempt.

Instructions were given for arrangements to be made for a course of lectures at Stratford Town Hall during January, and the Secretary requested to make enquiries as to other suitable halls.

Other matters of minor importance having been dealt with the meeting adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

A FREETHINKER going abroad offers the following:—**Life of Charles Bradlaugh** (2 vols.), **15s.**; **Flowers of Freethought** (2 vols.), **6s.**; **Bradlaugh's Debates, 4s.**; **Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers, 5s.**; Vol. I. of **The Reasoner, 5s.**; **Taylor's Diegesis, 5s.**; **London Investigator** (3 vols.), **6s.**; **Elements of Social Science, 3s. 6d.**; **Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life** (2 vols.), **5s.**; **Four Hundred Years of Freethought, £1**; **A Concise History of Religion** (3 vols.), **10s.**; **Our Corner** (7 vols.), **£1**; **Progress** (5 vols.), **15s.**; **Married Love and Wise Parenthood, 8s. 6d.**; **Dr. Hardy's Birth-Control, 2s. 6d.**; **Physiology and Psychology of Sex, 7s.**; **Loves Coming of Age, 3s. 6d.**; **Mating and Marriage, 2s. 6d.**; **Three large bundles of Pamphlets, 5s. each.** All post free.—W. HARRISON, 47 Jeffreys Road, Clapham, London, S.W. 4.

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.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 8, E. C. Saphin, "The Founding of the Christian Church."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Cyril E. M. Joad, "Thought and Temperament."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. C. Ratcliffe, "The Mission of Secularism a Substitute for Religion."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, H. W. Nevinson, "Ireland Now."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Saphin, Baker, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. A. B. Moss.

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Free Gardener's Hall, Leith Walk): Mr. C. Cohen, 11.30, "Why Men Believe in God"; 6.30, "Christianity, the Army, and the Nation."

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 6.30.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Small Hall): Mr. W. H. Thresh, 3, "The Solar System and Its Origin"; 6.30, "From Savage to Shakespeare."

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NEW AND STANDARD PUBLICATIONS.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

The R. P. A. Annual for 1920. Containing contributions by Professor J. B. Bury, W. Ralph Hall Caine, A. St. John Adcock, Dr. Ivor Ll. Tuckett, Edward Clodd, William Archer, Eden Phillpotts, S. K. Ratcliffe, Joseph McCabe, Adam Gowans Whyte, Charles T. Gorham, and a Clergyman of the Church of England. 96 pp.; cloth, 2s. 6d. net, by post 2s. 10d.; in paper cover, 1s. net, by post 1s. 2d.

The Faith of an Agnostic; or, First Essays in Rationalism. By Sir G. G. GREENWOOD. New and enlarged edition. xv+350 pp.; cloth, 12s. 6d. net, by post 13s.

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Is Atheism Dying?

Many of the newspapers have been letting themselves go over the supposed decline of "Materialism" and "Atheism." And the nature of these deliverances rouses the suspicion that the majority of them come from a single source. There is a strong family likeness between them. They all declare that Atheism is dead and that Materialism is no more. This, of course, is very disheartening to one who spends his time in helping forward both doctrines, especially when one had hoped that some headway was being made. The only gleam of comfort lies in the reflection that one has heard of this kind of thing before. Every now and again one gets the authoritative declaration that Atheism is killed, that religion is indestructible, and that men and women are coming back to the faith which they had forsaken in a moment of aberration. And yet the number of men and women who forsake the Churches seems on the increase. The lamentations of the clergy rise to heaven concerning the small influence that religion exerts over the mass of the people, and no one appears seriously to look to religion for help in any of the troubles that are at the moment harassing the world. It was even made a ground of complaint by some of the religious papers that no mention was made of God in the peace treaty with Germany. Perhaps that may be rectified when the treaty with Turkey is settled. For the Turks have another God, and occasion may be taken to point out that their God had failed them. It would have been awkward pointing this out to Germany. They had the same God as ourselves, and mention of him might have aroused reflection.

* * *

Is Religion Indestructible?

To the Freethinker there is just one gleam of light in an otherwise darkened sky. Religion, we are told, is indestructible. The conduct of the clergy hardly bears out the statement. For an indestructible thing needs no protection. If a society were formed to-morrow to prevent the annihilation of the atmosphere, we do not think that many people would interest themselves in the matter. Yet we have religious people banding themselves together, raising subscriptions, issuing literature, and preaching sermons—to prevent our destroying an indestructible thing. They tell us that religion is always with us. It is to be found among the lowest as well as among the highest. We must confess that the statement is true. But it is strongest with the lowest, and weakest with the highest. It is an unquestioned fact in the first instance, and a widely questioned theory in the second. And we fancy that the more educated people do not believe that religion is indestructible. "In their bones" they feel otherwise. What they mean is that the destruction of religion is undesirable. And that is a vastly different thing. It is no more than the assertion of an opinion. Life, they say, is undesirable without religion. Maybe; but the same thing is said of whisky and horse-racing, and a thousand and one other things that vast numbers of decent folk manage to get on very well without. After all, religion is only a habit. And the usual excuse for giving up a habit—good or bad—is that one cannot do without it.

* * *

The Problem of the Atheist.

And, after all, those who are without religion are not lamenting. They are happy enough; it is the religionist who is lamenting because the Freethinker is not miserable. And the Freethinker is really a problem to the religious man. He doesn't fit in with the world as the Godite conceives it. Religious people are fond of telling the Freethinker that his problem is to explain the presence of religion in the world. This is really not the case. The problem for the religious man is to explain the Atheist. Why are there so many people in the world who are not merely without the belief in a God, but who are none the worse, so far as one can see, for being without it? Sometimes the Godite thinks he has overcome the difficulty by assuming that the Atheist has allowed certain "faculties" to atrophy by his neglect of religion. But that is simply not true. The course of development is not first Atheism and then religion; it is the other way about. The Atheist is not deficient in any quality of mind or body that is possessed by the Theist. Nor can the Theist tell him anything about the feelings which are called religious. The Atheist knows what is the matter with the Theist; the Theist does not in the least understand the Atheist. A Theist sympathizing with an Atheist is not the case of a physician diagnosing a disease; it is rather that of a sick person offering to treat the doctor. Or perhaps a better picture would be that of a number of the inmates of a lunatic asylum commiserating with the folk outside for being insane.

* * *

Does Atheism Satisfy?

We are not, therefore, greatly impressed by the talk that Atheism is doomed because it is a "world outlook" that cannot satisfy human nature. It seems to satisfy Atheists all right, that is, unless we assume that they are all in a conspiracy to pretend to be cheerful when in reality they are miserable. Of course, if a man who already believes in a God and a Devil, a heaven and a hell, a soul and a future life, looks to Atheism to satisfy these demands he will be disappointed. But that is his

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fault. He must, if he can, take the world from the Atheist's point of view, and then see how it looks. Lemonade, from the point of view of the whisky drinker, is a very unsatisfactory beverage, but the test is to go without one or the other and then see what happens. To the Atheist these religious demands are as much pathological symptoms as is the craving for continuous doses of alcohol by a disordered organism. However religious beliefs originate, there is no question that in a civilized society they are kept alive by artificial stimulation. Besides, Atheism does not undertake to satisfy every demand that a disordered human nature may care to make. All it claims is that Atheism shuts out nothing that is truthful, beautiful, or useful, and that it leaves room for the play of every human quality that is worth bothering about. Atheism does not deny the value of any of the standard virtues, although it might conceivably range them in a different scale of importance than the one usually adopted. The Atheist at least stands for the possibility of human improvement apart from supernaturalism, and whether that is a sound or an unsound position, it is certainly giving man credit for more real dignity than religion has ever done. It is, indeed, one of the curiosities of theological controversy that they whose whole theory involves a belittling of human nature should oppose other theories because they detract from the dignity of man.

* * *

Atheism Inevitable.

So all things considered, we find ourselves taking with a tolerable equanimity these announcements that Materialism is dead and Atheism a forsaken position. What is chiefly the matter with these people is that they do not know, and have never taken the trouble to find out what either doctrine is, and whether it is true or false. Atheism is not a fashion, but the concluding term of a lengthy historical process. It began, in germ, when the power, or the existence of some tribal deity was first questioned. It is as inevitable as death. Compromises may delay its recognition, but to that complexion thought must at last come. And Materialism is no passing phase of mind; it is the essential of a true scientific method. Science is only possible on the assumption that the universe is the theatre of knowable forces, calculable in their consequences, and inevitable in their operation. Vulgar minds may be impressed by the cry that Atheism is dead; those who know, and who think, will simply smile. They know it is one of the many tricks of the Churches to divert attention from the fact of their impending collapse. It is an appeal to the sheep-like tendency of the average human mind—the fear that so many have of being thought queer, or unusual, or of standing alone. For a time, and with some, the plan works. But the pretence of belief is growing dangerously thin. The religious appeal touches a steadily declining proportion of the population. Life is more potent than theory, and the theory of religion is breaking down before the growing pressure of the logic of fact.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Over every hill
All is still;
In no leaf of any tree
Can you see
The motion of a breath,
Every bird has ceased its song.
Wait; and thou too, ere long,
Shall be quiet in death.

—*Goethe.*

Seeing is Believing.

THE Rev. John A. Hutton, D.D., is regarded as one of the great lights of the Christian pulpit, whose services are in growing demand in all parts of the country, and whose influence as a leader is steadily on the increase. In the religious press articles from his pen are in great request and always heartily welcomed. To the *Christian World* he is a frequent contributor, and it is in the character of an apologist that he generally writes. He never forgets that the Gospel he preaches stands in perpetual need of being defended. His article in the *Christian World* for November 6, entitled "Seeing and Believing," is throughout in the apologetic vein, and deserves to be seriously pondered by both believers and unbelievers. It starts with the tremendous assertion that "to believe in God is surely the greatest possession that a man can have." Such a claim is, on the face of it, challengeable, and the article makes no attempt to meet the obvious challenge. Instead of that the specious suggestion is thrown out that life can have no meaning apart from belief in God. What proof is there that God exists? Dr. Hutton very properly says:—

> We who are Christian people believe in God through Jesus Christ; we believe in God for the sake of Him. We welcome the corroborations of this belief which, once we have opened our hearts to it, crowd in upon us on all sides—from nature, from history, from certain obscure but invincible testimonies within our own minds. But we know that these corroborations are only corroborations; in themselves they are not proofs.

All intense believers in God declare that he is the Power that lies behind the genial and comforting things in the world of Nature and that, of course, he is friendly to our human race. Dr. Hutton puts it thus:—

> A sunrise, or a sunset, the cool majesty of a mountain peak cleaving the naked sky, or the play of clouds upon a landscape—what garments of the Eternal God these are to those who for some still deeper and dearer reason believe in Him. But to those who have no such deeper and dearer reason which has tipped the balance to the side of faith, all the glory of the world, especially in the hours when that glory seems to be eclipsed, might easily appear to be nothing but accident, fate, the senseless and irrelevant passing of moments and hours, and days, the working out of some great business which has no bearing on this life of ours and no knowledge of us.

The glory of the world is a pretty figure of speech merely invented by man, and it exists only for the inventor; and for him the world is quite as ugly as it is beautiful, whilst to the unimaginative dog it is neither. And if there be any Power behind Nature its malignity is at least in as full evidence as its beneficence. This is a fact which none can deny.

From this point onwards Dr. Hutton plays more or less skilfully with the well-known proverb, "Seeing is believing." He first of all reverses it: "Believing is seeing." Someone has said that "quibbles have no place in the search after truth;" but surely it is a quibble to say "that we do not begin even to see a thing until we believe." Dr. Hutton affirms: "My confidence that I see you and that you see me rests upon an implicit and accepted faith in the reliability of the power of sight." That is an extremely unfortunate illustration, because there are few things less reliable than the power of sight. No scientist would dream of holding the view that "the optic nerve is to be absolutely trusted in the report it gives me about this thing that I call the external world." As a matter of fact the optic nerve is a notorious illusionist, and science has been kept busy for ages correcting its misleading reports. What is true of external and material things is equally true with regard

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to mental and moral relationships. You trust a man's word because you have had experience of his truthfulness, or because he has the reputation of being a man of his word.

Dr. Hutton admits, however, that there is another interpretation of the proverb which is probably nearer to the original intention of it :—

> When we quote these words to ourselves we are in the mood of one who should say, "I don't want to be taken off my feet. I don't want to be deceived. If you wish me to believe in a thing you must give me some evidence, such as I cannot fairly or decently reject, that the whole matter is as you declare." And this requirement is really quite fair.

So it is. We ought not to believe except on adequate evidence. The reverend gentleman assures us that if a stranger appealed to him for help he could not give his case a favourable consideration unless he produced some evidence of his worthiness. If the evidence satisfied him as to the man's *bona-fides*, then, assuming, on such ground, his worthiness as well as need of help,—

> Something mounts up from within myself, something which our religion holds to be the deepest thing in us, which invites me there and then to clothe this bare evidence of his with all the richness of my nature—to let this precise occasion become the opportunity for the outlet in me of certain generosities and activities which in that moment I perceive to be my very business in this world.

Instead of proceeding, at this stage, to furnish adequate reasons for believing in God and Christ, Dr. Hutton goes off on a tangent to point out that some temperaments require more evidence than others. Thomas was of a cautious temperament, and what was sufficient proof of the Resurrection for the others left him doubting, whilst Simon Peter had an enthusiastic temperament, which made him only too ready to believe, almost without any reference to evidence at all. This may be more or less true of those two men, but the reverend gentleman skilfully evades the real point at issue. He omits, or is not able, to tell us on what evidence reasonable human beings can believe that a God of justice and love sits on the throne and rules the world. The real question for every man, according to him, is, "Would you like to believe?" Naturally, every sane person wants to believe what is in itself credible; but what we maintain is that the facts militate fatally against the belief that the world is governed in righteousness and love by an almighty Being. It may be easy enough for some folk to repeat, "we believe in God through Jesus Christ our Lord"; but that formula, so far from removing the difficulty, only emphasizes and enhances it. Strangely enough, the reverend gentleman *naively* admits that "if we kept our eyes upon the evil of the world, or the evil in our own hearts, we might deny God—deny him certainly as a robust and inevitable power"; but incontrovertibly such an admission cuts the ground from under his own feet. Why, it is the evil of the world, uneradicated through all the ages, that makes the active regnancy of an infinitely good and powerful God so unbelievable and so ridiculous a proposition. Ostensibly, Christ appeared that he might redeem the world from its sins of every kind, and yet the Church, whose Head and King he is said to be, has always winked at all social and economic evils, and has often stood up in opposition to genuine reforms. And yet, with all the horrible evils staring us continually in the face, Dr. Hutton says that "the real question for every man in our day, and in any day, is, Would he like to believe?" The truth is that the number of those who neither can nor wish to believe in an effete, impotent religion is steadily swelling year in and year out. Surely, Christ *has had his chance*, for his career began nineteen centuries ago, and yet one of his ordained ambassadors confesses to-day that keeping our eyes on the evils of the world would probably have the effect of converting us all to Atheism. More strangely still, Dr. Hutton has the temerity to exclaim :—

> When a man stands before Christ and gives Christ a chance, such a man becomes aware of something more than Christ. He becomes aware of a great Presence surrounding Jesus—a Presence which Jesus makes articulate.

Dr. Hutton is an exceptionally able man; but every now and then, by a mere slip of the tongue, so to say, he gives his own case wholly away. He does so in his article when he observes, "Now, faith is a kind of poetry." It deals not with facts but with fancies, and in a world of grim facts those fancies, however delightful to those who cherish them, are wholly out of place. The faith so eloquently and so illogically eulogized by this popular divine no doubt often lifts those in whom it burns violently into a state of the most exquisite emotional ecstasy; but the fault we have to find with it is that it has never succeeded in solving humanity's puzzling problems, in righting society's crying wrongs, in abolishing the evil conditions which breed poverty and want, or in bringing all mankind into the beautiful ring of true brotherhood and happy comradeship. Yes, Christ has had his chance, and has proved a complete failure. Shall we not now at last give Man his chance?

J. T. Lloyd.

The Christian Way.

> The dogs bark—the caravan passes.—*Eastern Proverb.*
>
> People swallow falsehood as a cat milk.—*G. W. Foote.*
>
> He who fights with priests may make up his mind to have his poor, good name torn and befouled by lies and slanders.
> —*Heine.*

The younger recruits of the Army of Human Liberation can have little conception of the intense hatred and antagonism which the Old Guard of Freethought roused in the Christian camp. To-day, if there be not a greater tolerance, there is at least far less bitterness, due as much to increasing religious indifference as to more polished manners. Christian apologists, who never tire of boasting of the tolerance of their intolerant religion, need to be reminded of these things. In the battle for free speech, Richard Carlile, his wife and friends, endured fifty years' imprisonment. Daniel Eaton was prosecuted seven times, and had £2,500 worth of literature destroyed. The poet Shelley was ordered by a Christian court to be deprived of the custody of his children, and a similar indignity was inflicted on Mrs. Annie Besant many years later. Charles Bradlaugh had to wait for years before he could take his seat in the House of Commons as member for Northampton, and only his alertness prevented his imprisonment for blasphemy. The late Marquis of Queensbury was denied a seat in the House of Lords on account of his Freethought opinions. Last, but not least, thousands of pounds bequeathed for Freethought purposes were diverted to other channels. It was not until Freethinkers became too numerous to be any longer subjected to this form of highway robbery that it was stopped.

Few men even among these heroic personalities fought a more arduous battle against the buffetings of bigotry than Charles Bradlaugh. The abuse levelled against politicians is politeness itself compared with the assault and battery made upon Bradlaugh's reputation, echoes of which still sound in our ears to-day. A generation after his death, tales are recounted to his discredit, and

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it is with some surprise that one finds a touch of the old malice in a book red-hot from the press.

It is true the work is from the pen of a clergyman, but nowadays people expect ministers of religion to be civilized. The Rev. John Pitkin is not an ordinary parson, and was for many years a prison chaplain. His allusions to Bradlaugh occur in his book, *The Prison Cell*, a volume of reminiscences of criminals he met in the course of his ministrations. One chapter, entitled "An Atheist's Testimony to Christianity," deals with the story of a convict who is alleged to have attributed his downfall to Bradlaugh's "ungodly creed."

Nine pages are devoted to this remarkable human document, and its value may be estimated by the fact that no names are mentioned save those of Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant. The nameless man who was converted is said to have been a charming individual who had been twice convicted and sentenced for attempted murder, one sentence being for twenty years. He had also served a further sentence for attempted suicide. He may be described as a brand plucked from the burning, especially as he had "once been foremost in spreading the poison of that pernicious system which is called Atheism."

Although described as "a devoted disciple" of Charles Bradlaugh, this convict had as hazy and remarkable ideas on the subject of Bradlaugh's opinions as ever illuminated a Christian Evidence pamphlet. How intimate his knowledge of Freethought was is seen in his confusion of mind between Atheism and Secularism. He even goes so far as to define Atheism, which, he declares, "exists to furnish designing clever lecturers with good incomes, which enables them to climb into power, where their moderate abilities in their own profession would never have placed them. They travel first-class, stay at the best hotels, and have a cab to take them to the lecture hall, if only five hundred yards distant." In short, they behave almost as badly as bishops. Lest, however, any reader should imagine that a Freethinker's life is all beer and skittles, the chaplain soon undeceives him.

Dipping his pen in crimson lake, he describes how that convict's daughter dies of consumption, and the convict drags a lecturer into the death-chamber, and asks him his candid opinion as to the existence of a Deity, and the chances of a future life. Of course, the unfortunate lecturer was dumbfounded. Another lecturer was kidnapped, and put through the same process, with the same awful negative results. Even Bradlaugh was approached on the same subject, but, apparently on account of his fine physique, not put through the torture-chamber, and it is recorded that he advised the convict not to permit his children to attend lectures and not to sell literature. We imagine that Bradlaugh would have advised the convict to see a doctor; but our ways are not the chaplain's. It was very fortunate, too, that this homicidal convict did not try to murder these lecturers, because, although "an ardent disciple of Bradlaugh," he writes bitterly enough: "I do not think that one of their lecturers truly believes in the Atheism he professes."

Like the criminal in Gilbert's verses, our convict was not always "jumping on his mother," and other people. Certainly, he tried to murder a constable, and to take his own life, but he only threw flowers at the chaplain. In one letter he writes: "In every one of your sermons you dispose of some bulwark of Atheism. One by one the distorted difficulties conjured up by our lecturers have been disposed of with ease." This is indeed interesting. Fifty-two sermons a year, and fifty-two religious doubts removed. We cannot wonder at the convict's conversion. And then comes the crowning mercy: "The style of your preaching has caused me for ever to renounce Atheism."

The secret of the conversion of this "militant Atheist" is buried in the bosom of the chaplain, who, like Brer Rabbit, lays low and says nothing. The converted convict "left the country and sailed for Australia" nearly forty years ago. In delaying the publication of the terrible "infidel's" testimony to Christ for so lengthy a period, the Rev. John Pitkin has displayed a Christian patience. He cannot be accused of allowing his courage to outrun his discretion.

MIMNERMUS.

The Dead Bee.

THERE is enough material in the world to prove any case—in a superficial manner. Words may be used in such a manner that their *tessarae* forms a pattern for easy conviction. By speech, sound may take the place of sense, personality may cloak an evil design, and fanaticism may even induce a few to believe that the world is square—because there are four seasons. The gulf between belief and truth cannot be bridged by these means for those who do not reject human experience for revelation. Swedenborg is worthy of our attention in this respect. His *Divine Love and Wisdom*, in our opinion, written with sincerity, is the work of one who sounded his note. It is a sweet, tuneful note; and if our ears could be stopped to all other notes; halcyon days and nights would woo us to the end of our mortal journey. It would be soothing to think that divine love and wisdom animated all phenomena—particularly soothing to the Freethinker, who has occupied every position in the scale of abuse from such men as Tertullian, St. Paul, G. K. Chesterton, the Bishop of London, and the Rev. William Sunday. Putting aside the fact that two can play at this game—a rather disreputable game, by the way—consider the weight thrown off the shoulders of all critics of Christianity if Swedenborg's theory be universally established. If we grant his influx of the spiritual into the natural, our books on science, sociology, and cottage gardening may be piled up for a bonfire of thanksgiving. No longer need we rack our brains to understand the philosophic systems that have been thrown into the world for man's guidance, no longer need we essay to grasp this sorry scheme of things entire, if we admit that Swedenborg has found the philosopher's stone.

Among revelations of the twentieth century, such as the discovery of the rascality of our press, the transition of a human being by aeroplane from London to Paris in a little over an hour, and the existence of a person belonging to a victorious nation on one-and-a-half ounces of butter weekly, there may be found one striking phenomenon. It may even have been overlooked by all but the most observant. We refer to the practice of boot manufacturers. There is a depth of meaning in the Irishman's remark about his new pair of boots. He said he would have to wear them some time before he could put them on. In other words, boots are made, but the feet have to fit them. And we think that it is the same with most systems of religion. They are made; but the mind has to fit them. Witness the lives of such men as Cardinal Newman and Tennyson; their frankness tells us that religion could not supply answers to all their doubts; and we see the quaint position of Gladstone *defending* the impregnable rock of Holy Scripture. Their religious systems were made, and their minds could never properly fit them.

If, my readers, you can be won over by the fervour of Swedenborg, for his writings are not unlike those of

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Jeremy Taylor, you will have to shut one eye and stop one ear. After a beautiful description of bees' activities —giving the natural side of their lives—he will lead you to this :—

> It may be seen from this history that the bees, for the use they perform to the human race, possess, out of an influx from the spiritual world, a form of government like that which obtains with men on earth, yea, with the angels in heaven.

This statement will sound strangely to English ears—it contains not a few fallacies; but, with sympathetic insight towards Swedenborg and his period suppose we admit its truth.

In our garden from the tops of Japanese sunflowers down to rose bushes are long silken ropes. Perilous is the journey to the spider along one of these to the unknown leaf caught by the line thrown out. His rough scaffolding accomplished, a web is woven. You may meditate on the existence of spiders, or their motives. Swedenborg says that spiders are symbols of Hell, and come from that place. But our mind will not even fit *that* explanation. Into one of these webs a bee had flown. Poor little winged wanderer in search of sweetness. Evil hath made thee a winding sheet before thou wast dead. No more will thy drowsy hum fall on the summer air. No more wilt thou draw nectar from flowers—the gift of Gods who love us. With wings crushed, wax laden legs wrapped tightly with silken bonds, thou art now what thou wast not.

Our mind will not fit this scheme of good from Heaven and evil from Hell—an indictment of God; you allowed a pretty little honey gatherer to be caught in a spider's web, and you endowed us with feelings that were pained when we saw it. The European Affair!—on a larger scale. *Ex pede*, you do nothing very well. At midnight, when the hour of twelve strikes, Oberon and Titania will come with their fairy train, and the dead body of the bee shall have a royal funeral. Did you *really* divide the Red Sea?

William Repton.

An Eagle's Feather.

Vide Browning on Shelley.

Mental processes vary in their movement and intensity just as much as one mind differs from another. What is certain is the process, dull or bright, fast or slow, backward or forward, somewhere or somehow, every man "changes his mind." Most minds, it may be, move round in a narrow, and very often a vicious, circle; some are stodgy and almost stationary, like those of the beasts of the field; others, again, like Gibbon's, "deep and slow," exhausting thought, and hiving wisdom with much toil and care—the latter culminating in an electric flash illuminating the world. Even the ordinary mind of the average intelligent man or woman, be the earlier process quick or slow, in the contact, or conflict, of clearly seen ideas, may, in this ultimate event, gain by a hop, step, and jump, or by a single natural leap, the veritable mountain-top of a vision, where for a moment it feels itself a transfigured thing, and from whence it surveys in scornful and serene sovereignty the pigmies in the vale below! The road was rough, the training was severe, the schooling costly, but the consequent unpremeditated levitation seeming, and indeed being, as easy and natural as the winking of an eye.

And what a heterogenous collection seem the ingredients producing this mental result; what connection, in this concoction, of unconnected things! As a personal instance: I had been reading Ingersoll's superb Reply to Gladstone, with its reference to the weird and wonderful beliefs that men have entertained about gods and devils, and the awful consequences to man himself of those ages of faith. Now I listened to a lecture on Home Rule for Scotland, and anon, with a few choice spirits, discussed "spiritual" things, in the dusk, at the close of the meeting.

The story was told, almost at first hand, of a man whose favourite dog died, which had been in the habit, while living, of rocking itself in a rocking chair. One morning, following the loss of his canine companion, the man awakened to see the chair *with nothing on it*—nothing, at least, but the invisible "astral body" of the dead dog rocking to and fro! The story was received with quite reverent credence by a Spiritualist member of the group, who did not see the joke even when the story was capped by that of the man, who dreamed he had been a day at the coast and awoke in the morning all sunburnt! "Ah," said he, quoting from Hamlet:—

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

Whereupon I had my revelation: Yes, I said, and it is also true that there are a thousand things *dreamt* of in our philosophy which have no existence anywhere else. At this moment the friends separated, and I had no opportunity of noting the effect of my thunderbolt; but struck with my own lightning —or what I fondly believed my own—I came away not a little satisfied—perhaps even a little conceited.

A. M.

Acid Drops.

At the request of the King, November 11 (Armistice Day) was observed by a two-minutes' cessation of work throughout the country—more or less. The people were advised to spend the two minutes in "thoughtful remembrance." That strikes us as rather dangerous. To advise the people a year after a war to *think* about it is rather risky. Perhaps the hope is that they will not think, but will merely remain motionless, and *look* wise.

One paper, greatly daring, headed its announcement of the King's message, "A Year of Peace." That was superb. We have only now about a score of wars, at the end of a "year of peace," and the Allies are in full use of one of the vilest forms of warfare known to man—that of the hunger blockade. All other forms of war are humane at the side of that. And it is being enforced by Christians, as it has been elaborated by them. "Suffer little children to come unto me," says the New Testament," and "I will see that they get nothing to eat," say the Christian Powers. And this is what the world has come to after two thousand years of Christianity. A state of peace where only about a score of wars are being waged! What would the world have been like without Christianity? It certainly could not have been worse.

Archdeacon Gresford Jones is quite angry with the Spiritualists for enticing Churchmen with their psychic affirmations. The Archdeacon thinks that the Christian Church has sufficient bogeys of its own.

An Anglo-Catholic Congress will be held next spring, prior to the Lambeth Conference. At that pleasant season of the year, the priests will be able to wear their newest spring petticoats.

The latest news of the "starving" clergy is that the salaries of the assistant clergy at Trimley, Surrey, have been increased from £200 to £250 yearly.

His lordship the Bishop of Manchester says that "the public knew very little of the patience and dignity of the clergy during the difficult times which they were passing." Dear, dear! The public knows quite well that the

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clergy were exempted from military service during the War, and it also knows with what "patience and dignity" the clergy are now posing as the "new poor," who are "starving" on the salaries mentioned in the Clergy List.

The Rev. S. F. Collier, of the Manchester Wesleyan Mission, lives in the clouds and laughs earthly facts to scorn. Many clergymen, who are on speaking terms with facts, sorrowfully admit the supreme failure of the Church; but Mr. Collier, pooh-poohing the facts, says: "The Church is a living, pulsating thing. Her life-blood comes from Calvary." Then treating the last nineteen hundred years as if they had never been, he continues: "And the Gospel she is commissioned to preach is the only true remedy for the sins and sorrows and miseries of mankind. Therefore, let us lift up our hearts. The future is ours; for the future is the Lords." Pious twaddle in which so many men of God indulge just now.

"The New Poor!" The Bishop of Southwark dined with his Majesty King Alfonso at the Grocers' Hall. At the banquet to the Shah of Persia at Buckingham Palace the Archbishop of Canterbury and his wife were among the distinguished guests. "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

Outside an East-end church is a notice, "The minister here was once a boy who sold papers in the streets. Come in and see him." It looks as if that minister was anxious to let folk know that he once earned an honest living.

The Rev. Robert Perdue, rector of Lorrha, North Tipperary, drowned himself in a tank. Yet emotional evangelists will have it that it is only Atheists who commit suicide.

Providence counts the hairs of our heads, but is careless about churches. In daylight, thieves broke a stained-glass window of Petersham Parish Church, and stole several brass candlesticks, and emptied the collection-boxes.

An extraordinary present has been given to the Prince of Wales by some of the Jews of Montreal, Canada. It consisted of gold tablets, inscribed with the Ten Commandments. What a pity they could not have included the eleventh, "Thou shalt not be found out." Perhaps the gold gave out first.

An American seaman, Harry Thomas, was found guilty of shooting a man at Liverpool. In the hearing of the evidence it was stated that Thomas thought he had had an interview with God and his dead mother and grandmother, and they told him to go and kill a burglar. He took the murdered man for a burglar. The jury found Thomas guilty of murder, but insane. We quite agree with the verdict; but we believe that the evidence for Thomas's communion with God is as good as any other evidence we have ever come across. What would have happened had Moses come along in 1919 with his story of an interview with God? His subsequent display of temper would only have confirmed the belief in his mental derangement. Or how would the prophets have fared? Or Jesus, with his interview with the Devil? These people were lucky in being born early. Thomas was unlucky in being born late.

At a meeting of the Manchester Diocesan Conference, it was suggested that the Churches should run combined cinema shows and restaurants "on business lines." Does this mean a film of the life of Christ and a sausage-and-mashed banquet for a shilling?

A picture appeared in a London newspaper of a crowd of racing stable-boys who had attended divine service in a local parish church. It seems appropriate that the Christian religion should appeal so strongly to stable-boys.

Lambeth was described by a labour candidate in the recent municipal election as "the most neglected and reactionary borough in London." Presumably, it is a mere coincidence that the Archbishop of Canterbury has a palace in the district.

The hard-hit clergy manage to keep the wolf from the door. One who was successful was the Rev. W. Poland, of Woodham Mortimer, who left estate to the value of £7,564. Another was Canon S. E. Davies, of Wyke Regis, Dorset, who left £2,276; whilst a third was the Rev. J. R. Phillips, of Abergavenny, who left £1,744.

If we had not been aware that there was a boom in Spiritualism at the moment—these things sweep over an ill-educated public in the way that the witch mania and similar delusions once swept over Europe—we should have guessed it after reading Mr. Bottomley's article in the *Sunday Pictorial* for November 9. In that article Mr. Bottomley promised all that if they would listen to the King's message and would "attune" their hearts and souls to the occasion "you shall hear the dead speak." And like a professional tipster selling a "dead cert," he adds: "*There is no Death* —and ere another generation has born and run its course on earth, we shall know as Fact what is to-day.....but a belief." That, we take it, is a straight tip from one who knows. And Mr. Bottomley knows because, we presume, a large number of impressionable and superstitious people are dabbling with the subject. When the boom dies out, Mr. Bottomley will, doubtless, declare it to be "damnable superstition." But, by that time, it will have served its purpose.

Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth. The worries of the men of God are increasing, and the advent of the woman-preacher is the latest and not the least of their troubles. At the City Temple, London, Miss Maude Royden is the star-turn, and now Miss E. Picton-Turbervill is to be an extra-turn at St. Botolph's Church, Bishopsgate, and will preach on Thursdays. It is enough to make poor old St. Botolph "revisit the glimpses of the moon."

The Rev. Dr. Orchard, preaching on immortality recently, made the following frank confession: "I do not ask where I am going, and, speaking reverently, I do not care." The only difference between him and us seems to be that we do not believe we are going anywhere after death—except to the grave.

A devotional writer says that "Jesus is beyond our conceptions and our human categories." That is why the men of God have so much to say about him, and it also fully explains the utter silence and inactivy of the Saviour of the world. He *does* nothing simply because he *is* nothing but a theological idea.

In one place or another, and in some way or another, the question of religious instruction in public schools is always cropping up. In the Kilpatrick School Management Committee, one of the members, Mr. MacLeod, moved that the Shorter Catechism be omitted from the religious syllabus. Mr. MacLeod announced that he was not a Christian, but he had been taught the Shorter Catechism himself as a child, and was quite certain it was hurtful to him. The motion was lost, and the children will be dosed with the horrible concoction of mediæval barbarity and stupidity against which Mr. MacLeod protested. Still, it is good to keep the question alive. Common sense will tell in the long run.

It is a sign of the times to find the following in the *Glasgow Herald*:—

> Isn't it time that religion, as taught in the schools, was removed from the curriculum? The children don't want it, and the teachers dislike it. The majority of parents don't wish it, but, having "been through" it themselves indifferently, consider that "it won't do any harm." Educational difficulties and bigotry would have a chance of disappearing were the little minds undisturbed by militant religion.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 16, South Shields; November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 17 and 18, Belfast; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—November 16, Leicester; November 23, Manchester; December 7, Swansea; December 21, Glasgow; December 22, Paisley.

M. J. Marsh (Cardiff) writes endorsing the opinions of Mr. Alec Cunningham as to the fear displayed by many local Socialist bodies lest religious people should be offended, and the need for a better display of "backbone" if progress is to be made and maintained. We are only concerned in this journal with the fact that progress everywhere depends upon the creation of mental charity and independence whether in Socialist or other organizations, and coquetting with religion is fatal to both qualities.

E. T. Rautela (Finland).—We scarcely understand your letter. As a regular reader of this paper, the answer to your questions are contained in its columns. We share your appreciation of the articles that have appeared in the *Freethinker*. Business preoccupations have prevented their writing as frequently as we should have liked, but we hope to see their pens more active in the future.

A. Russell.—We have been trying for weeks to find space, but will publish soon. Regret delay.

H. Black.—We are pleased to learn that Mr. Thresh's lectures at Manchester last week were so much appreciated by those present, and that several new members were made. The example of your Branch should inspire some others to do likewise.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

After a week in the North, and a few days in the South, Mr. Cohen again travels northward, and will lecture to-day (November 16) in Marsden Miner's Hall, Imeary Street, South Shields. The hall is much larger, we understand, than the one usually engaged, and we hope that Tyneside Freethinkers will do their best to see that it is well filled. The meetings will be at 3 and 6.30 There will be music—6 to 6 30—before the evening address.

To-day (November 16) Mr. J. T. Lloyd will lecture in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester, at 6.30. We hear that the audiences in Leicester have very much improved this year, and we, therefore, have little doubt that a speaker of Mr. Lloyd's calibre will find a good muster awaiting him when he mounts the platform.

The West Ham Branch of the N.S.S. is arranging a "Social," to be held at Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, E., on Saturday, December 6. There will be dances, games, musical selections, etc., and admission will be free. Forest Gate (G.E.R.) and Wanstead Park (M.R.) are the nearest stations; trams, etc., to the "Princess Alice" or Forest Gate Stations. All Freethinkers and their friends will be welcomed.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Moss's meeting at Birmingham on Sunday last was a very successful one. Mr. Willis presided, and the lecture was received with the greatest appreciation. We are very glad to hear of so favourable a beginning being made to Mr. Moss's renewal of platform work. We hope he will be kept busy.

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Ninth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £319 18s. Mr. and Mrs. Dawson, 10s. A. Cayford, 10s. S. E. Beardell, 3s. Per J. Stirling (Paisley), £1 5s. P. Siger, 2s. 6d. Mrs. B. Siger, 2s. 6d. E. Blakeman, 2s. 6d. D. C. Drummond, £1. J. Ralston, 10s. H. W. Barnes, 3s. W. F. Ambrose (9th and 10th subs.), 4s. Mrs. S. M. Peacock, £2. H. Bolt, 10s. Three Dundee Friends, 12s. 6d. Artisticus, 5s. A. D. Guest, 5s. Jas. R. White, 2s. 6d. H. J. Waters, £1.

Per James Thompson:—Mr. D. Smith, 2s. 6d. Alex. Thompson, 2s. 6d. Wm. Thompson, 2s. 6d. Mrs. J. Thompson, 2s. 6d. J. Thompson, 5s.

Total, £330 os. 6d.

The Better 'Ole?

(Impressions from Ypres.)

House of God or Estaminet, they shared the same fell fate.
—*Daily Paper.*

Estaminet or House of God
It mattered not one whit.
They went to hell, as you can tell
Whenever they got hit.

Nor Priest nor Pope, nor Faith nor Hope
Were of the least avail.
Both Sentry Post and Holy Ghost
Each told the same sad tale.

Oh, House of Wine and House Divine!
Pray tell me what ye thought
Of your two respective Landlords,
Were they, too, brought to nought?

The House of Wine replied, and said:
"I don't know, but I'm told
My master rushed away to pray
Within the Churches' Fold."

The House Divine said, "I opine
My master slipped away
For solace and security
To an Estaminet."

The reason of their common fate
In Ypres is common talk;
Almighty God was on the nod,
Or else gone for a walk.

Now the moral of this story
Is plain, though it seems odd:
Estaminets are just as safe
As any House of God.

Conversely, too, it seems quite true
It rarely ever pays
To leave the Holy House of God
To seek Estaminets.

So have a care, and be aware,
And swear by solemn oath,
To take no chance, but whilst in France,
Keep damn well out of both.

Iconoclast.

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Atheism and Agnosticism.

II.

(Continued from p. 549.)

The mystic, like the ascetic, is always thought of as being such and such a man, rather than as holding such and such beliefs. Mysticism involves a certain attitude towards things which are not capable of being either explained or understood. The matters with which mysticism is concerned cannot be either explained or understood simply because mysticism, if it could give an account of itself, would cease to be mysticism. But whereas the tender-minded will regard such matters as being above understanding, and therefore sacred, the tough-minded will regard them as being unfit for understanding, and therefore valueless. The tender-minded reveres what is beyond him, the tough denies it.

The tough-minded man calls everything to the bar of intelligence, and if it can give no account of itself, condemns it. He regards mysticism, Theosophy, and all doctrines which make more demands upon a man's faith than upon his intelligence as the resource of second-rate minds which have been driven to shelter themselves behind bulwarks of dogma, as a protection from the assaults of their intellectual superiors in the open field. Finding that intellect is not their forte they cry "These grapes are sour," disclaim its sovereignty, and affirm that the most essential truths about life, God, immortality, and the nature of the Universe cannot be grasped by intellect at all. If this is the attitude of the tough-minded with regard to the shibboleths of the tender-minded, the latter takes his revenge by pointing to the chaos of belief achieved by philosophy and is almost inclined to say that the more you trust to intellect the further you drift from truth. For such a mind mysticism is the only salvation from the barren quibbles of logic, which by enabling you to prove everything, turns round in your hands, and ends in proving nothing; for the tough-minded it is God's last ditch, the barrier erected by the intellectually unfit to save their self-respect from the defeats administered to orthodox religion by Evolution and the Higher Criticism.—*C. E. M. Joad*, "*Essays in Common Sense Philosophy*," 1919, pp. 228-230.

IF you ask an Agnostic does he believe in the Devil? he will say: "certainly not." But why this definite denial in the case of the Devil, and this tentative, leave-it-an-open-question affair in the case of God? In this connection it should be noted that Spencer himself declared that if he were to be convinced of "a supernatural interference with the order of things, then my personal experience would force me to the conclusion that the power underlying things is diabolical."[1] So the fact emerges that if Spencer had come down off the Agnostic fence, it would not have been to join the worshippers of a wise and benevolent Supreme Being; but, if he worshipped at all, it would be at a sort of Witches Sabbath presided over by the Spirit of Evil.

The fact is that although Spencer professed to find in the "Unknowable" a ground for the reconciliation of religion and science, this was merely a device to camouflage the godlessness of his synthetic philosophy. Nothing was further from his thought, or wish, than such a reconciliation. How could it be, if he held that if there was any supernatural power at work in the world it was diabolical?

A further proof of Spencer's privately entertained aversion to the God idea once he had discarded it, and his fear of letting it be publicly known, is given in Mr. Wilfred Scawen Blunt's lately published memoirs in which we are told that Spencer, seeing some of Mr. Blunt's poetry, wrote to him—he being quite a stranger—asking him to compose a dialogue between God and Satan after the style of Goethe's *Faust*. Mr. Blunt agreed to the suggestion, and the piece was produced under the title *Satan Absolved*, meeting with Spencer's approval. Later, Mr. Blunt remarks in his *Diary* that Spencer "is in a terrible fright lest it should be found out that he gave the idea of the poem 'on account,' he says, 'of the *odium theologicum* and the injury it might do to the spread of his philosophy,' so I have written a preface without exactly saying this, though it is not very courageous of him to leave me alone in the coming battle."[1]

We yield to none in admiration of Spencer as the author of the synthetic philosophy, all the more, therefore, do we regret his fear of public opinion which resulted in the "Unknowable" by which he influenced Huxley to substitute Agnosticism for Atheism.

As Moncure Conway pointed out, Agnosticism is "a religio-philosophical Cave of Adullam wherein are gathered the discontented from various regions of thought. Agnosticism is especially the euphemistic retreat of scientific thinkers unwilling to be thought Nature-worshippers, and cultured Freethinkers escaping the vulgar commotations of Atheism, while maintaining their criticisms on all Theistic theories.[2]

Agnosticism never obtained any vogue on the Continent. Buchner denounced it upon its appearance in the following words:—

> But, in reality, if we look at things in open daylight, we find that the "Unknowable" of modern Agnostics is nothing more than the good old God of the theologian, who has already made his appearance in so many deceptive disguises in the history of philosophy. It makes no essential difference whether he answers to the name of "Will," or "Unknown," or "Thing *per se*," or "Universal Soul," or "Unknowable." At the bottom of it we always find the same anthropomorphic disfigurement, the same *asylum ignorantiæ*, and the same vague being which, being begotten of the fear of the unknown, ruled of yore over the crude primeval man, and will continue to rule over the civilized man, until the sun of knowledge and the recognition of a natural and self-contained order of the world shall have made a reality *Fiat lux!*[3]

Perhaps this passage is responsible for Huxley's attack on Buchner.

The French Freethinkers, with their clear common sense, would have none of it. When a Frenchman leaves Catholicism he becomes an Atheist. He has no use for the half-way houses and camouflaged shelters invented by the English philosophers, who, with a few exceptions, like Professor Clifford, are more afraid of Mrs. Grundy and society opinion than they are of machine guns and poison gas.

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

Candour at Last.

THE report on *The Army and Religion*, which has just been issued, is the most cheerful piece of reading for we Freethinkers which has yet come forth from the headquarters of the Black Army. It was decided by the committee, of which the Bishop of Winchester and Dr. Cairns, of Aberdeen, were the joint conveners, that evidence should be taken from chaplains, officers, R.A.M.C. men, and others, who have been in close touch with our armies, as to the real religious position among the young men of to-day. This evidence has been carefully collected, and is now presented to the public in a handsome volume (Macmillan, 6s.). Nothing but the realization of their desperate position has drawn this candid admission of the decay of Christianity from its leaders and workers. As the editor, Dr. Cairns says:—

> We believe that the evidence in our hands is full of deep and startling meaning.....and therefore we have

[1] Duncan, *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer*, p. 373.

[1] Wilfred Scawen Blunt, *My Diaries* (1919), p. 402.

[2] Moncure Conway, *Free Review*, No. 1, vol. i.

[3] Buchner, *Force and Matter*, 1884 ed., p. 499.

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> felt bound to lay it before the Christian mind of the nation, believing that a new contact with reality is absolutely necessary to any further progress.

Dr. Cairns thus sums up his conclusions from the evidence he received:—

> That probably four-fifths of the young manhood of our country should have no vital connection with any of the Churches, and that behind this detachment there should be so deep a misunderstanding of the faiths by which Christian men and women live, and the ideals of life which they hold, is perhaps the most salient factor of our evidence. Here is an alarming fact, which is surely clear proof that something somewhere has gone gravely wrong. It is more than questionable if the situation has anywhere been adequately realized .....When one thinks of all the spiritual, financial, and political resources of the Churches, and their control of schools and pulpits for educational purposes for so many centuries, why should there be this "impenetrable fog"?

In spite of this melancholy candour, Dr. Cairns still begs the question in true Christian fashion on two vital aspects of the matter. He declares that the men are "unconsciously" following Christ, that they are "following him in the dark and denying him in the light," and in spite of their lack of religion "are practising great Christian virtues which put many of us to shame." He is here inferring that all morality is Christian, and that the existence of morality in a man proves that he is a Christian though the man himself be unaware of it. His other assumption is that society will be ruined unless this decay of religion is arrested. He considers it a "tragedy." Freethinkers will be inclined to reverse his opinion, and consider that it is the "happy ending," the "tragedy" lying rather behind us than before us.

There are some very good things in the evidence quoted. Surely this description of the men's conception of modern Christianity, though written by an assistant chaplain-general, is worthy of Mr. Foote himself: "It is a Mosaic of kill-joyism and Balaam's ass's ears, and Noah and mothers' meetings, and Athanasian damns and the Archbishop of Canterbury at £15,000 a year." A second lieutenant is "convinced that the attitudes of these men before the War was pagan. They took life as it came. These men never interpreted life into spiritual terms." Again, it is lamented that "these men as a whole believe that the Churches are out of touch with reality and out of touch with ordinary humanity." "These men find the Churches lacking in the spirit of Reality. The doctrinal message is unintelligible. They do not know what it is about." "They have a haunting suspicion that the Church itself is not sure about its own creeds and about the Bible, and that there is something insincere about its testimony." A Lancashire chaplain has nothing more comforting than this to offer: "I should say that 10 per cent. are vitally related to the Church and 10 per cent. semi-attached." Though he cannot find it in his heart to say so, it is obvious that the remaining 80 per cent. are vitally *un*-related to the Church for various reasons, chiefly the following:—

> To sum up a good deal of evidence, we seem to have left the impression upon them that there is little or no life in the Church at all; that it is an antiquated and decaying institution, standing by dogmas expressed in archaic language, and utterly out of touch with modern thought and living experience.

So the cat is out of the bag—at last! Nor can they even see their way to state that these men are ruined, socially or morally, by this new insight; for the Editor of the volume says "it is impossible not to feel the sharpness of the contrast when we turn from the comparative poverty of the religious thoughts and ideals of the men to the wealth of noble virtues which they reveal in their relationship to one another."

The sins chiefly lamented in this volume are swearing and sexual indulgence. "The men who do not swear are a small minority. The majority indulge in foul, immoral, blasphemous language. The Holy Name is mixed with every foul expression." "They argue that sexual indulgence is natural, and therefore legitimate." Neither of these vices is, however, more prevalent to-day than during previous war-periods, and neither is in any way due to the decay of religious belief, except, perhaps, in an added boldness of blasphemy. As an Atheist who discards swearing as vulgar and irrelevant, I can testify to the lack of connection between Freethought and foul language; and every one of us knows Atheists of the most rigorously moral sexual character.

Out of their own mouths they are convicted. Perhaps, after this, we will hear less about the great Revival of Religion which took place at the Front.

But now, having admitted the failure of Christianity at the present moment, what remedies have these reverend gentlemen to offer, what suggestions as to the best means of stopping the landslide so obviously in motion? None. Dr. Cairns gives it as his considered opinion that a great evangelical effort would only further alienate this mass of indifferent men. The only thing in which he can see any hope is "a widening and deepening of the whole outlook and aim of the Churches." A pretty generality; but what does it mean, unless it means a further breaking-down of dogmas and a further advance towards humanism and social service? But, as the rev. doctor says, there was no religious uprising during the latter part of the century strong enough to contain and use the great advances of scientific knowledge, and so to counteract "the advance of naturalism." On what, then, is the great revival to found its claims, now that the mass of men has passed out of relation to religion, and now that scientific "naturalism" has made such strides among the more educated? Truly, the reverend gentlemen who wish to set that revival afoot have something to think about for the rest of their days. This religion is dying in the way normal to all religions. Atheists, the report tells us, were few; the reason being simply that few men have a logical craving, a desire to "see life steadily and see it whole." The mass simply says, "This stuff won't wash," and drops the subject, without attempting to put anything solid in the place of the discredited creed. But as education, which is still very feeble, gradually improves and spreads its influence, the number who reject with reason and substitute with knowledge will rapidly increase. Even in their ignorance these men have suspected the truth; in their knowledge the men of the future will know it to the full.

H. Truckell.

NATURE AND MAN.

We bow down to the universal laws,
Which never had for man a special clause
Of cruelty or kindness, love or hate:
If toads and vultures are obscene to sight,
If tigers burn with beauty and with might,
Is it by favour or by wrath of Fate?

All substance lives and struggles evermore
Through countless shapes continually at war,
By countless interactions interknit:
If one is born a certain day on earth,
All times and forces tended to that birth,
Not all the world could change or hinder it.

James Thomson, "City of Dreadful Night."

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Pages from Voltaire.

III.

Instructions of the Superior of the Capuchins at Ragusa to Friar Pediculoso on his setting out for the Holy Land.

(1768.)

(Concluded from p. 554.)

XVII. We shall not say much to you about the New Testament; you will, of course, harmonize the two genealogies; it is the easiest thing possible, for the one has no resemblance at all to the other; it is obvious that there you have what is called a mystery. The good Calmet remarks ingenuously with regard to the two genealogies of Melchisedek: "It is noticeable that lies always betray themselves, some give this genealogy in one way, some in a quite different way." He admits, it will be said, that this striking divergence of the two genealogies is obvious proof of a putrid lie. Quite so, for Melchisedek, but not for Jesus Christ; for Melchisedek was a mere man. But Jesus was both man and God; therefore, it is obvious to the least intelligent that he had to have two genealogies.

XVIII. You will let us know how Mary and Joseph went with the young child into Egypt according to Matthew, and how, according to Luke, the family remained in Bethlehem. You will explain all the other contradictions that are necessary to salvation. It is possible to make some very excellent remarks on the changing of the water into wine at the marriage-feast at Cana; for the folk were already pretty far gone in liquor; indeed, John, the only one who mentions it, says that they were drunk, *et cum inebriate fuerint* reads the Vulgate version.

Be sure you read the *Questions* of Zapata,[1] a doctor of the University of Salamanca, on the massacre of the innocents by Herod; on the star of the three kings; on the fig-tree withered for not bearing figs although the time of figs was not yet,[2] as we see from the text. Those who cure excellent hams in Bayonne or Westphalia are astonished to find that the Devil was sent into the bodies of two thousand swine, and that they should have been drowned at sea. They say that if the swine had been given to them they could have made twenty thousand francs, that is, if they were in good condition. Do you agree with Father Lemoine who tells us that Jesus had his knife into the Devil, and that he did well to drown him since he had got the better of our Lord on the mountain?

XIX. When you have put these matters with all the clearness they merit, we recommend you emphatically, to vindicate St. Luke, who was the latest of the evangelists in point of time,[3] being better informed than his fellow-writers; and as he had examined all the facts with care from the beginning, as he says,[4] he must be regarded as a thoroughly respect-worthy writer. This respectable author tells us that when Mary was about to be confined, Cæsar Augustus, who apparently had his doubts, commanded so that prophecy might be fulfilled, that the people of all the world should be numbered, and Quirinus, governor of Syria, published this edict in Judea. Certain infidels, who have the misfortune to be learned, will tell you that there is not a word of truth in this; that Augustus never published so stupid an edict; that Quirinus was not governor of Syria until ten years after Mary's confinement, and that this Luke was in all probability an idiot who, having heard it said that a census was taken under Augustus, and that Quirinus had been governor of Syria after Varus, confounded all the periods and all the events; that he talked like an ignorant provincial of what took place at the court, and that he is impudent enough to claim that he has more education than the others.

This is the way your infidel talks, but you will believe only those writers who are pious; and speak yourself always as a pious man. Read especially on this point the *Questions* of Brother Zapata; they will clear up this difficulty as they do all the others. There may be a passage here and there which will puzzle a Capuchin, but, with the grace of God, everything can be explained.

XX. Do not omit to advise us, if you come across in your travels any scoundrels who make light of transubstantiation, the ascension, the assumption, the annunciation, the inquisition, who are content to believe in one God, to serve him in spirit and in truth, and to be virtuous. You will easily recognize these monstrous creatures; they confine themselves to being good subjects, good sons, good husbands and good fathers; they give alms to those who are really poor, and never to the Capuchins. The Rev. Father Hayer, the Franciscan, ought to help us to exterminate them. There is no true religion except that which puts millions into the coffers of the Pope, and brings generous gifts to the Capuchins. I recommend myself to your prayers, and to those of the small creatures that inhabit your beard.

Englished by Geo. Underwood.

[1] *The Questions of Zapata* is one of Voltaire's best anti-theological pamphlets. Its date is 1767.

[2] Mark xi. 19.

[3] Except John, who wrote his Gospel about A.D. 96, many years after the death of Luke.

[4] Luke.

Correspondence.

HERBERT SPENCER AND THE UNKNOWABLE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

Sir,—May I supplement my few remarks under the above heading in your issue of November 10, 1918?

Reference was made to Spencer's illustrations in *First Principles* of the meaning of the terms "explanation," "comprehension," "understanding," etc., as showing that they all involve merely the successive inclusion of special truths in more general truths, and to his conclusion that the deepest facts cannot be understood, either because the process, if unlimited, would require infinite time; or because, if limited, we finally reach the most general truth, which does not admit of inclusion in any other, and therefore does not admit of explanation.

Against this, it was contended by the writer that instead of regarding the most general truth as inexplicable, it should be regarded rather as the *end* of explanation; and that, beyond this point, explanation becomes not impossible, but simply meaningless.

Some such view as this seems to have been held by Spencer himself in later years, for in a letter to the late Alfred W. Benn, written in 1899, and published in Dr. Duncan's *Life and Letters of Herbert Spencer*, he wrote:—

> The idea of Cause is itself an entirely relative idea; and, being so, is in the last resort inapplicable to the relation between phenomena and that which transcends phenomena, however needful it may seem to us to use the word in that relation.....But there is even a still deeper reply, namely, that the very idea of explanation is out of place. I have repeatedly, when dwelling on the matter and feeling at once the need for explanation and yet the conviction that no explanation is possible, ended in the thought that the very idea of explanation is irrelevant. For what is explanation?.....it implies in every case the interpretation of a more special truth in terms of a more general truth; and the making of explanation behind explanation ends in reducing all special truths to cases of the most general truth. But now, what happens if we carry out this definition of explanation into the relation between the Knowable and the Unknowable? The explanation of that relation would be to include it along with other relations in a more general relation; but where is there a more general relation than that between the Knowable and

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the Unknowable? There is none. That is to say, the idea of explanation is excluded.

In conclusion, I should like to again point out, as I have previously explained, that the statement about Paine's "tracts against the Old Testament," to which "Mimnermus" refers as a specimen of "Catholic Truth" and imputes to the Cardinal's biographers, is not Dr. Barry's, but was made by Newman himself, in Part III. of the *Apologia*.

J. A. Tomkins.

THE BIBLE.

Sir,—May I be allowed to enter a word of protest against Mr. G. O. Warren's extraordinary article on "The Bible." The views expressed by him are amazingly one-sided and unfair. To quote one sentence from his article, he says the Bible "is the book of rulers, monopolists, pompous prelates, and designing priests." Surely he must be aware that a very considerable portion of the Bible expresses the ideas of the "prophets," who stormed against the tyranny and wickedness of rulers and priests in their day; of early Christians who were accused by the authorities of "turning the world upside down"; of Jesus, the central character of the New Testament, and he was put to death by the priests for expressing views which they thought were dangerous and a menace to their own position and power. Surely the writer of the article on the Bible knows all this, and surely he ought also to know that such a foolish article as his can never serve the cause of freedom and Freethought.

Hugh M. Brook.

Obituary.

Swansea Secularists have lost a steady supporter by the death of Mr. Francis Prior, of Westbury Street, Swansea. Mr. Prior's funeral was the first in Swansea that had been accompanied by a Secular Service, and Mr. J. T. Lloyd travelled from London for the purpose of officiating. Considerable interest was displayed locally by so unusual a proceeding, and Mr. Lloyd's address produced an impressive effect on those present. To strangers present it probably came as a revelation that the attitude of Freethinkers in the presence of death is what it is. Some good is always done by lifting the great functions of life from the control of the agents of superstition. Reports of the ceremony appeared in the local press.

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

Metropolitan Secular Society (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 8, C. E. Ratcliffe, "The Mission of Secularism."

North London Branch N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, C. H. Kelf, "A Socialist Commonwealth—or Despotism."

South London Branch N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. J. H. Van Biene, "Lessons to be Unlearned."

South Place Ethical Society (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Joseph McCabe, "The Religion of Great Artists."

OUTDOOR.

Hyde Park: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Baker, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

Leeds Secular Society (19 Lowerhead Row, Youngman's Rooms): Members meet every Sunday at 6.30.

Leicester Secular Society (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, "Dream Life and Real Life."

South Shields Branch N. S. S. (Marsden Miner's Hall, Imeary Street): Mr. C. Cohen, 3, "The Meaning and Morals of Materialism"; 6, Music; 6.30, "Christianity, the Army, and the Nation."

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Views and Opinions.

Russia and the Church.

In Christendom there are two things that are sacred. The one is money, the other is Christianity. The first is really worshipped. It is, indeed, the one sincerity about the modern Christian. In church and chapel the rich man is given the first place, and his opinions the most weighty consideration. Out of Church the sacredness of money is the one article of faith that the Christian illustrates in his everyday life. He measures his neighbours by the style of house they live in, or by their ability to keep a motor car, or by the number of servants they have. And when the Christian who owes his social position to his bank balance dies, the main question is, not what has he done, or what has he been, but how much has he left? "Blessed be ye poor," says the Christian; and having blessed them he considers that he has given them all they deserve, and proceeds to jump on them. "Woe unto ye rich," he also exclaims, and having expressed his sense of their horrible condition he benevolently sets to work to make their lives as comfortable as is possible. Look down the list of notables mentioned week after week in the press, and consider how many of them have a claim to notoriety other than a big bank balance. Nowhere in the world is money worshipped as it is in Christian countries; and as there is in these same countries no other force so powerful in the upholding of vested interests as Christianity, the attack on that religion is the one unforgivable crime. Hence the anxiety to see that whatever else the people lack there shall be no want of religion.

* * *

Attacking the Bible.

So we felt that when the Russian revolution developed and the Christian Church was attacked the fat was in the fire. That was the crowning crime. "Atrocities" might be forgiven, excesses might be overlooked, but to disestablish Christianity, that was inexcusable. We had seen the same thing with the revolution in Portugal, and in France when the Church was disestablished, and our papers were vocal with the moral decline of the French people—until the War with Germany drove these same papers to grow almost hysterical over the virtues of our French Allies. And, now, when there is some prospect that the failure to crush the Soviet Government by force will be manifest in the world, great alarm is felt in certain religious quarters lest peace should be made with people so hostile to an official Christianity as the Russian Government appears to be. For example, the *Christian World* for November 13 devotes one of its leading articles to warning Britons against making peace with a people so hostile to religion as are the Bolshevists. It appears that, "For the Bolshevist no jeers are too bitter, no gibe too caustic to be flung at the Christian religion." It cites from a pamphlet which asserts that the destruction of religion is essential to the well-being of the working classes, and that so long as the belief in God continues progress will be retarded. These be terrible things to teach. We are convinced they are because we have ourselves taught that until religion is uprooted neither the working class nor any other class will ever realize their true welfare. The conclusion is still more terrifying. Here it is:—

> Belief in God is merely a reflection of our vulgar worldly relations, and is tantamount to a belief in slavery. Those who believe in God are incapable of any struggle, for religion not only throws mankind into slavery, but keeps it there. Religion is like opium, it conjures up lovely dreams, but undermines and ruins those who indulge in it.

Which teachings may be right or wrong—personally we believe these concluding words to be substantially accurate, and in this we feel that all Freethinkers will agree with us. Religion is slavery, and slavery of the worst form. And of that slavery we know of no worse manifestation than Christianity.

* * *

Religious Liberty in Russia.

We are not concerned here with the political side of Bolshevism, but only with the attacks made upon it because of its disestablishment of religion. Of religion, be it observed, not merely of a Church, and the setting up of another in its place. And it is quite evident that this disestablishment of religion has not interfered with the practice of religionists. The *Christian World* has itself from time to time published reports of the activities of the various dissenting sects in Russia, who now enjoy much greater freedom than they did under the old order. Mr. Goode, the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, Mr. Arthur Ransome, and others have reported that the churches in Moscow and Petrograd are open and well attended. That is as it should be; so long as the people wish to attend church, no obstacle should be placed in their way. One is a bit surprised, therefore, at the statement that the circulation of the Bible has been prohibited in Petrograd, and would like to have authority for the statement. Intolerance breeds intolerance, and thus explains, although it does not excuse it. The surprising thing is that this same writer could so calmly bear the intolerance, brutality, drunkenness, and lechery of the old Russian Church, existing in a State whose security was not in danger, and his vehement indignation at alleged acts of intolerance in a struggle for existence against armed force and carefully engineered misrepresentations. Had the Bolshevists committed all

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their alleged excesses in the name of God, they might have been easily forgiven. Forgiveness would then have been a Christian duty. But to commit excesses in the attempt to found a State on a human basis, one in which religion had no place whatever, that was an offence quite beyond forgiveness—in either this world or the next.

* * *

Religion and the Child.

But we have not yet done with the wickedness of the Bolshevist rulers. One of them is declared to have said of the Bible (we are quoting the summary given in the *C. W.*) that "no book was so full of absurd statement, cruelty, injustice, and immorality, and the man who reads it is filling his mind with ancient trash which has as much bearing upon the problems of to-day as the A B C book of an infant. It is full of a spurious morality, and the hopes it holds out of immortality are nauseous to all men and women of common sense." Furthermore, we are told that it is the avowed aim of one of the Ministers of "Cultus" to root out "the pernicious system of the Christian religion from the minds of the young." This is terrible; but there are hundreds of thousands of people in this country with similar ideas about the Bible who are allowed to live without grave danger to the peace of Europe. And why should not one of the officials say that he hoped to see the superstition of Christianity rooted out of the minds of children? Will the *Christian World* writer be good enough to tell us why it should ever be placed there? Or, assuming that the Bolshevist State was doing what it certainly should not do—that is, teaching children active opposition to Christianity—is that any worse than teaching them to actively support it? But we are really not satisfied that the views cited are official views, although they may be the views of officials. One might as well cite Mr. Balfour's writings on religion and philosophy as the official views of the British Government. The Bolshevist State has no right whatever to prevent the freest exercise of the Christian religion. If it does, it is only replacing one form of tyranny by another; and tyranny does not become tolerance when it is exercised against an opinion to which we are opposed. But in so far as it keeps the State absolutely apart from religion, so far as it organizes its life without regard to religion of any sort, it is acting in full accord with the most enlightened spirit of our time.

* * *

A Sinister Alliance.

So we do not feel particularly outraged at the particulars disclosed by the *Christian World*—even accepting them at their face value. What is the exact truth about Russia we cannot say. The press is muzzled, soldiers are forbidden to speak, officials will not say. Meanwhile, not the least strange feature of the situation is the ease with which newspaper correspondents get into Russia and out again, with the evident desire of the Allies that they should not visit these people at all. And from the situation two things seem clear. The first is, that some lying of the very tallest order is going on. Our atrocity mills have been working at full pressure, and the most incredible stories have been accepted on the very slenderest of evidence. Secondly, the Soviet Government does appear to have made some attempt to reorganize Russian Society on something of a Communistic basis. That is a form of government to which many would object, ourselves among the number. But in this attempt to reorganize society, the Bolsheviks, in addition to the opposition they would have received in any case from the existing vested interests, disestablished religion. They have cleared religion out of the State offices and out of the schools. They appear to be making a more serious attempt than is being made anywhere else in Europe to give to every child a good education, *minus* religion. And all the Churches everywhere are alarmed. They see the chance of killing two birds with one stone. By dwelling upon the evils of Bolshevism, and upon the way in which its leaders oppose religion, they can help the Church in Russia and discountenance Freethought at home. In this country one has only to label a thing as immoral, to not only stimulate the energies of its enemies, but to weaken also the activities of its friends. And they could count upon the silence of many of the home-bred heretics because of their fear of being associated with Bolshevism. Thus the two forces of vested interest and religion have been driven to a very close co-operation. They hang together for fear they shall hang separately. Tyranny may exist in the absence of religious help; but there is no other assistance that can so well perpetuate its being.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Samuel Butler.

I.

Two men of genius bore the above name, the author of *Hudibras*, who lived in the seventeenth century, and the author of *Erewhon*, who died seventeen years ago. The latter was an eminent novelist, philosopher, scientist, and satirist, and is regarded by many as "the greatest English writer of the latter half of the nineteenth century." But though he died so long ago his life has only just appeared under the following title: *Samuel Butler, Author of "Erewhon" (1835-1902): a Memoir.* By Henry Festing Jones. In two volumes. (Macmillan & Co., 42s.). This is one of the completest, at any rate, one of the longest biographies in our language. It has afforded the editor of the *British Weekly* a golden opportunity to give forcible expression to his strong dislike and disapproval of Samuel Butler both as a man and a writer. He praises the biographer, saying that he "has not written a great biography for the simple reason that he has not written the biography of a great man." Samuel Butler, Sir William informs us, was "a man of very moderate mark," who wrote nothing likely to live and said nothing worth remembering. Writing over his pen-name of "Claudius Clear" in the *British Weekly* for October 23, he admits that "in order to understand Mr. Festing Jones' work one must reperuse *The Way of All Flesh*, and I have not been equal to the effort"; and yet he has devoted two long articles to a review of a work which he is not in a position to understand. According to him, *The Way of All Flesh* is "a book conspicuously destitute of the higher imagination, of poetry, and of idealism. Curiously enough he mentions a brilliant young novelist who "spoke in high praise of Butler's novel," saying "that it belonged to a ripe category of sound work which embodied the experience and reflection of many years." Mr. Bernard Shaw, in a charming review of the biography in the *Manchester Guardian* describes *The Way of All Flesh* as "one of the summits of human achievement in that kind, and there is nothing for it but to require from the reader of the memoir as a preliminary qualification that he shall read the autobiography in the novel."

Of course, many of the charges brought against Butler in the *British Weekly* are, unfortunately, only too true. For example, he was a notoriously vehement hater. As Mr. Shaw says:—

> All through this memoir we find Butler "hating," on principle, everything that was not immediately congenial and easy to him at the very first taste. He "hated"

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Plato, Euripides, Dante, Raphael, Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Blake, Rossetti, Tennyson, Browning, Wagner, Ibsen, and in fact everyone who did not appeal to his palate instantly as a lollypop appeals to the palate of a child. The exception was Handel, because he had learned to like Handel's music in the days of his childish illusion; but I suspect that if he had never heard Handel's music until after he had set up his rule (in the art of life) he would have denounced him as a sanctimonious drum major, and classed him as one of the Seven Humbugs of Christendom.

It is true that these repeated denunciations of great men as impostors and humbugs are made with a tart humour which betrays a subconscious sense of their folly, and saves Butler from being classed as a vulgar niladmirarist; but the trick is none the less tiresome and even sinister because it is plain that Butler did seriously narrow his mind and paralyze his critical powers by refusing to take any trouble to find out what our greatest teachers were driving at, or to face the drudgery of learning their peculiar idiom.

The secret of the *British Weekly's* antipathy to Samuel Butler lies in the fact that he "set himself to the demolition of Christian belief." It attaches great importance to his stupendous and undisguised hatred of his parents. "Young Samuel," we are told, "was very nearly from the beginning at enmity with his father. According to him, his father was continually flogging him, flogging Latin into him, flogging hymns into him." Worse still, he seems to have hated his mother with equal bitterness. In fact he possessed and displayed a horribly "vindictive temper," with the result that it was practically impossible to live at peace with him. Evidently Claudius Clear has forgotten the utterly unlovable character of the parents as portrayed in *The Way of All Flesh*. Take the following sample of how the children were treated; it was a Sunday evening:—

> In the course of the evening they came into the drawing-room, and as an especial treat, were to sing some hymns to me, instead of saying them, so that I might hear how nicely they sang. Ernest was to choose the first hymn, and he chose one about some people who were to come to the sunset tree. I am no botanist, and I do not know what kind of tree a sunset tree is, but the words began, "Come, come, come to the sunset tree, for the day is past and gone." The tune was rather pretty, and had taken Ernest's fancy, for he was unusually fond of music, and had a sweet little child's voice, which he liked using.
>
> He was, however, very late in being able to sound a hard "c" or "k" and instead of saying "Come," he said, "Tum, tum, tum."
>
> "Ernest," said Theobald, from the arm-chair in front of the fire, where he was sitting with his hands folded before him, "don't you think it would be very nice if you were to say 'Come' like other people, instead of 'tum'?"
>
> "I do say tum," replied Ernest, meaning that he had said "come."
>
> Theobald was always in a bad temper on Sunday evening. Whether it is that they are as much bored with the day as their neighbours, or whether they are tired, or whatever the cause may be, clergymen are seldom at their best on Sunday evening; I had already seen signs that evening that my host was cross, and was a little nervous at hearing Ernest say so promptly, "I say tum," when his papa had said he did not say it as he should.
>
> Theobald noticed the fact that he was being contradicted in a moment. He got up from the arm-chair and went to the piano.
>
> "No, Ernest, you don't," he said, "you say nothing of the kind, you say 'tum,' not 'come.' Now say 'Come' after me, as I do."
>
> "Tum," said Ernest, at once; "is that better?" I have no doubt he thought it was, but it was not.
>
> "Now, Ernest, you are not taking pains; you are not trying as you ought to do. It is high time you learned to say 'come,' why, Joey can say 'come,' can't you, Joey?"
>
> "Yeth, I can," replied Joey, and he said something which was not far off "come."
>
> "There, Ernest, do you hear that? There's no difficulty about it, nor shadow of difficulty. Now, take your own time, think about it, and say 'come' after me."
>
> The boy remained silent a few seconds, and then said "tum" again.
>
> I laughed, but Theobald turned to me impatiently and said, "Please do not laugh, Overton; it will make the boy think it does not matter, and it matters a great deal"; and then turning to Ernest he said, "Now, Ernest, I will give you one more chance, and if you don't say 'come,' I shall know that you are self-willed and naughty."
>
> He looked very angry, and a shade came over Ernest's face, like that which comes upon the face of a puppy when it is being scolded without understanding why. The child saw well what was coming now, was frightened, and, of course, said "tum" once more.
>
> "Very well, Ernest," said his father, clutching him angrily by the shoulder, "I have done my best to save you, but if you will have it so, you will"; and he lugged the little wretch, crying by anticipation, out of the room. A few minutes more and we could hear screams coming from the dining-room, and knew that poor Ernest was being beaten.
>
> "I have sent him up to bed," said Theobald, as he returned to the drawing-room, "and now, Christina, I think we will have the servants in to prayers"; and he rang the bell for them, red-handed as he was (pp. 95-7).

Such was Butler's father, and his mother was not one whit better. They not only denied their children all the pleasures of life, but continually treated them with the utmost physical cruelty into the bargain. They regarded themselves as special favourites of Heaven, and it was in Heaven's name they said and did everything; but in reality they were "like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness." They were plaster saints merely, whose inhumanity knew no bounds. No wonder Samuel learned to hate both them and the religion which they professed; and as Bernard Shaw points out, *The Way of All Flesh* was written on purpose to hold his father up to ridicule, because he wanted to illustrate the futility of the present system of education and the complete impotence of the Christian religion as a moralizing and uplifting agency.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Use and Misuse of Sunday.

> It is time to fling aside the antiquated rubbish of the clergy, and arrange our periods of rest and recreation according to the dictates of common sense.—*G. W. Foote.*

IT is over eighty years since that doughty Radical, Charles Dickens, published his *Sunday under Three Heads*, an eloquent plea for a brighter Sunday. In the dedication the great novelist scourged the then Bishop of London for his denunciation of the Sunday excursionist. Four generations later, owing to the mulish obstruction of the clergy, the question of Sunday recreation is still a live one, and is likely to continue being one. Despite all the efforts of progressive people, the fifty thousand clergy of this country, who evaded their responsibilities as citizens during the War, continue to challenge any attempt on the part of their fellow-citizens to lay out Sunday as they wish.

Few people realize what this clerical hold-up of Sunday means. Just think for a moment. It is one-seventh of a man's life—ten solid years of a man's life

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who lives to be seventy years of age. And this time is monopolized by the clergy and the publicans, so that in so many parts of the country a decent citizen is faced one day in the week with the grim alternatives of spiritual or spirituous intoxication. In some favoured towns the unhappy citizen is graciously permitted by his pastors and masters to witness cinema shows, carefully censored so that he should not laugh overmuch; or to attend so-called "sacred concerts." What a boon! And on the Continent men have made Sunday a bright holiday, which lends colour to the whole of the week.

This filching of the working-man's Sunday is a big matter. Why is the British workman denied relaxation that his Continental brother has in abundance? The workman cares as little for the clergy as the clergy care for him. The workman, too, has reason to doubt the reality of any friendly feeling, for the clergy have not only restricted Sunday entertainments, but, through their representatives in the House of Lords, opposed so many measures of reform. The clergy are the most lugubrious members of the community, and they have succeeded in making Sunday the most lugubrious day of the week, and, incidentally, made Britain the laughing-stock of Europe.

The whole matter is a survival of Puritanical religious fanaticism. So bitter were the old Nonconformists that they unsheathed the sword rather than observe the more humane ideas of their opponents. By making the Bible a fetish, they made Sunday as gloomy as the Jewish Sabbath, which is an Oriental nightmare. Since then the Churchmen have come into line with the fancy religionists, and to-day the citizen is cheated of one-seventh of his life in the name of an Oriental superstition he either half-believes or detests.

There is no valid reason why Britishers should not enjoy themselves on Sunday. Even Catholics know that, and their priests countenance games for their parishioners. The Protestant bigots, however, have the power, and exercise it most tyrannously. For how much longer, we ask, is this five per cent. of the population to lord it over the remaining ninety-five per cent. of the country? The members of the wealthy governing classes have holiday all the days of the week, and all the weeks of the year, and all the years of their lives. Yet they claim the right to steal the Sundays of the working-man, in the name of a deity who is supposed to have been a working-man.

This restless, modern life makes greater demands than ever upon the individual. To make Sunday a real holiday, and not a day of unnecessary restraint or weary listlessness, must be all for the good of the nation. Let us therefore tell the clergy that we have done with them and their bigoted Sabbath Act of Charles the Second, and let them make room for better men. There are other folk in the world beside the clergy. We could manage to exist without parsons, but we must have workers—and workers must have relaxation.

MIMNERMUS.

When reason's voice,
Loud as the voice of nature, shall have waked
The nations; and mankind perceives that vice
Is discord, war, and misery; that virtue
Is peace, and happiness, and harmony;
When man's maturer nature shall disdain
The playthings of its childhood;—kingly glare
Will lose its power to dazzle; its authority
Will silently pass by; the gorgeous throne
Shall stand unnoticed in the regal hall,
Fast falling to decay; whilst falsehood's trade
Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
As that of truth is now. —*Shelley.*

Atheism and Agnosticism.

III.

(*Concluded from p. 564.*)

MR. BELFORT BAX, the well-known historian, publicist, and Socialist, who has never identified himself definitely with Freethought or Secular propaganda, gives an account of the origin of Agnosticism in his book of Reminiscences which bears out in every respect our contention. After observing that it is no longer necessary for the average society man to make any profession of belief, yet it was long before the profession of religious belief ceased to be regarded as a necessary badge of respectability. The problem then arose, says Mr. Bax, of how to keep the badge of respectability while getting rid of the obligation to profess any positive religious belief. To overcome the difficulty, proceeds Mr. Bax: "A new word was coined to this end by the late Professor Huxley.....To save his social and speculative respectability, the Atheist had now only to call himself an Agnostic and he was comparatively all right. A somewhat doubtful line of distinction was sought to be drawn between the alleged point of view of the despised and rejected Atheist and the relatively acceptable Agnostic. The Atheist, it was said, was a foolish, if not wicked person, who thought he could prove the non-existence of God. The Agnostic, on the other hand, was, whether one agreed with him or not, a decent and reasonable person, who did not deny the Theistic contention, but merely asserted the necessary absence of all proof of that contention as being deducible from the nature of human knowledge. The absence of any categorical denial on his part thus saved the situation as regards respectability for the happy Agnostic."[1] But, as Mr. Bax objects "Between the absence of all proof of an affirmative and the presence of the proof of a negative there may be a logical distinction, but it is without practical results," and he gives the following illustration: "The ordinary suburban resident believes in the possibility of the fall of aerolites, and he disbelieves in basilisks (let us say); in other words, he regards the latter as an absurdity or an impossibility. Nevertheless, if he is contemplating an evening stroll on Clapham Common, he will be just as little concerned with the undoubted possibility, albeit high improbability, of having his head smashed by the fall of an aerolite, as he would be with the absurdity or impossibility of his being scorched by the glance of a basilisk. For practical purposes there is thus no distinction between theoretical impossibility and theoretical possibility, when the probability falls below a certain standard. Hence, to come back to our original point, the Atheist's alleged belief that the non-existence of a deity can be demonstrated, and the Agnostic's admitted conviction that the nature of human knowledge precludes the possibility of any positive demonstration, or even probable proof, of his existence, amounts for practical purposes to precisely the same thing. Yet if the distinction commonly alleged between the Atheist and the Agnostic rests on what is little better than a logical quibble, it is not impossible perhaps, if we try, to discover a real distinction."[2]

Mr. Bax finds this distinction in "the region of ethical sentiment." The Atheist objects to the Theist, that even if we grant the existence of a Creator:—

> there is nothing in the nature of the ordering of this Universe that would entitle me to regard such a being as an object worthy of my worship. To any argument

[1] Belfort E. Bax, *Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Middle and late Victorian*, 1918, p. 190.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 192.

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based on the imperfections or positive evils of which the ordering of the world is full, you Theists of all sects and persuasions content yourselves with replying by vague assurance that, to use a vulgar metaphor, "it will all come out in the washing"—that all is meant for the best, and will ultimately turn out to be for the best. In fact, in your theology and ethics you accept the position of the confidence-trick man. Just as the former is willing to hand over his cash into the keeping of a person of whose *bona fides* he has no evidence, so you are prepared to pledge your faith and religious ideal on the unproven assumption that the author and providence of this Universe is ethically good, and that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. Now, I am not prepared to do this. Nay, further, I find you are acting more foolishly even than the victim of the confidence-trick man. The latter is usually a plausible person, at least, and his victim has nothing definite on which to base his suspicions. The case with the creator and providence whose existence you assume is far otherwise. Here the horrors and evils present in the world of his supposed creation and ordering are very real, and obtrude themselves upon our notice. In the face of these facts my conscience will not allow me to regard the author or permitter (for that matter) of these things as worthy of my respect, not to say adoration. I am not to be beguiled by cheap references to the limitations of the human faculty, by tall talk about "wise purposes," "beneficent ends," etc., in excuse for the ways of your assumed deity.[1]

Moreover, says the Atheist: "The distinction sought to be drawn between action and permission, to palliate from the Theistic point of view the evils of the world, is futile. If I permit a wrong to be perpetrated which I could prevent, I am at least passively guilty of the wrong." And further:—

> The most pious *bourgeois* condemns the conduct of the little boy who steals money from the till in order to put it in the missionary-box, or of the gambler who cheats at cards in order to maintain his aged mother, yet conduct which he would reprove in the little boy or the cardsharper he condones in his God. That the end justifies the means may possibly in some cases be admitted as regards man, with his limited outlook and powers of action. But I submit that on any ethical basis it can never apply as an excuse for the *primæ facie* evil acts of a being possessed of the power and knowledge assumed in the notion of God as the creator and providence of the world. For my conscience no amount of "wise purposes" or "beneficent ends" will exonerate the author of the world as it is. They are to me as the "good intentions" with which the road to Hell is said to be paved. The transparent sophistries of theologians in attempting the impossible task of justifying their divinity fills me with nothing but disgust and loathing.[2]

"Thus the Atheist," says Mr. Bax; and he adds: "This moral attitude might possibly be regarded as differentiating the conscientious Atheist from the mere Agnostic. According to this definition, the Atheist is essentially ethical and religious in his judgment, while the Agnostic need not to be so."

Which sums up the situation so accurately that there is no need for further comment, and, coming as it does from one standing aloof from the rival camps of religion and popular Atheistic propaganda, it constitutes a valuable testimonial for the Atheist as against the Agnostic.

Walter Mann.

And thus they cease not to demand of you the cause of the cause, until you take refuge in the will of God, that is to say, in the asylum of ignorance.—*Spinoza.*

[1] Belfort E. Bax, *Reminiscences and Reflexions of a Middle and late Victorian*, 1918, pp. 192-193.

[2] B. E. Bax, *Reminiscences and Reflexions*, p. 194.

Acid Drops.

The *Daily Mail*, with its well-known interest in all that affects the religious—particularly the religious—welfare of the people, is wroth with the Bolsheviks because of their attitude towards Christianity. It admits that they tolerate all religions, and leave the Churches alone; but it complains, in its issue for November 13, that they regard all the Churches with contempt, and "do their utmost to convert the people to what they call reason." And their papers are filled with "blasphemous references to the Russian clergy." Well, it is something to learn that toleration is practised, and that the Bolsheviks only try to convert people to their views. That is certainly setting an example of liberality that the *Daily Mail* would do well to follow. For, like the rest of the Press in this country, the *Daily Mail* takes good care to play to the religious gallery, and to exclude other opinions from its columns. We are not accusing the *Mail* of having any religious opinions; it is purely a matter of business, and we daresay that, if it could be shown that Freethought would pay, it would be as ready to advocate that as anything else.

Meanwhile, we may congratulate ourselves that we did not yield to pressure and make ourselves ridiculous. When the atrocity campaign was at its height, we had many letters from timid Freethinkers urging us to publicly dissociate Freethought from the Russian movement for fear of the discredit it might suffer in the eyes of the people of Britain. We replied to most (privately) that while we were not concerned with the political aspects of Bolshevism, we were not inclined to back up wildly improbable stories for fear of losing caste with the "respectables." If Freethinkers cannot keep their heads in a crisis who shall? And if they are to subscribe to an outcry, merely because it is popular, what advantage to them is their Freethought? A little common sense and a modicum of courage were all that was needed.

When the villainous falsehood concerning the nationalizing of women in Russia was being circulated in Britain, and used by religionists to discredit Freethought (it received, it may be noted, the endorsement of our Government) we printed the Bolshevik marriage laws, which are substantially our own, with the elimination of the religious ceremony. Now, it is interesting to note that Mr. Dukes, who has been writing in the *Times* a series of anti-Bolshevik articles, prints the programme of the Centre Party in Russia (Anti-Bolshevik and in favour of intervention), and this embraces, among other things, the Bolshevik marriage laws as they stand, and the disestablishment of the Church. This, we should think, ought to kill that lie. But we have our doubts. A lie is not an easy thing to kill.

The poor clergy are still starving. To prevent cannibalism, the Bristol Diocesan Board has distributed £9,000 among the local parsons. The late Mrs. M. E. Walker, of St. Paul's Rectory, Silloth, Carlisle, died possessed of £21,465.

Providence must be feeling the ravages of age. Communion plate was stolen from Steeple Claynon Church, Bucks, and a collection-box from a neighbouring village, but no one was struck dead.

The higher clergy like their congregations to think that they are appointed by the Holy Ghost. The real solution is that the bishops of the Established Church are appointed by a Baptist Prime Minister, who is not a ghost, and is as holy as most politicians.

The Bishop of Bristol appears to have the same remarkable aptitude for figures as his brother Bishop of London. The former's income is £4,300, and this, he contends, only allows £166 for his family. It is fortunate the Bishop is not an ordinary man. Otherwise, his wife would want a lot of detail to explain how it was that he drew £86 weekly, and she had to run the family on a paltry sixty-three shillings.

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Sir A. Conan Doyle declares that in the next world "every man or woman finds a soul mate sooner or later." Poor old Solomon will feel lonely.

A divorce has been granted to the wife of the ex-Rev. J. S. Smith, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, on the usual grounds. The restraints of religion are not conspicuous in this instance.

Among the signers of a widely circulated manifesto on the subject of British Help to Save Austrian Children is the name of one solitary bishop. There are forty bishops.

In the stomach of a bullock belonging to a Rugby farmer was found a golf ball. According to Holy Writ, in the stomach of a whale was found a live prophet, who was an uninvited guest in the whale's interior for three days and nights.

Nothing can cure the hypocrisy of the British press. A newspaper notes that M. Clemenceau when visiting Strassburg went to the cathedral. It adds that his opinions on religion are well known. That leaves the British public to assume anything. It would never have done to say outright that M. Clemenceau was an Atheist. The land that gave birth to Christian Socialism for Socialists who lacked courage, and Agnosticism for Atheists who feared the respectabilities and a thousand and one other compromises, remains true to itself.

It was surely a sign of the times that the King's message concerning the anniversary of Armistice Day made no mention of God or of prayer. But some attempt was made to get it in here and there. A Salvation Army band played hyms on the front of the Stock Exchange, and at the Mansion House "Praise God from whom all blessings flow" was sung. Anyone who could find blessings for which to thank God in the five years of War could find comfort in an earthquake. Friends of God would do well to leave him out of the picture. It may suggest inconvenient thoughts.

The Dean of Durham, as reported in the Manchester *Evening Chronicle* of November 10, says that strikes which threaten the food, or gas, or coal of the community, are as immoral in the sight of God as the German invasion of France. We have not noticed the Dean of Durham equally emphatic concerning the conduct of those who so often bring strikes about, nor have we seen from him any repudiation of cutting off the food of a people by the new international method of a hunger blockade. But that is done in the name of God or morality, and it makes a world of difference.

Sir F. Maurice says the Church requires more propaganda in the press. This looks as if we may expect a return of the dear Angels of Mons, or a winking statue of some saint —in print.

The Bishop of London says that Christians "are not going to have people go to the theatres to hear things that degrade them." Remembering the contents of the Bible, the Bishop should be a good judge on this subject.

The clergy are altering their sails to suit the wind. The Rev. W. E. Orchard says "the Psalms are written for the proletariat, by the proletariat." He will tell us next that the cursing Psalms were written by Billingsgate fish porters.

The famous Chapel of St. George, Windsor Castle, is in a bad way, and the roof is in danger of falling. This is very impolite of St. George. A small miracle would prove acceptable to pious folk.

Criticizing the Church of England Enabling Bill, Mr. Hugh Edwards, M.P., described it as "disestablishment by bloodless surgery under the influence of twilight sleep." This is not a bad description of what happened to Adam in the Garden of Eden.

The Lord has been busy in South Africa. In Somerset, the drought has been so severe that large trees are dying. Services are being held for rain, and we are quite sure that sooner or later they will be answered. But it is interesting to note that the Europeans prayed inside the Dutch Reformed Church, while the coloured people prayed outside. It hardly needed the War to make the world safe for hypocrisy—to use Dr. E. J. Dillon's terse summing up of the result of the European War.

Wales has broken out again with another revival. And we don't know what it has done to deserve the infliction. The scene of the outbreak is Aberaman, South Wales; and, of course, numerous converts are reported. There are reports of healings, and also of visions. This is just what one would expect. What one would like explained is the substantial difference between the visions seen in ordinary dementia or those resulting from alcohol, and these visions that accompany religious outbursts. We are quite serious in the matter, and our columns are open to anyone who thinks he can establish a distinction. Collective hallucinations are also very common, and their occurrence goes a long way to explain the recurring waves of Spiritualism.

The Bishop of Manchester says that he finds it hard to believe that this is a Christian country when he finds that people prefer to stay in bed on Sunday morning to coming to Church. His Lordship should reflect that some allowance must be made for choice, and many prefer bed to sleep in. Besides, if the Bishop is in doubt whether this is a Christian country or not, he should reflect upon the number of prisons and workhouses we have, upon the size of our Army and Navy, upon the glorious War we have just finished, and any doubt as to our being a Christian country will be set at rest.

Some Christians no longer implicitly believe in Providence. To check collection-box robberies, Major Law, Chief Constable of Herefordshire, has invented a thief-proof offertory-box. The idea has been suggested to the Archdeacon of St. Alban's, who has so far not excommunicated the inventor.

The *Daily News* is getting quite bold for a Nonconformist periodical. Discussing the Drink question, it said: "not all the concentrated eloquence of Transatlantic evangelists will win approval in this country for the doctrine that a glass of beer is a pernicious thing in itself." What will Chadband and Stiggins say?

Prebendary Isaacs, late of Chiswick, complains that in that parish thousands of persons never go to church themselves, and care little about sending their children. The Prebendary would, we take it, excuse the parents not coming if they would send their children. For our part, we think that the Chiswick parents show a much greater conception of duty than do those who have no relish for church themselves, but who send their children, either to get them out of the way or to use their attendance at Church as a means of diverting the suspicion of their neighbours from their own heresy.

An appeal for £600,000 for the purpose of training returned Army officers for the Church is being made, and is signed by Field-Marshal Haig and nine other officers. We should have imagined that such a sum of money would have been better spent in training these officers for some useful work in the world. We should like much to interview these Army officers, whose experience at the Front has led them to think of entering the Church. It has been said for a long time that the Church only got the fool of the family. It looks as though we shall soon be able to substitute another word for family.

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." We see that the Commission that was appointed before the War to settle the land question in South Africa allotted 87 per cent. of the land to a million and a quarter of Europeans, and 12 per cent. for four and a half million natives. Thus is Scripture fulfilled.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 23, Leicester; November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 14, Liverpool; December 17 and 18, Belfast; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—November 23, Manchester; December 7, Swansea; December 21, Glasgow; December 22, Paisley.

Will the gentleman who asked Mr. Cohen for the exact reference for statement made in *Christianity* and *Slavery* please send on his address, and the reference shall be sent.

L. Somerton Love.—Letters received. We hope to publish some of your verses so soon as space permits. Pleased to know that you find the *Woman* and *Slavery* so useful. If we were a millionaire we would issue both as penny pamphlets.

A. Rubin (Johannesburg).—We are pleased to learn that you are one of those to whom the *Freethinker* comes as a personal friend. Thanks for subscription to Fund. We are never likely to think less of a subscription because it is small. It is the spirit behind the help that is of vital importance. With regard to your other suggestion, we should be glad to publish an article on the modern apologies for Judaism if you care to send one along. As with Christianity, a great deal of whitewashing is going on. But there is only one way in which to purify a religion, and that is to kill it. There is, we are afraid, a more or less close agreement between reactionaries to day. The more need for courage on the part of genuine Freethinkers.

C. T. Shaw.—We do not know anything about the two mad parsons you name. Why not try and secure a hall in Wolverhampton? We would then run down and see what could be done.

W. Gordon (Winnipeg).—We are glad to hear that your plan of inducing a newsagent to take extra copies of the paper on the understanding that you would take back all that were unsold has resulted in all the copies ordered being disposed of. We note your observation that Winnipeg is a priest-ridden town. Unfortunately, we have many such in this country.

H. L.—We are always ready to quote special terms for our pamphlets for those who wish to use them for propaganda purposes.

E. Pinder.—Much obliged. Shall hope to have a word with you when we visit Leicester. We are quite well—too busy to be anything else. Illness is one of those luxuries we cannot afford.

H. Elliot.—Yes, we are still issuing the *Freethinker* posters, and shall be pleased to send them on to any who will display them.

J. Williams.—There is a hearty ring about your note that does one good. We hope to see you before the winter is over.

A. Vanderhout.—Thanks for circular. Will use it next week.

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When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Verily there are rewards for our doing good to dumb animals, and giving them water to drink. An adulteress was forgiven who passed by a dog at a well; for the dog was holding out his tongue from thirst, which was near killing him; and the woman took off her boot, and tied it to the end of her garment, and drew water for the dog, and gave him to drink; and she was forgiven for that act.—*Mohammed.*

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Tenth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £330 os. 6d. A Rubin (Johannesburg), 2s. E. M. Ginders, 10s. Harold Eliot, 10s. A. K. Kemp, 4s. Mrs. C. M. Renton, £3. W. Hopper, £1. T. Mosley, 2s. J. Richards, 5s. T. W. Haughton, £2 2s. W. F. Ambrose (11th sub.), 2s. Anonymous, £5. Thomas Evans (Liverpool), 5s.

Per J. Williams (Rhondda): J. Adams, 10s. F. Cox, 10s. A. Morgan, 5s. J. Williams, 10s.

Per E. Pinder (Leicester): M. Hopkins, 5s. G. Martin, 2s. 6d. R. Wheatley, 2s. 6d. C. Pell, 2s. 6d. M. Marston, 1s. S. Woolley, 2s. 6d. G. H. Folwell, 5s. E. Pinder, 5s.

Total, £345 18s. 6d.

This Fund closes on December 14.

Sugar Plums.

We have decided to fix December 14 as the closing date for our Sustentation Fund. This means that all subscriptions to be included in that week's list much reach the office not later than December 9. After the Fund is closed we shall have to make a statement concerning the future of the *Freethinker*. We were in hopes that with the close of the War the cost of production would fall. Paper did fall in price, but it is now advancing again, and other expenses have increased since the Armistice. Now a new rise in wages is imminent, which may mean anything from £100 to £200 a year on the wages bill. There is no lack of excitement in editing a Freethought weekly.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (November 23) in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, Leicester. The meeting commences at 6.30. Next Sunday (November 30) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Town Hall, Birmingham. This is one of the finest halls in the Midlands, and we have no doubt that there will be many present from the surrounding district. Admission is free.

In spite of the bitter wintry weather at South Shields, there was a good attendance at Mr. Cohen's meetings on Sunday last. Visitors were present from Newcastle and other places, and the Branch is determined to see what it can do to reawaken interest in the Movement on Tyneside. It is time that this was done; the public is ready, although a spirit of somnolence appears to have crept over some of the Tyneside Freethinkers. And really the only way in which Freethinkers can justify their existence is by working in some way to advance the commou cause. Before commencing the lecture, Mr. Cohen had the pleasure of presenting to Mr. Ralph Chapman, on behalf of the Branch, a large framed portrait of Charles Bradlaugh, as a mark of appreciation of his thirty years' service as Secretary. There was no mistaking the esteem in which Mr. Chapman is held by the Shields and district Secularists, and we know of no man in the party who more richly deserves it. Another feature of the evening meeting was the delightful violin playing of Mr. J. Chapman, which was greatly appreciated by all present. It only remains to add that there was a good sale of literature, and we believe that several new members were made.

Mr. Lloyd will lecture to-day (Nov. 23) in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Manchester. The lectures will be at 2 o'clock and 6.30. We hope that all friends in the district will do their best to induce one of their Christian acquaintances to attend one or both of these meetings. They could hardly introduce them to a lecturer better calculated to awaken an interest in Freethought. If Mr. Lloyd has the audience he deserves, many of his hearers will have to stand.

The Centenary of the birth of George Eliot occurs this week, November 22. But journalists are as sheep-like as

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most other people, and because one or two wrote about her some time before the real date of the anniversary, all the others followed suit. We print this week the first of two articles on George Eliot from the able pen of Mr. Underwood, and we congratulate him on his avoidance of a discussion of the private relations between her and Lewes. The ascetic and pornographic taste of many writers have led them to dwell upon that as though it were of paramount importance. But with that the world has no vital concern. It is George Eliot the creative artist with whom the world is concerned, and if writers kept to that the tone of our literature would be healthier than it is.

A debate will take place to-day (November 23) between Mr. F. E. Willis and Mr. R. Skipp in the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, on the subject: "That by Human Effort alone will the World be Made Sweeter and Purer." Mr. Willis will take the affirmative, and we have no doubt that in his hands the Secular view will be worthily upheld. Debates are not so common as they once were, and we expect to hear that this one has attracted a large audience. The discussion commences at 7 o'clock,

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An address on "George Eliot, Novelist and Freethinker," will be delivered this evening (November 23) by Mr. T. F. Palmer at the St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., at 7.30. North London Freethinkers please note. It is certain that those who miss this Centenary address will have no opportunity of attending another.

On Monday next, November 24, at 8 o'clock, Mr. Joseph McCabe will begin a course of three lantern lectures at Caxton Hall, Westminster, on "The Evolution of Life and of Man." The object of the lectures is to popularize the teachings of science, and a reserved seat course ticket will be sent gratis to the head teachers of any school or educational centre in Westminster or the adjoining districts.

The *R.P.A. Annual* for 1920 (Watts & Co.; 1s.) is, as usual, full of interesting matter, but it strikes us as scarcely up to its usual level of excellence. It may be merely an impression, but there seems a note of hesitancy about many of the articles that robs them of some part of their forcefulness. There is one sentence in the opening article by Mr. Archer that no Atheist can allow to pass unchallenged. In the course of a curate's egg kind of an article he remarks: "It is true that we are driven by the constitution of our minds to conceive some sort of Creator." But that is precisely what the constitution of our minds does *not* force us to conceive. So far from our being forced to conceive a Creator, it is impossible for any such conception to exist. In using the term, we are juggling with words, and the passage as written is just pure nonsense. And it is difficult to see how any man who holds such views can properly call himself anything but a Theist. Professor Bury writes a very satisfactory article on "Playing for Safety," Mr. Edward Clodd a very informing one on "The Permanence of Sacred Places," and Dr. Ivor Tuckett subjects Mr. Archer to a well-merited criticism on the question of evidence for the "supernormal." Mr. Eden Phillpotts, Mr. McCabe, Mr. Whyte, Mr. Gorham, and others join in making a good number of the *Annual*.

We desire to call the attention of all Freethinkers in Glasgow and district to the advertisement of the Glasgow Branch of the N. S. S. on page 579 of this issue. The Branch feels that enough is not being done in the West of Scotland for the furtherance of Freethought, and in this we agree with them. The whole of Scotland is ripe for a strong and well-directed Freethought propaganda, and we hope that the efforts of our Glasgow friends will receive the help that should be given. The notion is to make Glasgow the centre of a number of local organizations, and we feel sure that there is scarcely a good-sized town in Scotland in which a Branch of the N.S.S. could not be established at the expense of a little earnest work on the part of local friends. We trust that they will see to it at once.

George Eliot.

1819-1880.

WE have been accustomed for the last twenty years or so to hear the Victorian age maligned by every clever young gentleman who has elected to guide our steps through the difficult and devious ways of literary and philosophic rectitude. The Victorians, it is true, had it all their own way for a long time. Their individualism, we were told, had become irritatingly complacent; they had replaced the discredited dogmas of religion by the dogmas of science; the illusion of progress was raised by them to the position of an unassailable truth; moral action prompted by instinct or habit had given way to ethical theories. Their art was commonplace, esoteric, or vaporously sentimental; their poetry was tearful and pessimistic, as in Matthew Arnold, decorative and vapid, as in Tennyson, barbarous and platitudinous, as in Browning, and, as in Swinburne, spluttering, verbose, and violent. Their fiction was cynically drab or sentimentally rose-red—it was a social or ethical pamphlet instead of a vivid impression of life. Indeed, if we are disposed to take its critics seriously, the Victorian age was one to weep over or curse, just as it suits one's temperament. It will be remembered, however, that we had the same irrational dislike of the preceding age in the period known as the Romantic revolt (1790-1830), when the young bloods of the time made, as they thought, a clean sweep of the rationalistic eighteenth century. All such reactions are inevitable, and they have this good point: that, by a wilful exaggeration of defects, they help those who come later to see the discredited age in the light of truth. No one now needs to be told that the eighteenth century was not an intellectual and emotional desert. In the same way, it is reasonable to think that the Victorian age will be given its right place in the long and splendid progression of English philosophy, letters, and art; and on this, the birthday, a hundred years ago, of George Eliot, we shall attempt, in critical humility and with sincere admiration for her genius, to find out precisely what this great Victorian writer means for us alike as a thinker and as an artist.

I.

Mary Ann Evans, like many other ardent and convinced Freethinker, was brought up in strictly orthodox surroundings. She knew religion, not from a mere interest in theological systems or in the origins of Christianity, not from the outside, but from within. It was not for her an æsthetic or historical object; rather it was a deep-felt need of her whole nature. It had gripped her, and had left its mark upon her intellectual nature. Unlike Renan or Heine, she could not play with religious ideas; her experience, like that of the Swiss Edmond Scherer, had been too poignant; and even when she had succeeded in discarding religious ideas, she still retained that profound seriousness which, I imagine, was largely due to her early preoccupations with religion. Her ultimate spiritual emancipation is to be credited to her education, which was remarkably good for the time, its admirable solidity serving to support her natural intellectual seriousness.

She was twenty-two when she was first introduced to scepticism through some Coventry friends—the Brays. Charles Bray, a ribbon manufacturer, was a proselytizing Monotheist, who had just written and published *The Philosophy of Necessity* (1841). Miss Evans was put up by her orthodox friends to convert the heretic to Tritheism. As Bray seems to have had little difficulty to bring her to his heterodox views, it seems not unlikely

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that she had gone part of the way before she was introduced to the Coventry Socinians. Anyhow, she soon left her Unitarian friends far behind, and rejected their Theism with less difficulty than the orthodox Christianity of her youth. To occupy her leisure time she translated Strauss' *Life of Jesus*, spending two years of hard labour on her version, which is said to be a model of competent workmanship. She did not get much pleasure out of it, as she had left Strauss' position far behind, and it is amusing to find someone reporting that she used to work at it with a crucifix before her, whether as a consolation or a stimulus we are not told. However that may be, it did not prevent her from presenting to English readers the German critic's dissolving view of the Jesus of the Gospels. She seems to have been fairly happy in the society of the Brays and their Coventry friends, but she had no idea that she possessed any particular talent.

In 1851, when she was thirty-two, she was invited to join the *Westminster Review*, at that time an important organ of advanced thought, and counting among its contributors writers like Spencer, J. S. Mill, Grote, Lewes, and other vigorous and independent thinkers. Her work was soul-destroying drudgery; but she managed to stand it pretty well, analysing long-winded, bulky German volumes of philosophy and sociology, and writing an occasional article in the vitriolic style of the period. We can see that she had gone far since the Coventry days, for she now makes a version of Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity*, and afterwards takes up Spinoza's *De Deo*. Her work on the *Westminster* brought her into touch with Spencer, who introduced her to the volatile and versatile Bohemian, George Henry Lewes, to whom she was not at first much attracted. She came to see the really amiable side of his nature, and a year or two afterwards took the step which horrified even some of her Freethinking friends, and, what was worse, confined her to the society of Lewes when what she needed was a more vitally artistic atmosphere. Lewes, was, of course, a Positivist with a hearty hatred of Christian morality. He was talking one day with some friends when one of them mentioned a noble act of renunciation which had not come to his notice, and exclaimed that Christ would have done the same thing. "He do it?" said Lewes, with withering scorn, "he would have told others to do it." It was not, as a French critic remarks, a Voltairean jeer, rather it was a humorous condemnation of the very spirit of Christianity, the condemnation of the spirit of faith by the spirit of action. We cannot imagine the sympathetic creator of so many types of religious aspiration expressing herself in this vigorous way, but she had her own manner of condemning the current religion, and it was not less effective if less startling:—

> I have faith (she says) in the working out of higher possibilities than the Catholic or any other church has presented, and those who have strength to wait and endure are bound to accept no formula which their whole souls—their intellect as well as their emotions—do not embrace with entire reverence. The highest "calling and election" is to *do without opium* and live through all our pain with conscious, clear-eyed endurance.

In the letters which were arranged by her husband, Mr. Cross, whom she married after Lewes' death in 1878, and in the essays which she wrote for the *Westminster Review*, we get a fairly clear idea of her philosophy of life. The article called "Worldliness and Otherworldliness," a review of the life and work of Young, the writer of *Night Thoughts*, puts before us her conceptions of Christianity as ethically maleficent, and more especially the belief in another world, a belief which absolves us from doing what we ought to do in this. The fundamental principle of her ethic, as of Spinoza's and Emerson's, was the inexorable law that a man reaps what he has sown. The essay on Dr. Cumming, a sort of Christian evidencer of the time, is, perhaps, energy wasted on an unworthy object, but it says some things about clerical incompetence, ignorance, prodigality of misstatement, exuberance of mendacity, and zeal *in majorem gloriam dei* which are unfortunately as true now as they were then. Her sympathetic treatment of religious character has hidden from some intellectual people the real nature of her philosophy, which is frankly opposed to the ethic of Christianity. A Catholic critic, Lord Acton, has to admit that her "teaching was the highest within the resources to which Atheism is restricted as the *Fioretti* is the highest within the Christian limits." We disagree with him to the extent of setting the Victorian novelist and thinker above the mediæval saint.

Geo. Underwood.

(*To be concluded.*)

Freethought in Unusual Places.

III.

The Artist's Bias towards Mythology.

The creative artist looks upon the living face of man and depicts him as best he may, but always he is seeking in the real for the ideal. His distaste for the paucity of inspiration to be found in the deeds and faces of his fellows leads him necessarily to the consideration of the mythology of his compatriots in the search for ideal subjects. Be he writer, poet, or painter, he is faced with the same deathliness of the actual, and is consequently forced into the realm of pure imagination.

No part of the imaginative kingdom is more prolific in artistic subjects than that of religion, for that also is a purely emotional conception, and the artist by virtue of his very being is emotional. He, feeling and seeing with so much more intensity than his fellows, must needs apprehend the facile beauty of the de-corporealized more exquisitely than they. His deities are not so much matters of worship and respect as capable of beautiful depiction in whatever medium. Always they have nobler emotions than man, and the artist is therefore able to give them in his verse, prose, or picture a clothing of idealism which cannot be adapted to the every-day wear of ordinary men and women. Thus we have the Pheidian statues, the mediæval churches and paintings, the *Paradise Lost* of Milton, and the classical epics, together with the Arthurian cycle. Indeed, the beginning of art is the great legends of the race within which the art is executed, inasmuch as the legends provide the exceptional, the ideal, the wonder-worker for whom the artist is ever seeking.

And the artist finds his love not only in the good gods, but also in the bad. The legends of *Black Magic* are intensely interesting. The raising up of the Devil and the selling of a soul to him is a fascinating transaction. Moreover, the wondrous powers which he donates to his purchase are delirious in their conception. Such a one was Pope Joan, a mediæval heroine, who undoubtedly was of the Ehrnung type, and who, with the help of her unholy ally, changed temporarily the face of Christendom, theretofore vivid with light, to a seething mass of darkness and delusion, wherein witches and warlocks held sway until at last she died.

Equally instructive is the perfect knight, the Arthurian Sir Lancelot, who, while he was a pattern of all the virtues, held criminal conversation with the wife of his king and paragon, who was himself an incredible altruist and warrior. Just in the same way the fathers of the

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race, the Adam and Eve of Milton, who, by the way, did more than anyone to make concrete our conception of the Hebraic story of creation, are ideal and marvellous, so that they must appeal to the artistic temperament for their very incredibility.

That quality of appeal to the artist is not of necessity the quality of truth, nor is it the quality of morality. The artist is concerned with beauty, and, providing that he can endow any conception with that quality, he is prepared to accept and use it without reference to anything else of whatever sort. It would be ineffectual, for instance, to state that the legends of great women, the beauties of all time, have not taken a serious hold upon the common mind. Cleopatra and her successors, wanton though they be, have had a very marked effect upon the average idea of beauty. On the other hand, the Immaculate Conception, an ideal of the birth of a God, which was attributed to the Virgin Mary, has supplied the common sense of beauty with many pictures of lovely women, who were often little more than artists' paramours, nursing in their arms the Holy Child.

Therein lies the secret. The artist, seeking expression of the beautiful, utilizes the religion of his time and its deities, saints, and evil ones; but, by his human portraiture of them, he brings them from the level of pure imagination into direct measure with man. Even supposing that he, being man, is able to endow them with ideal qualities, he is unable to give to the concrete effects the superhuman idealism of the vague and iridescent vision of the earlier dreamers, who have only outlined in filmy vapour the ideas, the emotions, which have led them to the conception of a high divinity.

In this crystallization of the longings of the human heart, which is unable to obtain an answer to its questionings, and which has therefore provided itself with answers, the artist has determined the effect by making it merely human. Before he did his fell and beautiful work upon the mythology of the race, it was in the realm of the abstract, and as such it was incomprehensible, indefinite, and satisfying to the vague desires. He, however, makes his story, such as the complete and detailed history of creation—in itself most beautiful—contained in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, but absolutely controvertible, and quite incredible in the realm of reason; or he paints his picture of the Virgin Mother and the Holy Child, clothed in the garments of his day and in the flesh of his beautiful beloved, and destroys the illusion; or he writes his wonderful story of good and evil, his philosophy of human action, as that of the Pauline epistles or the legends of the Gospels; and behold! the average man, not knowing these things as of beauty alone, cannot give them credence in his world of fact.

And thus, in spite of the appearance of working towards the sustenance and stabilizing of belief, the artist, by his work on the conceptions of mythology, brings it to a definite place, which it continues to occupy by virtue of his talent for beauty, but not by virtue of its right of worship.

G. E. FUSSELL.

Correspondence.

HEAVEN'S LANGUAGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Mr. F. J. Gould's allusion to Esperanto in the *Freethinker* for November 9 suggests a few thoughts. The first, though not the most important, is that those who read the *Freethinker* are not in urgent need of a language for use in heaven. Readers of the *Freethinker* don't go there; any respectable theologian will tell you that. Whether it is worth while for your readers to put in some spare time learning the language of the other place, and what that language is, I do not know. I believe some kind of "Evidence" lecturers speak it sometimes, though not with any high degree of purity or grammatical accuracy.

But what Mr. Gould's article suggests to me with greatest force is the question why on earth Secularists (*this-worldists*) should take so limp an interest in the international language question, of the development of which Esperanto is one phase—a question pre-eminently of this world, and of such far-reaching importance to this-worldism.

Mr. Gould will remember the International Congress of Freethinkers, many years ago, at the Hall of Science. At that Congress I heard the same speech delivered once in English, once in very bad French, and once in a language with which I have no acquaintance. Then I went out to get some refreshments, and, on reflection, was forced to admit to myself that "I could not stand ancther dose of that sort of thing."

I am an Esperanto diploma-holder. Personally, I regard Ido (simplified, not primitive, Esperanto) as the up-to-date endeavour towards the unattainable or perfect combination of maximum internationality with maximum regularity, simplicity, etc. Of these things it is for Freethinkers who are linguists to judge for themselves by patient examination of the details of the two systems.

But the one thing which, I confess, I cannot understand is how anyone can be a Freethinker without taking up the international language question at all.

If the North London Secular Society like to organize an Ido class right away, I shall be pleased to give instruction free of charge, and I am sure, should they prefer to learn Esperanto, my old friends and ex-colleagues the Esperantists would come forward with a similar offer.

ROBERT HARDING.

19 Prospero Road, Upper Holloway, N. 19.

THE BIBLE.

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. H. M. Brook, objects to my condemnation of the Bible because some of the "prophets" and Christ inveighed against the priests and politicians of their day. But I stated that the Bible contains some good things which should be treasured. Nevertheless, these good things can always be effectively countered by the vile things. For example: at the recent Coal Commission, when Mr. Smillie was examining the Duke of Northumberland, that arch-monopolist and wealthy idler, he quoted the passage, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof"; to which the Duke immediately retorted with, "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's"—a passage that gives divine sanction to every form of legal plunder.

G. O. WARREN.

THE JANUARIUS "LIQUIFACTION."

SIR,—A *Freethinker* writer the other week, speaking of the above Neapolitan wonder, says it is simply a liquid which, under influences of atmosphere, pressure, etc., assumes the appearance of blood. I neither deny nor agree with this, which is quite a possible explanation, whether one be a Freethinker, Protestant, or even Catholic. I am of opinion, however, that these matters must be strictly proved, and not rest on hypothesis. Therefore, I shall feel obliged if you will print this letter, and if your contributor will append a note to it. In that note, all I ask him to put is the name or chemical formula of which he speaks. Of course, the whole problem depends upon this; and I am unable to find a chemist who knows of the substance in question; so in my perplexity I ask you to print this note and your contributor's addendum.

J. W. POYNTER.

[The article in question was not by a *Freethinker* writer, but a translation of an article which appeared in one of our foreign exchanges. We do not know what formula the writer had in mind, but we believe there are several which will produce the effect named. The late Dr. Cumming, according to Brewer, used ether to produce the effect seen in the Roman Catholic "miracle."—ED.]

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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.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. Maurice Maubrey, "Death."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, T. F. Palmer, "The Centenary of George Eliot—Novelist and Freethinker."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mrs. R. H. Rosetti, "The School, the Bible, and the Child."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "The New Barbarism."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Baker, Ratcliffe, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Debate: "That on Human Effort alone will the World be made Sweeter and Purer." Affrmative, Mr. F. E. Willis; Negative, Mr. R. Skipp.

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (Clarion Cafe, Gasgoine Street, Boar Lane, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30. Mr. Lew Davis, "Historical Materialism."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Christianity, the Army, and the Nation."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Small Hall, Ardwick): Mr. J. T. Lloyd, 3, "Christianity in the Melting-Pot"; 6.30, "Dream Life and Real Life." (Musical Selections.)

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S.—All Freethinkers in the neighbourhood of Pontypridd are kindly asked to meet at 4 St. Catherine Street at 2.30 to-day to arrange for Mr. Lloyd's lectures at Pontypridd on November 30.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (14 Hunter's Terrace): 6.30, Meeting of Members and Friends.

Glasgow Secular Society.

THE Members of this Branch of the N. S. S. believe that by greater cohesion on the part of the Freethinkers in the West of Scotland, an organized Secularist propaganda could be carried on.

Within a few miles of Glasgow are Airdrie (population 25,000), Coatbridge (45,000), Clydebank (45,000), Motherwell (40,000), Paisley (90,000), Wishaw (25,000). Beyond that small circle are Ayr, Dumbarton, Falkirk, Greenock, Kilmarnock, and others, ranging from 25,000 to 75,000 people.

All over that district the Religious Sectaries are lamenting the growing indifference, the non-Church-going, the Sabbath-breaking habits of the working people. "P.S.A.'s," "Brotherhoods," "Manly Meetings for Men," and other Agencies, are being tried to bring them back to the apron-strings of the true Mother Church.

The Churches are on their Trial. So are We.

Practically no effort is being made to guide the thoughts of these men and women, or their children, into Rational, Secularist channels.

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RATIONALISTIC EDUCATION.

MR. W. H. THRESH has re-opened School in temporary premises, and will be pleased to receive a few Day Scholars and Boarders. Next Term he will have accommodation, in a commodious house (not now available), for Forty Pupils. Freethinkers who wish to place their children in this school are asked to make their arrangements at once, as the success of the enterprise will depend upon the support of sympathisers. It will be remembered that Mr. Thresh conducted a similar school (closed by the War) for thirteen years in Southend-on-Sea.—Address W. H. THRESH, 23 Weston Road, Southend-on-Sea.

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Views and Opinions.

The Doom of the Church.

Canon Peter Green, of Manchester, is in despair as to the future of organized religion in this country. In fact, it has, he thinks, no future. "Of the Church of England I have scarcely any hope," he says, which is the opinion of many others beside Canon Green. True, he hedges a bit by saying that he does not fear for the future of religion; "but that anything approaching organized religion is likely to survive is a very doubtful thing." And he goes on to say that the leaders of the Church have no conception of the extent to which people are losing touch with, and are hostile to, organized religion. But in this we think he does not do the leaders of the Church justice. They are not, it is true, all brilliant men—very few of them would be accused of brilliancy by even their best friends—but they are not fools. And they cannot well help knowing that large masses of the people think little of religion. But the clergy do not generally believe in calling stinking fish. They know that if people have outgrown, biologically, the simian stage of life, they have not yet outgrown the sheeplike stage of mind, and that nothing would induce them to leave the Church so much as to learn that others had already left. The ordinary man or woman is in the Church because of the pressure of the crowd, and they will be out of it for the same reason. So we think the Church leaders have quite enough wit to see how little the mass of the people think of the Church; but they have enough artfulness to see that to admit the fact would not be profitable. Canon Green is more reckless. He is letting the cat out of the bag—whiskers and all.

* * *

Religion and the People.

But while we are sure that Canon Green is near the truth when he speaks of the black outlook for religion (we wish we could feel sure the position is as black as he says), we note he has not overcome the clerical habit of distorting facts in the presentation. Thus, he said he had been travelling lately, and a man who had his finger on the pulse of one of the provincial universities had expressed astonishment at "the extent to which the students were throwing over all alliance to religion of any kind. They denied, not merely the fundamentals of religion, but of morality, and the women were worse than the men." We are not surprised to hear this. We know something of the movement of thought in the universities (we do not think there is a university in Britain to which the *Freethinker* does not find its way, and our letter-bag is a fairly faithful index of its influence), and we fancy all that is meant by a denial of the fundamentals of morality is that the need of religion to morals is denied. But other sections of the community are in an equally bad way. In a northern town he found the "whole body of workers" hostile to the Church. A congregational headmaster of a municipal day school said the school was turning out Atheists every day. Religion was being destroyed there. In Manchester itself, in one poor district, the whole of the congregations in the morning could be accommodated in one church, and all the evening congregations in two. It is fortunate for the clergy in the district that their salaries do not depend upon the takings, or it would not have been left for a parson in a panic to let out a little of the truth. Finally, there is the Army. Everyone knows what hopes the clergy had that the War would bring about a revival of religion. And we know how the Bishop of London found the men at the Front filled with religion. Canon Green's testimony is that "very few indeed had returned to the Church." Evidently they lost their religion since Armistice Day—that is, unless the Bishop was not telling the truth. And as the Bishop told the soldiers that we at home had grown religious as a consequence of the War, the hypothesis of the Bishop having departed from the strict truth will not appear such a wild one—particularly to those who know him.

* * *

Religion and War.

The Canon attributes this collapse of organized religion to the War. He asks, "Is it likely that we should go through five years of war and see religion deeply discredited without some harmful result?" At this point we have to part company with the Canon. He has been quite cheerful company hitherto—of course, without meaning to be—but we cannot agree that religion has been discredited by the War. Why should it be? When has the carrying on of a war been disadvantageous to religion? Canon Green is concerned only with the state of religion in England, so that we will keep to this country. And what war is there in which the clergy have not played exactly the same part they played in the late War? They were not always so unanimous, we admit; but substantially their conduct has been the same in all wars and between all wars. For when we were not at war, the preparations were still going on. And never did the clergy refuse to bless the guns or the battleships, or to give their benediction to all those preparations without which war would be impossible. Why, for at least 150 years, there has not been ten consecutive years in which we have not been at war in some place or the other. And these never disturbed either the Churches or the people's religion. True these wars were not all what we call great wars. That is, the wars were not all so expensive as the last

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one, and we were only killing coloured people in the interests of civilization. But, still, if all the wars that Great Britain has fought during the last century and-a-half did not injure religion, it seems odd that five years of war should have had so deadly an effect. Besides, religion and war are such old bedfellows that it is too much to ask us to believe that they are seriously disturbed at finding themselves in very close company.

* * *

Pulling Off the Scales.

The War, as war, would never have injured religion. As such, war would have helped it. Those who think otherwise have yet to grasp the historical and psychological relation of the two. And yet the War has resulted in a tremendous loss to religion. That fact is very apparent. The clergy denied it so long as they could, and only admitted the truth when its concealment became impossible. Why is it that the loss to the Churches has resulted? The answer to that question is that the War, as war, did not prove religion to be false; what it did was to help men realize that they were no longer believers in Christianity, and that all their professions of belief had been no more than a formal assent to an established institution. And that institution still stood with all the apparent strength of earlier years. It was there like some old tree that, to a casual view, seemed able to defy the storms of a century. But when the storm came its weak spot was found and the giant bit the dust. The storm found the weak spot. That, I take it, is exactly what happened to religion in this War. For over a century the Freethought attack on religion had gone on. It had set up a blockade against it, if not so effective, at least as insistent as that which the Allies set up against Germany. And for long enough the Churches had been able to hide from their supporters the extent to which they suffered from the attack. So it was that the War came upon people in the same way that a severe storm comes upon a tree with a decayed trunk. The storm of war exposed the weakness of religion. It helped to show thousands of people that their belief was a mere pretence. A real belief in religion, had it existed before the War, would have survived the War, and might even have gained strength from it. But a mere formal assent, such as religion had become with thousands, only needed a shock to prove that for them it had no reality and no value.

* * *

Labour and Religion.

Canon Green thinks there will be a Labour Government in at the next election, and that this will be followed by the disestablishment of the Church. We are not so sure of either thing. We are not sure that a labour majority will be returned, and still less certain that if so it would proceed to disestablish the Church. The Labour Party in this country is too fond of coquetting with religion, too frightened of it, too given to pandering to it, for one to feel that it will act logically towards it if ever it achieves power. We do not, as a matter of fact, see Labour advocates usually practising disestablishment where they may. They join in identifying civic functions with religious services where it is customary for the two to go together. The Labour Party in Parliament and in municipal life have numerous ways in which they could show that they do not believe in the State patronage of religion, but we have not observed their doing so. If the Labour Party gets a majority in Parliament, we think they are far more likely to please their Nonconformist followers by establishing all Churches instead of disestablishing one. It would be State patronage for the lot instead of for one. And we are not sure that the change would be for the better. There is only one thing that will tell in the long run, and that is to go on making Freethinkers. That work has been going on for several generations. And it is good to have Canon Green in the box as an unwilling witness to the success of our efforts.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Samuel Butler.

II.

SAMUEL BUTLER'S hatred of his parents was perfectly genuine. He ultimately hated them with his whole heart because in their treatment of him they had always been entirely hateful. For this we can neither admire nor wholly blame him; but his object in giving so graphic and exhaustive an account of the matter in *The Way of All Flesh* was to expose the falsity of the system of education that made such treatment possible. His father was a country rector, his mother the daughter of another, and religiously both were the narrowest literalists, in whose character self-righteousness, engendering supreme self-satisfaction, was the most conspicuous ingredient. But whilst Butler's hatred of his parents was thus an intense reality, though arising from no vindictiveness of temper, his denunciations of great men who happened to disagree with him was more of a literary pose than anything else, though he owed the tendency to it to his thoroughly bad education at home. In this respect he was a reproduction of his parents; it was their religious bigotry and intolerance that re-appeared in him and made him an Ishmaelite in the literary world. As Bernard Shaw puts it: "Ardent Butlerite as I am, I cannot deny that Butler brought a great deal of his unpopularity on himself by his country parsonage unsociability and evangelical bigotry." The following passage in Shaw's review of the memoir is significant:—

> One does not get rid of that bigotry by merely discarding the Resurrection and making people laugh against their wills with such sallies as "Resist God and he will flee from you," or "Jesus, with all thy faults I love thee still." Bigotry in a parson is at least not unexpected, and not unnatural, if he is in earnest about the 39 articles; but in a rampant anti-clerical like Butler it tempts us to say that, as he brought so much of the worst of the Church with him when he came out of it, he might as well have stayed in it, to please his father.

I thoroughly agree with that sentiment. Intolerance is a Christian virtue of the purest order, and has ere now been seriously recommended as an eminent means of grace; but in a Freethinker it is the worst of vices and a source of incalculable weakness. This it proved itself to be in the highest degree in Butler's own case.

And yet this arch-hater was by natural disposition the most lovable of men. Among his friends he was an ideal embodiment of unselfishness, courtesy, considerateness and conscientiousness. Even the *British Weekly* quotes the following estimate of him by his biographer, Mr. Festing Jones:—

> To me he was the dearest, kindest, most considerate friend that any man ever had. He was never selfish nor egoistic, nor was there ever anything that required explanation.

No man was ever more easily gulled than Butler. A barrister, named Pauli, who earned or begged £900 a year, imposed upon him for years, pretending to be in abject poverty, and like the infamous scoundrel he was, obtained from him a pension of £200. Butler would not listen to a word in the man's disfavour; and when, after Pauli's death, the wicked deception indulged in became known to him, his only regret was that he was robbed of the opportunity to forgive him. Is that an

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evidence of his being cursed with a vindictive disposition?

It is not our purpose to eulogize Samuel Butler either as a character or as a thinker, but simply to protest against attributing his failings in either capacity to the fact that he had renounced supernaturalism and "set himself to the demolition of Christian belief." His defects of character were the outcome of his Christian heredity and environment. His ancestors lived on in him in spite of himself, though not altogether without his knowledge. While despising his parents, he was perpetuating most of their delinquencies. It was much easier to get rid of the belief in the supernatural than to eradicate the evil seeds so sedulously sown in his constitution, much of which came to so disastrous a harvest during his life, and prevented him from occupying the position to which his genius so clearly entitled him. He was essentially weak from first to last; weak and perverse. He lacked the gift of continuity. He might easily have developed into one of the greatest scientists of the day, if he had had the strength to persevere. He had it in him to make fruitful experiments in biology and psychology. He continued his researches long enough to become an evolutionist, but abandoned them before perceiving the fallacy of the old design argument, so painfully constructed by the theologians during so many centuries. It is all very well for Mr. Bernard Shaw to belittle Darwin as a "simple-souled naturalist, with no comprehension of the abyss of moral horror that separated his little speciality of Natural Selection from Butler's comprehensive philosophic conception of Evolution"; but he cannot do away with the fact that Darwin's hypothesis has commended itself as most probably true, or as most nearly fitting the known facts, to the leading biologists of the world, while Butler's conception is by scientists almost wholly disowned. It is sheer affectation on his part to claim that "the best brains were always with Butler," for he must know that such neither was nor is the case. Beside, it was not as a scientist, but as a philosopher, that Butler approached the theory of evolution; and the amazing fact is that as a philosopher he adopted the argument from design after he had ceased to believe in a designer. Bernard Shaw himself admits that Butler imagined "that in getting rid of the miracles he had got rid of Christ, of God, of the Church, of any obligations to pursue anything but his own pleasure," but claims that "his mind was too powerful to be imposed on in that way for long." When he had outgrown that phase and came to advocate the presence of will and purpose in evolution, we learn that the intelligence, will, and purpose were alike unconscious. Butler did not, nor does his most eloquent disciple, believe in a personal, omnipotent God, who has existed from all eternity; and yet we are assured by both that the evolutionary process was directed for countless millions of years by an intelligent, directing, but unconscious force, consciousness in the universe being of a comparatively very recent appearance. Twelve years ago Mr. Shaw delivered a lecture in the Kensington Town Hall, in which he addressed his audience thus:—

> What you have got to understand is that somehow or other there is at the back of the universe a will, a life-force. You cannot think of Him as a person, you have to think of Him as a great purpose, a great will, and, furthermore, you have to think of Him as engaged in a continual struggle to produce something higher and higher.

At first this God was "a bodiless, impotent force, having no executive power of its own, wanting instruments, something to carry out its will in the world," and yet in this bodiless, impotent state, and possessing no executive power of its own, making innumerable experiments of all sorts, which resulted in failure oftener than in success, "creating reptiles, birds, and animals, trying one thing after another," until at last, blundering blindly and impotently along, it succeeded, "some or other," in producing man. Is that, I ask, a scientific, even intelligible, presentation of the doctrine of evolution? That, we are told, is the theory championed by Samuel Butler, a theory he evolved out of his own powerful brain without any reference whatever to the facts, to the study of which Darwin dedicated his whole life. As is well known, Darwin began his investigation as a firm and devout believer in an omnipotent personal God, who designed the Universe and presided over the working out of his own wise purpose; but a patient, careful examination of the facts extending over many long years, tended to weaken his belief in both God and design, and ended in his losing it altogether. One can understand such a theory, whether one accepts it or not; but the theory of a bodiless, impotent force minus executive power of any kind, yet working with an intelligent purpose, though continually making egregious mistakes, is inconceivable and unintelligible, and the number of its champions in the scientific world is infinitesimally small. It was announced from the chair at a recent meeting of the British Association that Vitalism had had its foundations undermined, and that most of the superstructure had toppled over.

The purpose of this article, however, is not to discredit Butler's "comprehensive, philosophical conception of evolution so much as to defend him against the disparagement heaped upon him in the *British Weekly*, and to show that his defects of character enumerated and emphasized by that Nonconformist organ, and even his intellectual perversities, which were many, were due not to his Rationalism, but to his ancestral inheritance, the evil effects of which were intensified a hundred-fold by his horribly unnatural and brutal upbringing. It was religion that darkened and soured his life, though he had ceased to be religious. It is forgotten by our contemporary that Butler was a satirist, and that his denunciations and anathemas often indulged in are not be taken too seriously. For example, in his preface to the second edition of *Erewhon*, written in 1872, he assures us that it had not been his purpurpose "to reduce Mr. Darwin's theory to an absurdity, for which I have the most profound admiration"; and we feel confident that, had he persisted in his examination of the subject, instead of wasting his time over music and painting, he would, in all probability, have ended in a whole-hearted acceptance of his opponent's hypothesis.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Use and Misuse of Sunday.

II.

> Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever,
> Or the priests of the evil faith. —*Shelley.*

> Speedy end to superstition, a gentle one if you can contrive it, but an end.—*Thomas Carlyle.*

The clergy have flown the Jolly Roger over Sunday for so long that they resent the slightest interference. During the Great War, in which parsons were exempted from military service, a proposal for raising money for blinded soldiers by Sunday entertainments aroused the pious anger of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Yet the clergy are compelled to recognize modern conditions. It is useless to expect the democracy to be content to spend their only free day in the midst of the scene of their work, faced by the alternatives of places of worship and

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public-houses. The clergy do not venture to attack Sunday excursions by rail, 'bus, or tram. They leave such follies to the mere laymen. It is recognized that this is too strong and powerful an institution to attack, and if a serious attempt were made in that direction, the Sunday Observance Movement would lose what influence it possesses among the leisured folk in sheltered homes.

Despite their hypocritical plea for a day of rest, the clergy themselves work on Sunday; so do their servants, choristers, organists, and all engaged in their churches and chapels. Religious people delight in noise, and plenty of it, provided it is made by themselves. They even delight in inflicting their barbarous taste upon the more civilized members of the community. Acts of Parliament give local authorities the power to suppress unnecessary noise, and vendors of milk, watercress, and muffins have, here and there, been compelled to desist from raucous cries. Even organ-grinders may be moved on. But the "unco' guid" turn the so-called "day of rest" into a pious pandemonium, and the peaceful citizen does nothing because the noise is associated with religion. We do not discriminate between any sect, and criticize equally the State and fancy religions. We object as much to the clanging of bells in church-steeples and tin tabernacles as we do to the ear-splitting noises of the Church and Salvation Armies and side-street mission bands. The tea-tray and hammer music of the Boy Scouts and Church Lads are as distasteful as the portable harmoniums of itinerant evangelists. It is not a question of prejudice, but of noise. The banging of drums, the blare of brass instruments, the bellowing of hymns on Sundays is sufficient to bring blood from the ears of a bronze statue.

Of all these noises peculiar to the Christian "day of rest," bell-ringing is the most perfect anomaly. People no longer believe in evil spirits, hence there is no necessity to ring bells to drive them away. Since none are so poor as not to possess a watch, the secondary purpose of the Sunday cacophany is a need of the past. As for the Salvation Army, it is true it banged and brayed itself into notoriety, but the time has gone by for such methods since its first "General" was canonized by our oldest University, and the Army patronized by royalty.

Unless the clergy, who profess to care so much for "the day of days," are prepared to grapple with this problem of noise, we cannot see that they can escape the accusation of hypocrisy. If they attacked the Sunday noises made by their co-religionists, they would probably not succeed, but they would persuade people more surely of the sincerity of their crusade.

The modern idea of Sunday is broadening. Millions of our soldiers have visited the Continent, and willy-nilly, religious denominations must prepare themselves for changed conditions. The time has gone by for ever when the working classes of this great nation can be satisfied with the sole resources of the public-house as an alternative to the ritual of an outworn creed. No longer will the democracy consent to wallow in such kennels, and so give excuse for saintly tyrants to call aloud for more laws which shall convert the one free day in a week of labour into one of gloom, bigotry, and persecution. Let those who have six days in the week for the pleasures of life appropriate Sunday to gloom, but let those who employ six days in toil devote their Sundays to a different purpose.

MIMNERMUS.

A man's giving in alms one piece of silver in his lifetime is better for him than giving one hundred when about to die.

—*Mohammed.*

The Public.

A GREAT wit said of the public that it was like a clown with a broken heart. The felicity of this metaphor is not apparent to everybody, so that a little consideration of it will help to show how true it is. For what is more absurd and, at the same time, more pathetic than the public?

A composite creature, so to speak, as cruel and irrational as a wild beast, and, at the same time, excessively emotional. A thing to laugh at or weep over according to your mood and temperament.

Go with me into a Roman Catholic church, where is found in this country to-day the crudest form of religious superstition, and observe what the clown with a broken heart is doing. Each person on entering dips his finger in some water—he will tell you it is holy water, made holy by a priest, who may have been as drunk as a lord the night before—touches his forehead and his breast making the sign of the cross or gallows on which a god was killed by priests who worshipped the same god these people worship. Then he falls on his knees before an altar on which are various knick-knacks and lights. Then a priest appears and chants something that nobody understands. Then a bell rings and the priest holds up a gilt thing and everybody goes down before it as if it were a god whose terrified slaves they are. Then they eat a wafer of flour and water which the priest assures them is the actual flesh of the God who was killed nearly two thousand years ago!

All this is something to laugh at or weep over according to your mood; but if you were to arise in the congregation and try to call these people to their senses they would fall upon you and have you dragged to prison—if they did not beat you to death on the spot, and all the newspapers, some of them edited by Atheists, would declare that you were treated as you deserved for disturbing the people in their sacred occupation.

If five hundred workers meet to rationally discuss how it happens that a few idlers get half of the wealth they produce, and to propose measures by which this robbery may be stopped, that is not a sacred meeting and the chances are that it will be broken up by the police who are themselves workers. But if five hundred persons meet to worship an impossible being, and, in doing so, go through a performance that tends to reduce them to imbecility, that is a sacred gathering whose dim, religious shadows must be protected by force, if necessary, from the disturbing influence of one ray of truth.

Do something that is rational and useful and your conduct is profane. Do something that is senseless and injurious and your conduct is sacred. Only a few weeks ago the clown went on a parade in honour of a man who had directed the killing of some thousands of people. If he had saved that number of lives there would have been no parade.

In America, on every 4th of July, the clown amuses himself by exploding fireworks, listening to speeches and brass bands, and marching—he dearly loves to march. What is all this fuss about? Why, there was a time when he was ruled and robbed by a set of ambitious and greedy men in England, and there came a time when he threw off that yoke and began to be ruled and robbed by a set of ambitious and greedy men in America, and he thinks this change so fine that he has been sending up rockets on every 4th of July since.

Every Easter Sunday in this country there is a parade of gaily dressed clowns, because they believe that a certain God-man rose from the dead on that day. While

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these worshippers are sitting in the fine churches, listening to the high-priced music and smelling the costly flowers and incense, thousands of unemployed workers will be almost starving, and it never occurs to these clowns that if there had ever been a God-man with power enough to rise from the dead, and kindness enough to save the world, nobody would be starving.

It is commonly said that our Government is established by the consent of the governed, and that it is of the people, by the people, and for the people. These sayings are admirably adapted to the interest of the politicians, the professional rulers, for they seem so fair that the public will take a long time to grasp the simple truth that such a government is impossible. People submit to government by brute force because they cannot help themselves, but they never consent to be thus governed. And what is called government of the people by the people and for the people is really the government of eleven-twelfths of the people by the caucus of politicians who are smart enough and rich enough to obtain the votes of a majority of one-twelfth of the people.

Every now and then these politicians go forth and harangue the electors. They appeal to their passions, their prejudices, and their party spirit. They know that if they can arouse these, their ignorant hearers will vote the very shoes off their children's feet to beat the other party; welcome taxes, welcome tyranny, if only they can beat the other party. But it makes no difference which party wins, except to the politicians, who get the public offices. The priest has his flesh-pot, the millionaire his unearned luxury, and the honest worker his low wages, whichever party wins.

Was not he a genius who said the people are like a clown with a broken heart? What can we expect of people who, when they hear lies, believe them to their own hurt, and when they hear the truth, reject it as poison? Is it any wonder that when the populace like lies, politicians and preachers and editors give them lies? Every politician knows that if he should speak the plain, unvarnished truth, he could not get the smallest office. Every parson knows that if he should tell the truth he would lose his living. Many editors know that if they wrote their honest opinions they would quickly get the sack. Think of the idols of the populace. They are the politician, the priest, and the policeman. The signs of these are the ballot-box, the crucifix, and the club. By these signs the rulers keep under foot liberty, wisdom, and kindness, and so long as the world worships these idols this world will be a place of prisons and poverty, which the enlightened man must endure as best he can, for he never can enjoy it.

Slowly and surely, however, the public grows wise and sane. The great majority are always wrong on living questions; but one by one these questions are fairly grasped and solved, and settled by the public ceasing to be a clown, and getting some truth and wisdom into its brains. Nearer and nearer comes the day when the present popular idols will be overthrown, when God will have no houses and the people will have better ones, when the State will give place to a fraternal society without rulers and without slaves, when guns shall be beaten into ploughshares, swords into pruning-knives, and policemen's clubs into paper-cutters.

One of the few deep joys of the sorrowful present is to dream of and work for that great day.

G. O. Warren.

Serene will be our days and bright,
And happy will our nature be,
When love is an unerring light,
And joy its own security. —*Wordsworth.*

Acid Drops.

Another fraudulent medium exposure! A Mr. C. Chambers, of Walthamstow, was giving a materializing sitting, and, suspicion having been aroused, one of the persons present discovered that the spirit-form was composed of muslin. Nothing was said at the time, but preparations were made, and after awhile the spirit-form issuing from the cabinet was seized and discovered to be the medium himself with coat, vest, and boots off, and trousers turned up. He had a white cloth suspended from his waist, a handkerchief on his head, and was swathed in a quantity of muslin. A written confession of fraud was obtained from the medium with a promise that he would never practice again. It should be stated that this exposure was made and published by Spiritualists themselves. But there has never been any question of the honesty of the great mass of Spiritualists, but only of that of a large number of the professional mediums. And when one takes away all that is due to fraud, to illusion, to self-delusion, and to misunderstanding in terms of spiritual agency of occurrences that may well be explained in other ways, the residuum does not appear to be worth bothering about.

In an action brought by a father for the betrayal of his daughter, the accused man indignantly denied that he kissed the girl on Sunday. He admitted that he had kissed her on a week-day, and that he had been amusing himself with her, but he denied having done this on a Sunday because "there are no carryings on on the Sabbath." Macosquin, near Coleraine, Ireland, where the alleged offence was committed, must be a very pious place indeed. All the same, we have our doubts about there being no "carryings on" there on the Sabbath.

The clergy have always been a caste apart. They got through the years of war with the least discomfort. Now they have attempted, in the Enabling Bill, to strengthen their position. Stripped of its verbiage, this precious Act of Parliament means conferring autonomous powers of legislation on one calling and one profession, which shows quite clearly what quaint ideas of Democracy parsons possess.

"The new poor!" The Bishop of Oxford, whose income is £5,000 a year, has been the recipient of a new motor-car from people in his diocese.

The Yellow Press, describing "the devilry of the Bolshevists," refers to the desecration of Russian churches by converting them into "movie shows." The phenomenon is not unknown in London, but here it is done under the guise of religion.

No Christian country has yet succeeded in standardizing wages, living, housing, or anything that is really useful. The only two things that are eagerly and rapidly standardized are lying and killing. Any new development in these directions are quickly seized and practised. Thus the *Daily News* of November 20 reports that a squadron of twenty-five aeroplanes circled over certain Mahsud villages (India) and dropped five tons of explosives "with good results." The same paper of a later date reports another raid on a *Sunday*. We have not been long in adopting German inventions as our own. Now, if it had been a German improvement in education or housing, we should have had to wait for years for its adoption, and should have had to meet the anti-alien cry all along. But, of course, dropping bombs on Indian villages is quite another matter.

How easily a statement passes into a tradition! A writer in the *Times Literary Supplement*, noting a book on the Salvation Army, says the "Salvationists have shown that their lurid theology was no impediment to hard-headed philanthropy." This is no more than the repetition of a phrase. Some years ago Mr. Manson showed very conclusively that the philanthropy of the "Army" was no more than a disguised trading, and that, where no profits were made, the

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philanthropy was soon dispensed with. Other writers have since made similar charges, and the way in which, at Salvationist Shelters, unfortunate devils are worked and paid is notorious. Moreover, we think the entire work of the religious organizations during the War would repay inquiry. We need only remember that huge sums were subscribed, that the property purchased out of those moneys remain with the religious organizations, to realize that a very handsome profit was made out of the "philanthropy."

The Dean of Peterborough has denounced the Peterborough Board of Guardians for the hours they compel their officials to work. In process of time, doubtless, the Dean may find out that organists, church workers, and teachers in Church schools are in need of a champion.

At Christie's Sale Rooms, £33,600 was paid for a picture of "Saint Eustace," and the previous week another picture was sold for £54,600. This happens in a country which worships a carpenter-god.

The appeals on behalf of the penurious parsons have resulted in £120,000 being raised, and this is to be distributed by the Central Church Fund. As the Bishop of London admits that it is difficult for him to make ends meet, perhaps he will be entitled to a modest share.

In Queensland, Australia, the drought has becoms serious. In the Rosewood district there has been no rain for twenty-one months. It is evident that the local clergy have not used the prayers for rain often enough. May we suggest the assistance of praying-barrels?

The Bible Society is appealing for funds, and it says, in order to enforce its appeal, that in India there are fifty millions of people who are living "in degradation due to dirt, drink, debt, demonolatry, and depression by the higher classes." If this is true, it is the most severe condemnation of British rule in India that we have seen. If it is not true—and we know that these societies are not very particular what they say when their need is funds—it is a fine example of the reliance one may place upon statements made when a religious purpose is to be served. But how a larger circulation of the Bible is to help the Hindoo is more than one can see. Perhaps it will teach them to be content, and regard their misery as the fatherly attentions of an overruling providence.

Some time ago we had a call from a member of one of the Indian deputations at present in London, and it was precisely this kind of "dirty picture" of the Hindoo—to use his expression—against which he said the natives of India protested. Missionaries to serve their own ends, and to conjure money from the pockets of their dupes at home, present a picture of a crowd of dirty, ill-dressed, half-starved people as a representation of what India is like. But it is no truer of India that a crowd of ill-dressed, drunken, dirty denizens from the slums of one of our big cities would be a true picture of the British people. If such pictures were circulated in India as a type of the home population, we imagine that the Government of India would arrest those responsible for attempting to cause disaffection. It is a pity that some steps cannot be taken to prevent the circulation of what are virtually libels upon a proud people, and who had a civilization when the people of these islands were still savages.

The Congregational Union was gravely disturbed over the question of Sunday. Rev. G. Dalaston said that we were rapidly moving towards a Continental Sunday, and we have no doubt that our Continental Allies will appreciate the compliment paid them by this being regarded as a sign of degeneration. It is noticeable that this is about the only thing in connection with the War that the clergy really regret—the breaking down of the Puritanical Sunday, which, in reality, is one of the few good things that have come out of the War.

The Rev. Frederick L. C. Parkyn, formerly vicar of Holy Trinity, Southport, and afterwards an Army chaplain, was cited as co-respondent in a divorce petition of Mr. P. Stowell, of Southport. There was no defence, and a decree nisi was granted, with costs. The uplifting character of religion is not very clear in this instance.

Free Churchmen are preparing a crusade against premium bonds. They would prefer that people with money gave it to evangelical organizations.

The Bishop of Lichfield declares that the clergy are "almost the worst paid section of the community. His own salary is £4,200, and thirty-nine other bishops and archbishops share £180,700 a year. "Blessed be ye poor!"

Whatever happens to spirits in the next world they do not appear to improve much. A book has just been published which purports to be messages from celebrities of all ages and countries. Jesus Christ says: "I never formulated a creed, I never wrote or spoke a constitution of a Church. I never even gave a name to my religion." After spending a century and a quarter in the spirit world, the best that Voltaire can do is: "I hated shams and affectations and wrongs in Church and State. I saw it all, and my physical body grew hideous in the scorn I poured on this rank, stinking fabric of my earth-day society." Whitman says: "What a solemn tread I had when on earth, as I walked down the corridors of time on the fifth plane, but I set echoes of truth flying that will resound to the end of time." And Shakespeare delivers himself of the profound utterance: "I will be a silent listener in the house of the immensities of my God." There are plenty more from Plato and others, says the *Daily News*, to which paper we are indebted for the above quotations, and they all appear to be equally convincing. All we can say is that it is fortunate that these people made their reputations before they left the earth. They would hardly have done so afterwards. In the world of spiritual values we should say that the Bishop of London would rank as a genius and Charles Garvice as a great writer.

In a biographical notice of the new Bishop of Lincoln, the *Daily Mail* printed this delicious nonsense: "Dr. Swayne is a man of broad views who favours dancing as a civilizing agency." Old-fashioned folk used to consider that a bishop's duty was to keep people out of hell, not to teach Christians to waltz.

When the War broke out the dear clergy declared that the outbreak made for the spirituality of the nation. They left other men to do the fighting, however. Now the War is over, there is no sign of the spiritual uplift so confidently predicted. On the contrary, Mr. Edward Lovett, the folk-lore authority, says there has been more superstition during the War than at any time for a century.

Although the papers have been filled with distressing details of the plight of the "starving clergy," the *Daily Mail* asserts that "3,000 candidates have offered themselves for Holy Orders." Either these young men like "starving," or else another war is in sight.

At the Southwark Diocesan Conference it was resolved to revise the contents of the local Church Chronicle, which is now to include a serial story "with a strong love interest." It looks as if the "old, old story" is getting stale.

For stealing from the collection-box at Matlock Parish Church, David Davies, aged seventy-eight, was sentenced to three years' penal servitude, another charge of sacrilege being taken into account.

Bishop Welldon says politely that "Spiritualism in itself is not irreligious or un-Christian." Probably, he remembered that one ghost was holy.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

November 30, Birmingham; December 7, Sheffield; December 14, Liverpool; December 17 and 18, Belfast; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—December 7, Swansea; December 21, Glasgow; December 22, Paisley.

D. G. Tacchi.—Shall be pleased to see you when you come to London. We did not stop the correspondence. All the letters sent that were admissible were inserted.

A. M.—Glad to learn that you are better. We feared that your silence indicated indifferent health. Shall appear soon. Sorry we cannot spare the space to write on the subject of Communism. Our reference was quite incidental.

T. Mosley.—We know the man. He has been everything by turn and nothing for long. Thanks for cuttings.

H. C. M.—Received, and shall appear.

R. H. Nisbet.—Addresses must have been duplicated. Presumably you refer to Professor Keith's lecture. We could not reprint the whole, but we might summarize it, if we can find the space.

H. Irving.—We are very sorry to hear of the death of Mr. Crookson. We first met him nearly twenty-five years ago, and always recognized him as a fine type of the mentally courageous man. We agree that the world of Freethought is the poorer by his death.

L. M.—Very pleased to hear that you find the *Freethinker* the most satisfactory of the journals you read. As you read many, and for critical purposes, your opinion is the more pleasing.

W. Gilbert.—(1) The articles are not in print. (2) No Life of G. W. Foote has been published. (3) There is no difference between a reasoned Agnosticism and Atheism, so far as belief in God is concerned. The former is a later, and a respectable, form of the latter. (4) There is a Branch of the N. S. S. at Coventry. The Secretary is Mr. T. E. Fowler, 120 Nicholls Street, Stoke, Coventry.

W. J.—We observe that mere words are very powerful with many people who are otherwise enlightened.

F. Travers (Toronto).—Cuttings useful. There is nothing new in inconsistency in such quarters. It is the badge of the tribe.

A. E. Maddock.—Received, and handed to proper quarter. We hope to publish articles at an early date. Thanks.

Mr. A. E. Maddock writes, in sending subscription to the Sustentation Fund: "I am very pleased to see the hearty support which is being given to the Sustentation Fund. It not only shows the genuine esteem in which the paper is held, but the high appreciation of your work in keeping it going through so many difficulties."

C. Lewis.—As we said, we were expressing our own opinion. There is, naturally, plenty of room for differences between Freethinkers on political and social questions.

Will the gentleman who forwarded ninepence in P.O. and stamps for certain of Ingersoll's pamphlets be good enough to send our Shop Manager his address? There was none on his letter.

E. Graves.—We have no figures by us on the subject of the religious opinions of the N.C.C. Corps. We fancy the numbers were fairly mixed. We are sending you on a free parcel of literature for distribution. The *Bible Handbook* is at present out of print.

J. Partridge.—We note that there was a large audience at the debate between Mr. Willis and Mr. Skipp. It is no surprise to learn that Mr. Willis did so well, and we are afraid we cannot claim much credit as a prophet for hinting at this result before the discussion came off.

W. Atkinson.—Pleased to hear from one of our new readers who has so high an opinion of the *Freethinker*. You will see that we have made use of your communication. The identification of freethinking with immorality is an old trick, but it is wearing thin. Freethinkers are common and well known, and that kills the slander.

J. Lauder.—Thanks for complimentary remarks on the *Freethinker*. We have always done our best to keep things up to the mark. There is a sense in which the thinker will always lead a lonely life; but in another sense he has the finest company of all—that of the best minds and the freest spirits of the ages.

R. Murray.—Suggestion is quite a good one, and we shall adopt it so soon as we are in a position to employ a little regular help. But we cannot undertake more work ourselves. We are at work practically all day, and cannot do more.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (Nov. 30) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Town Hall, Birmingham. There will only be one meeting, at 7 p.m. Admission will be free, and this should serve as a good occasion to introduce a Christian friend. As the seating capacity of the Town Hall is about 3,000, there will be room for all. Visitors from a distance who would like to meet members of the Branch before the meeting, should enter by Door A, which will be open at 6 o'clock.

We publish this week the discussion that took place in these columns between the Editor and Dr. Lyttelton. There is no need to say much now on the nature of that discussion. It was quite unique both as to method and variety of subject-matter. And it was pursued to the end with a courtesy and good temper that have not always characterized such debates. While the articles were appearing in these columns they attracted very wide-spread attention. Sermons were preached on them, and many unusual readers for the *Freethinker* were found. A very general wish was expressed for their republication in book form, and this has now been done. The discussion covers 140 rather crowded pages, it is printed on good paper, with a neat coloured wrapper. In these days of dear printing it will surprise many to know that we are selling at 1s. 6d. per copy. We have fixed that price because we anticipate a large sale, for we are sure that Freethinkers will find it useful as a method of introducing the subject of Freethought to their friends. Postage will be 2½d. extra. Six copies will be sent anywhere post free.

Mr. W. H. Thresh pays his first visit to Glasgow to-day (November 30). He will lecture in the Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street, at 12 o'clock and 6.30. We hear excellent accounts of Mr. Thresh's lectures, and we hope that Glasgow saints will turn out in force on both occasions.

There was a much better audience at Leicester on Sunday last at Mr. Cohen's meeting than he has had for some time. There was also an unusually brisk fire of questions which would have kept on, apparently, all night had the chairman, Mr. Sydney Gimson, encouraged them. But Mr. Gimson is an old hand at controlling a meeting, and knows where to draw the line. We were pleased to learn that the accession of new members this year has been unusually large, and it was gratifying to see the large proportion of young men in the meeting. On Monday Mr. Cohen returned to London, and, after a few hours at the office, visited the Labour College, Kensington, to address the students on "Freethought and Labour." The address led to a very lively discussion, and the meeting was prolonged beyond its usual limits. After that it was, as Pepys says: "home and to bed."

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Lloyd had good meetings in Manchester on Sunday last. One of his audience writes us to say that he had never heard him in better form. That is the kind of report that all will be pleased to read, and none more than ourselves.

A pleasing feature at Mr. Palmer's lecture in North London was the speech of a lady visitor who announced

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that on the 21st she took a party of forty school children to lay a wreath on George Eliot's grave in Highgate Cemetery. We see from a newspaper paragraph that only one wreath was observed on the grave, and if that is so, we know the origin of that solitary act of remembrance.

The Manchester Branch holds its second Social Evening on Saturday, November 29. We hope this copy of the paper will be in local readers' hands in time to make them aware of the fact. The function will be held in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, Ardwick, and will commence at 6 o'clock. There will be music, whist drive, and other forms of entertainment during the evening. The tickets, which include refreshments, are two shillings each. We can speak from experience of the enjoyable nature of these gatherings, and we have no doubt that this one will be as well attended as others have been.

Admirers of Mr. Eden Phillpotts, and they are many, will welcome *One Hundred Pictures* (Methuen; 6s.). Mr. Phillpotts has made the Dartmoor country peculiarly his own, and one hundred of his descriptions of Dartmoor scenery are here selected by Mr. L. H. Brewitt with, so far as we can judge, commendable taste. It is astonishing how well these selections read divorced from their context. They are complete pictures in themselves, and one is apt to overlook Mr. Phillpott's power of painting these word pictures when they are given in connection with one of his novels. The volume is illustrated, and has as a frontispiece a portrait of the author. Now that Christmas is approaching, and people will be looking round for suitable presentation books, many of our readers will be obliged to us for calling to their notice so interesting and suitable a volume.

An old friend of the paper makes the following suggestion:—

> I am convinced that there are thousands of people in the country who would gladly subscribe to the *Freethinker* if it could be placed within their reach. I, therefore, make the following suggestion. Let someone be found in each district who will make it his business to deliver the *Freethinker* for a stated number of weeks to subscribers. This will insure a regular supply, and once the habit of getting the paper is formed it may be assumed that it will not easily be broken. Two or three months will be enough. This is not much for those who are interested in the welfare of the *Freethinker*, and it would give the cause a real help forward. The copies ordered could be secured through a local newsagent or direct from the office.

This is a good suggestion, and we shall be pleased to give any help we can in the matter.

Mr. A. B. Moss is lecturing to-day (Nov. 30) for the Willesden Freedom League, at 7.30. The meeting will be in the Hamilton Institute, 375 High Road, Willesden, and the subject "The Glory of Freethought: a Challenge to the Claims of Dogmatism and Superstition." Admission is free, 'buses and trams pass the door of the hall. We trust there will be a good rally of local "saints."

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Eleventh List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £346 3s. 6d. Mr. and Mrs. Kilpatrick, £2 2s. John Lauder, £1. E. K., 5s. W. Walker, 5s. A. E. Maddock, £2. L. Richards (Bargoed), 2s. 6d. E. Egerton Stafford, 10s. Mrs. Goodwin, 5s. F. W. Mathie, 13s. 6d. T. E. Robinson, 6s. 6d. W. F. Ambrose (12th sub.), 2s. J. Thackray, 2s. Mr. and Mrs. Holland, £1. T. A. Mathew, 5s. Total, £355 2s.

"Anonymous, £5," in last week's list, should read Apoxyomenos, £5 5s. The total has been corrected accordingly.

This Fund will close on December 14.

George Eliot.

1819-1880.

II.

(*Concluded from p. 577.*)

I BELIEVE it is George Eliot who somewhere makes the remark that in attempting to estimate a writer we have first to consider what was precisely his contribution to the spiritual wealth of mankind. If we are able in this way to delimit the fundamental characteristics of his genius or talent the marking off of minor qualities, good or bad, is likely to be an easy task. It is, therefore, our intention here to try to find out by a rapid survey of George Eliot's work in fiction what was her individual contribution to English letters, and through translation, to the intellectual wealth of Europe.

Now, if we look for a moment at the great novelists of her period, or thereabouts, we shall find that no one of them approached fiction from the side of philosophy. Thackeray was prompted by an intense hatred of snobbishness; Dickens and Charles Reade felt acutely the urge of social injustice; Kingsley, in *Alton Locke* and *Yeast*, put into artistic shape his ideals of a new and better social structure, and in his fine novel *Hypatia* the impact of a simple vigorous race on an old and over-ripe civilization; Disraeli's impulse to fiction came wholly from politics, while the women novelists, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, and Mrs. Gaskell were urged to fiction by nothing but the imperious will to create; their earliest efforts of self-expression took the shape of story-telling. George Eliot did not begin her work of fiction until she was thirty-seven, and seems to have had no prevision of her aptitude. She was the only novelist of her time whose practice of her art was preceded by a severe training in the rationalistic philosophy of the Spencer period. Had not the sympathetic intuition of Lewes given her confidence, we should have had another critic of religion and ethics, an English counterpart of Guyau. We should have been the wiser for her pessimism, her acute and acrid criticism of religious and scientific idealism, her clear-eyed rejection of the illusion of progress, but we should have missed the chastened pessimism (she called it meliorism, I think) of her novels, the all-embracing imaginative sympathy which, like the sun, shines alike on the just and the unjust, the gracious pity for the despised and rejected of this world—a pity which is as balm to the wounded spirit. It is this sympathetic emotion, supported by knowledge, that makes her the equal of Hugo and George Sand, of Tourgeniev and Dostoievski, and prompts an enthusiastic French critic to exclaim that if, a hundred years hence, there are readers of the novels of a past age, opinions will be divided between George Eliot and the great Russian writers of fiction.

Scences of Clerical Life, three intimate studies of the parson type, appeared in *Blackwood's* for 1857, and were published in book form in 1858. The first story, *Amos Barton*, strikes at once the poignant and plangent note characteristic of George Eliot. It is peculiarly enough the same note that we get in Gogol's *Cloak* and Dostoievski's *Poor Folk*. Barton is just a well meaning, dull, unintelligent, and incompetent clergyman, who has hard work to make both ends meet, and is often dependent on the charity of his parishioners. His wife is a beautiful and gentle woman, who is devoted to her boorish companion. Her death (the scene is a triumph of restrained pathos) and his removal from his beloved countryside to a town curacy make a pessimistic ending, relieved only by the presence of a daughter, who seems to have inherited her mother's unselfishness and devotion. Mr. Gilfil is a parson of breeding, but limited education,

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a type that George Eliot admired for its honest if stupid nature, and his love-story is a pretty, sentimental fancy. The Low Church parson in *Janet's Repentance* is a parson of the Simeon school, and we know what that is from Samuel Butler. The novelist could easily have sunk the humanity in these examples of the clerical type, but George Eliot raises them into individuals by the sheer strength of her imaginative sympathy. It is just this human quality that gives to her fiction its peculiar ethical value.

Adam Bede was published in 1858, and *The Mill on the Floss* in 1860. Here George Eliot tried her hand on a much larger canvas, and her success was greater than even Lewes had expected. The moving story, *Adam Bede*, was based on an experience of an aunt, Mrs. Evans, who was a Methodist preacher. She had visited in her cell a young girl who had been sentenced to death for killing her baby, and had passed the night in prayer with her. The central figure in the story is not Adam or Hetty, but Dinah Morris. Lewes had to use all his influence as a critic to get George Eliot to put some life into Adam Bede. We are afraid that both Adam and the novelist regard poor Hetty with her tragic fate as a mere episode. *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) marks an advance in creative power. The early scenes between Maggie and Tom have the perfect finish, and the aptness of touch of an artist who knows her power. The tragedy, however, is not, to my thinking, inevitable; at least a mere tailor's dummy like Stephen Guest is not a worthy creator of tragedy. The humour of these two works has had an exorbitant share of praise. Mrs. Poyser has the pleasantly sharp flavour of acid malignity about her, but the Pulletts and Gleggs and Deanes and all the other relations of the Tullivers are just a trifle wearisome with their long drawn-out conversations about nothing at all. George Eliot liked to dwell on these early memories, and seemed to forget that her reader's interest was more impersonal. No; George Eliot's overpraised humour was not Shakespearean. I question if she cared at all for the incomparable Falstaff.

The one story that has the unreserved admiration of every artist is *Silas Marner*. The psychology of the thing is perfect. Silas is not by nature a miser, but by reason of a scandalous miscarriage of justice. The change wrought in him by the apparition of the pretty child come in from the snow to his warm hearthstone is instantaneous, but it is not miraculous. We see something like a preparation for it the moment he realizes that he will not get back his gold. The end is ethically as it should be, but we cannot help being just a little sorry for the squire. Here George Eliot seems to have exhausted, for the time, her stock of early memories. With *Romola* (1863) she tried a new vein. It is a story, as you know, of Florentine life at the end of the fifteenth century. The background is the City of Flowers, and the figures set against it are Tito, a Greek refugee and scholar, a polished and selfish schemer for political ends, meanspirited, and cowardly. Against him is set the noble, severe, figure of his wife, Romola, and that of Savonarola. There are those who find the story moving and grateful, but I am not one of them. For me it smells too much of the lamp, and the moral atmosphere is stuffy. You will see what I mean if you turn from it to the comedies of Machiavelli, the autobiography of Cellini or even Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*. George Eliot had her limitations, and they stopped short of the Italian spirit of the Renaissance. Lewes it was who encouraged her to this departure, and, for once, his literary divination was at fault. We believe that to him was due another comparative failure, *Felix Holt* (1866). This was a venture in the political novel, but as George Eliot was practically confined to the society of Lewes and friends who did not dare to criticize her work, she had not the opportunity of acquiring new knowledge of life. It was part of the price she had to pay for Lewes's protection. There is one subtle and delicate character-study in the novel, Mrs. Transome, which alone made it worth study. Rufus Lyon is a fine, earnest, archaic sort of parson, but Felix is a libel on the political reformers of the time. We know what Ebenezer Elliot would have said to him.

In the immense novel, *Middlemarch* (1872), she returned to the surroundings she knew best. On the whole, and apart from *Silas Marner*, in which there is a perfect fusion of art and philosophy, this great novel represents George Eliot's high water mark of excellence. It is, of course, far more serious in tone than the earlier work, and some people are inclined to regret the replacement of humour by caustic and, at times, acrid wit. But then you get the ripe wisdom of a woman who had read much and reflected more. And you have also three groups of fictional interest, a sort of three-in-one story, the curious thing about it being that no one who has the courage to attack the story resolutely will say that it is too long. It is the last work of George Eliot that counts with those who are not Zionists. *Daniel Deronda* (1876) is an orgy of psychological analysis exercized to no purpose. As a story it is dead, or at most, only half-animated matter, but you will find in it much quotable ethical wisdom. If George Eliot in her memory is ever dishonoured by the intituting of a Society, the members will find plenty of solid material in this portentous novel, the poems and the *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*. I hope no such sad fate awaits her.

Geo. Underwood.

Hygiene Better than Salvation.

Outside the public hospital in Derby stands a statue of a lady, lamp in hand—Florence Nightingale—the famous nurse, whose family belonged to Derbyshire. The figure represents the popular opinion that nursing is one of the noblest activities of womanhood. So it is. Yet I venture to forecast a time when woman, as health-creator, or hygienist, will be held in greater honour than woman as nurse. The development of a sound body will be regarded as a finer office of humanity than the cure of sickness, or the redemption from evils caused by accident.

Observe these three names: Job, Christ, and Ross. Let us call them Job the Sufferer, Christ the Redeemer, Ross the Sanitarian. They symbolize three stages of human attitude towards the problem of Pain.

Job the Sufferer was the central and tragic hero of an ancient Hebrew poem. He bore the loss of property, children, and personal health with sublime fortitude, even going so far as to accuse the God Yahweh of moral injustice in afflicting a man who had lived an honourable life in the land of Uz. The God Yahweh closed the question by raising a whirlwind and shouting Job down. Thus, to the mind of antiquity, the spirit of the Cosmos appeared as an autocrat, suppressing both complaint and inquiry. As a matter of literary fact, the poem of Job is one of the most living Freethought essays in the whole course of human expression.

Christ the Redeemer marked a step forward. In the poem of Job, Satan (or the Devil) had been allowed by the Autocrat of Heaven to plague Job with a most loathsome disease. It is true that, at the end of the legend, Yahweh restored Job, but this was an act of particular grace towards his opponent in argument. In the New Testament a new situation arises. Here we see masses of poor people—the maimed, the paralyzed, the blind, etc.—horribly treated by Satan, and lovingly

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cured by Jesus Christ. Jesus does this, not as an act of favour towards models of piety and intellectual capacity (as Job was), but simply out of pity for the afflicted. We behold a battle royal all through the Gospels. The issue of the battle is described in the figure of speech used by Jesus: "Behold, I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven." Over and over again we read of wretched creatures who are exploited, or "possessed," by devils, and relieved by the direct attack of Jesus upon these infernal parasites. All the New Testament turns upon the pivot of the idea that Jesus saves and redeems. The last book of the Bible (the *Apocalypse*) is a stormy, and almost frenzied, parable of this redemption—a series of thundering and fiery scenes in which Disease, Famine, Death, and Devils, are crushed and damned, and room is at last cleared for Jerusalem the Golden. I believe this Christian legend exactly portrays the feeling and thought of Europe for some eighteen hundred years, that is, from the times when the Gospels first circulated to the times when modern criticism began to dissolve the Catholic beliefs. Of course, a large portion of the Christian civilized world has not yet gone farther than this longing for cure and redemption. The faith in a Redeemer will gradually yield to three powers—the Rationalist power of criticism applied to theology, the economic power acting through Labour Movements, Socialism, Strikes, etc., and the sanitarian power wielded by such discoverers as Sir Ronald Ross, and such agencies as Preventive Medicine. In other words, the progress of the spirit of self-help has reached, or tends to reach, a point at which the Christian doctrine of Salvation will be displaced by organization for Health in the widest meaning. The nurse—admirable figure as she is and always will be—is the reflector of the second stage of mankind's experience. She is (as a social type—I do not refer to individuals) of less value than the Hygienist.

Thus we arrive at the third stage, of the nature of which I select Ronald Ross as example.

Ross was an Army surgeon, on service in India, when he hit upon the fact that malarial fever was conveyed to the sufferer by minute organisms that lived in the blood of mosquitoes. A mosquito bite injected the disease into a human patient. Hence it followed that to exterminate mosquitoes would effect the extermination of malaria. Practical experiment verified the discovery. The same basic idea was carried into the problem of Yellow Fever. American sanitarians (whom we might call Health-gods) have been busy for years in killing mosquitoes in Central America. The Yellow Fever, which once killed armies of Chinese and other navvies engaged on the Panama Canal works, has declined. The Canal was completed in triumph. One might affirm that the Panama Canal was created by Hygiene. Whether the removal—more or less—of malaria and other fevers will render the Tropics readily habitable by the White Race is a question yet to be decided; for other factors besides disease have to be reckoned with. In any case, this method of prevision, or seeing-before, and of provision, or supplying protective means, is characteristic of our dawning Third Period. It is a method far superior in efficiency to that of Redemption, Salvation, and Nursing.

If you pay close attention to what is called Christian Apologetics, you will sooner or later come up against this conception of Christ as Redeemer—a totally distinct conception from that of the Hygienist. The Christian conception, as such, knows nothing of Hygiene in the grand, effective significance represented by Ross's discovery. It must, as a system, die because it is wedded to the ancient idea of Redemption. Among Freethinkers, I have stood in a somewhat small minority through my willingness to acknowledge that Catholicism (the Christian way of living) did play a useful and beneficent part in civilization. Yet I join with all other Freethinkers in regarding Catholicism as a purely human construction, and in rejecting, in whole and in every part, the Christian theology. It seems to me that, in what we often call the Middle Ages, the human power over the soil, the minerals, the plants, the animals, the sea, the air, the mechanical and chemical forces, the physiology of man—in a word, over nature—was so imperfect that a religion of Faith, Prayer, and Redemption was the only possible attitude. All through the Middle Ages, up to the period of Harvey, Gallileo, Swammerdam the microscopist, and other such explorers of nature, I think I discern signs of continuous struggle towards this Third Period of Self-confidence and Hygiene. But however that may be, the social truth remains that the Christian system must inevitably go because the Health-creation method is more beautiful and more powerful than the method of the Nurse.

F. J. GOULD.

Debate in South Wales.

A HIGHLY interesting debate took place a week or two ago between the Rev. Mr. Foster and Mr. J. Davies at the Bible Christian Chapel near Cymmer, South Wales. The subject chosen was "Is Christianity True?" Mr. Foster, naturally, championed the affirmative in the presence of a densely packed audience, the overwhelming majority of whom were at first on his side. Possessing no natural aptitude for debating, he soon wearied his hearers by commonplace arguments unskilfully stated. His opponent, Mr. Davies, is a born debater, and it soon became evident that he was in complete command of his subject. He piled argument upon argument in support of his thesis, that Christianity is not true. A new feature in this debate was the throwing of it open so that any members of the audience could take part, a privilege of which several availed themselves by asking questions and raising objections. Then the reverend gentleman had the opportunity of making the closing speech, which, instead of being an attempt to reply to his opponent's attack on Christianity, turned to be a discourse written beforehand and closely read amid repeated murmurs of angry dissatisfaction. Several gentlemen rose and protested against his action, but he read on, loudly condemning Anarchism, Bolshevism, and Atheism, but without once touching upon the real subject of the debate. Mr. Davies was acclaimed victor.

Other debates are in contemplation in the same neighbourhood, in which Mr. Davies and another Freethinker are to represent our cause. The people generally are taking the liveliest interest in such combats, which is an exceedingly good sign. Mr. Davies has already made several converts to Freethought in different parts of Glamorganshire, and we wish him more power to his elbow.

J. T.

Obituary.

At the great age of eighty-four, Mr. George Crookson, of Hoyland Common, near Barnsley, died on the 12th inst. Mr. Crookson was one of the "Old Guard." He assimilated Freethought under Holyoake, and, later on, Bradlaugh was his hero. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner wrote him a letter on one occasion, thanking him for much interesting information relating to the great "Iconoclast." Mr. Crookson was the means of Mrs. Besant visiting Hoyland Common in the stormy days of Secularism, and also Mr. Cohen. The writer remembers being present at Barnsley some time in the 'eighties, when Mr. Crookson acted as chairman in a debate between Mr. Wallace Nelson (now of Queensland) and Mr. Taylor, of Sheffield. The last Conference Mr. Crookson attended was at Stratford-on-Avon. A great lover of the stage and of Shakespearean drama, the visit to Shakespeare's birthplace, in company with Mr. Foote, was a red-letter day in his life. Mr. Crookson had lived his life. There is nothing for tears; but Secularism is poorer by one strong character.—H. IRVING.

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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.

HAMILTON HALL (Trades and Labour Institute, 375 High Road, Willesden, near Pound Lane): 7.30, Mr. Arthur B. Moss, "The Glory of Freethought." Admission Free. Questions and Discussion.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 7, Social Gathering—Music and Dancing.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Percy H. Muir, "The Need for Democratic Control of Foreign Affairs."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "Christianity in the Light of Physical Science."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, C. Delisle Burns, M.A., "Profits and Public Service."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Ratcliffe, Baker, and Dales.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Town Hall): 7, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Christianity, the Army, and the Nation."

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (The Good Templar's Hall, 122 Ingram Street): Mr. W. H. Thresh, 12 noon, "The Solar System and Its Origin"; 6.30, "From Savage to Shakespeare." (Silver Collection.)

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (Clarion Cafe, Gasgoine Street, Boar Lane, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Robert Dell, "French Election Result, Its Cause and Meaning."

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S.—All Freethinkers in the neighbourhood of Pontypridd are kindly asked to meet at 4 St. Catherine Street at 2.30 to-day.

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (3 Thompson Street, Tyne Dock): 6.30, Mr. J. Fothergill, "What is the Meaning of Liberty?"

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Views and Opinions.

A Martyr of Science.

For some days there have been appearing in the papers accounts of the illness of Dr. Lister, of Middlesex Hospital. For very many years Dr. Lister has given himself up to research work in the X-ray department of the above-named hospital. His experiments exposed him to great danger, and, in spite of a knowledge of this, he kept at his work, and was, says one newspaper account, often seen at work with his hands bandaged as a result of injuries acquired in the course of his labours. Some years ago he was diagnosed to have cancer, and it was clear that if he gave up his professional work, he might count himself as secure from further danger. This he declined to do. He kept to his work, offering himself for experiment after experiment, and probably trying more experiments than even his friends knew. And now the end has come, or is coming. He is lying ill, seriously ill, and little hopes appear to be entertained of his recovery. When the end does come, it may be prophesied that comparatively little note will be taken of his death. There will be a paragraph in the papers, a longer and more appreciative notice in the scientific journals, and then his name will be forgotten, except to those who study little-read histories of science and to the few who realize that the real good of the world is advanced by the men and women who pursue their work without ostentation, and in the satisfaction that comes from a knowledge that one's work is well done.

* * *

False Values.

Now, it in no way detracts from the value of Dr. Lister's example, or from the importance of his work, to express the opinion that the quiet heroism of his character may be paralleled over and over again in the history of science and in the records of social life. On the contrary, the fact emphasizes a truth that is of profound importance to all, but the recognition of which is partly hidden by our defective system of education. For five years we have had much talk of heroism in connection with the War. Much of this, we expect, was mere cant; but it was a useful cant, and so was given full scope. And there were two classes of people who made full use of the opportunity afforded by the War, as they made use of every opportunity to further the same end before the War commenced. These were the militarists and the Godites. The first told us that the courage of our men was due to war, that a nation would decay without war, that war was a moral tonic to a people, and that the battlefield was a veritable seedplot of manly virtues. And the latter called high heaven to witness that but for the inspiration of religion, the soldier's devotion to duty, his courage, etc., would hardly exist. The politician said that our soldiers were all heroes, the parson said they were all saints—while the War was on; and between the two there is no wonder that the old and radically false and dangerous teaching that the military life led to the development of the "manly" virtues seemed to many a true one. Here and there a voice was raised in protest, but it was a feeble whisper amid such a volume of sound.

* * *

Social Heroes.

If our system of education were other than it is, it would be realized that the seedplot of our virtues is not the battlefield, but social life. When war comes, it does but use what has been previously developed elsewhere. The conquest of the air was achieved in times of peace, mainly by civilians, and only used during a time of war. In arctic travel and exploration, where a man takes his life in his hands and is all the time dependent upon the exertions of himself and his small band of companions, we have again courage of the very highest order. In the mine or at sea, or on shore in the case of a wreck, never is the call for volunteers made in vain. In the annals of medicine we have scores of cases of men who have given their lives in the pursuit of knowledge. In our social annals we have men and women who have faced imprisonment, and in earlier years death, in defence of an opinion. And in all these cases we have illustrations of courage of the very highest order. It is a courage that is exercised in quietude, and often in the face of social dispraise and censure. Sympathy, imagination, and a certain "nerve tone" seem the ingredients of courage, and when war does come, it can but make use of what the generations of social life has provided it with. And it uses this exactly as it uses the material savings of a country. That is, it dissipates them. War deteriorates men, as social life improves them. The very highest qualities of men are born in the fields of social life; there is no other place in which they could be born.

* * *

How We Act.

The recognition of this truth with all its important consequences, is, as we have said, a matter of education. As matters stand, and from our earliest years, we are taught to associate courage mainly with the soldier. Courage, when expressed mainly on its lower plane, is identified with courage as a whole. The soldier is made to monopolize the field, where, as a matter of fact, his presence is more or less accidental. A soldier who wins a battle against an enemy is loaded with honours, given a huge sum of money, and a large pension. The man who battles against disease, and who runs far greater risks than many a general is exposed to during a campaign, receives at most a small salary while living, small attention when dead, and in his old age may receive

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£100 or £200 a year from the civil list—provided he has some friend who can pull the official strings. There is no Victoria Cross for a man such as Dr. Lister; his name will appear in no "honours list," and it would be considered lunacy to the mass of the people if it were even suggested that men of his stamp were of more consequence to the country than a field-marshal. We do not associate courage or heroism with social life because we are not trained to do so. We do not think of social life as the ground on which is reared whatever admirable qualities are displayed in war, because we really have no social training or education worthy of the name. And when we note how deficient our education is in this direction, there is really cause for surprise that our social sense is as active as it is.

* * *

The Choice Is Ours.

For our own part we are convinced that the form of courage displayed by Dr. Lister is more common than most people are inclined to believe, and of immensely greater social significance than would appear at first glance. Dr. Lister's courage is a social product. So also is the soldier's courage as displayed on the battlefield. And whatever be their relative social value, both may be taken to express a sense of social duty. In the soldier's case it takes the form of risking his life on the battlefield. In the other case it takes the form of risking life in the battle against disease, or in saving life in the mine, or at sea, or the sacrifice involved in fighting for reforming ideas. The only point of social importance here is how to bring up the rising generation to a full recognition of the value of these latter efforts, and that, even while the soldier stands as a figure that is necessary, Militarism is to be discouraged, and that an expenditure of courage and energy in this direction should, in the interests of society, be reduced to as small an expression as possible. The courage represented by Dr. Lister is of a higher order, and its development to the utmost capacity is something that is of incalculable benefit to all mankind. It is here that the power of education comes in. We do not mean by education mere scholasticism, which we think has been greatly overvalued. What we have in mind is that larger education which society gives each of us, and which society alone can give. The greatest force that goes to the moulding of mankind is that represented by the stock of traditions, ideas, and ideals that meet each one of us at birth. It is this that so largely determines our aims in life, and the direction in which our capacities are to be expended. There is no reason whatever why the people should not only grow up with a very hearty appreciation of the type of courage displayed by men such as Dr. Lister, but the courage which is displayed in war and in the profession of the soldier should be made to flow into the more useful channels of research, experiment, and healthy adventure. As we pointed out a few weeks ago, human nature is so educable, so modifiable, that there is hardly anything that cannot be done with it, given the right knowledge and the right aim. If we will place the soldier, the representative of brute force, and the priest, the representative of primitive cunning, in the forefront of the picture, we have only ourselves to blame if the resultant is of an extremely unpleasant kind. Human nature has its roots in the earth, but it flowers towards the stars. It will function for gain at all times, but whether the gain is the material increment of the financier, the tinselled, bloodstained glory of the soldier, the intellectual satisfaction of the searcher after truth, or the moral and intellectual satisfaction of the social reformer, is a matter of social education. It is for society to set the standard of value. And it is for society to reap the results of its choice.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"Giving God Time."

No demand can be fairer or more just than that God should be given plenty of time for self-justification. This is the subject discussed in the prophesy of Habakkuk, who flourished some six hundred years before Christ. The righteous suffered while the wicked prospered; and, what was worse still, the righteous were afflicted by the wicked. Curiously enough, the so-called righteous, Jehovah's chosen people, are represented as depraved and corrupt, as full of iniquity and perverseness, whilst the Chaldæans, "that bitter and hasty nation," are introduced as Jehovah's instruments whereby he will chastize his elect, and bring them to their senses. But the prophet dwells on the cruel and oppressive measures resorted to by the Chaldæans, and wonders why the Lord does not intervene and check their rapacious violence. In the leading article in the *British Weekly* for November 27, Dr. John A. Hutton undertakes to interpret for us what Habakkuk says on this point:—

> Face to face with life, all good and believing men must say the same thing. What Habakkuk says and what we say is, "At the end it shall speak and not lie." It is as though we were saying, "Let us give God time."

According to the reverend gentleman, God is confronted with an infinitely complicated problem, which is to save men, to inspire them for their "moral ascent, their hearty choice of higher things." There is one feature of the problem, however, which Dr. Hutton does not face at all, namely, the amazing fact that men need salvation, or that they require external stimulus to make the ascent of life, or to choose higher things. It must not be forgotten that God is not a kind-hearted outsider who, pitying men's unfortunate, lost condition, becomes their Saviour, but their Maker, who is of necessity responsible for the deplorable state in which he finds them. They have gone astray simply because he bungled in creating them, or, as the divines aver, because he entrusted them with the perilous endowment of free-will. In any case, he must be held accountable for their sinfulness, with all the suffering and sorrow it entails. As Omar well puts it:—

> Oh, Thou, who Man of baser Earth didst make,
> And ev'n with Paradise devise the Snake:
> For all the sin wherewith the Face of Man
> Is blacken'd—Man's forgiveness give—and take!

Ignoring that aspect of the problem, Dr. Hutton concentrates on the continued existence of evil in the world, and comes to the conclusion that God has a stupendous task, and must be given time to execute it. Habakkuk said, "At the end it shall speak and not lie," by which he probably meant, "That though evil might seem to be having its free play for a season, later on God would intervene in a dramatic way, and vindicate himself." But has God ever done that since the world began? Is there on record an occasion on which he crushed the strong in defence of the weak, or miraculously caused the right to triumph over wrong? The prophets always speak of Israel as Jehovah's own people, chosen out of all the nations of the earth; but they could not disguise the fact that Heaven's favourites were subject to as many adversities, disasters, and calamities as others. The prophets refer to the Chaldæans and the Persians as Jehovah's instruments, whom he generally employed to wreak his vengeance upon Israel; but those mighty powers, unaware of their heavenly mission, had their own ambition to serve when they invaded Palestine or any other country, and it is a certainty that the Israelites did not benefit, nor were made any better by the numerous invasions of the land they loved. Judging by their history in Old Testament times and since, it would

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not occur to anybody to infer that they were the objects of a Special Providence. Dr. Hutton seems to recognize this as a fact in the following passage :—

> We see certain things in operation in this world; people living in a certain way, or certain communities giving themselves over to moral unbelief, to the low view of life and there is a sense in which we can say nothing or do nothing. For I hold that it is possible for a wave of sentiment or a moral fashion to have acquired such head and force that it is futile to argue with it; as futile as it is to sweep back the Atlantic with a broom. We can only stand by until the wave attains to its crisis and breaks and spends itself. It often happens that we have no resource except to bide our time until those who have launched themselves upon some perverse way of life rush against the hidden nature of things, and learn the truth upon those barriers and ramparts that defend the moral constitution of the world.

But what evidence is there of the existence and operation of anything beyond or above the Nature of Things? Is there any proof that the constitution of the world is either moral or immoral? In the seventy-third Psalm we learn that in this world the wicked fare far better than the righteous. It is the ambitious and violent people who inherit the earth, the meek having no chance whatever. Millions of our fellow-beings are self-seeking and have no moral scruples whatever. They grow rich and powerful by cleverly dishonest means, marching proudly over the heads of their weaker brethren, and their prosperity continues unchecked to the day of their death. Nor are we necessarily to think of them as unbelievers, the majority of them being fairly zealous professors of religion, who sing with rapture of "the fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel's veins," in which they claim to have had all their guilty stains washed away. The truth is that the constitution of the world is entirely non-moral, morality being purely a product of social life. That it is not a Christian product is evident from the fact that multitudes of Christians neither possess nor practise it. Only those in whom the social sense is well-developed, or whose gregarious instincts are strong and have free scope, live a high and disinterested moral life.

We are bidden to give God time to set the world right. That was what Habakkuk besought his contemporaries to do twenty-six centuries ago, and that is what Dr. Hutton is urging us to do to-day; and yet the world is scarcely any nearer the ideal state now than it was then. What has God been doing during the long interval? He has done so little during nigh three thousand years that it is laughably absurd to ask us to give him another chance to redeem his character. It is this consideration that makes Theism so impossible a creed, and that baffles the theologians in all their attempts to justify the ways of God with men. We give Dr. Hutton credit for accurately stating the problem in the following words :—

> Habakkuk is dealing with the problem which the Old Testament, from the days of the Captivity, had been wrestling with—the problem, namely, which is still the problem—how this world can be what it is, and yet God be the ruler of it. Why does not God stretch forth his arm and smite all evil on the cheek-bone? one good man asks. Why does God hide himself, remaining in his pavilion? asks another.

That problem, it is frankly admitted, is still the problem, and those questions are still unanswered. Dr. Hutton's article evades the problem, and ignores the questions. All he wants us to do is to give God more time, which is nothing but a begging of the question. All we know about the world is that it is very slowly evolving, and that it is only in human society that the process displays the active presence of purpose, or will, or intelligence; nor can we close our eyes to the fact that the process is seriously retarded by several cross-purposes.

J. T. Lloyd.

Charles Southwell.

> For proud and fiery and swift and bold—
> Wine of life from heart of gold,
> The blood of his heathen manhood rolled
> Full-billowed through his veins.—*James Thomson.*

One of my most cherished possessions is a manuscript diary kept by my paternal grandfather during the years 1840-9, in which he noted his intellectual progress from orthodoxy to Freethought. A man of the strictest integrity, his diary reflected his mental pilgrimage with relentless accuracy. He mentions the preachers he sat under, summarizes the points of their sermons, and adds his own private comments. He searches the Scriptures diligently. Then, one day, a friend persuades him to attend a lecture by Charles Southwell on "The Day of Judgment," and from that time onward his views broaden until he finally leaves the Church of his fathers. At first, irritated by Southwell's views, he mentions him only by his initials in the diary; but, beneath the anger, there is a growing sense of responsibility, and he is impelled to reply to the Freethinker. Other lectures were listened to, and, slowly and almost imperceptibly, the conversion is affected until my grandfather became a complete Secularist. When he died, thirty years later, no religious service was held at his funeral, and upon his tombstone was engraved, by his own request, the dying words of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, "The rest is silence." Nor is this all, for his son was brought up as a Freethinker, and, in turn, his son's family was reared under the same happy conditions, and the writer of these lines is not only the representative of a third generation of a Freethought family, but his children have been brought up without religious instruction. Those superior folk who gird at Secularist lecturers as the merest Iconoclasts might ponder this lesson, for here is a concrete example of practical good resulting from militant advocacy. Nor do I forget that Charles Watts, the silver-tongued orator of the Secularist movement, was another of Southwell's converts. Truly, Southwell must have been an apostle to reckon with.

Yet little is known of his life. During the period prior to the birth of an organized Freethought Party in England, Charles Southwell's personality loomed large in the forefront of the battle. His eloquence, ability, and courage attracted the "intellectuals," and drew on him the resentment of the orthodox. Living when he did, he performed a high and useful task. His keen bright sword played havoc with the ranks of the enemy, and he and his colleagues cleared a space with difficulty through which many have since passed with ease. There is an elusive character in Southwell's life-story. So much is vague that whole chapters of his life are blank. The few portraits of him have been described as unsatisfactory, and a biographer is reduced to inference. What is known, however, is as interesting as a novel.

Born in 1814, the year before the battle of Waterloo, Charles Southwell was the youngest of a large family of thirty-three children. His father was a militant Freethinker at a time when heresy was not child's play, and, when over seventy years of age, he married a handsome lass of twenty. Charles was the outcome of this marriage of May and December. In his schooldays young Southwell was remarkable for playing truant, and for possessing a wonderful memory. When he left school

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at the age of twelve, he had assimilated sufficient knowledge to puzzle a professor, and yet was ignorant enough to disgrace a negro. Yet, if he knew little of the world of books, he soon learned the book of the world. His subsequent life was a great adventure. During his short career he was orator, soldier, actor, Socialist, Freethought advocate, writer, editor, and prisoner for free speech. At one time he was a private in the Spanish Legion, and for two years he consorted with one of the prettiest company of gentlemen of fortune who ever cut throats for a living.

On his return to England he made a big reputation with his oratory, and he made history with the publication, in 1841, of the *Oracle of Reason*, which will always be remembered as the first Freethought paper. The dear clergy soon scented danger, and threatened Southwell with prison and other samples of Christian charity. Southwell had been used to fighting men, and not petticoated priests, and he at once carried the war into the enemy's camp. Threatened with prison for publishing literary and philosophical articles, Southwell met force with force, and the pages of his paper were laden with plain speaking. On the appearance of the fourth number of the *Oracle*, Southwell was arrested, tried, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment, with a fine of £100.

The Freethinkers fought a forlorn hope, inch by inch. During the trial, Southwell's colleague, William Chilton, outwitted the enemy, who had seized all the copies of the *Oracle*. He printed and sold at a halfpenny copies of the warrant, a document that set out at length all the objectionable passages. Driven back by overwhelming numbers, the "intellectuals" did their best. During Southwell's imprisonment, Holyoake edited the paper. When he, in turn, went to prison, Thomas Paterson took his place. "Bulldog" Paterson, as he was affectionately called, was also sent to gaol, and Mr. and Mrs. George Adams stepped into the breach, and each was sent to prison. Chilton succeeded them, and kept the flag flying bravely until the end, which was hastened by the heavy costs of the law cases and the formidable fines imposed.

The *Oracle of Reason* lasted two stormy years, but, during its short and exciting career, it created a profound impression, which, in due time, led to the formation of a properly organized Freethought Party. After his release from prison, Southwell carried on a Freethought mission in many places, and ultimately settled in New Zealand, where he edited the *Auckland Examiner*. He died in 1860, at the early age of forty-six, worn-out and prematurely aged.

Southwell wrote much, but most of his work was simply journalism. His most lasting contribution is *The Confessions of a Freethinker*, published in 1845, a candid and fascinating piece of autobiography. To present-day Freethinkers, Charles Southwell is little more than a name, but those of an earlier generation recognized in this gifted and wayward man one of the most remarkable figures that has appeared in the Freethought Movement. Looking at the heavy and lowering stormclouds that are looming on our horizon, it may be that a glance at an heroic figure of other times will be acceptable and timely. Around the camp-fire, in the pauses of the battle, the soldiers of Liberty may well listen to a stirring story of the brave days of old.

MIMNERMUS.

Without philosophers, without some few virtuous men who seem to be of a different nature from the rest of mankind, the worship of a wicked divinity would surely be established over every part of the earth.—*Goldsmith.*

A New Defence of Materialism.

> I shall endeavour to show that the whole of the positive knowledge available to mankind can be embraced within the limits of a single materialistic system. The outlines of this system are not new; the main features of it, indeed, have been admittedly associated with scientific progress for centuries past. An age of science is necessarily an age of materialism; ours is a scientific age, and it may be said with truth that we are all materialists now.—*Hugh Elliot*, "*Modern Science and Materialism*," p. 138.

MANY of our readers will remember the publication, in 1912, of Mr. Hugh Elliot's book, *Modern Science and the Illusions of Professor Bergson*, a trenchant exposure of the French philosopher's shallow philosophy. The same author has just published another valuable work, entitled *Modern Science and Materialism*.

It consists of an Introduction and six chapters, which cut to the very heart of the questions that divide all thinking people into the hostile camps of Supernaturalism and Materialism. To give the titles of the chapters is enough to indicate the fundamental character of this important work. They are as follows: "The Universe as a Whole," "Matter and Energy," "Life and Consciousness," "The Fallacy of Vitalism," "Materialism," "Idealism."

Mr. Hugh Elliot has made a special study of all the sciences concerned, in their latest developments, a work of no small magnitude, and he has done the work well. All the problems of Life, Consciousness, and Thought are ably dealt with, and shown to be only explicable on a Materialistic basis.

Since the publication of Lang's great work on the *History of Materialism*, we are not aware of the publication of another book upon the subject, notwithstanding the access of many leading scientists who have given in their adhesion to the Materialistic philosophy, especially in the domain of Biology and Psychology, the two sciences which were once held to be impregnable fortresses of supernaturalism.

The fact is that Materialism has never been a popular philosophy; how could it be when every child is trained in spiritism and supernaturalism from the moment it begins to imbibe ideas? It is due to this cause that, as Mr. Hugh Elliot observes, "every materialistic advance has been met with the most vigorous opposition of the Church, the people, and often the civil government. The history of the progress of materialistic science is a history of persecution, and however we may account for it, the fact remains that the normal mind has a strong disinclination towards materialistic doctrines, or, in other words, a strong bias in favour of spiritualistic doctrines. It is this bias which causes vitalism still to be maintained and supported, notwithstanding the extreme discredit into which science and logic have brought it."[1]

The scientific Materialist has considered it more profitable to concentrate upon observation and experience, instead of fighting against the stream of popular prejudice. For this reason the philosophy of Materialism has not been popularized, and it remains the creed of the scientist and philosopher. That is why the clergy, who are unacquainted with the advances of modern science—as illustrated by the new school of biology, of which Professor Loeb is the leader, and in the inorganic sciences by the researches of Professor Bose, Stephane Leduc, and many others, and take their ideas from the monthly and quarterly reviews which cater for the public—are really quite ignorant of the true position, and are continually announcing that Materialism and Atheism are dead, quite unaware that the old defences have been turned and their position rendered untenable.

[1] Hugh Elliot, *Modern Science and Materialism*, p. 118.

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Commenting upon the astonishing advances made in our knowledge of the constitution of matter, Mr. Hugh Elliot observes:—

> These modern views are in every particular consonant with materialistic interpretations; they are in every particular irreconcilable with spiritualistic interpretations. Penetration into the secrets of atomic structure has opened up to us a vast new sphere of phenomena whose very existence was previously unsuspected, and which differ *toto cælo* from all kinds of phenomena with which we were previously acquainted. Yet throughout this new continent of knowledge we find the axioms of materialism as unquestioned as ever. The electrons and the positively charged nuclei of atoms have their unchangeable laws, and illustrate afresh the inviolable relation of cause and effect. Nor, as we approach the very foundations of existence, do we see any more signs than elsewhere of a *purpose* at the basis of the Universe.[1]

"In all this new field of discovery there is no place for any kind of spiritual agency." As Mr. Elliot points out: "We know at length what is the basis of matter: it is not spirit, it is energy, a factor exclusively objective in character, and residing on the materialistic, not on the spiritualistic plane. It may be suggested that materialism is no longer a suitable name for a doctrine which dissolves away all matter into intangible energy. The contention cannot be upheld, however. Scientific materialism has never imagined matter to be as it seems to the unaided touch and vision, and into whatever factors it may be analysed, it remains matter in the only sense knowable by us.....Furthermore, one thing is certain. Whatever matter may ultimately be resolved into, it certainly cannot be resolved into spirit. The wildest speculator in science has never suggested *that* possibility. And the name materialism only has a meaning by contrast with the rival doctrine of spiritualism."—(p. 69).

Again, as the same writer remarks, we can only conceive of spirits by attributing to them material qualities, for: "If a spirit has neither visibility, nor tangibility, nor divisibility, nor position in space, nor any other property whatever, it is then identical with nothing."—(p. 206).

Of metaphysics—the attempt to think out the problems of existence without the aid of science—Mr. Elliot observes, when: "we compare the fertility of science with the barrenness of metaphysics during the last two or three thousand years, we cannot discern the smallest claim on the part of metaphysics to any recognition as a means for the discovery of truth. Metaphysics is like a house built upon the sand, its foundations are for ever shifting with every new exponent of the art. Science is like a house built upon a rock; so firm are its foundations that each generation of workers adds a new storey to the edifice. We cannot admit, therefore, that metaphysics is a rival method to science, but regard it rather as a study of the same order and validity as theology. Only by the methods of science can knowledge be attained."—(P. 135).

To the objection that by bringing everything within a mechanical system the materialist "knocks the very soul out of life and Nature," Mr. Elliot replies that it is not a question of whether it is satisfying or not, but whether it is true; and proceeds:—

> I fail to see the slightest grain of accuracy in the criticism, however. We know what life is, with its art, its morality, its beauty and ugliness, its goodness and badness. All these things are just the same in fact, whatever may be the theories which we form of them. Nature is just the same Nature, whether our theories of it are materialistic or spiritualistic; and the purpose of my theory is not to satisfy the emotions but to state the truth" (p. 208).

We have marked many more passages for quotation from Mr. Elliot's work, but space forbids. We can only advise our readers to go to the work itself. It is published by Longmans, Green & Co., at 7s. 6d.

The book appears at an auspicious time; never were people more inclined to listen to Freethought. We congratulate Mr. Elliot upon his able exposition, and hope the work will attain a large circulation.

W. MANN.

[1] Hugh Elliot, *Modern Science and Materialism*, p. 68.

Acid Drops.

At last the secret of the defeat of the German Army is out. And when we know the secret, we realize how unequal the combat was. Our informant is Mr. H. Church, who writes an article for the Johannesburg *Sunday Times* for October 10. This gentleman tells of a conversation he had with "a well-known London K.C.," who told him of the many proofs he had of communications with departed spirits. These proofs are as convincing as any we have seen; but we are only now concerned with the revelations concerning the winning of the War. A spirit who had often communicated with them, on February 8, 1918. told them that, with the British Army in France, there were Henry V., Richard I., Simon de Montfort, and the Chevalier Bayard, several of Napoleon's generals, Edward I. and II., Bruce, Wallace, Marlborough, Wolfe, Clive, Wellington, and Joan of Arc. Napoleon was very busy. He was constantly at work; organized a "spirit army." He was untiring in his "canvassing other spirits," and once this spirit accompanied Napoleon to the battlefield. Napoleon rode his grey warhorse, and his soldiers were untiring in their efforts to help the Allies. There is a lot more of the same kind of evidence, and we can only say that, with all the military geniuses of the world against them, the German effort deserves to be ranked as the greatest that the world has ever known. As the "control" explains, "all the good spirits" and "all the heroic souls of the past" were on the side of the Allies. No wonder the Germans were beaten. But what a pity that the slaughter was not confined to the spiritual armies!

The 1918 Nobel prize for physics has been awarded to a Berlin professor; the 1919 Nobel prize for physics to a Greifswald professor; and the 1918 Nobel prize for chemistry to another German scientist. Yet the yellow press will have it that the Germans are all savages.

The clergy are still "starving" on the incomes mentioned in Crockford's *Clerical Directory*. Bad cases reported in the press are those of the Rev. W. S. Green, Caherdaniel, Kerry, who left estate to the value of £5,480. The Rev. F. T. Wethered, of Hurley Vicarage, Berks, left £26,177. The Rev. T. M. Masoly, of Farringdon, Southampton, left £14,730.

One of the "new poor" has actually revolted. The Rev. H. C. Percival, Rector of Sedlescombe, Sussex, has resigned his position, declaring that he has not the wages of a labourer. The official figures of this hard case are given in the *Clerical Directory* as gross income £352, net £290 and house.

A Reuter's telegram, published in the papers for November 27, and describing our little war on the North-western Frontier of India, says that our airmen have bombed the principal town of the enemy, consisting of about 600 houses, that "the buildings were blown to dust, and by the time the airmen had finished, practically the whole town was in flames. Besides bombing, the airmen fired thousands of rounds from their Lewis guns." Somehow this item of news, not the first of its kind, does not appear to arouse any particular kind of comment. Of course, the women and children who are killed in these wholesale bombardments are coloured people, and that makes all the difference. Others will think

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that if this beastly business is to become a recognized part of our warfare there is more need than ever to rouse the world to the brutality, the infamy, of "civilized" war. Not long ago we were all shuddering at the "baby-killing" manœuvres of German airmen. By the time the next war arrives we shall have got over that stupid delicacy.

The "spirituality" of the clergy is sometimes very much like ordinary commercialism. The Archbishop of York, who is struggling against adversity on a paltry income of £10,000 yearly, urges the Welsh people to go "over the top" for a living wage for the clergy. With Iago, his grace might exclaim, "Thus do I ever make my fool my purse."

The Bishop of Salisbury, placing his hand where his heart should be, declares that he is the patron of about seventy so-called livings, a proportion of which deserved the name of "starvelings." Just so! But how do these seventy Men-of-God live? They do not take in each other's washing.

"I get such a small congregation at church that when anybody strange comes, I at once know all about it." This is not the utterance of the curate at Slopington-on-the-Snazle, but of Canon Masterman, the vicar of Bow Church, in the heart of London.

There is an unconsciously cruel sentence in a *Times* review of Mr. Bruce Glaiser's *The Meaning of Socialism*. The reviewer calls it "a view of Socialism that attracts Bishops, priests, and laymen of the Christian Churches." That, we should think, settles it. A Socialism that is attractive to Bishops and priests is one that any sensible Socialist can well afford to do without. Still, Mr. Glaiser will earn the reputation of a "good" man, and that is something.

"I do not believe," says Mr. Clarke Hall, the Old Street Magistrate, "that religious dogmas appeal to boys. I have two boys of my own, and I do not force them to go to church.....I was brought up in the old-fashioned way, but I am sure I am none the better for it. Let them have a high standard of right put before them, and leave them to learn for themselves later the use and beauty of religion." The trouble is, that if they don't get religion while they are young, they are not likely to get it when they get old. You can't get people to accept religion when they are old enough to understand what it is all about. Every Church in the world knows that. It looks as though Mr. Clarke Hall is trying to pull the leg of the Goddite.

Distracted by the screams of the "starving" clergy, the unfortunate laymen will be further harassed by the appeal of the Young Men's Christian Association for the very modest sum of £750,000 to enable the Society to "carry on." And, doubtless, the female Christians will shortly want a bit on account. Religion may be beyond price; it is certainly expensive.

Not to spare the rod is a Biblical injunction, and one that Miss Choate, Principal of the Methodist Girls' College, Ceylon, quite believes in. In a case before the Colombo Police Court she was charged with ill-treating one of the girls under her care. For some infraction of school discipline, a girl of eleven years of age was taken in front of the whole school, placed face downwards on the table, her clothes turned up, and given twenty-one cuts with a cane. In order to give the proceedings a proper religious flavour, the Doxology was sung afterwards, and prayers were said. Medical evidence was given that the girl was compelled to keep her bed for some days afterwards. The Rev. J. Noble supported the Principal in giving the punishment she did, but the magistrate fined the woman Rs. 25, or two weeks' imprisonment. In our opinion she should have had the imprisonment without the option of a fine. Care for the natives takes a peculiar form, and it is hard to divest the white man of his right to "wallop" a coloured one, whether the white be a missionary or a trader. Our report is taken from the *Ceylon Daily News* of October 22.

It is awe-inspiring to witness how the clergy sustain the burden of the blessings of poverty. The late Bishop of Meath left £10,907.

The clergy like to be regarded as a moral police force, and it is rare that there is police opposition to their action. At Frimley Green, however, the curate applied for a licence for a watch-dance at the Church Hall. The local police-superintendent opposed, and said that the hall was surrounded by trees, and this was not suitable for young people late at night. The curate won his application, so the dance should be a Victory one.

Speaking in the House of Commons on the Aliens Restriction Bill, Captain Wedgwood Benn said that "under this Bill Saint Augustine would, after landing in Kent, have been deported as an undesirable alien." He might have added that, if the twelve disciples had landed, they would have shared the same fate.

The letterpress of the daily papers always give cause for wonder, but the illustrations are a source of endless amusement—or despair. One wonders whether those responsible for their appearance are sly humourists, or whether they are convinced that we are a nation of idiots. Quite recently a lady had stolen, in the Strand, a valuable string of pearls. So the *Daily Herald* publishes a portrait of the lady who lost the pearls. Then we have in other papers Mr. Lloyd George walking down Whitehall, King George eating a sandwich at a railway station, the Prince of Wales looking at an aeroplane display, etc. Now, if the lady who lost the pearls had two necks, or if Lloyd George walked down Whitehall on his head, or the King ate sandwiches through his ears, one could appreciate the illustrations. As it is, one is left marvelling—and sorrowing—at the type of mind that can find satisfaction in illustrations that have neither artistic merit nor intellectual interest to commend them. They evidence a want of intelligence in the general public, and a readiness to exploit it on the part of newspapers that bodes ill for the future. It is a fashion that could be killed if some of our well-circulated papers set themselves to the task. Well-directed ridicule would do it.

The Head of Oxford House, Bethnal Green, sends out a circular appealing to men to come to their Sunday afternoon meetings. As an ex-Army Chaplain, he says that he is aware men are slow to enter churches; but he adds that this is not because they are irreligious (it would never do to give the game away), but because they might appear to be hypocrites, This strikes us as about the funniest excuse that we have yet seen. If the men believe in the service, what have they to appear hypocrites about? The man who feels that he is a hypocrite for going to church is plainly one who does not believe. But they are promised, if they will go, "nothing more than a half-hour's good sacred music, a straight talk from a good speaker (who is not always a parson), and a few prayers offered from the heart." Religion in Bethnal Green is evidently in a bad way.

The Bishop of Croydon is passing the hat round on behalf of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, an organization which aims at "bridging the gulf between the Church and Industry." The Society sends out "working-men agents" to preach the Gospel, in order to extend the Kingdom of Christ. In short, the Society's manifesto is a wonderful mixture of piety and piffle, which is not to be wondered at when it is remembered that its headquarters are situated at Church House, Westminster.

Whatever hard things the clergy may say concerning materialistic things, they have a very keen appreciation of the value of money. Discussing the question of a "living wage" for parsons, the Secretary of the London Branch of the Clergy Association declares indignantly that priests are paid on about the same scale as policemen. If this is not altered, the Church "might as well shut up shop at once." Evidently, the clergy would rather have their reward in cash on earth than harps in heaven.

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G. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 7, Sheffield; December 14, Liverpool; December 17 and 18, Belfast; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 7, Swansea; December 21, Glasgow; December 22, Paisley.

MRS. C. M. RENTON.—The flogging of school children is, in our opinion, nearly always reprehensible, and the case in the Ceylonese missionary college is peculiarly bad. It is an illustration of how little genuine kindness often accompanies the professed care for people's souls.

C. YOUNG.—In the new year, along with other changes that we have in view, we are hoping to make a special feature of notices of all new books that are of interest to Freethinkers. This may ultimately take the form of a special monthly supplement.

F. GORDON.—We are flattered by your opinion, but we have not space for a discussion as to the form of government which we consider best. We can only say that any government that rested on a basis of justice and enlightenment would be fatal to the pretensions of religion, and the religionists know it.

MR. A. E. STRINGER, in sending a subscription to our Sustentation Fund (he is writing from Ireland), says: "As a reader of your paper for over thirteen years, I wish to thank you for the pleasure I get from its perusal week after week. May it long continue its work. Ireland needs large doses of Freethought, North as well as South." That seems a general impression among our Irish readers, and we, of course, endorse it. But we must depend upon the help of those upon the spot. We are willing to help all we can by supplying literature for free distribution.

AUTOLYCUS.—As we expected, the word is purely a local one. Thanks for inquiries. We are not surprised that the religious parties are trying to make the Labour Party pay for the alliance. Presently, the rank and file of the party will realize that the only policy that ultimately pays, is a straightforward one. The fight with religion must come, and nothing is gained by putting it off.

J. THACKRAY.—You are right. If we haven't yet killed Christianity, it is evident that it has received its death-blow. And the coming generation is moving along the right lines. A very striking feature of all our meetings lately has been the large proportion of young men listeners. That heartens one for further work.

C. M.—Send along and we will give our opinion on the matter. But you must not take it as any more than a bare opinion. It is a matter on which we cannot claim to be an authority.

DESMOND FITZROY.—Received with thanks. Will not forget when we get to Belfast. Our only objection to Ireland is the sea between. We would forgive the Government not being able to manage the land if it would rule the water—and rule it—smooth.

A. B. WHEELER.—Mr. Cohen's *God and Man* "discusses the subject of God and Evil, and would probably give you what you require. We hope to publish shortly a book on the whole question of Atheism and Theism which will go thoroughly into the subject.

H. TRUCKELL.—Received and shall appear.

C. M. BEADNELL.—We do not know of any translation of the Bible other than those in ordinary use. The rendering of several passages has been challenged by numerous scholars and critics, but these appear in various critical works, and in the course of the author's criticism. Thanks for appreciation of "Views and Opinions."

W. JUDD.—Glad to hear of your having secured new converts. It is not unusual to have people thank one for introducing the *Freethinker* to their notice. Pleased this has been your experience. After all, there is only one *Freethinker*.

MR. CLIFFORD WILLIAMS (Birmingham) writes:—"Please find note for Sustentation Fund. This is, of course, no indication of the appreciation I have for the indefatigable energy and patience you have displayed since the death of Mr. Foote. It may be said that no man could have undertaken such a task under worse conditions, and the fact that the "flag" is flying higher than ever is a tribute to you which a judicious friend would put forward rather than suppress."

MRS. HAREWOOD.—Pleased to hear from an old friend.

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The "Freethinker" will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

To-day (December 7) Mr. Cohen lectures in the Builder's Exchange, Cross Burgess Street, at 3.15 and 6.30. His subject in the afternoon is "Religion and the Logic of Life,' and in the evening on "The Meaning and Morals of Materialism." A gathering of Freethinkers from the district is expected, some arrangements, we understand, having already been made. On Sunday next Mr. Cohen visits Liverpool. He will go from there to Belfast, lecturing there on the 17th and 18th, and he returns to Manchester on the 21st. Then home for Christmas. And a few days' rest will be welcome. Tea is being provided for visitors from a distance.

Mr. Lloyd lectures to-day (December 7), afternoon and evening, in the Docker's Hall, Swansea. The lecturer is at his best with a crowded audience.

We hope there will be a good gathering of Freethinkers and their friends, as well as of the general public, at the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, this evening (December 7), when Mr. Clifford Williams will lecture on "Christianity, Old and New." Mr. Williams' lectures are much appreciated by local audiences, and he is so far a negation of the old proverb that a prophet hath no honour in his own country.

We are pleased to learn that Mr. Moss had a good and "lively" audience for his lecture last week at Willesden on Sunday last. There are evidently a number of Freethinkers —unattached—in this locality who should be organized in order to do more effective work.

We are pleased to see that the new Secretary of the South Shields Branch, Mr. J. Fothergill, is making a frequent appearance in the local paper with letters dealing with various aspects of Freethought. This is an example that other secretaries might well follow. It is a capital plan of keeping the Society and its objects in front of the public, and ought to form a part of every secretary's work, provided that he or she has the time to give to it. One day we hope to see this side of our work properly organized.

The Pontypridd Freethinkers have now secured the use of the White Palace, Pontypridd, and intend holding meetings there. Mr. S. Holman, the Secretary of the Branch, will occupy the platform to-day (Dec. 7) at 7 o'clock. Subject, "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?"

Mr. Dan Griffiths, of Llanelly, pays his first visit to Manchester for the Branch to-day (December 7). He will lecture in the Co-operative Hall, Downing Street, at 3 on "The Churches and Society," and at 6.30 on "Human Nature, Determinism and Free-will." We hope that Manchester friends will see to it that Mr. Griffiths will have a good meeting on this visit. The rest will depend upon himself, and we have no doubt but that he will attend to that.

The West Ham Branch of the N. S. S. is arranging a "Social," to be held at Earlham Hall, Forest Gate, E., on Saturday, December 6. There will be dances, games, musical selections, etc., and admission will be free. Forest Gate (G.E.R.) and Wanstead Park (M.R.) are the nearest stations; trams, etc., to the "Princess Alice" or Forest Gate Stations. All Freethinkers and their friends will be welcomed. The function will commence at 7 o'clock.

A few weeks ago the Glasgow Spiritualists approached the local Branch of the N. S. S. with a proposal to arrange a debate on Spiritualism. The Glasgow Branch accepted the invitation, and asked Mr. Cohen if he would represent them. Mr. Cohen agreed. The title has been decided, and the debate will come off some time in February next. One of the largest halls in Glasgow, the St. Andrew's Hall, seating about 4,000, has been engaged, and the proposed discussion is exciting considerable local interest. A very large audience is expected. Further particulars will be announced later.

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It may have been a particular application or a mere general circular.' But the other day we had a letter from one of our lecture agencies, offering to book lectures for us "on advantageous terms" in "Church Halls.....educational institutes," etc. We replied that we should be pleased to lecture whenever suitable in these places—particularly in Church Halls—but our purpose on the platform was to preach Freethought, and we had no time to devote to other subjects; and we were quite willing to lecture in any Church Hall in the country without any charge whatever. We regret to say that our offer has not been accepted. That is why we are repeating it here. There are a number of institutes connected with churches and chapels up and down the country, and we are willing to visit them "free, gratis, for nothing"—provided we are allowed to lecture in them on some subject connected with Freethought. But we don't expect to be overrun with applications.

When the decision of the Bowman case was announced, we were alone in pointing out that the real significance of the decision lay in its legalizing a bequest to a Secular Society, whether the Society was registered or not. It was surprising that the belief that non-registration was a bar to receiving a legacy should ever have grown up considering that it never was a disqualification at law. Soon after the Bowman decision a small legacy of £10 was paid over to the N. S. S.—which is at present an unregistered body—without demur. And now we have to announce that the National Secular Society has received notice from a firm of lawyers that by the will of Mr. Antonini the Society is entitled to a legacy of £1,000 which will be paid over in due course. We have had this information in our possession for several weeks, but waited for a meeting of the Executive before making anything like an official announcement, And it is good to know that after wandering in the outer darkness for so many years, a legacy to the National Secular Society is now absolutely secure. It is another step towards the N. S. S. assuming the public position in the country that it richly deserves.

In spite of very strong counter-attractions at Birmingham on Sunday last, there was a good audience at the Town Hall. Mr. Williams officiated as chairman, and there was a pleasing number of young, eager, and intelligent faces in the audience. That is one of the most pleasing features of our work at present.

The high price of clothing appears to have led to the burgling of a number of tailors' shops. One of the sufferers from this form of post-War activity is Mr. Harry Boulter, whose name will be known to many readers of this paper. His premises in the City Road were broken into, and the whole of the stock, including the implements of trade—the whole valued at £200—carried off. Nothing was insured, and the result is complete ruin. A Fund has now been started to enable Mr. Boulter to recommence business, and the Mayor of Shoreditch, Mr. H. Girling, of 15 Newton Street, Hoxton, London, N. 1, is acting as treasurer. All who care to assist should send their subscriptions direct to that gentleman.

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Twelfth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £355 2s. J. Breese, £2. W. Saunders, 5s. Mr. Rowland (Rugby), 5s. Mr. Hayes (Rugby), 5s. W. Judd (Rugby), 10s. E. Lechmere, 10s. Constance, 5s. A. E. Stringer, £1. Clifford Williams, 10s. J. Reid, 2s. W. F. Ambrose, 2s. Swansea Branch N. S. S., £1. F. H. H., 2s. 6d. F. G. Margetson, jun.. 7s. 6d. J. Williams, 2s. 6d. J. Cooper, 5s. T. Grinley, 5s. T. P., 9s. Mrs. Harewood, 5s. Total, £363 12s. 6d.

This Fund will close on December 14.

Darwin and Haeckel.

THE grotesque slanders which have been published in the British Press concerning Haeckel and his work are the outcome of hatred, ignorance, and prejudice. Those who circulate them are apparently so dense that they fail to see that they are merely provoking a *tu quoque*. If Germany has her great Materialists, so also has Britain. Recriminating charges and counter-charges are merely vulgar abuse, and lead nowhere.

Charles Darwin's son and biographer mentions that his father's friendship with Haeckel was not merely growth of correspondence, as was the case with some others—for instance, Fritz Muller. "Haeckel," he says, "paid more than one visit to Down, and these were thoroughly enjoyed by my father." Darwin's "strong feeling of regard" for Haeckel is emphasized—"a feeling which I have often heard him emphatically express, which was warmly returned." Huxley's admiration for Haeckel is also cited. In his *Evolution in Biology* Huxley wrote:—

> Whatever hesitation may, not infrequently, be felt by less daring minds, in following Haeckel in many of his speculations, his attempt to systematize the doctrine of Evolution and to exhibit its influence as the central thought of modern biology cannot fail to have a far-reaching influence on the progress of science.

These two giants—Darwin and Haeckel—in several respects present an interesting contrast. Temperamentally, they appear to differ widely. Darwin shrinks from "exciting anger" and "making enemies." Writing to Haeckel from Down on May 21, 1867, he says:—

> It never occurred to me for a moment to doubt that your work, with the whole subject so admirably and clearly arranged, as well as fortified by so many new facts and arguments, would not advance our common object in the highest degree. All that I think is that you will excite anger, and that anger so completely blinds everyone, that your arguments would have no chance of influencing those who are already opposed to our views. Moreover, I do not at all like that you, towards whom I feel so much friendship, should unnecessarily make enemies, and there is pain and vexation enough in the world without more being caused. .....The belief in the descent theory is slowly spreading in England, even amongst those who can give no reason for their belief. No body of men were at first so much opposed to my views as the members of the London Entomological Society; but now I am assured that, with the exception of two or three old men, all the members concur with me to a certain extent.

Perhaps, if Darwin had been a fighter and an ardent propagandist, he might not have been buried in Westminster Abbey, despite the representation of Sir John Lubbock and other distinguished men to the Dean of Westminster. It is interesting to note among the signatories to the representation, in addition to Lubbock's, such names as G. O. Trevelyan, Lyon Playfair, Charles W. Dilke, Henry Broadhurst, and H. Campbell-Bannerman. The date of that document is April 21, 1882. Darwin had breathed his last on the 19th of that month. He was buried on the 26th.

On November 19, 1868, Darwin pens a delightful letter:—

> My dear Haeckel:—I must write to you again for two reasons. Firstly to thank you for your letter about your baby, which has quite charmed both me and my wife; I heartily congratulate you on its birth. I remember being surprised in my own case how soon the paternal instincts became developed.....I hope the large blue eyes and the principles of inheritance will make your child as good a

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> naturalist as you are; but judging from my own experience, you will be astonished to find how the whole mental disposition of your children changes with advancing years. A young child, and the same when nearly grown, sometimes differ almost as much as do a caterpillar and butterfly.

He then proceeds to congratulate Haeckel on a projected translation of his *Generelle Morphologie*, 1866, and goes on :—

> I have been reading a good deal of your last book (*Die Naturliche Schopfungs-Geschichte* translated in 1876 under the title *The History of Creation*) and the style is beautifully clear and easy to me.....Your chapter on the affinities and genealogy of the animal kingdom strike me as admirable and full of original thought. Your boldness however sometimes makes me tremble, but, as Huxley remarked, some one must be bold enough to make a beginning in drawing up tables of descent.

Of that work A. R. Wallace wrote in the *Academy* :—

> If it had appeared before my Essay had been written, I should probably never have completed it. Almost all the conclusions at which I have arrived I find confirmed by this naturalist, whose knowledge on many points is much fuller than mine.

Haeckel was among the first to express appreciation of Darwin's *Descent of Man*. In acknowledging congratulations Darwin says :—" I cannot tell you how glad I am to find that I have expressed my high admiration of your labours with sufficient clearness; I am sure that I have not expressed it too strongly."

Writing to Haeckel on September 25, 1873, Darwin shortly raises one or two points. " Has the problem," he asks, " of the later stages of reduction of useless structures ever perplexed you? This problem has of late caused me much perplexity "; and further on, " I much wish this latter question (of spontaneous generation) could be settled; but I see no prospect of it. If it could be proved true, this would be most important to us."

As a birthday gift Darwin received from Germany in 1877 an album of photographs of 154 men of science with a dedicatory poem. To Haeckel he wrote regarding it :—

> The album has just arrived quite safe. It is most superb. It is by far the greatest honour which I have ever received, and my satisfaction has been greatly enhanced by your most kind letter of February 9.....I thank you all from my heart. I have written by this post to Herr Rade, and I hope he will somehow manage to thank all my generous friends.

These few sidelights on the relationships of two great men are of particular charm when the survivor of them has just passed into the shadows. *Ave atque vale !*

Ignotus.

A Memory and a Meditation.

When a man walks with God his voice shall be as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn—which is a very beautiful metaphor, and merely Emerson's more stately way of saying, When a man walks with Nature, etc.; *chacon a son gout.*

I had been a little unwell, and perhaps a little worried, as even the happiest of mortals may be at times, when one Sunday I remembered I had not been to church, my church, for a long time. It was October, and the summer almost gone, as with pack and staff for probable bramble picking, I sallied forth in the cool air and golden sunshine of a still and perfect autumn day, traversed the roads, skirted the woods, followed the paths, crossed the burns and fields I knew and loved so well, now more than ever, and felt growing upon me an exceeding peace and healthfulness. In a wooded dell, enlivened by a plashing stream from the brown hills beyond it, I reached for brambles amid the scented pines and jagged thorns to the music of the rivulet and the occasional piping of a bird, disturbing not, but deepening by contrast, the breathing silence of the brake.

In four hours or so my pocks were filled; yet I kept craning my neck and looking for more with an experienced eye—so use doth breed a habit in a man, and so the labour he delights in physics pain. Outwith the wood, in a high hedge, poised above the busy brook, and where only the cutest bramble-hunter would think of looking, I found some long, richly-loaded tendrils depending, vine-like, from the hedge, some of which—with a little compunction for the sacrifice—I cut off and picked at leisure on the sward. Great was my greed, and yet it was merely a kind of religious zeal, a holy passion. I was alone in the wilderness, a modern John the Baptist, the faded glories of the summer, the peace and beauty of the world all about me; the lyart leaves of the hawthorn were massed in quiet eddies of the stream, forming a sweet mosaic on the surface of the dark water.

By the slap, or style, in the hedge corner, and mossy stones under the witching bouertree bush (elder), I rested long amidst the fallen leaves surveying the quiet lichened trees and the evergreen sward under its bleached tangle of leaf and windlestrae, and at my feet the soft mellifluous music of the burn as it carved its channel in grey sandstone (the old red) amid boulder, clay, and loam. The fallen tree, the first and last, most picturesque of bridges, spanned the stream. Dyke and hedge, the corner of the wood, the curving field, sloped, dipped into, and met in harmony in this happy hollow; aye, even as though each gentle natural object conspired with another to make for me this little heaven on earth.

I have seen dogroses in bloom here in November; campion and ragged robin are still to the fore; hips and haws are plentiful; even an odd wild raspberry, which, save for the wild strawberry (in its earlier season) has, to my rustic taste, the most delicate and delightful of flavours. The glossy and tempting but bitter sloe shining in its lichened, stunted blackthorn twig is also in evidence about this time, all of which may seem the most meagre menu for the monarch Pan; but to the true worshipper and "child of God" this faith is ascetic also; and so let the heathen rage and gorge themselves, I, like Burns' moosie—

> Will get a blessin' wi' the lave,
> An' never miss 't.

Sad and severe were some of the Sunday faces I met on my way home; but, as for me, the deep abiding tranquillity of soul I felt must have illumined my erstwhile Don Quixote visage; my tones must have sounded soft and tender as I spoke to friends, aye, even to mine enemies, gladly and forgivingly, as I kept murmuring within me the holy text I had proved so true!

Andrew Millar.

Our second Social was a great success. Though the whist drive was absent on this occasion, we had plenty of songs and dancing, and a novelty in the form of a youthful choir, whose initial efforts on behalf of the Branch were much appreciated. All credit is due to Miss Williams for her work in this direction, and we wish the lady every success. Thanks are also due to Miss Bailey and Miss Mapp for their entertainment at the piano, and to Miss Keefe, Miss Everson, Mr. Bailey, and others, for their songs. Our next Social is on December 27, but on this occasion it is the children's turn.—H. Black, Hon Sec. Manchester Branch N. S. S.

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Correspondence.

FREETHOUGHT ON TYNESIDE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—There are many unmistakable signs that there exists a strong desire among Freethinkers on Tyneside to become better organized. There is no claim here to define the boundary of Tyneside, but it is the stating of a calm truth that, after leaving the banks of the coaly river, one may travel a considerable distance in any direction without meeting with a profession of freedom of thought in a combined sense. On a recent Sunday (November 16) we had our worthy President in South Shields, where he gave two lectures. All things considered, the gatherings were eminently successful. A spell of our grand old North-East weather grimly forbade many to be with us; but there was a goodly company, a contemplation of which makes one dream things. Why should a lecturer come to this district for one day only? It ought to be well within the bounds of possibility that lecture tours should be provided in our immediate vicinity. When we call to mind the quiet encouragement that we have received from our visiting friends, we feel, out of deference to them, that we should make some continued effort. Freedom of thought is the greatest discovery of mankind. It calls for the utmost development of the understanding, and this brings with it the sweetest solace known to man. In far-off times there lived men who thought as we think—Reason was their guide; but the thunders of authority triumphed, enslaving the human mind to an almost incredible extent. But here and there giants arose. We enjoy comparative freedom to-day because of their labours. The burden of the fight, however, still largely rests upon individuals. Let us change all that. It is no doubt grand to watch the persistent work performed by the sentinels of freedom, but it would be far grander if we would all gather up our forces and help to consolidate the victories already secured. All around we see desperate attempts on the part of religion to retain its hold upon the thoughts of men. It would be unwise to view these efforts with equanimity. The fight may seem unequal, but there is much to show that vast numbers of people are actuated by the principles of liberty. There is an evident determination on the part of the masses to secure a better life in the future than has been possible in the past. Independent thinking will best provide for this, a little enquiry will make quite clear the fact that all progressive workers are considering our principles with a growing degree of favour. Our work is still enormous, but let us go back a few years and consider the rude treatment meted out to our forbears. Our atmosphere is congenial compared with theirs; but "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance." Thus, we would call to the Tyneside Freethinkers. Numerous branches might be formed at once, sleeping branches might rouse themselves. A resulting north eastern federation of Freethinkers would become a power in the land. The antiquated interpretation of the facts of life, eternally furthered by a huge army of religious propagandists, should be for ever questioned. But if it should happen that humanity fails to take full advantage of its splendid opportunities, at least, let Tyneside Freethought so impress itself upon history that men in future ages may look back to us for inspiration, as we look back to the Freethinkers of all bygone times. It is no vain-glorious ambition that moves us in this present instance. We would be glad to support any form of organization that would ensure the furthering of our principles. But as we cannot see any distinct effort being made anywhere in the district, might we respectfully invite all and sundry who agree as to the urgency of this matter to communicate with J. FOTHERGILL, 3 Thompson Street, Tyne Dock, South Shields.

FREETHOUGHT IN IRELAND.

SIR,—I would draw the attention of Freethinkers in the North of Ireland to the forthcoming visit of our President, Mr. Chapman Cohen, to Belfast on December 17 and 18. No effort ought to be spared to have the hall crowded each evening. The local Branch, owing to the expiry of a lease, has temporarily to forgo the weekly lectures which were so successful, and has difficulty in getting a suitable hall. Given enthusiastic meetings, however, at Mr. Cohen's lectures, we would be encouraged to bigger propaganda ventures, and we appeal for your support. Buy tickets yourselves and give to your Christian friends, or, better still, bring them with you. Mr. Cohen will do the rest.

Tickets in quantities may be had from the local Secretary, JOHN F. LESSELS, The City Studio, 3 High Street, Belfast.

HYGIENE AND SALVATION.

SIR,—I have read with interest Mr. Gould's article in this week's issue of the *Freethinker* on "Hygiene Better than Salvation," and I quite agree with him as to the place held by sanitation and hygiene in the development of a healthy body. I am somewhat puzzled to know, however, what he means by his cryptic addition, "and other agencies of Preventive Medicine." I suspect that he is here paying undeserved homage to the prophylactics which are now so much the craze (and the curse) of the medical profession. I should like therefore to emphasize my contention that, whilst I regard these prophylactics of extremely doubtful benefit to mankind, there can be no possibility of cavil that sanitation and hygiene are proven agencies in the development of a sound constitution. I should not look upon Ross as the best exemplar of this beneficial science. One might with more propriety cite Lord Roberts, whose experience of sanitary methods during the South African War led him to inaugurate the splendid sanitary corps which has done so much for the Army; but to the Japanese should be given pride of place for establishing this system on proper lines. During the Russo-Japanese War, they, eschewing inoculation, went all out for rigid sanitary methods, which met with instant and unparalleled success.

A careful inquiry will, I think, convince any impartial investigator, blessed with the ordinary modicum of intelligence, that prophylactics, and the methods of the medical profession generally, have as much to do with health creation as have the empty vapourings of the religionists in preserving sanity throughout the world.

There is a striking analogy between the Sanitarian and the Freethinker. The former aims at the removal of disease-polluting habits and the setting up of beneficial hygienic conditions for the development of a healthy body; whilst the latter is out to clear away the weeds of superstition from the mind of man, in order that the reasoning faculty may have full sway to develop intellectual advancement.

November 29, 1919. H. C. HEDBES.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON NOV. 29.

The President, Mr. C. Cohen, in the chair. Also present: Messrs. Kelf, Lloyd, Moss, Neate, Quinton, Rogers, Rosetti, and Silverstein; Miss Pitcher and the Secretary.

The Minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The Financial Statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Manchester, North London, and South Shields Branches, and for the Parent Society; fifteen in all.

The Report of the Organization Committee was received, and their various recommendations adopted.

It was reported that the Society would shortly receive a bequest of £1,000 under the will of the late Chas. Antonini.

The deepest regret was expressed by the Executive at the report of the death of their old and greatly esteemed colleague, Dr. R. T. Nichols, one of the late Vice-Presidents of the Society. The Secretary was instructed to convey to the relatives the Executive's keen sense of the loss sustained by the Movement of which Dr. Nichols had been so devoted and liberal a supporter. It was resolved unanimously that the N. S. S. should be represented at the funeral by the President, Secretary, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, and other members of the Executive. It was intimated that the Secular Society, Ltd., would be represented also.

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A donation of £5 was ordered to be paid to the Secular Education League.

Arrangements were concluded for a series of Sunday afternoon lectures at South Place Institute. It was agreed that no meeting be held in December, in consequence of the Christmas holidays.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Obituary.

It is with the deepest regret that we have to record the death of Dr. R. T. Nichols, of Ilford, at the age of eighty-two. Dr. Nichols had been for very many years a zealous supporter of the Freethought cause, and was a member of both the Secular Society, Limited, and of the National Secular Society. Of a simple and kindly disposition, he did much good in a quiet and unostentatious way, and one may assume from what is known of him that few appeals for help fell on deaf ears. One of the last cheques he drew was a donation to the Ilford Philanthropic Society, and his name was never absent from a subscription list in these columns. Interested in many reform movements, the Freethought cause stood nearest to his heart, and he was indefatigable in circulating its literature. The Ilford *Recorder* in noticing his death pays him a high and a well-deserved compliment both as to his character and his generosity. Dr. Nichols had been in poor health for some years, and his ailments increased rapidly of late. He was without family, and on November 24 retired to his room telling his housekeeper that he did not wish to be disturbed. Some time after he was found dead in his bed. At the inquest held on the following day the coroner remarked that the deceased felt that he was near his end and "thought it not worth while to live longer," returned a verdict that death was due to "Prussic acid poisoning, self-administered." In accordance with his wish, the body was cremated at the City of London Cemetery. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd both delivered short addresses, and Messrs. Quinton, Rosetti, Silverstein, Miss Kough, and Miss Vance represented the two Secular Societies to which he belonged. A representative was also present from the Liberal Club of which he had been President. No doubt many others would have been present had time permitted of a longer notice.

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INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. Ernest Dales, "Contrasts."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, Debate: "Is Prohibition Necessary?" Affirmative, A. Eagar; Negative, T. F. Palmer.

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Open Debate: "The Housing Puzzle." Introduced by Mr. V. Roger.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Aylmer Maude, "The Russian Problem."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Baker, and Ratcliffe.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. E. Clifford Williams, "Christianity: Old and New."

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (Clarion Cafe, Gasgoine Street, Boar Lane, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30.

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SHEFFIELD ETHICAL SOCIETY (Builders' Exchange, Cross Burgess Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3.15, "Religion and the Logic of Life"; 6.30, "The Meaning and Morals of Materialism."

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Views and Opinions.

"On Compromise."

Many years ago Lord—then plain John—Morley wrote a book called *On Compromise*. The book was a good one, full of sound generalizations and wise maxims. Personally, we always associate with this one another good book, *The Struggle for National Education*, which has never been reprinted in his collected works. Much of this would be now out of date, but it will still repay careful reading. *On Compromise* was an attempt to give compromise its right place in life, and was, in the main, a plea for a thoroughgoing application of principle in intellectual matters. But having written the book, Lord Morley appears to have spent the rest of his life in breaking nearly every one of the rules he laid down for the guidance of other people. This may have been due to his absorption in politics which has spoilt more than one good man, and has anything but an elevating influence on the best. Or it may have been due to an inherent weakness of character; or, yet again, to a combination of both factors. For our own part we are inclined to lay stress on the political factor, for that is the field on which compromise flourishes and principles perish. In practice one is often compelled to compromise, in teaching, compromise is out of place. That is one reason why the thinker and the teacher should avoid entanglement in politics. Their function is to teach the politician, and to see that, so far as is possible, legislation should move in the direction of principle, if not parallel with it. At any rate, there is the historic fact that no sooner does a movement become entangled with politics than it suffers from a sacrifice of principle. Votes become of more importance than conviction, and to stand well with the public is of more consequence than to see that the public stand well with you. And there is some significance in the fact that in England where, from various causes with which we are not now concerned, political development has been more rapid than it has been in most other countries, the habit of compromising should be most in favour—and most dangerous. Politics has killed many a worthy man; it has still more often buried a good principle.

* * *

Breadth and Depth.

We have already said that there is a legitimate place for compromise, and that is on the level of practice. When it comes to putting principles into operation, one is often compelled to apply only so much as circumstances admit. Thus, to take the question of religion in the schools. It is one thing to secure that no one who wishes to dispense with religious ministration or teaching shall be bothered with it. That is wholly to the good, and may be considered an advancement of the general principle that the State should have nothing to do with religion at all. It is quite another thing to agree, as was done by the Nonconformists, that a measure of religion with which all religious sects agreed should be taught at the public expense. That was a clear sacrifice of principle. Some apology for this kind of tactic is offered, in this and in other connections, by the plea that it is broadening thought. That, again, is a dangerous phrase. It assumes that a mere broadening of thought is in itself and by itself good, when as a matter of fact it may only be comfortable. Breadth of thought, or of anything else is not in itself a good thing. A river which has a certain depth and breadth will be a good thing. But if one sets about broadening it, he may pursue that task until as a result he has, not a serviceable river, but a very unserviceable swamp. Breadth and depth combined make a wholly good combination. Breadth alone is not of necessity a good thing at all. You may broaden and broaden your teachings until they become so broad that everyone may agree with them, and are therefore of no service to anyone. To state Freethought in such a way that a Christian clergyman or a half liberated Theist will agree with you is not a gain, but a compromise that involves a very real sacrifice of principle and a loss of effectiveness. To act in this way may minister to the love of ease or to the craving for popularity, but it counts for nothing in the real progress of the world.

* * *

Facing Facts.

An apology is attempted on the ground that it is wise to pursue a policy of permeation. That, we admit, has its uses, but it also has its limitations, and they are very pronounced. The chief, perhaps the only use of a policy of permeation is to secure a jumping off ground in circumstances where it would not be possible by a more direct method. It is essentially what one may call a foothold policy, and it puts itself out of court in the exact measure of its success. The Sunday lecture movement, to take an example, had its use in familiarizing the minds of people with lectures on the "Sabbath." It was directly opposed by the Churches, and to take part in it became the equivalent of an attack on organized religion. But soon the Churches, in the big centres of population, accommodated themselves to the change. Prominent Christians began to identify themselves with it, and, as a consequence, its Freethinking character was lost. For some years we have seen scores of Freethinkers, whose time might be more profiably employed, spending their energies in connection with a movement which, under present conditions, has but the minimum effect on the disintegration of religious beliefs. So also with the spread of more scientific knowledge. Fifty

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years ago popular scientific lectures also had the same effect as the Sunday lecture movement. Evolution was branded as anti-religious, and to advocate it was inferentially to attack religion. But here also accommodation took place. The Churches began to preach evolution. They began to arrange for scientific lectures on their own account. These were and are given in connection with churches and chapels. Clergymen take the chair, and even deliver lectures themselves that are in point of manner and matter quite impeccable. The conditions have therefore altered. We are no longer where we were fifty years ago when a scientific discourse had all the force of an attack on religion. More than ever it is the direct attack that is needed. It is the Atheistic character of science that must be emphasized to-day. The matter of science, so far as Freethought is concerned, is merely so much illustrative material. If we would advance with the times, we must bear in mind that what was effective half a century ago may be largely a waste of energy to-day. In other words, the need for Freethinkers to-day is to discriminate between the permeation that disintegrates and the permeation that ends in absorption by the enemy.

* * *

No Compromise With Religion.

It is a mistake to suppose that the great need of the world is broad thinking or liberal thinking. There is, as a matter of fact, no shortage of either. What the world really needs—what it always needed, and still needs—is strong thinking. Putting on one side the political and social worlds, we can take as an illustration the situation in the world of Freethought. And here there is no question if those who have really abandoned all Christian and Theistic beliefs could be brought to the point of saying so without apology, or evasion, or qualification; they are sufficiently numerous to command recognition, and to put a stop to that petty persecution and miserable boycotting which still prevails. But what we find in a large number of cases is an attempt to narrow differences in such a way that the advantage nearly always rests with the religious believer. The Atheist in fact becomes the Agnostic in profession, then the agnosticism of philosophy is confused with the agnosticism of theology, until, as a grand *reductio ad absurdum*, we have a religious agnosticism emerge, and we are assured that we are making progress. But we are not. It is a step wholly in the wrong direction, a form of compromise that John Morley in his better moments wrote so forcibly against. And how can we expect that the religious world will ever yield Freethought the respect that is its social due while so many who have ceased to believe in religion spend so much of their energies in placating the common enemy? "No compromise with the Hohenzollerns" was a popular cry during the War. The cry was based on the assumption that the aims of the Hohenzollerns and of the Allies were wholly incompatible. How much more force should the cry "No compromise with religion" have with the Freethinker who understands his position! Many years ago John Stuart Mill said that the time had come when people should speak out their minds on religion. It is more than time that all disguise and timidity should be thrown aside. A little courage is all that is needed to end the farce of religion in nearly every civilized country. And we are doubtful if a country has the right to be called civilized until this has been done.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

The Philosophy of Secularism.
BY G. W. FOOTE.
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Christianity and the Times.

ON a recent Sunday evening three of us attended a fairly large church in the North-West of London, and found it not quite two-thirds full, though it was the occasion on which a Salvation Army band paid its annual visit thereto. The minister is exceedingly well known, and fully deserves the high reputation he enjoys. He is entirely free from all pulpit mannerisms. He talks with perfect naturalness, and though his discourse lasted upwards of an hour, he held the attention of his audience to the end; and being natural, he was thoroughly unconventional. Indeed, in some respects, the lecture was very remarkable, the like of which is seldom delivered from a pulpit. It was eminently frank, suggested by and largely based on the equally frank book edited by the Rev. Dr. Cairns, which book has often been alluded to in the columns of this journal. From a religious point of view the book is profoundly pessimistic. Dealing primarily with the state of religion in our own Army during the War, and recording the evidence supplied by a vast number of more or less impartial witnesses, it reveals the fact that the bulk of our fighting men knew little and cared less about the Christian religion. Of course, some of the witnesses were not competent judges on this point. Chaplains and military officers, for example, were not in a position to ascertain the men's real atttiude towards religion. As a rule, parsons are the very last persons to whom the majority of young men are likely to disclose their religious views, whilst in the Army, during a great war, there is very little intercourse on such matters between officers and men; and to our own knowledge some officers were themselves unbelievers.

It is amazingly easy to fasten this charge of ignorance and indifference upon the non-religious. The preacher did so repeatedly in the course of his address. The allegation is that the overwhelming majority of people in this country have no idea of what the Churches stand for, or of what Christianity is. On the assumption that the accusation is true, whose fault is it? How is it possible for such gross ignorance to prevail in the most Christian country under the sun? Is not its very existence the most damning of all arguments against the truth of Christianity? The Church claims to be a Divinely founded institution, charged with supernatural powers, and its ministers glory in being the ambassadors of an omnipotent, all-conquering Redeemer; and yet, according to their own admission, some eighty per cent. of the population of this country are outside of the Churches, and densely ignorant of Christ. If this is the state of things in a country which constantly boasts of its Christianity, what inference can any sane person draw save this, that Christianity is the most complete farce ever heard of, the most colossal failure on the face of the earth?

Of course, the charge is at most only partially true. Of this statement the preacher himself furnished ample proof. He admitted that when in France he was subjected to a fiery ordeal of heckling, awkward questions, and stubborn opposition. One officer testified that English people generally and Tommies in particular did not think at all; but the preacher found out at the Front that many soldiers did think, and that as a result they had become intellectually hostile to the Christian religion. The same thing is true of multitudes all over this island. They are Atheists because they have successfully thought themselves out of Theism. They reject Christianity because they have convinced themselves that it is not true. The people who do not know what the Church stands for or what Christianity is are

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incapable of intelligent hostility to either. In a vague, unintelligent way they are all believers, though they cannot tell exactly what they believe. They never read the *Freethinker*, or any other intellectual publication. Through ignorance and carelessness they have become *lapsed* Christians, but it is not in them to become *anti* anything. Their case is utterly hopeless, so far as the Christian religion is concerned. Neither directly nor indirectly does God seem able to do anything for them. But outside the Churches are to be found tens of thousands of intelligent, well-read, cultured, and highly moralized men and women who have been obliged to renounce their belief in any form of supernaturalism. Our preacher frankly admitted that "most of the heroism and self-sacrifice displayed on the battlefield was not connected with Jesus Christ," and that at present in the Homeland crowds of the best living folk are not associated with any religious sects.

This preacher set great store by his frankness, and assured us that he was not speaking to the gallery. But is it frankness to affirm that non-Christians of acknowledged ability of character are leading Christian lives? If that affirmation is justified, why should Christian missionaries be sent out to such Heathen countries as China and Japan, where the moral standard is known to be fully as high as, if not higher than, in Christian England? Or what need is there for churches and chapels, with their huge staffs of paid and honorary workers? Are not all these wholly superfluous if the majority of the best characters are produced apart from them? Such characters are no more Christian than they are Confucian or Buddhist; they are merely human characters, and are to be found in all lands, whether Christian or Pagan, civilized or savage.

Our preacher was equally inaccurate when he asserted that scientific or theoretic Materialism had gone for ever. Soon after the War began he made a similar assertion concerning Rationalism. As a matter of fact, Materialism was never in such strong evidence as it is to-day. The materialistic interpretation of the Universe was never so widely accepted as it is at this moment. Vitalism among biologists is as dead as Queen Anne. It is true that, as a theory, Materialism, like most other "isms," has waxed and waned alternately throughout the ages, but it has never been without its advocates. Dr. Russel Wallace, who repudiated Materialism, confessed again and again that he stood practically alone. Sir Oliver Lodge could make the same confession as regards his own position among physicists.

Almost every passage our preacher read from Dr. Cairns' book was of a peculiarly pessimistic character. He declared that there is a bright as well as a dark side to the picture; but on this occasion the bright side was not presented, neither from the book nor from the preacher's own experience and observation. He enumerated a few of the conditions upon which, in his opinion, depends the possibility of putting an end to the present impotence of the Churches, such as the creation of a genial, cheery, homely atmosphere wihin each Church, the cultivation of an incorrigibly optimistic disposition on the part of all professing Christians, and the banishment from ecclesiastical activities of all formalism, artificialness, and sanctimoniousness. It will be observed that he treated the Church as an exclusively human organization dependent for its prosperity upon purely human conditions. In the New Testament the Church is represented as being of Divine origin and the medium of Divine power. What made Pentecost memorable was the alleged descent of the Holy Ghost; and Paul depicts the Church as a body whose head is Christ. It used to be the belief that every religious revival came down straight from heaven —from the very presence of the Lord. But on the occasion now under review there was no allusion whatever, except perhaps in the prayers, to the supernatural powers believed to be inherent in the very nature of the Church. Besides, the preacher closed his eyes to the significant fact that some Churches are, from a simple business point of view, eminently successful now. Here is a Church which flourishes like a green bay-tree, not because there is bestowed upon it a larger measure of the Holy Ghost than upon its less successful neighbours, but because the man in the pulpit has a voice like silver bells in tune, or is the possessor of an irresistibly magnetic oratory, and treats his hearers as so many musical instruments upon which he has learned to play with consummate art. In his church there are no vacant seats whenever he occupies the pulpit; but only a few filled when he is absent. Are we to infer from this that the Holy Ghost is a respecter of persons and pours out his power upon those who are passing rich in power of their own, but withholds it from those who lack the natural endowment; or are we to learn the only sane lesson, namely, that the Holy Ghost and his power are an exploded myth, and that all Churches alike are purely human societies, conducted on exclusively natural lines, though under the hollow pretext of being indwelt and energized by a trinity of supernatural persons? In any case, as saviours of society and nations, as purifiers of public morals, as refashioning factors in economic relationships, and as promoters of the brotherly and sisterly solidarity of the race they have in all ages exhibited and still continue to exhibit the quintessence of incompetence and futility. In these most important and vital respects, the word Failure must be written in letters of fire across their entire history.

J. T. Lloyd.

The Lower Slopes of Parnassus.

"Heine's not the man," you say, "for me,
Tennyson or Kipling is my poet.
If I must be plagued with poetry
Let me have it as at home they grow it.

Something sapid, cut and come again,
On the tickled palate such as lingers,
Not like Heine, jam who gives, you then
Raps you with the spoon upon the fingers."

—*John Payne.*

Prior to the War, there was a slackening of public interest in the works of Mr. Rudyard Kipling; but the inclusion of the Union Jack among the sacred symbols of the National Religion roused the public attention to a writer who is nothing if not patriotic. The five years of war have but increased this vogue, and to-day we are confronted with an *edition-de-luxe* of his verse, which, since publishers are not philanthropists, means that the great public which neglected Meredith and Swinburne has taken Rudyard Kipling to its capacious bosom.

It may be that Mr. Kipling does not covet the bay leaves of the poet, but his publishers have put him forth as one. And the critics, obeying the nod of the advertisement managers, have lauded him extravagantly as a singer. The clergy, too, have included some of his verse in their hymnologies in order to divert a too strict attention to the other poetasters who contribute to sacred anthologies. It is all very diverting, for the blunt truth remains that Mr. Kipling is seldom other than a brilliant and spirited rhymester. *Departmental Ditties* are clever society verses, *Barrack Room Ballads*, *The Seven Seas*, and *The Five Nations* are more evidence of a poet in heart than of an artist in expression. They are stirring, these metrical and verbal effects, but they are not "the linked

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sweetness, long drawn out" of real poetry. The golden music of Swinburne or the quiet dignity of William Watson is not paralleled in Mr. Kipling's pages. The smart audacity of *Tomlinson* serves only to remind us what such a theme might be in the hands of a great master of melody. The *Recessional*, if we have any canons to measure it, must show cleverness rather than poetry as the result; but we dare not dwell too closely upon Mr. Kipling's rhymes. To the wide public, to the people who admire George R. Sims or Mrs. Wilcox, Mr. Kipling may seem something like a poet; but to the lovers of real literature he is first and foremost a romancer who can hold his audience surely with his stories.

Much has been made of Mr. Kipling's politics, and more of his piety. The curled, perfumed darlings of the Tory press acclaim him proudly as the most religious poet since old John Dryden, and the sad-eyed students of the Nonconformists retort sorrowfully that he has no "soul." This, however, is the merest and paltriest partisanship. Of all the thousands of gods created by men in their own likeness, the Anglo-Indian deity of Mr. Kipling is one of the most astonishing. For example, such high-minded sentiments as those expressed in *The Young British Soldier* ought to make pious penmen shy of claiming Mr. Kipling as a lineal literary descendant of Dr. Isaac Watts:—

> When you're wounded and left on Afghanistan's plains,
> An' the women come out to cut up your remains,
> Just roll to your rifle, and blow out your brains,
> And go to your Gawd like a soldier.

He uses Biblical illustrations with a freedom which reminds one of wicked old Sir John Falstaff:—

> Said England unto Pharaoh, "You've had miracles before,
> When Aaron struck your rivers into blood;
> But if you watch the sergeant he can show you something more,
> He's a charm for making riflemen from mud!"
> It was neither Hindustani, French, nor Coptic,
> It was odds and ends and leavings of the same,
> Translated by a stick (which is really half the trick),
> And Pharaoh harked to Sergeant Whatshisname.

Now and again Mr. Kipling leaves this fluent fingering of the keys, and strikes a deeper note. He has reproduced in startling fashion the wondering amazement of the Hindoo brought face to face with the Christian religion:—

> Look, you have cast out love! What gods are these
> You bid me please?
> The Three in One, the One in Three? Not so!
> To my own gods I go.
> It may be they shall give me greater ease
> Than your cold Christ and tangled Trinities.

In *White Horses* we are back again with the old patriotic piety and the old beautiful nonsense. Here the poet hints harshly that the very sea is bestowed by Omnipotence for the pleasing purpose of destroying the enemies of England. In the *Recessional* our wonderment is by no means lessened. The second verse, if it stood alone, might pass, though its best line, "An humble and a contrite heart," is no more novel than the National Anthem. Yet how curious is the association of the line just quoted to that other sentiment:—

> Such boasting as the Gentiles use,
> Or lesser breeds without the law.

We would not close upon this note. Mr. Kipling has other claims upon our attention than those of a versifier who has gutted the Old Testament. Writing at a time when so much of contemporary literature is neurotic and "tommyrotic," Mr. Kipling has kept on the old road, and witched the world with noble story-telling. Read with wonder to-day, we wonder if his charm will last. It matters little. He has an audience, and in the future the secret of immortality is beyond us, as the greater secret was alike to old Omar and his love. To discover how much choice of subject and novelty of incident have prejudiced us in his favour is not worth trying. "Nature's infinite book" is open to all. If Rudyard Kipling finds subjects where others had but found dusty material for dustier books of travel, so far from decrying such talent, we yield him praise for the pleasure he has given us.

MIMNERMUS.

The Nose of Freethought.

HAVE you a taste for philosophy? As a Freethinker your answer must be yes. The right kind of philosophy will take you through life, not without a tear—this it cannot promise you, but it will at least steer you safely past those phantoms of imagination thrust at you by priestly visionaries. You shall not waste your time in deciding whether a mouse, having partaken of a consecrated wafer, assimilates the Holy Ghost. Perhaps you, with Montaigne, in the fullness of your knowledge will exclaim: "What do I know?" But independent thought will make you cast aside as presumptuous the idea that a man was crucified to save you. In our travels we have seen chalked up on a wall: "Christ died for the ungodly." Someone with childlike simplicity had added: "And so did Tommy Atkins." We would not refute the *necessity* of a myth; we would refute the necessity of it when humanity had outgrown it. When Moses had brought the Israelites to the land of milk and honey, it was not necessary for him to see another fertile country—that is, create another myth. Honour to the myth makers! but let them beware of outstaying their—necessity.

Cyrano de Bergerac (published by Messrs. Heinemann, Bedford Row) is a fine play. Throughout the progress of it, in our mind, this myth idea kept recurring. For its philosophic qualities alone this play will equal any of the best modern productions. Cyrano's nose, his deformity, is a subject under a taboo. Cyrano is wit, poet, soldier, defender of lost causes, but he is essentially a philosopher. He is the sun and all the other characters revolve round him. In the mouth of a stammering lover he puts the glowing words that win for him his love. In a fight he accounts for seven ruffians. Upon the stage, he is the inspirer of a mediocre actor, but it is in the trenches at Arras that we confess we were held spell-bound. My readers who have first hand experience of trenches, without assistance from heroic bullish editors, will have their emotions stirred in this scene. The party has been foodless for days. In our own duration language it is "fed up." To be fed up is to be verminous, wretched, and envious of the *lucky* man who goes down the line on a stretcher. We will not elaborate this state for many can fill in the blanks. The party is reduced to despair; Cyrano calls to the piper to play a tune. It is a simple pastoral air; many of the soldiers remembering the scenes that the music recalls, give way to tears. Then Cyrano calls to the drummer to give a roll on the drum. This instantly pulls them together; they forget their hunger and misery and prepare for an attack, and Cyrano, by example and exhortation, lifts them completely out of their dejection. Although this scene is mounted according to a former period, it is a truthful picture of many during the late War. If the great fat-headed public could only have seen parts of the line a little over a year ago, our contemptible daily press would have been unable to sell its trash. In the words of our editor: "If war could be painted on a canvas large enough there would be an end to it." And, whilst so many can be out of it, authority will be no more pacific in its intentions in the future than it has been in the past.

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Cyrano accomplishes many courageous deeds, and, in the last scene of all, he appears in the garden of a convent. In this scene his words are full of wisdom. He tells a sister the old joke: "Sister, I ate meat yesterday." He loves the pointed word for a good cause; what is appearance? It is not reality. Dead or alive, his spirit is ever alert in the world of shams—it is on the side of the oppressed, it is against the dressed-up foppery of humbug. It supplies courage to the faltering; it pursues goodness and beauty in whatever protean shape it assumes.

In very truth readers, it is a man's play, it is a woman's play. It leaves a mark on the mind. The author has something to say, and we prick our ears, for this is something extraordinary during an epidemic of revues, and pyjama, and bedroom plays.

Spirit of Cyrano—truth is not always handsome. Often it weareth an ugly nose. The rewards of truth are not measured by the tradesman's gold. Modern society may be founded on a lie. Truth is keen—it is keener than the edge of the sharpest razor. The culture of a nation may even exist on the fringe of truth, and—the successful merchant, apparently, receives more honour than the scientist or the philosopher. But that will not deter any student of truth from his path—nor will it make him a tyrant wishing to *impose* his knowledge of truth on others. Farewell and hail! spirit of Cyrano, spirit of laughter and tears—spirit of life that long-faced Christians cannot understand—for laughter was disastrous in the Bible. Help us to understand man. In the words of "R. H. C.," in the *New Age*, "The gnosis of man is necessary to the gnosis of God; and God can well look after Himself and bide our time."

Cyrano's nose, his deformity, is a subject under a taboo, and Mr. W. L. Courtney writes in the *Daily Telegraph* that the real Cyrano (1620-1655) was regarded in Paris as a somewhat dangerous Freethinker. Dangerous to whom? we ask. Our reply is best given in Cyrano's dying words:—

> But since Death comes,
> I meet him still afoot.
> [*He draws his sword.*]
> And sword in hand!
> . . . . . .
> Why, I well believe
> He dares to mock my nose? Ho! insolent!
> [*He raises his sword.*]
> What say you? It is useless? Ay, I know!
> But who fights ever hoping for success?
> I fought for lost cause, and for fruitless guest!
> You there, who are you? You are thousands! Ah!
> I know you now, old enemies of mine!
> Falsehood!
> [*He strikes in the air with his sword.*]
> Have at you! Ha! and Compromise!
> Prejudice, Treachery!
> [*He strikes.*]
> Surrender, I?
> Parley? No, never! You too, Folly,—you?
> I know that you will lay me low at last.
> Let be! Yet I fall fighting, fighting still!

All men of spirit would wish for no better company than the foe to Falsehood, Compromise, Prejudice, and Treachery. It is a matter of public regret that this brilliant play is now homeless; that we should he denied the privilege of Mr. Robert Lorraine's acting and his company's splendid support is an excellent index of the spirit of the times. The purveyors of the rag-and-bob-tail flummery at present on the stage in London no doubt care for public taste as much as the man in the moon, and the valiant figure of a parson pushing a porter's truck during the railway strike indicate the last words in Christian culture. Is it only Moneybags who prevents you from giving the public something to think about, Mr. Lorraine?

William Repton.

Acid Drops.

We note the *Church Times* points out that it has information from "a sure source" that the head of the Church in Moscow has accepted the principle of Soviet rule for Russia, and is advising the people to support it. That is a striking comment on the lies that have been told in the general press here concerning the suppression of religion and the closing of the Churches in Russia. We have pointed out all along how false these statements were, and we presume that we are not far off the time when the truth will be told on this matter. The *Manchester Guardian* correspondent, Mr. Goode, pointed out in a recent lecture that in Soviet Russia there obtains complete freedom of worship, the Bolsheviks treating all religions with a good humoured and contemptuous intolerance. Naturally, the religious parties don't like that. Not to be granted special privileges is, to the Christian, equivalent of persecution. And Christians have always been careful of the truth in dealing with their opponents—careful, that is, in the direction of economy.

The *Toronto Mail and Empire* reports the case of a woman who complained to the court that her husband had only given her twelve dollars in three months. She said that her husband spent a lot of time in bed, but he went to church every Sunday morning and evening. The magistrate summed up the situation by saying the trouble with him was that there was too much church and not enough of wife and home.

An advertising expert has been lecturing on "How to earn £10,000 a year." It isn't worth doing. The good Bishop of London has told us that it only leads to the workhouse.

The dear clergy, who did none of the fighting in the War, promised us when peace came a new heaven and a new earth. A writer in the *New World* says bluntly "we only find a different kind of hell." A palpable hit!

Speaking of the poverty of the parsons, the Bishop of London (salary £10,000) said £137,000 was required for 1920, as against £85,000 for 1919. Two brothers-in-the-Lord (anonymous) were bankrupt, and another (also anonymous) had died of worry in an asylum before the news could reach him that his wife had been given £200. No news was given of the unhappy ecclesiastic who fed his family on sixpence a meal.

Mr. Jerome K. Jerome, who is an old journalist, says: "They talk about the editor's opinions. It's the advertiser edits half the paper." Yes! And think of the quacks and other holy innocents who do advertise.

A recent Spiritist publication contains an alleged message from Shakspeare, dated last year. It reads: "I will be a silent listener in the house of the immensities of my God." And whisky had not then been released.

Miss Mary Hall, whose death was reported in the papers last week, achieved the distinction of travelling from the Cape to Cairo without a white companion. She experienced from the natives nothing but courtesy and consideration. Mrs. French-Sheldon was another lady with a similar experience among "savages." So also was Miss Mary Kingsley. These experiences bear out the testimony of many males that, when one goes among primitive peoples who have had little experience of the rascality of the white man, there is evinced a consideration and rude hospitality on which one may count. The savage is much like a child in this respect. Treat him with consideration, and he will respond with the readiness of a child. But when the white man begins to treat him as an inferior animal or a beast of burden, when he outrages his tribal customs and generally regards him as a mere instrument for exploitation, when the problem becomes "how to make the nigger work," all the material for trouble is there, and the next white that comes along reaps the consequence. Someone has said that the only real savages in Africa are the white men.

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We travelled to Scotland a little while back in the company of an Indian tea-planter and his wife. They were quite an admirable couple, and, we should judge, of a kindly disposition, the man one who would most probably treat his workmen with every consideration. As a man, we think little fault would be found with him. And yet, running through all his talk was the quiet assumption that the only real justification for the existence of the people of India was that they might minister to the benefit of the white man—preferably of the Briton. This was not so much stated as it was taken for granted. So long as the native received food and shelter, and medical attendance, there seemed nothing else that he had a right to demand. And one could not help reflecting that, if this was the state of mind of a naturally amiable man, there were immense probabilities of trouble when the individual was of another type.

Incidentally, my travelling companion expressed great indignation at the tactics of some of the missionaries in diverting labour from the tea plantations of the traders to their own plantations. We do not think it is generally recognized to what extent the missionaries are interested, either directly or indirectly, in trading ventures. It is a capital policy—for the missionaries. The public supply the capital in the shape of subscriptions for conversion, and there are no dividends to pay. And religion, we have no doubt, plays a useful part in keeping in order those of the natives who are "brought to Christ." Industry becomes a religious duty and a cardinal virtue. The people at home subscribe for Christ, and the native abroad works for Christ —and the missionary sits at the receipt of custom.

A new Bishopric has now been established at Bradford, and for the present the Parish Church is to serve as the Cathedral. The *Church Times* remarks that for the present it will be well to go slowly in this matter, because if money were to be spent now on this project a good many people would ask, "To what purpose is this waste?" So at present it advises Bradfordians to be content with "a spiritual building." We assume that the Bishop will hardly be content with a spiritual salary. But one hopes that presently the intelligence of the country will be sufficiently developed to prevent large sums of money being spent on the erection of these costly Joss houses.

In Somerset and Gloucestershire the Church has organized a travelling cinema. A motor van has been fitted up and visits the villages giving its performances. Sometimes the performances are given in the church halls, where the rent is small, and the place is, we are informed, invariably crowded. We see no reason to doubt this, particularly as we are informed that "No effort is made to gild the religious pill; the promoters of the movement are out frankly to entertain with interesting drama, straight comedy, or events of world-wide interest." The move is artful enough. It counts on the stupidity of village people being great enough to conclude that because "Passon" provides a picture of Charlie Chaplin there is some ground for belief in the resurrection. Or a picture of Bill Farnum among the cowboys will be taken as evidence for the Virgin Birth. At any rate, the evidence here for Christianity is as good as any other evidence that we have come across. And the move serves to illustrate what we point out in another part of this issue, namely, that the Church to-day is quite ready to arrange for any number of scientific lectures, or lectures on educational addresses, since it sees that it no longer pays to associate these with heresy. Our real task as Freethinkers is to point out the bearing of the developments in science and life on religious teachings and doctrines. Unless this is being done we are permitting our movement to be side-tracked, and are even helping at the game. The direct attack on theology is more necessary than ever. The more the Churches seek to evade the real issue, the more it should be our concern to see that it is faced.

The Committee of the Conference of the League of Nations Societies has decided to advise that, while the Holy See is not a Nation, it is a Power, and should therefore be admitted to the League. We hope that nothing of the kind will be done. The Holy See is a *Church*, and there is no more reason for admitting that to a membership of the League than there is for admitting any other Church, or even the National Secular Society. The reactionary and out-of-date influences are already sufficiently strong on the League without their being made stronger by the official inclusion of the greatest reactionary of all. We quite admit that the Roman Church would prove of service to some members of the League; but if the League is ever to become an instrument for the real good of the world, the less religion there is mixed up with it the better. The Christian Churches have done nothing whatever to make the peoples of the world live together in peace in the past, and we see no reason for expecting any better influence from them in the future.

Something like a comment on our remarks in last week's "Views and Opinions" as to the relative rewards given to soldiers and others is seen in the appeal for £53,000 to purchase a property for General Haig. This in addition to the huge sum already voted by the Government. We should think more of General Haig if he declined the subscription.

"His father thinks that if you knock one devil out you will let in two," said a Bagshot woman to a school attendance officer who suggested that the boy should be thrashed. This remark was given in evidence in a case before the Chertsey Bench. It occurs, be it noted, in a country which has enjoyed the blessings of Christianity for many centuries.

The Rev. A. V. Magee, Vicar of St. Mark's, Hamilton Terrace, N.W., declares that in the East End "sixpenny messages from the dead" are advertised. Whew! Prayers for the dead bring in more than sixpences, but the Rev. Magee does not worry about that.

Providence is something of a humourist. Whilst the choir at an Acton church were hymning the Lord, thieves entered the vestry and stole their overcoats and belongings.

The latest news of the "starving" clergy is terrible. Church folk at Frinton-on-Sea are building a new place of worship which will cost £20,000. Estate to the value of £25,565 was left by Canon Nisbet, of Canterbury. The King has signed the decree authorizing a new bishopric of Bradford. The late Rev. J. Scott, of West Cromwell Road, W., left £15,476.

The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, in its issue for December 1, publishes a report of a lecture by a Mr. J. E. Bell that is really worth preserving. Mr. Bell is a theological "whole-hogger." He declares that the Biblical statement of creation is literally true. The world *was* made in six days, and it was only a few thousand years of age. The story of Babel was a true record of the origin of languages, and fossils were not formed to-day because, "if you throw a dead cat or dog into the canal, the fish and other things eat it." We know what the physical structure of the cave-man was, but we have often wondered what he was like mentally. After reading Mr. Bell, we are in doubt no longer.

Judge Bankes, speaking at London Diocesan Conference, said men had given up the idea of Holy Orders and were becoming policemen. We wonder if this will affect the veracity of the boys in blue?

The Rev. F. B. Meyer declares that he sent eleven hundred men from his own church to the War. Which commandments did he break?—"Thou shalt not kill" or "Resist not evil"?

Sir Arthur Yapp is still yapping on behalf of the Young Men's Christian Association. Appealing for more money, he said people did not realize that the War-work of the Y.M.C.A. is still continuing on a very substantial scale. From Ireland to Palestine the society was still at work.

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C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 14, Liverpool; December 17 and 18, Belfast; December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 21, Glasgow; December 22, Paisley.

CHRISTIAN READER.—We do not know on what ground you conclude that the case of stealing you enclose is the result of preaching Secularism. Is it because stealing is such a rare occurrence in Christian circles?

H. T. HUMPIDGE.—Mr. Cohen's work on *Religion and Sex* is now on sale.

G. G. JOSEPH.—We cannot see the force of your distinction between Agnostic and Atheist as the one being "without knowledge" and the other "without God." What is it of which the Agnostic is without knowledge? If it refers to God, then it is only Atheism under another name. If it has nothing to do with God, then it bears no relation to the point at issue, and becomes a subterfuge. The question of Existence, Force, or Cause has no necessary connection at all with the theological question of God. It is a confusion to identify the two. And you quite overlook the significance of the fact that it is only in Britain, the classical home of compromise and mental timidity, that Agnosticism has a vogue worth bothering about.

W. K. ANDERSON.—Professor Keith's work on the Antiquity of Man is the latest and most authoritative on the subject. A list of vestigial remains will be found in almost any popular treatise on Evolution.

L. MAYLAND.—We thought our answer to you on November 9 quite explicit. At any rate, we can only repeat that we do not and never have issued challenges, or challenged anyone, to debate. When we are asked to represent a responsible organization in a Freethought discussion we have never declined, but we do not fancy ourselves issuing challenges to all and sundry to tread on the tail of our coat. We have another purpose to serve on the platform other than that of merely getting a big crowd. We did receive an invitation from the person named but declined.

H. C. WHITE.—Many thanks. We will pass it on to Mr. Lloyd, who is the person concerned, and he will return it to you later.

B. SMITH.—We should be only too pleased to visit Bristol if a hall could be obtained. Will you see if anything can be done and let us know?

G. FINLAY.—We are as much in the dark as you are concerning the matter. Probably the habit of suppressing news, set up by the War, is too strong to be overcome easily. And when a people have been treated for five years as children, perhaps they, too, are not yet recovered from the treatment.

AUTOLYCUS.—We are obliged for references. We believe that G. B. S. did attend the Hall of Science in his younger days.

W. MINSHALL —All subscriptions to the N. S. S. are due in the January of each year.

G. GROVE.—You are untiring in your efforts to push this paper. Thanks.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

Sugar Plums.

We have to thank all those who have so generously subscribed to our Sustentation Fund, which closes this week. The sum subscribed will clear off the deficit to date, and, as we announce elsewhere, we have the fullest confidence that under the new arrangements the *Freethinker* will pay its way. When we say that, exclusive of the high cost of paper, which we do not count, because that should presently get cheaper, the permanently increased cost of producing this paper is at present between four and five hundred per year, to bring the *Freethinker* to this point is something at which we may all feel pleased. We count this as a permanent cost, because it is represented by wages, and no one anticipates a fall here. And wages, it should be said, means the cost of composing, machining, and shop expenses.

To-day (December 14) Mr. Cohen lectures, afternoon and evening, in the Clarion Cafe, Liverpool. His subjects are: at 3, "God and Evolution"; at 7, "Christianity, the Army, and the Nation." Tea will be provided for visitors from a distance. Mr. Cohen will then cross to Belfast, and lecture in the Ulster Hall on the 17th and 18th. From there he will return to Manchester, on the 21st, in the Co-operative Hall, Ardwick, Manchester. Any delay in dealing with correspondence during this period must be excused for obvious reasons.

Mr. Cohen had two capital meetings at Sheffield on Sunday last. There was a good audience in the afternoon, and at night the hall was packed, many being compelled to stand. A party of twenty came over from Barnsley to the meetings, and there were visitors from Rotherham and elsewhere. The large proportion of young men and women present was very noticeable, and cheering for the future. On the Saturday evening, Mr. Cohen, who was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Irving at Barnsley, met the members and friends of the local Branch for a chat. It is hoped that a hall may be obtained, and propaganda on a larger scale attempted in the near future.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures to-day (Dec. 14) in the New Theatre, Maesteg. There will be two meetings, morning and afternoon. We hope to hear that there has been a good muster of Freethinkers and their friends from the surrounding districts. Mr. Lloyd's lectures should be very welcome, with that part of Wales threatened by another revival. And there are few men better able to act as a counter-irritant.

We have barely space to announce that Mr. F. J. Gould lectures to-day (December 14) in the Repertory Theatre, Birmingham, at 7 o'clock on "The March of a Million Years." We hope the theatre will be as crowded with people as we are this week with matter.

Religion and Sex: Studies in the Pathology of Religious Development is the title of a new work by Mr. Cohen which is published this week by T. N. Foulis & Co. We hope soon to review the work at length. At present we can only say that it is an attempt to depict the part played by the sexual instinct and abnormal mental states in the perpetuation of religious beliefs. There is no other book that covers the same ground, and, to quote the publisher's announcement, "the author's researches cover a very wide field, from the primitive culture field onwards. Although strictly scientific in tone, the style of the work is fully acceptable to the general reader, and should prove of interest no less to the sociologist than to the student of religion." The book makes a handsome volume of about 300 pages, well printed on superior paper, and is published at 6s. Copies can be supplied direct from the *Freethinker* office. Postage, 6d. Those who are looking out for suitable Christmas or New Year gifts might well make a worse selection than a volume of this description.

"Freethinker" "Victory" Sustentation Fund.

Thirteenth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £363 12s. 6d. C. Bridger, 5s. H. C. White, 5s. H. Lupton, 10s. G. F. Shoults, £3. T. White, 10s. C. Wykes, 4s. S. Lidgett, 2s. 6d. W. Owen, 5s. D. Seddon, 10s. J. Shipp, 10s. E. Oliver, £3 3s. G. Smith, 5s. R. J. Thompson, 5s. W. F. Ambrose (13th sub.), 2s. G. Morrison, 5s. B. B., 10s. A. Coleman, 5s. R. Lloyd, 2s. 6d. Total, £374 11s. 6d.

This Fund is now closed.

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Belfast's Lost Souls.

[Scene, outside City Hall, Belfast, one Sunday evening. A number of fanatical and freakish-looking men and women of a type usually associated with evangelical Christianity are holding a meeting. They are clad in uniform similar to that of the Salvation Army; they carry musical instruments, and flaunt a banner. One of their number, the possessor of a radiant smile and glorious lungs, is appealing for converts—and funds.]

MEN and Weemen of Belfost,—I want to give my testimony to the great joy that has entered my heart now that I have lost God. (Hallelujah!) Oh, men and weemen, I was once a stupid believer, a howling Christian seeking salvation; but now, thank God, I'm an Atheist. Oh, I'm so ha-appy now that I've lost God. Oh, men and weemen, I want all yous Christians to stop believing, to lose God, to know how ha-appy you'll feel when you're lost souls. Oh, for years and years, I was seeking God; but now, praise his name, I've lost him, and I'm so ha-appy now I've joined my brothers and sisters in unbelief. Oh, men and weemen, poor saved Christians, don't delay, don't put off; don't say you'll put off being ha-appy, that you'll keep on believing a little longer. Oh, men and weemen, you may be too late, too late to lose God, and be so ha-appy. Oh, men and weemen, don't persist in your stupid believing; some of yous may say, "Oh, I've always been a miserable Christian, and salvation's good enough for me." Oh, brothers and sisters, men and weemen, that'll maybe do to-day when you're well and strong; but oh, when you're on your deathbed, oh, how you'll wish you'd been lost before it was too late. You'll cry out, "Oh, if only I had listened to th' infidel in Ann Street, and read his tracts about dying Christians, I might have been so ha-appy now." Oh, come away, brothers and sisters, flee from the terrors of salvation and the horrors of another world, come and lose God now, to-night, and oh, you'll be so ha-appy. Everybody's ha-appy in the Lost Souls Army. As the great Colonel said, "The time to be happy is now, and the place to be happy is Belfost." (Amen!) Oh, it's a glorious thing to be lost, to know there's no glorious hereafter! Oh, when I look round at all the smiling, ha-appy faces of the Lost, I feel so ha-appy that when we're dead we'll never meet again. Oh, thank God for guiding me to infidelity (Hallelujah!) and to the ha-appy hearts of the Lost Souls. Oh, come away, men and weemen, come to-night, come along to our hall, come and hear the glad tidings of unbelief. Oh, we're all so ha-appy at our meetings in Joy Street. You're all welcome, dear brothers and sisters. Never mind if you're steeped in belief; there's not one can be too good a Christian but what can be lost, come and be washed in the precious mud, come and join the ha-appy Army. We're now going to march to our hall; come along with us, men and weemen, you're sure of a treat. Brother Effel will be speaking; Brother Effel's sure to be speaking; Brother Effel's *always* speaking. Some say he speaks too much; but when you've lost God, what's half an hour when you know the world can never end? Oh, all our good comrades will be there at the hall to-night. Jim Wilkinson, the converted painter, all the way from Ballymacanett, is to give his testimony. Oh, it's a plain, unvarnished tale Jim tells. Come and hear him yourself. He'll tell us how he found the poor, trusting paper-hangers clinging to God; but, thank God, Jim could size them up. Oh, they couldn't whitewash the dirty passages in the Bible when Jim was about. He gave them coats of many colours of infidelity. And now, praise God, many a Christian painter has brushed aside his belief, and got over his distemper, so to speak, and now gives hell and boiled oil a flat denial, and pastes up the posters advertising the *Infidel*. Oh, Jim has made them so ha-appy.

And our good Captain Mawhinney will be with us to-night. Oh, the Captain's always so ha-appy. He'll tell us the old, old, story of his early struggles with the Christians on Thileand. Oh, it'll make you so ha-appy to hear it from the captain in his own words. Oh, men and weemen what the good captain suffered from these poor ignorant savage believers on Thileand! Captain Mawhinney tells us they were nearly all believers, scarcely one of them was lost, or had ever read the *Infidel*. Oh, brothers and sisters, it was hard to be sneered at and jeered at, and told to go to hell, when the Captain knew there was no such place. But Captain Mawhinney, always so ha-appy, with his pipe in his mouth, went on with the good work. He never lost heart, and gradually he made converts; and, thank God, hundreds on Thileand are now ha-appy lost souls. And wherever the Captain goes, into the engine-shops, and the boiler-shops, and the chip shops, and all the other shops on Thileand, he carries the *Infidel* and all our other literature. At first the captain did this in his spare time, but now, thank God, he's got no time to spare—for work. For thirty years he has worked in the vineyard—I mean shipyard—of the Lord, and even the poor saved Christians now respect him. Captain Mawhinney never hides his opinions, everybody on Thileand knows he's lost, in fact, Lord Pirrie himself often thinks he's lost.

Oh, come away men and weemen, come now, come with us to-night to our hall. Next week is our Self-Indulgence week; and, ah, we're going to be extra ha-appy all the week. The General himself will be be coming ("God bless him," "Praise his name," "Hallelujah"), to lecture on "How to lose God," and we'll have such ha-appy days. Now that we're lost, we can rightly indulge ourselves. There will be ham and eggs every meeting during our self-indulgence week, and them that's married will have sausages for tea (hallelujah) and them that's not married can have kippers (bless their name!). And monkey nuts and chewing-gum for the little lost souls, and squeaky balloons from Woolworth. Oh, we'll all be so ha-appy, but, oh, we need funds, we need collections. Throw in your money, men and weemen. Thank God for a bit of silver. Oh, give us funds for the good work. Our brothers and sisters will go round and collect. Don't be afraid of offending us, men and weemen, drop the money in the tambourines, put it in the comrades' caps, stuff it into the cornets, fling it on to the drum, throw it at me if you like, but for God's sake give quick and give plenty. Don't stop at nine and ninepence. Thank you, sir, God bless you, but sixpence is too much. Ten and fourpence, we'll have to make that fifteen bob. Oh, men and weemen, think of the lost cause, and help on the work. Give us money, we need funds, we can't have too much funds. Fifteen and twopence, I'd like to get a pound. Oh, we're so happy we could knock hell out of the drum. Brother Blowhard, why do you play the piccollo, that can't hold funds? Oh, come away with your brass, we're needing a thousand pounds for our Fresh Air Fund to take poor children to Glengormley for half an hour on the Twelfth. Oh, think of the children, men and weemen, you were once kiddies yourselves before you were saved. The dear little lost children at our hall are all so ha-appy now that there's no God to punish them when they break the furniture.

Now, we're just marching away to our hall in Joy Street, and we want all yous to join in and be so ha-appy.

(The banner is unfurled and borne on in front, the drum is soundly beaten, the instruments blare forth, and the orator, alternately facing the Army, and with

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his back to it, with waving arms and clapping hands, leads the singing) :—

I don't believe, I won't believe,
That Jesus died for me,
This talk of God, is all a cod,
We wish men's minds were free.

Cynicus.

Freethought in Unusual Places.

IV.

The Ballroom.

The expression of the modern tendency towards liberty of thought and of action is ubiquitous, and it would be hardly credible that the devotees of Terpsichore, who are so numerous, should not be involved in that expression. There are here, as everywhere in the field of human action, two parties: the retrograde and those who desire to advance; and naturally the former are imbued with the desire to return to earlier days, when all was well. Needless to say, my own feeling is not with them. The ordered stateliness of the dance in earlier times, the authority of the Master of the Ceremonies, and the formal repetition of a given sequence of movements by a large crowd of people, is a mirror of the life of the times, which were so organized that the necessity for thought was removed from the individual. Moreover, it removed the possibility of self-expression in the dance; and for what purpose do we dance but for joy?

The vast outcry last year against the Jazz step was an indication of the attitude of all who worship set forms. The modern ballroom is one which is organized quite differently from that of the era before the introduction of the equally immoral Tango, which has had so marked an influence on dancing. To-day it is quite unusual for a Master of the Ceremonies to be appointed. The dancers do not need to find partners to dance with. It is sufficient that one has a partner with whom to dance through the evening, and it is most important that the dancers should be well acquainted with each other. They must be temperamentally in unison in order to extract the greatest enjoyment from the art. They are not to be tied in the thongs of rule. A one-step may involve a number of movements allocated to that dance, or it may be jazzed, or it may be a mixture of movements taken indifferently from the one-step or jazz step. Similarly a fox-trot may be treated. And the orchestra simply provides a sequence of music to which the dancers may suit their own choice of steps. Further, the abolition of programmes releases the dancers from engagements with other partners whose dances must be acknowledged and gone through with, however much the desire may have changed before the time for those dances has come.

All this may seem to be towards anarchy more than liberty, but in practice it proves that the majority of people are quite happy without license if they are allowed to please themselves. The Godlike authority of the ubiquitous and troublesome Master of the Ceremonies having been removed, it is found that the amenities of courteous conduct are observed with as much, if not more, care than under his instructions. On an occasion within my experience, indeed, the authority of the official was nothing but an irritant, which spoiled an evening's enjoyment, just as the code, which the ecclesiastics seek to enforce, is one which destroys the happiness we could achieve in the only world we know.

The most retrograde, of course, would not admit that these innovations add to the enjoyment of the terpsichorean art. They prefer the set solemnity of those dances which are the repetition of a sequence of steps by all and every dancer on the floor, or the lusty, romping which is frequently part of the Lancers. They can hardly believe that they enjoy dancing unless they labour to the flow of perspiration. And it cannot be doubted that this also is a mental reflex from their view of life, wherein all should be bound in the slimy bonds of convention, and wherein each action must be dictated by the criterion of the possible judgment of the unthinking.

It will be remembered that the most determined onslaught upon the introduction and increasing popularity of the smooth and swinging Jazz step were ecclesiastics, who professedly had not seen the dance, but who, nevertheless, seeing its tendency, declared it immoral, and placed a taboo upon it for their faithful followers. The Press, willing to exploit anything that would add to its circulation—they are not blameworthy therefore in a commercial world—took up the cry, and behold it had become immoral! Later it was found, on inspection, to be mere innocent enjoyment; but that was not until it had obtained a popularity which was beyond gainsaying.

More important, however, than the strictures of priestly personages upon the immorality of innovations in the life and pleasures of the people, is that tribe of fanatics who are of no use for that they wish to do always as was done before; those who cannot realize that to-day is a new day. In all the teaching profession, whatever is taught, there is somewhat of this, and amongst the leading instructors in dancing at the moment it is fashionable to say that the Jazz step is dead, and that there is a reaction in favour of the valse, which is the only graceful dance in vogue. They forget that all the iniquities of Jazz and similar steps were found in the valse when it first became popular. These poor souls seem to believe that the mere antiquity of an institution is its criterion, and they base their judgment accordingly.

They, and the priests who condemn, and the people who refuse to believe in the new things, the new pleasures of the new people, are those who do not know the liberation which has been caused by the cataclysm. They confuse liberty with license, believing that the one is inevitably the result of the other, for they cannot trust material human beings who are not intimidated into acting as they think right.

It is just that lack of faith in the possibilities of human character for good that has led civilization into its turmoil. The principle of intimidation has sapped the vitality from our life. We look here and there, and we perceive the desirable, but we dare not obtain it. It is possible that the method by which we might bring the desirable into being would be illegal; it is possible it might not be respectable; it is possible it might be sin; it is possible we might go to hell; it is possible—oh, anything is possible as the result of our actions, except the possibility that our instincts may be right, and we may be proceeding in the direction of an improvement of this life instead of hoping for the prospect of the possibility of the chance of a throne in Heaven.

Fortunately those who are intimidated are decreasing in number as the innovations are understood and appreciated, and the reaction of each phase of life upon the others leads us inevitably forward. No one who is devoted to dancing to-day would care to return to the conventions of dancing of ten years ago. Correlatively no one to-day would have it that they should return to the state of mind of ten years ago. The events of the last ten years have caused suffering, but they have granted development out of that suffering, and it is just that which has rendered possible progress in thought, religious and political as well as scientific and economic, which shall not be confined to those who are profession-

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ally interested in these things, but shall spread among the people at large, so that to-day we see more clearly the fallacies under which we have laboured, and which we are determined to remove. And when we have removed them, the light that is now only percolating through the mists of fallacy will blaze out in splendour on the face of the earth.

G. E. FUSSELL.

Nature and Religion.

NATURE and Religion—normal and abnormal—usually coincide.

If you meet a person who is superstitious, aggressive, arrogant, or without any real ideals in life except himself, or one without respect for those outside his own sphere, you will usually find on inquiry he is either a member of the Catholic or a very High Church. The Catholic and High Churches apparently appeal to this class of individual.

If you meet a man or woman without humour, or one who is always willing to put any everyday episode in life down to God's will, or is inclined to interfere or criticize others, or is indecently puritanical, or one who is interested in tombstones or foundation-stones, and with a general dismal view of life, as a rule you will find this individual a fine Free Churchman or a rabid chapel-goer.

If in your travels you meet a man genuinely interested in life, one fair-minded and refined from a moral point of view—plenty of give-and-take—and one always willing to give in to common sense and decency, you will find as a rule he is either a man to whom religion does not appeal or is an avowed Freethinker.

The foregoing remarks are the opinion of one who has had the opportunity of studying the various natures of men and women—that is, the normal and abnormal.

A normal nature is capable of thinking for itself, an abnormal cannot, as a rule; therefore it follows that Religion appeals more directly to the abnormal. Churches and chapels evidently find it pays to encourage the abnormal nature for obvious reasons (mostly financial).

"SATIS SUPERQUE."

Notes From Ireland.

About two weeks ago I saw some rather artistic postcards of the Sacred Heart and Holy Child in a shop window, and entered to get some. When I had selected, the woman bade me wait a moment, and made a dive beneath the counter, to reappear with a large green card. "This," said she, "has nothing to do with me business, but is in connection with the society." Whereupon she urged me to pledge myself never to read immoral or infidel publications, especially those imported from London, blandly remarking the while that "she would not ask everyone, but she asked me because I looked an intelligent young man."

At first I brushed the incident aside as a bubble of laughter. Suddenly it struck me, however: Why did she ask me, an intelligent looking young man? Why didn't she ask the old woman who was at the same time wrangling over the respective merits of two pictures, each of a man in pain? Why does she not ask the middle-aged mental decrepits? Aye, why? I'll tell you. Because the man who has gone through thirty or forty years of Irish Catholicity is no more than a witless automaton, a withered weed, a broken bottle. He is devoid of originality in so far as the vital, significant things of life are concerned, while his imagination, where it is given to artistic creation, is crippled somewhat by the absence of intellectual freedom. To him life is a dark, dull patch of consistency—his opinions and prejudices are cast in brass. Now, what effect would the *Age of Reason* produce on such a man? No more than the falling of a solitary snowflake upon the top of an Alp or the twinkling of a star at noon. And this is so, not because the Church has removed his reason, but because the same One True Church has encircled him with its vile hemp and throttled in him the passionate longing for truth, one of the two great hallmarks of man's divinity. No; the confirmed invalids love their beds too dearly to rise. The traps are laid, black and ghastly and yawning, for only "the intelligent-looking young men."

Not far from me lives a doting old man, who devotes most of his time to hymn-singing and to praising God for his old age, his wrinkles, his infirmities, and his troubles. He is a swaddler. Well, the young urchins of the neighbourhood, goaded on, no doubt, by the old urchins, their parents, scarcely allow a week to pass without roaring in through his window, throwing stones at his door, and putting insects and crabs in his letter-box—and the poor old fellow, harmless as are all old men, keeps on gaily praising God!

Beauty is the only thing in the whole world worth living for. When a man frees his shoulders from the sable, impenetrable fur coat of creed, and, donning the ordered hem of Freethought, steps into the smooth glories of the mighty unyoked soul, let him see to it that he understands, that mere scepticism is not the tip-top of his freedom. Freethought is only the basis of the new empire; beauty must be the superstructure. The basis, the foundation, however, is our immediate concern, and in Ireland, alas! it is thin and fragile almost to invisibility. In Belfast, it is true, some advance seems to have been made; but I am afraid Belfast is a bad lead for the remainder of the country. If we southerners want to crystallize, we had better not point to the north until our birds are safely nested. Then, when we have a Branch of the N.S.S. in each of the other provinces, we can—ah, but when that time arrives all men will be perched upon a cloud!

Shall I Be a Priest? is a pamphlet published by the office of the *Irish Messenger*. This precious epistle is written by Rev. Wm. Doyle, S.J., and, up to 1917, thirty thousand impressions had been issued. God only knows how many more thousands have been sold since. It is full of sweet, innocent, lies. Permit me to quote some choice *bon mots*:—

> In the eyes of God and His Heavenly Court the priest is no longer a man, a sinful child of Adam, but another Christ.
>
> Deeply conscious of his own great unworthiness, his faults and failings, the priest can never forget that.....he is *the elect of God*.
>
> Strengthened by the power of great personal holiness the priest becomes indeed a terror to Hell.
>
> Priests, priests! send us priests!

And to wind up with the most terribly significant:—

> A sweet poet, Wordsworth, once wrote:—
>
> A mother is a mother still
> The holiest thing on earth.
>
> Had he known the Catholic priesthood, the sublime dignity and lofty calling of Christ's Anointed, he must have changed his words, since of all God's creatures there can be none more sacred than the priest whose body, hands and feet, whose lips, eyes, ears and very soul are holy to the Lord.

When one reads all this and then gazes upon one of these "elect of God," one's soul cannot but splutter with fury. To my eyes the face of nearly every priest is a red bulbous bit of masquerading morality streaked and shot with fish blood. Their lips are so soiled with the sinfulness of men and women that they regard themselves as hounds of heaven hunting in the fair, false, fields of hell. They are puffed up with the truth of their own falsehood. "As one knows the poet by his fine music, so one can recognize the liar by his rich rhythmic utterance."

DESMOND FITZROY.

All compromise with institutions of which your conscience disapproves,—compromises which are usually made for the sake of the general good,—instead of producing the good you expected, inevitably lead you not only to acknowledge the institution you disapprove of, but also to participate in the evil that institutions produces.—*Tolstoy*.

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Correspondence.

WAR MEMORIALS AND RELIGION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The local War Memorial Committee invited me recently to fill in a form stating the age, rank, war service, and other particulars concerning my late son, who was killed in action.

Of course, I was only too pleased to do anything I could to assist the Committee, and forwarded the particulars asked for, including a photograph.

On the other hand, I added a postscript, the substance of which will, I believe, receive your approval:—

> Please Note: My late son was a convinced Freethinker, and complained bitterly that he was compelled to adopt some form of religion before he was permitted to volunteer to serve his country. He mentioned in his letters that he had carefully obliterated the letters C of E (Church of England) from his identity disc.
>
> I wish it to be clearly understood, therefore, that my dear son's name must not appear in your records or on any memorial unless entirely dissociated from any "religious" reference.
>
> To quote his own words, he volunteered to fight, not for God or King, but for the liberation of mankind. He has made good, and it remains for me to see that the freedom he fought and died for is accorded to his memory.
>
> If it should be *necessary* to state the religious views of those whose memory you desire to perpetuate, you may put against my son's name "no religion" or "Atheist"—whichever you please, but I should object to a blank being left against his name, which might be taken to mean that his "religious" views were not known.

Would it not be as well if other Freethinkers adopted the same course in similar circumstances?

WM. SKEATE.

[We think the above a capital suggestion, and hope that it will be carried out.—ED.]

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LONDON.

INDOOR.

METROPOLITAN SECULAR SOCIETY (Johnson's Dancing Academy, 241 Marylebone Road, near Edgware Road): 8, Mr. Wm. Heaford, "The Superstition of Religion."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, 15 Victoria Road, N.W., off Kentish Town Road): 7.30, J. Perry, "Atheist Virtue *versus* Christian Vice."

SOUTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Trade Union Hall, 30 Brixton Road, S.W., three minutes from Kennington Oval Tube Station and Kennington Gate): 7, Mr. E. Burke, "Science and Superstition."

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY (South Place, Moorgate Street, E.C. 2): 11, Joseph McCabe, "The Place of Frivolity in Life."

OUTDOOR.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Mr. Samuels; 3.15, Messrs. Baker, Dales, and Ratcliffe.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BELFAST (Ulster Minor Hall): Wednesday, December 17, 8, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Christianity Before the War and After." Thursday, December 18, 8, Mr. Chapman Cohen, "Christianity and Evolution."

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Repertory Theatre, Station Street): 7, Mr. F. J. Gould, "The March of a Million Years."

LEEDS SECULAR SOCIETY (Clarion Cafe, Gasgoine Street, Boar Lane, Leeds): Every Sunday at 6.30.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Mr. Coun. J. W. Murby.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Clarion Cafe, 25 Cable Street): Mr. Chapman Cohen, 3, "God and Evolution"; 7, "Christianity, the Army, and the Nation."

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (White Palace, Pontypridd): 2.30, Mr. Owen Hughes, "Freethought and Freethinkers"; 6, Mr. W. Mainwarring, "Christianity and Socialism."

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Views and Opinions.

The Ways of God.

According to the Rev. Arthur Pringle, there are a great many Pagan survivals in Christianity. The discovery is made rather late in the day; but for the moment we are rather more concerned with that gentleman's way of enforcing his statement. It seems that during the War a soldier had just torn a leaf out of his Bible to use for shaving. Immediately after he was shot dead, and as he fell he said, "That's just like God." The incident may be true or false; but we feel certain that had God killed all who used their Bibles for other than devotional purposes, the German troops would have had a walk-over. Those on India paper were often used for cigarette-papers, and those on stouter material were put to uses about which we had better not speak. The curious thing is that Mr. Pringle thinks the view that God killed those who offended him is a Pagan view. On the contrary, we venture to say that it is most Christian in character. Indeed, if Mr. Pringle will turn to the fifth chapter of Acts, he will find the story there of two persons, a man and his wife, who were struck dead for trying to swindle the apostles. And is not Christian history full of similar stories? What of the "infidels" who have been struck dead for blasphemy? Of the catastrophes that have been sent on man because of his wickedness? Was not the European War itself declared from scores of pulpits to be the punishment of God on man because of his sins? And really, if there is a God, he ought to be doing something. At a time when there is an increasing demand that everyone shall earn his or her living, it is not to be expected that a God who does nothing at all will maintain his popularity. A God who went about punishing the blasphemer would at least be a God who attended to his own business. But a God who does not even do that becomes a negligible quantity in the affairs of men.

* * *

Christians and Pagans.

Of course, much of Christianity is Pagan—in the sense that its teachings, and its dogmas, and its symbols belonged to the pre-Christian religions long before they were ever re-named Christian. Indeed, if one were to take away from Christianity all that it borrowed from other creeds, what remained would not be worth bothering about. Virgins conceived god-begotten children long before Jesus Christ is said to have been born. Holy men worked miracles, were tempted by evil spirits, cured the sick by faith, made the blind see, demi-gods were crucified and raised again from the dead, long before the world had a version of these things from the Christian Church. People taught brotherhood and love before the Christians were heard of, and they robbed and lied and murdered as freely as Christians have done throughout their history. These things are all Pagan, they are Christian, they are religious. Even the art of torturing in order to induce a profession of faith, and of burning the unbeliever as an act of homage to God, is not quite Christian in origin; although, to give Christianity its due, it developed this side of religious activity, and applied it with a thoroughgoing and ruthless universality that none of the Pagan religions ever dreamed of. In only one thing could it honestly be claimed that Christianity brought a new feature into religious life, and that is the extent to which it developed the art of deliberate lying in connection with the perpetuation of belief. Nothing like the disregard for truth even among the best, or the deliberate forging and lying among the worst, that is found in the Christian Church, was to be seen in "Pagan" times. It forged documents and falsified records. It lied about friends and foes with heroic impartiality—even though with different aims. It made slander and reckless statement so common in connection with religious advocacy that their presence in the pulpit has ceased to excite comment. Certainly there are some original features about Christianity, but they are not those upon which emphasis is usually placed.

* * *

Christianity and Savagism.

A well-known author wrote us the other day that in his opinion there was an intellectual dishonesty which Christians seemed to acquire with their earliest years—which numbers of them never outgrew. That, we fancy, will become a commonplace with people in the future, as it is the considered opinion with some of our clearest thinkers to-day. And this cant of the Pagan elements in Christianity is a case in point. For, clearly, Christianity is not more moral, nor more sensible, nor more liberal than were the Pagan religions. And it is certainly not more peaceful. Pagan Rome could keep the peace of the world with an army of no more than 400,000 men. Christian Europe would utilize almost that number at a holiday review, and we have lately seen the spectacle of five million men from the British Empire alone take the field against the most Christian country in Europe—with the exception of Spain—a country which owes its decline to the prevalence of the Christian religion. To say that the Christian religion has Pagan elements in it is one thing. That is only part of the wider statement that all religion comes to us from the past. Indeed, if we probe the matter to the bottom the true parent of all religion is the savage, and if we take out his contribution there is nothing left in religion that anyone need bother about. But to say that

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there are Pagan elements in Christianity, with the assumption that these are the things that bring religion into disrepute, and that if these are removed there is some kind of a "pure religion" left, is an expression of that intellectual dishonesty which Christianity seldom fails to develop in its supporters. Take away Paganism and savagery from Christianity and what is left is a complete blank. Between enlightened thought that is really honest, and Christianity, there can be no commerce. You may disguise the primitive medicine man in the robe of the modern priest, or the primitive nature rituals in the stories of the birth, crucifixion, and resurrection of Jesus, or the magic working and miracles of the savage in the petitions of the modern devotee, but a very little thought enables one to pierce the disguise. And then it is not a question of discarding the Pagan elements and retaining the rest. When we have given up all that knowledge and honesty call upon us to give up, there is nothing left. We have nothing but the history of a delusion, the memory of a mistake.

* * *

Loss or Gain.

But let us be just to the Pagans. Christian misrepresentation, with its control of education and of the instruments of publicity, has set on foot the legend that whatever be its faults the Christian religion represented an advance on the religions of the Pagan world. But that is simply not true. The conquest of the Christian represented an all-round triumph of reaction and retrogression. It carried the world, not forward, but backward. It enthroned intolerance where tolerance had reigned. It glorified ignorance where knowledge had been appraised at high value. Can anyone seriously maintain that the Christian stories of an after life, with their pantomimic heaven and brutal hell, were really an advance on the conception of the future life? Was the Christian pantheon, with its emasculated and anæmic saints, a genuine improvement on the pantheon of the Pagan world? At the side of the old Greek gods, with their representations of physical strength and beauty, the pain-drawn figure of Jesus shows to but small advantage. Was the world really better for the exchange? What benefit had the world in dethroning the Pagan philosopher and enthroning the Christian theologian? It seems a poor exchange to swap Plato for Tertullian or Socrates for Torquemada. Take the Pagan writers, even on such questions as the existence of God or of the soul, and you have wise men struggling with an obvious absurdity. Take the Christian writers who succeeded them—and to make the comparison fair, and deadly, take them on the same topics—and you have a crowd of foolish fanatics making the absurdity the more apparent by their own incurable folly. No one who was not a monk or a fool would have preferred to live in Europe for the first thousand years after the establishment of Christianity than to have lived in the Rome of the Antonines or the Athens of Socrates.

* * *

The Cant of Peace.

Even on a topic that we have all felt keenly of late, that of peace and war, the Pagan world will compare well with the Christian one that succeeded it. We are within a few days of the old Pagan festival of Christmas, and the Churches will be filled with all the usual talk of peace on earth and good will to men. But when has Christianity ever brought this about? Instead of wars becoming more infrequent under Christian rule they have become chronic. Christian countries have never failed to make the profession of the soldier the most honoured, without humanizing the occupation or diminishing the occasions for its exercise. And we have just finished (?) the largest and most brutal War in all history without any organized effort on the part of the Christian Churches to either minimize its ferocity or to avert the severity of its consequences. We have seen the wholesale starvation of a people deliberately adopted as one of the weapons by which the conquering nations decide to work their will. We see poison gas and the wholesale bombing of defenceless villages adopted as regular methods of warfare. We see the Christian nations declaring that their armies must be kept up and ready, in spite of the fact that if the Christian nations of the world could trust each other wars would be practically impossible. The world will hear as much this Christmas as ever of the "Christian message of Peace on earth and good will to all men," but, fortunately, a much larger number than usual when they see what the world has become under Christian auspices, will know the hollowness of this century-old cant.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Man."

A REPLY TO THE "FREETHINKER."

SUCH was the title of an address delivered before the St. Matthew's Church Men's Meeting at Dyson Road, Forest Gate, on Sunday, November 30. The speaker was the Rev. W. R. Matthews, M.A., B.D., Dean of King's College, London. The discourse consisted of a courteous criticism of my article on the same subject which appeared in this journal for September 21. It would have been fairer to all concerned had the reverend gentleman seen fit to reply to me in the *Freethinker*, for obviously there could have been but few in his audience who had either seen or even heard of the article criticized. Through the kindness of Mr. Henry C. White, who took the address down in shorthand, I have had the opportunity of reading it. While cordially thanking Mr. Matthews for the courteous tone of his criticism, I am impelled, with equal courtesy I hope, to answer him.

Mr. Matthews began by calling attention to the "outstanding fact that there is only one portion of the world that seems to be able to progress." He did not inform his hearers what exactly he meant by progress; but he did say that "it is a remarkable thing that science, philosophy, and the arts have developed in the European nations only." Assuming, for argument's sake, the accuracy of that statement, I beg to point out that it in no wise supports the claim that progress has been due to the influence of religion, because it is an incontrovertible fact that for many centuries the Christian Church violently opposed all scientific progress, invariably persecuted and often put to death all progressive thinkers, and held the fine arts in severe bondage to itself. Does the reverend gentleman really believe that there was any genuine progress made in any direction during the Middle Ages when the Church was absolutely supreme? Did the eminent Saint Bernard of Clairvaux make for progress when he hounded to death such moderate advocates of the claims of reason as Peter Abelard and Arnold of Brescia? Was the Spanish Inquisition an efficient instrument of progress? Why, the only civilization worthy of mention in Europe during the Middle Ages was the creation of the Arabs, who were dominated, not by religion, but by their love of ancient Greek and Roman learning; and who, during their comparatively brief rule in Spain, were converting that interesting land into a place fit for heroes to live in. And why were these heroic lovers of wisdom so ruthlessly driven out of Spain by the Christian Church, if not for the reason that they favoured and worked hard for progress? Besides,

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is not Mr. Matthews aware that European progress, on any large comprehensive scale, began, not under the inspiration of religion, but as the result of the revival of letters in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries?

There are a few matters of mere opinion on which I am obliged to disagree with Mr. Matthew. In Judaism and in primitive Greek religion it was a common belief that rewards and punishments were to be administered in this world. Inasmuch as that teaching seemed to be contradicted by the facts of life, the centre of gravity was very slowly shifted from this world to the next. This idea is beautifully handled by Professor Gilbert Murray in his masterpiece, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, particularly in the lecture entitled "The Failure of Nerve." The older religions of the Western world were being considerably modified, and, in some instances, almost completely displaced by the Oriental cults, whose main emphasis was laid on the individual soul and its need of salvation through "a mystic union with a dying and resurrected Saviour-God, an Osiris, an Adonis, an Attis, a Mythra." There was thus introduced a radical change of emphasis. In the first place, it was a well-nigh universal conviction that the end of this world was close at hand. There are divines not a few who hold the view that the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, preached by the Gospel Jesus, was not intended for this vale of tears at all, but for some heavenly sphere beyond the stars, and that the legislation for it in the Sermon on the Mount is of such a character as to make it utterly unsuitable for earthly existence. Taking the New Testament, as a whole, the contention of those divines has the appearance of being well founded. Paul and John speak of the world as an object of contempt and hatred. To love both it and the Father at one and the same time is declared to be wholly impossible. As the Dean of St. Paul's said at the last Church Congress, Christianity is pre-eminently the religion of "other worldliness." In the hymns and liturgies of most of the Churches, the same sentiment finds oft-repeated expression. Christianity reminds us that "brief life is *here* our portion," that sorrow and care and even joy are short-lived, the life that endures being *there*. I am convinced that Mr. Matthews is radically mistaken in thinking that the Gospel Jesus taught anything about human nature as such. There is nothing in the record to show that he possessed any knowledge whatever about the world outside Palestine. The teaching of the orthodox Church throughout the ages has been that humanity is incapable of improvement without being wrought upon by supernatural power. It must undergo a second, supernatural birth before it can rise in the scale of excellence and worth, and Christianity has always claimed to be the only life-giving and life-nourishing power in existence.

It is perfectly true that Augustine was a man of genius, and wrote a few great books; but his City of God, like the Kingdom of God, was merely an interesting dream, which has never come true, and the same thing, on a grander scale, is true of Dante, whose conception of Church and State as the two departments of the Divine government of the world, met its only possible doom. My contention is that the Kingdom of God is an idea that has never found embodiment in human history. Augustine did much to mould the theology of the Church, but the Church and its theology have been and are but a dead weight in society, a veritable hindrance to progress. Why has Spain, not only stood still, but seriously retrograded? It was in the name of God and Christ that it expelled the progressive Moors and the non-Christian Jews; and that Christian country has been losing ground ever since. Russia, until quite lately, was a profoundly Christian, and, at the same time, the most backward country in the world—a land groaning under the fear of the Lord, and reeking with all sorts of unspeakable horrors; would Mr. Matthews call Russia a country of progress? Speaking broadly, history bears witness to the truth that most of our genuine European progress has been made in defiance of the Church and its hierarchy. The Church justified slavery in Great Britain and America until public opinion became too strong for it to continue its defence of it any longer. Some of the most prominent Abolitionists in the United States were bitterly denounced from the pulpit as abettors of Atheism.

In reality what Mr. Matthews presented his audience with was, as one who was present remarks, a series of "old fallacies dressed up anew." This becomes more evident still in the second part of his address, which commences with the entirely true statement that "if we are going to make any real progress it must be founded on a moral basis." That is frankly admitted by all Secularists. After making so excellent a start, the reverend gentleman goes astray in the very next sentence, which is as follows: "The fundamental thing about man is not that he is an animal, but that he has a mind, and unless you can satisfy man's higher mind you cannot make any progress at all—you may, on the contrary, with all your inventions, have fallen back into a worse state than that of barbarism." But what has that, if true, to do with man's alleged need of supernaturalism, or even with placing progress on a moral basis? More irrelevant still is "what we are going to say to everybody":—

> You are going to give up something which you have hitherto considered a private right, to subordinate your personal interests to the larger good of the brotherhood of humanity. We are trying to get you to merge and subordinate your private interests into the good of the whole.

I do not recognize any fundamental difference between man and the animals. I do not believe that man possesses anything of which there is no trace in the ant-heap and the bee-hive. Surely, Mr. Matthews does not mean to say that man is the only being on earth that thinks; if he does not, what is the force of the statement that the fundamental thing about man is that he has a mind? To me it is a meaningless statement, and is certainly not true. Most animals have a distinctly psychical life, and as soon as gregariousness appears life begins to be placed on a moral foundation. The social instinct in the ant and the bee rests on an essentially moral basis. Mr. Matthew's great mistake is that he treats morality as if it were not in existence until man appeared on the scene.

J. T. Lloyd.

(*To be concluded.*)

The educated wealthy minority, having freed themselves from the Church hypnotism, believe in nothing at all, and look upon every faith as an absurdity, or as merely a useful means of keeping the masses in subjection. The immense, poor, uneducated majority—consisting of people who, with few exceptions, are really sincere—being still under the hypnotism of the Church, think they believe in what is suggested to them as a faith, although it is not really a faith, for instead of elucidating to man his position in the world it only darkens it. This situation, and the relations of the non-believing, insincere minority to the hypnotized majority, are the conditions which shape the life of our so-called Christian world. And this life—both of the minority which holds in its hands the means of hypnotization, and of the hypnotized majority—is terrible, both on account of the cruelty and immorality of the ruling classes, and of the crushed and stupefied condition of the great working masses. —*Tolstoy.*

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A Saucy and Spurious "Science."

> Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour?
> —*Shakespeare, "Much Ado About Nothing."*
>
> Thus do I make my fool my purse."
> —*Shakespeare, "Othello."*

SCIENCE and religion have ever been deadly enemies. Scientific teaching and investigation, or, indeed, any form of intellectual liberty, has always been incompatible with assent to the dogmas of religion. The entire organization of Priestcraft has always been brought to bear against science on the ground that it is a solvent of faith. This resistance of the various Churches of Christ to the prevalent opinions of scientists has no clear claim to our respect. When we remember that the system of Copernicus, the discoveries of Galileo, the law of gravitation of Newton, and the Darwinian theory were all in turn received with contempt in the same venerable quarter, we are inclined to attribute that resistance, not to the weakness of the scientists' arguments, but to the priestly dislike of knowledge.

Chemistry was opposed as an impious prying into the secrets of God, and the early chemists were regarded as agents of the Devil. Physiology and medicine were opposed on similar grounds. Geology and biology were also opposed by the clergy. They resented inquiry, preferring that their dupes should explain natural phenomena by mythological invention.

After these many centuries of opposition, a lady attempted to build a golden bridge between religion and science. As the lady hailed from the land of tall buildings and tall statements, the new evangel was not hid under a bushel. It was spread abroad in the approved methods of patent medicine advertising, and to-day the Gospel of Mrs. Eddy bids fair to rival the older evangel of Jesus Christ. The newest of new Bibles, *Christian Science: A Key to the Scriptures*, of which the American Lady-Saviour was the author, appeared in 1866, and is now in its two hundredth edition, and the cult is everywhere growing in popularity.

The new evangel has been received by tens of thousands of half-educated religious people, reverent of learning, quite unable to discriminate it from its adulterated imitation. Mary Eddy, quite as indiscriminating as any of her readers, was equipped admirably by a nodding acquaintance with theology, metaphysics, and a pseudo-scientific vocabulary, and the gift of a tenacious memory, to give them the thing they longed for. One of her biographers says that Mrs. Eddy's "task was to re-Christian the verities." This beautiful nonsense means in effect that the Lady-Saviour uses common terms with an uncommon meaning, a habit which is sometimes associated with patients in mental institutions.

Mrs. Eddy was brought up in an atmosphere of Transatlantic piety, and, naturally, the Bible was her text-book; but she reads into the old work new meanings. This new rendering is Christian Science. She says:—

> God I called Immortal Mind. That which sins, suffers, and dies, I called Mortal Mind. The physical senses, or sensuous nature, I called Error and Shadow. Soul I denominated Substance, because Soul alone is truly substantial. God I characterized as Individual-Entity; but His corporeality I denied.

The last sentence shows that Mary Eddy was not a Christian. When she says that "soul alone is truly substantial," she is saying that black is white, and that a square is a circle. Such paradoxes are startling, but in Christian Science they are as common as "leaves in Vallombrosa."

Words are Mary Eddy's stock-in-trade. Her pomp of court and her priesthood are verbosity—mere words. There are five hundred pages of polysyllabic words in her book. To a reader familiar with the sober use of scientific terms, her explanations and definitions are delirious jargon. They are the bastard offspring of a riotous imagination playing, in the light of half-grasped ideas from the scientists, upon resonant words. For example, here is a—definition:—

> Matter, mythology, mortality; another name for mortal mind; illusion, intelligence, substance, and life in non-intelligence and mortality; life resulting in death, and death in life; sensation in the sensationless; mind originating in matter; the opposite of truth; the opposite of God; that of which immortal mind takes no cognisance; that which mortal mind sees, feels, tastes, and smells in belief.

The author of this evangel from Earlswood, this farrago of nonsense, has been hailed appropriately as a teacher "second only to Jesus Christ." It was only proper, therefore, that she should regard matter, mythology, and mortality as synonymous. Even the Master, who considered a "whale" was a "fish," could hardly improve upon this colossal blunder.

The topsy-turvy nature of the new evangel is shown by another quotation from the divine revelation:—

> The metaphysics of Christian Science prove the rule by inversion.

For example:—

> There is no pain in truth, and there is no truth in pain.

Yet Mary Eddy, with pain, regrets that ontology receives less attention than physiology, and relates the following improving anecdote, worthy of the saucy and audacious writers of the Holy Bible:—

> It is related that a father, anxious to try such an experiment, plunged his infant baby, only a few hours old, into water for several minutes, and repeated this operation daily, until the child could remain under water twenty minutes, moving and playing without harm like a fish. Parents should remember this, and so learn how to develop their children properly on dry land.

Truly, a fishy story! It is as believable as the yarn of Jonah and the Whale. What, in the name of common sense, did the Lady-Saviour suppose ontology to mean? It is fitting that such a teacher should give her disciples a form of prayer and a confession of faith which bears the same resemblance to the "Lord's Prayer" that margarine does to butter. Observe, the high-priestess of the new faith strutted in borrowed plumes, and charged three hundred dollars for a dozen lessons. No American oil-king, no beef-trust baron, no provision profiteer, ever kept a keener eye or a tighter fist on money—the only material thing in existence which Christian Science allows to be real. She never allowed a dollar that had no friends to get by her alive. In short, Mary Eddy was a religious "boss" like General Booth the first.

We set out in a spirit of inquiry to make a serious examination of Mary Eddy's claims. But this nonsensual system makes us tired; for of all the strange, frantic, and incomprehensible books which have emanated from the half-crazy brains of religious maniacs, this book is one of the worst. It is more incoherent than the Christian Bible. Beside it Joe Smith's *Book of Mormon* is a plain unvarnished tale; and the ravings of Joanna Southcott but simple prose. The *Forty Coming Wonders* of Prophet Baxter is shrinking modesty compared with the impudent effusion of Mary Eddy. This Yankee Bible takes the breath away, and makes the head swim. No other less colloquial phrase can so aptly

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describe the effects of claims so far from sanity. One reels back from the insane heights of Christian "science" to the simplicity of a rational system such as Secularism, suited to the requirements of the age, and freed from ignorance and superstition.

Mimnermus.

Scribes and Pharisees, Hypocrites!

According to Dr. Dillon, the Great War has "made the world safe for Hypocrisy." This is certainly true in the sense that it has made the world *unsafe* for the honest expression of opinion on many subjects; but it would seem also to have made the barefaced practice of hypocrisy more common and less liable to challenge. The greatest instance of this on record is the new manifestation of the cupidity of the clergy. Formerly these saintly souls made profession of a disinterested zeal for religion, and endeavoured to appear as if they followed their Master out of pure love when they heard his voice crying to them, "Give all to the poor and follow me." True it is that in private they sometimes expressed themselves otherwise. I will never forget the remark made to me by a clergyman in the South of Scotland in reply to my deploring the existence of a large and well-filled prison there. "Weel, it's an ill wind that blows nobody good," he said; "if there were no prison, there would be no prison chaplain: and *I* am prison chaplain!" Publicly, however, the meek and lowly attitude prevailed. Now, in these changed times, the Dark Forces are voicing their claims with the zeal and insistence of a trade union agitator. In the Diocese of Carlisle they have made a corporate demand for "a living wage of £400 or £500 a year": £8 or £10 per week. In that same diocese they denounced the Railwaymen for demanding £3 per week, and one zealous clergyman "blacklegged" at the railway fitting shops. The citizens showed their appreciation of this truly Christian attitude by mobbing the reverend gentleman, who unfortunately escaped (under police protection) with slight injuries, mostly sartorial. But the whole country is witnessing this clerical clamour for greatly increased pay, for pay much in excess of that claimed by the workers; and this excess is "justified" by the tacit or spoken assumption that the clergy *must* be supported in large houses, with servants, conveyances, libraries, and all the accessories of the well-to-do. One of their number recently wrote to the *Times* a whining complaint that he had been forced to dismiss his gardener and coachman, and to do with two indoor servants only. Truly a man of sorrows, a worthy follower of that Son of Man who had not where to lay his head! As the Rev. J. B. Cochran truly remarked in addressing a congress of clergymen in the South of Scotland, during a discussion of the stipend question, "Religion can't be run on a sentimental basis; it must be run on a business one!"

One more very barefaced instance of clerical materialism occurred at Barrow-in-Furness this week. The vicar of St. Luke's, whose church and vicarage, by the way, are within a few hundred yards of the workhouse, made a public statement as to the chaplaincy of that institution, which has roused the ire of the Board of Guardians. "Nobody wants the responsibility of such a position," he said, "not to mention the meagre emoluments attached thereto." Now, the Board of Guardians point out that the reverend gentleman receives £30 for the chaplaincy, and only puts in half-an-hour on Sunday morning, and, occasionally, half-an-hour during the week. One speaker remarked that he ought to feel glad of the opportunity of ministering to the unfortunate, the lonely, and the aged poor, even without pay, instead of "grousing" and backing out of it for financial reasons. The Board agreed to write demanding an explanation from this Reverend Father-in-God.

It may be suggested that this outspoken selfishness is really an advance towards honesty. But I cannot admit of men who continue to teach the religion of Jesus, to preach with pious upturned eye the very doctrines which they openly repudiate in their daily lives. What is to be said of a priest of the religion of peace who preaches the precept of turning the other cheek to the smiter, and also presides at militarist meetings, or acts as a recruiting-agent, first obtaining exemption for himself? Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Preachers of renunciation and "other worldliness," whose worldliness can scandalize a Board of Guardians! With the intellectual dishonesty of a Jesuit these men teach doctrines they neither believe nor act upon, and without even the Jesuit's excuse that he acts for the glory of the Church alone, still more without the Jesuits' readiness to sacrifice himself for that end. Self-seekers, commercial-minded buyers, and sellers of truth, what shall be said of them? Only the words of Voltaire fit our need: "destroy the Infamous!"

H. Truckell.

Acid Drops.

We suppose size impresses some people. Evidently most of our "spiritual" guides are of this opinion, for they are arranging to publish the largest Bible in the world. It is to be hand-written throughout, and all sorts of celebrities will write a verse or two of it. The King and Queen will head the list. The Bible, when finished, will be over five feet in height, and three-and-a-half feet wide. It is then to be placed on show, and will be taken to "the Overseas Dominions as a great witness to the word of God." That will be enough for many. For ourselves, we cannot see that a lie is the more convincing because it measures five feet instead of six inches, or that nonsense becomes sense if you enlarge it. Still, we can quite imagine some people feeling that a book that size *must* be good. And of such is the kingdom of heaven.

The Bishop of London says he has known several cases of people who have been driven out of their minds through Spiritualism. That may easily be the case; but we feel that Nature has protected his lordship from any such disaster.

The Bishop of Birmingham, writing on the low birth rate, wishes to "foster the ineradically implanted desire for parenthood, which is inherent in every human heart." His lordship might address a circular letter to all the nunneries and monasteries of Europe.

The Republican group in the Italian Parliament is introducing a Bill for the abolition of the oath. There is said to be considerable support given to the measure among other groups, most feeling that the time is ripe for its abolition. It looks as though England will soon be a storehouse for these mediæval curiosities, and will serve to illustrate in the political world what Australia does with specimens of plants and animals. Freethinkers will remember the fight of Charles Bradlaugh on the oath question, but all he could gain was the privilege of dispensing with it. And the valuelessness of it is clear to all. "So help me God, it's true," is more often than not the preface to a lie; and the man who asserts that the Members are better, or more sensible, or more truthful because they take the oath deserves to be sent to the House of Commons for life.

The Carlisle Magistrates have decided that, although during the War concerts were allowed on Sundays at which a charge was made, this can no longer be permitted. What a lovely religion Christianity is! When it is a question of

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making war, anything may be allowed. But if it is a question of, not killing people, but providing rational enjoyment for them, then it is taboo. No wonder the late Sir Hiram Maxim was told when he was pottering about with life-saving devices, "If you want to make money, invent something that will help these Christians to kill one another." The man who gave that advice knew his Christians.

M. Vandervelde says he saw with surprise, when in England, Mr. Arthur Henderson rise before a meal and solemly offer a prayer. To a Continental Socialist the surprise is excusable. It takes this country to produce a hybrid of the character of the Christian Socialist. Abroad men generally try to find out where they are, and, if they succeed, publish their discovery. Here we generally avoid the discovery, or, if it is forced upon us, try to find some midway term that will convince both sides that we are with them. Result, a state of sloppy sentimentality and hazy thinking, that gives humbug a veneer of decency and pillories the sturdy thinker as a crank or an impracticable person.

The following occurs in the course of a review in the *Nation* of December 6:—

> If the word religion is to be extended to cover all earnest care for mankind, it becomes indistinguishable from morality.

That we quite agree with, and cannot see that the use of the word "religion" by people who are not really religious is any more than an amiable concession to those whom it is hoped to disarm by suggesting an underlying agreement where no such agreement really exists. And history and experience shows that you cannot placate Christians. You can only fight them and defeat them. Religion is not morality nor is morality religion, and it is useless trying to camouflage the one with the other.

The London Zoo has a number of new tenants. There is nothing, however, likely to rival the whale who housed the prophet Jonah.

In an article on the prevention of consumption, the *Evening News* prints the following: "No, it's not God's will that things should be so. It's man's folly." Evidently the editor believes in a limited-liability Deity.

The clergy, in spite of their superior airs, are very like ordinary folk. The Rev. C. J. Wigand, Workhouse Chaplain, of Winslow, Bucks, has resigned because the Guardians refused to renew his War-bonus.

One can generally trust a parson in office to more often take the wrong than the right side in any humanitarian measure. Recently the St. Pancras Guardians had before them a proposal that some unmarried mothers should be employed in the nursery, the mothers to have with them their infants, so that they might continue to feed them. This seems to us quite a humane and sensible proposal, but it was nevertheless thrown out. Miss Vance and others strongly supported the proposition, but its principal opponent was the Rev. E. L. Metcalfe, and he succeeded in inducing a majority of the Guardians to reject the proposition—presumably in the interests of "morality." It never seems to strike these good people that, whether married or unmarried, the right person to look after an infant is its mother. And the reciprocal influence is almost certain to be beneficial.

A Lowestoft Baptist pastor says that modern dancing is simply "playing into the hands of the Devil." This statement suggests the Stone Age of religion.

According to an American publication, the *Twentieth Plane*, Colonel Ingersoll is now a close neighbour of Lincoln, Emerson, and Whitman, in the next world, and in a "spirit message" Colonel Bob communicated the information that "we sleep four hours like your Edison." We wonder if these three distinguished men all sleep in the same bed?

The Bishop of Pretoria believes in prayers for the dead. His reason is a purely professional one. The people, he says, want prayers for the dead; and if his Church doesn't permit it, they will seek some other Church that does. That is quite frank. If you want to do business, you must stock your shop with the kind of goods that people require. Prayers for the dead or soothing syrup for the living, the modern clergy are quite careless so long as business is brisk.

From the *Daily News*:—

> Bolshevism is reaching into strange quarters. A little girl of my acquaintance said to her mother last week: "Mummy, I'm not going to say my prayers to-night, an' I'm not going to say them to-morrow-night, an' I'm not going to say them the night after, an' if nothing happens then I'm never going to say them again."

The story is quite good, although we remember meeting that little girl quite twenty years ago. But perhaps that was her mother, and we are dealing with the second generation. And it would never do for the *Daily News* to say that it took a story from the *Freethinker*. Still, we may console the writer that more than he find the *Freethinker* very good to steal from.

Bishop Welldon declares that a Christian gentleman could not lie. The Holy Bible declares all men to be liars, so there you are! In any event, the Christian must believe a good many falsehoods, or else he ceases to be a Christian.

His lordship, the poor Bishop of London (bachelor, £200 weekly) has once again been delighting congregations with his views on economy and Church finance. It is quite clear that his lordship is not happy among figures, "He cannot help it," said a witty Irishman, "he lives in the *Waste*—End of London."

The Vicar of Leeds says there are clergy who do not get enough to eat. He should pray for the return of the ravens who fed Elijah, the prophet.

In an article in a literary contemporary, it is stated that "the moralist professes to find the modern dances (imported from the Puritan and teetotal United States) hopelessly immoral." We know that "moralist." He is generally a parson.

War, says the *Evening News*, always makes for violence and crudity. Really! And this after for four years talking day after day of the men being splendid, and the women being immense, of the altruism generated by war, of the brotherhood of the trenches, etc. For over four years our newspaper press poured its stream of lies, and now that the War is over we are told that wars always make for violence and crudity. When the next occasion arises all the old lies will be repeated, and the mass of the people, learning nothing from experience, will devour their morning and evening papers with the trustfulness of a fly alighting on a sheet of prepared paper. Newspapers should be organs of enlightenment, they are more and more organs of demoralization.

The new Bishop of Bradford says that he would not have accepted the "call," but that he and his wife turned up as texts for the day what they regarded as a clear call from God. So we must take it as granted that God who could not interfere in the War, takes a decided interest in who shall be Bishop of Bradford. And man is said to be a rational being.

For jumping over tombstones in a churchyard at Aldershot four boys were fined ten shillings each. They were, it was stated, waiting for their friends to come out of church.

The Church of England Enabling Bill has passed through the Houses of Parliament. Put in a nutshell, this precious Bill enables the Church of England to derive national benefit from national funds without national control and State supervision.

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The "Freethinker."

Three weeks ago I promised a statement with regard to the future of this journal. I have nothing alarming to say, and what I have to say will surprise no one who knows the state of the printing trade.

During the five years of war we struggled against raising the price of the *Freethinker*. We did succeed—thanks to the generous help of our readers—in keeping the paper at its pre-war price, and I think this is about the only journal in Britain which achieved that distinction.

When Armistice came we consoled ourselves with the reflection that if things did not get better, we had at least got them at their worst. In that we were mistaken. Since November, 1918, there have been two rises in wages in the printing trade, and a third is now due. The exact amount of this it is impossible to say at the moment, but it will mean a substantial addition to cost, and this on top of a wages bill that is already more than twice the pre-war figure.

Now, if nothing is done, this would mean keeping the Sustentation Fund as an annual feature, and it would also mean that next year the new increase would have to be added to the present deficit. But I do not think this is a good thing to do in face of the present situation. Friends have been so good, and given so readily, that I feel it my duty to do away with the necessity for their giving, if it is at all possible. And I think we must face the fact that values are permanently altered, and that we must adjust ourselves to the changed circumstances.

It must also be remembered that the income of the *Freethinker* is derived solely from sales. Its advertising revenue is almost a negligible quantity; it makes no charge for advertising any Secular Society, and it has no subsidy in any shape or form. Of its importance to the Cause I need say little. Without it our Movement could not be where it is, and even though it is without capital, it has during the past four years issued a large number of new publications, and has revived the literary side of our propaganda.

Briefly, what I propose to do is this. **Commencing with the New Year's Issue, which also is the First Number of a New Volume, the "Freethinker" will be enlarged to Sixteen Pages and the Price will be increased to Threepence Per Copy.** Purchasers will thus get more reading matter, and the paper will get a larger income. I also calculate that the paper will then be self-supporting, and there will, I think, be no further need for the Sustentation Fund. The increase in size and price will enable many things to be done in connection with the paper that cannot be done under present conditions. What these new features are will be seen as they appear, which will be determined by circumstances that are necessarily of an indeterminate character. We shall, however, with the New Volume commence the compilation of an index, which will be published, with title page, each year.

This is the only plan by which I can see, at the moment, to bring the paper back to its full size, open up greater opportunities of usefulness, and place the *Freethinker* on a self-supporting basis. But I shall be pleased to have the opinions of as many readers as possible as to the proposed change, with any alternative suggestions they may have to offer.

With regard to subscriptions. These will be as follows: 13 weeks, 3s. 9d.; 26 weeks, 7s. 6d.; one year, 15s. In each case postage is included. So far as those whose subscriptions are already running, these will be regarded in the light of a contract, and the paper will be sent at the old rate to the end of the period for which payment has been made. If any care to send the additional amount, the concern is theirs.

It is not without some disappointment that I abandon my ambition of making the old paper pay its way at the old price. But one must recognize the inevitable. And I may console myself with the reflection that but for the largely increased circulation since I became Editor, it would not pay its way, even at the advanced price. Moreover, threepence to-day is only three-halfpence in pre-war values, and so instead of a rise, there is really a reduction. Anyway, I think it may be taken for granted that I would not take any step affecting the paper without the most careful consideration. Of the thirty years I have given to Freethought work, nearly twenty-two of them have been given to the *Freethinker*. During that period there has been only one week in which an article has not appeared from my pen, and in addition to that being something of a journalistic record, it is a guarantee that I am not likely to do anything that would jeopardise either its security or its utility.

Should conditions take a turn for the better, no one will be more pleased than myself to see the paper restored to its old price. For the present, I am convinced that the plan proposed is the best in the circumstances, and I am reckoning on the hearty support of all the readers of the oldest Freethought paper in Europe. In that direction I feel sure there will be no disappointment.

Chapman Cohen.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 21, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

J. T. Lloyd's Lecture Engagements.—December 21, Glasgow; December 22, Paisley.

"Freethinker" Sustentation Fund.—T. Fisher, £1; Woman Reader, 5s.; O. Baumgartner, 4s.; S. E. Owe, £1 1s.; C. S., 5s.; J. Roberts, 2s. 6d.; W. E. Hickman, 2s. 6d.; Failsworth Secular School, £1 1s.; J. L. Fenister, 10s.; E. Youall, 10s.; E. Lyons, 2s. 6d.; J. H. Gartrell, 10s.

C. Lewis.—There are certainly some people whose minds cannot be altered in relation to religion or anything else. But the majority are susceptible to argument, and the only thing is to keep on pegging away. One must remember how much there is against one in the attempt to make people Freethinkers, and so be content with whatever ground is secured. And every little tells.

E. S.—Thanks for cuttings. Always welcome.

R. J. Thompson.—We are much obliged to you for securing us two new readers.

H. J. Stenning.—Will try and find room later, but are dreadfully overloaded with MSS. at present.

Kenneth Desmond.—Will publish in the New Year. Thanks.

H. M.—Sorry for delay, but we are simply overloaded with MSS. We could run a daily *Freethinker* without exhausting our supply. We hope to publish soon.

J. Edwards.—Sorry we did not get your report of Mr. Lloyd's Swansea lectures in time for use in last week's issue. Still we are pleased to hear of the fine impression he made upon his audience. We are not surprised at that. We should be surprised were it otherwise. And you will be pleased to learn that your own opinion is one that is shared by all Freethinkers.

One of our readers in Perth would be glad to hear of the address of another *Freethinker* reader in the district for the sake of setting up an intellectual companionship. We shall be pleased to help in the matter. Please address this office.

H. Taylor.—We are greatly appreciative of the interest shown in the *Freethinker* by the Failsworth Secular School.

V. Horn.—Sorry we have not room for so lengthy a letter. If you can summarize your case, we will try and find room. We do not at all appreciate your apology for time-serving Socialists

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who are afraid to come to grips with the religious question. Clear thinking and straight speaking is surely as essential in sociology as it is in theology. Our pamphlet on *Socialism and the Churches* was written to call attention to the need for more vigorous thinking and more straightforward speech among social reformers. And we are glad to see, from the attention it is arousing, that it is having that effect.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen is away in Ireland this week, and some of his correspondence will have to wait to be dealt with till he returns. We are indebted to Mr. Lloyd for seeing the paper through the press during the Editor's absence. And it will certainly be none the worse on that account. We are fortunate in our friends.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (December 21) in the Co-operative Hall, Ardwick, Manchester. His subject in the afternoon is "A Freethinker's View of the League of Nations," and in the evening, "How Christianity Began: a Christmas Story." We hope local Freethinkers will each bring along a Christian friend, particularly to the evening meeting. It will serve as a corrective to the Christmas "slush" that will pour from the pulpits.

Next Sunday (Dec. 21) Mr. Lloyd pays a visit to Glasgow. It is some time since Mr. Lloyd visited that city, and his arranged lectures in October were cancelled over the railway strike. His many friends there will welcome the chance of seeing and hearing him once again. He will lecture in what is now the usual meeting-place of the Branch, and we have not the least doubt that it will be crowded to the doors.

The second edition of Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Freewill?* has been in hand for some time, but it is almost impossible nowadays to say exactly when a book will be ready. The delay is entirely owing to the binders, but we hope that it will be ready directly after Christmas. We make this announcement in reply to numerous inquiries about the work. The book has been revised and enlarged, and, judging by the number of inquiries, we should not be surprised if the second edition went off more rapidly than did the first one. The work appears to have established itself as a standard one on the subject.

Owing to the Christmas holidays, the *Freethinker*, dated December 28, will be published on Monday 22. We shall, therefore, be unable to use any notices that have not reached us by December 19.

The Executive of the N. S. S. is arranging another course of Sunday afternoon lectures at South Place Institute during the Sunday afternoons in January. Mr. Cohen will open the course on January 4. His subject will be "Do the Dead Live?" In view of the wave of Spiritualism that is passing over the country, the subject should prove attractive. May we ask the help of our London readers in getting these lectures as widely known as possible? A full announcement of the course will appear in our next issue.

Mr. Lloyd had bad weather but delightfully enthusiastic meetings at Maesteg. In the afternoon the chair was taken by Mr. Webb, and in the evening by Miss Whitby, of Cardiff. Miss Whitby has brilliant and highly popular gifts, and is an exceedingly effective platform speaker. She is undoubtedly destined to occupy a high and honourable position among the leaders of progressive movements in this country; and it is pleasing to record that she is a thoroughgoing Secularist.

Mr. H. Black, Secretary of the Manchester Branch writes:

> Manchester Branch N. S. S.—Mr. Dan Griffith's first visit to our Branch on December 7 was in every way a success. His lectures were much appreciated, and it was a considerable disappointment both to Mr. Griffiths and his good audience at the evening lecture that questions had to be cut short to enable him to catch the train home to South Wales. Will members keep in mind that our next social is on the 27th when we hope to be able to give the children a happy evening.

Lady Dorothy Nevill has published a volume of Life and Letters, in the course of which she tells the following story of Lord Orford, her father, who was asked by the Norwich Bible Society to become their President. He replied:—

> Sir,—I am surprised and annoyed by the contents of your letter—surprised, because my well-known character should have exempted me from such applications, and annoyed because it compels me to have even this communication with you.
>
> I have long been addicted to the gaming table. I have lately taken to the turf. I fear I frequently blaspheme. But I have never distributed religious tracts. All this was known to you and your Society. Notwithstanding which, you think me a fit person to be your President. God forgive your hypocrisy.
>
> I would rather live in the land of sinners than with such saints.

HEROES.

There is the Open Secret Society of the heroes. Their mystery has been published in books, in songs, in world famous deeds of life and death, to all men of all nations and languages; yet only the heroic brotherhood really comprehend it, and are fully possessed by its inspiration. Other men may have transient glimpses of its meaning, and may thrill with its divine enthusiasm in rare moments; but soon the great door shuts, and they are cowering again in the darkness and the cold; nor can they even truly remember these rare moments in other hours and days, though they remember well enough the words of the chant, or the details of the action with which the inspiration happened to be connected. But one of the brotherhood understands and feels always. The mystery which he understands so thoroughly and feels so triumphantly is simply this: That in the whole range of the universe from highest heaven to deepest hell, there is no thing or circumstance, creature or being, dreadful to a man; that out of himself there is nothing which a man need fear; that no nature can be born into a realm unconquerable by that nature; and moreover, that the most dazzling lightening of ecstasy leaps from the blackest storm of danger. But neither he who writes, nor he who reads, is any nearer to the heart of the mystery through this interpretation; if he is of the brotherhood his pulse beat in unison with the throbs of this heart before; if he is not of the brotherhood his pulse will never beat in unison with these throbs—save at intervals and for moments similar to those in which the hands of a clock that does not go agree with the hands of another which is keeping true time.—*James Thomson ("B. V.").*

PRIESTS.

Where priests have much influence the gods have little; and where they are numerous and wealthy, the population is scanty and miserably poor. War may be, and certainly is, destructive; but war, as thou well knowest, if it cuts off boughs and branches, yet withers not the trunk. Priests, like ants, corrode and corrupt wherever they enter.—*Landor.*

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Some Dangers of Freethought.

THE man who so enlarges his mental horizon that he cannot accept the popular religious and social beliefs, certainly increases his happiness, but he runs into some dangers.

One of these dangers is that he may grow too conceited. When we have emancipated ourselves from the bald absurdities of conventional religion, we look back on them with contempt, and when we see some of our friends still clinging to them we are apt to forget how real they once were to us, and assume an air of superiority. I call this a danger because it weakens us to fancy that we are so wise that we can scoff at other people's honest beliefs, however foolish they may seem to us.

The Church is still a powerful institution, and superstition is deeply rooted in the sentimental instincts of ignorant people; to undermine them we should cultivate the strength of that wisdom which is strong because it is wise, and modest because it is strong.

Another danger is that we may become hard and bitter towards people who hold beliefs obnoxious to us, and towards those institutions, such as the Church and the State, which are fabricated by, and in a sense composed of, such persons. When we suffer ourselves and behold the misery that follows the teaching of men whom we consider to be hypocrites, thieves, and tyrants, and yet see these men installed in the highest positions in society, Church and State, by the very people who suffer at their hands, we are naturally inclined to hate these men, and to denounce them for what we believe they are. Such bitterness, however, only arouses increased bitterness against us, and does nothing to remove the injuries complained of, besides affecting our own serenity of thought and temper. And although every step of the formation of the Church and State was made with the purpose of enriching and empowering the privileged classes at the expense of the honest workers, yet it could not have been otherwise. If it could have been, it would have been. Both Church and State are monuments of the shrewdness, strength, and narrow selfishness of the few, and the stupidity, weakness, and superstition of the many. But they cannot be beaten down by hatred or violence. They will melt slowly away by enlightenment, as an iceberg melts under the rays of the sun. And, as it is irrational to hate institutions, so is it to feel bitter towards individuals. Most of those who lord it over, and live luxuriously on the labour of their fellow-men, do not realize what they are really doing; nor could they do these things without the consent and approval of their superstitious slaves. To me, it seems at first incredible that any sane man could possibly imagine himself to be the vicegerent of God on earth, and endowed with infallibility. But, on reflection, I can understand that the Pope may honestly believe thus of himself, for the human brain is a curious organ which plays as it is played upon, and it is possible that the Pope honestly holds an opinion of himself so extraordinary as to make him appear to me either a liar or a lunatic.

It is also very strange to me that a millionaire can find himself possessed of an enormous unearned income arising from certain bits of paper—bonds and title-deeds—while most of the workers who produce his wealth possess little but ungratified wants, and never suspect that there must be something wrong with a system that gives great riches to the idler and gaunt poverty to the worker. And it is still more strange that such a man can go to church and listen to all that Christ said about the rich and poor, and never suspect that he cannot possibly be a Christian. And yet when we consider the queer pranks of the human brain, and the difficulty most men find in thinking correctly, we are driven to believe that most millionaires quite fail to understand what is involved in their conduct. And we Freethinkers, who have emancipated ourselves from the prevailing superstitions of the day, will do well to avoid the small conceits and hatreds which often characterize those who are still in bondage. It is for us to show that clear thinking leads to largeness of mind, fairness of judgment, and mental poise. Observe the childish international squabbles that go on between the rulers and the rows among the politicians in the course of their schemes for power and spoils. Observe the silly quarrels that occur in the Churches about events that never happened, and are of no consequence whether they happened or not. Rulers bristle against each other, and lead their wretched peoples on to mutual slaughter. Politicians wrangle and hurl names at each other, each in his anger, telling the truth about the other. Christians quarrel, hating, persecuting, and vilifying each other. And all this has been going on for ages. Freethinkers should stand aloof from all such contemptible work, and win their way by persistently and dispassionately advocating their honest opinions, and trusting to the certainty that other men will adopt them if they are true.

Moreover, just in proportion as we struggle through the wilderness of superstition and approach the happy land of reality, our path grows more and more lonely. We can no longer listen with pleasure to the religious preacher, or the political speaker, or the half-way poultice reformer. Books, magazines, and newspapers that once pleased us are seen to be so full of specious fallacies and glittering falsehoods that they lose all their old relish. We run quickly against the limitations of our old friends—the points beyond which they cannot, or will not, think. People draw away from us, and we draw away from them. Our social intercourse is apt to be reduced to inquiring the price of butter or remarking that it is a fine day. Orthodox people live in such an atmosphere of religious and political jugglery, and have so many companions to share and sympathize with them in their errors, that it is easy for them to drift along, with their gods and angels, ghosts and fairies, baseless hopes and butterfly fancies. But with the Freethinker it is not so, and he must possess great strength of character to enable him to press forward, however lonesome the path may be. To go back is impossible; but so dear to man is the companionship of man, that to go onward all alone may well try both our courage and our confidence. The orthodox people are consciously or unconsciously studying us Freethinkers. Every mode of thought will be ultimately accepted or rejected, as it tends to make its adherents happier or not. If our way of thinking turns us into conceited critics of orthodox people and their beliefs; if it makes us hard, bitter, and unlovely, it will not attract men though truth be on our side. But if it makes us large-minded and generous toward those who disagree with us; if we become, as may be expected, fair in our judgment of others; if we grow actually happier—by which I mean braver and more cheery in our thoughts and demeanour—our opinions will commend themselves to those who hold them not.

It is wise for Freethinkers so to bear themselves that all who meet them shall have to admit how much more useful, honest, and agreeable they are for having emancipated themselves from the superstitions which darken the mind and poison the life.

G. O. WARREN.

Six days to mammon, one to cant.—*Whittier.*

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Oh, that Paradise!

I'm but a pilgrim here,
Heaven is my home.

I WAS once engaging in the gentle art of "tub-thumping" at the entrance to a public park in a city that shall be nameless.

In the course of my remarks I had the temerity to state that it was the eschatology of the Christian Church that was responsible for the adherence of its followers. To this day, I'm not sure what caused the outburst from the crowd. Perhaps it was because they didn't know what I was talking about, or if they did, that they knew I was speaking the truth and didn't like it; but whatever it was that caused it, the tempest raged. When it subsided and I withdrew from my hiding-place behind a blade of grass, I asked: "If it isn't fear of what lies *Beyond* that makes you Christians, what is it?"

And a dear old lady answered: "It is the love of Christ." "But why do you love Christ?" I asked.

A great silence fell upon the crowd. The *greater love* was dumb.

From a street corner a short distance away came the squeaking of an harmonium and a discord of voices wrestling with the delightful effusion. "There is a happy land."

That "happy land" is the summit of Christian hope. Their imaginations can evolve nothing more wonderful. All their efforts are directed towards this glorious consummation.

Christianity is based on two premises—a heavenly Heaven and a hellish Hell. If you take them away, what have you left? Certainly not a religion.

Before you can get anyone to believe in your religion you've got to threaten him and then cajole him. Christians are experts at this.

This magnificent religion, despite all its fine talk of altruism and brotherly love is the quintessence of selfishness. They deny the right of admittance to their celestial roof-gardens to all but their own select coterie.

I have often wondered whether a Protestant hates an Atheist much worse than he hates a Roman Catholic. These two sects of worshippers of the "true God" are about as happy in one another's company as a mud lark on a frosty morning.

It's a game. And the cause of it all is that little heaven and hell. *Fear* is the father of the gods.

There was a time (not so very long ago) when Catholics and Protestants used to go to the stake because their opinions differed as to whether bread became flesh in fact or in fiction.

Do you think they cared a —— anything you like—for flesh or soul? It was the little heaven they were after, and they didn't mind whether they arrived as a cinder or a sausage so long as they did actually get there. Of course, nowadays, the clergy do not pay so much attention as they used to the "father's house of many mansions." They are much more interested in seeing to it that there is a sufficiency of rooms in their own houses.

They are beginning to agitate for higher wages. But it isn't "our Father, which art in Heaven," they are asking for their daily bread.

He who feeds the sparrows is apparently oblivious to the prayers of his disciples. They are starving—on paltry pittances ranging from £10,000 to £500 per annum. Of a truth, they are much to be pitied! They are determined to have the best of both worlds.

It's a sad world, my masters! —— "ah, but there is a better world beyond." Yet we can't be too sure of that better land —— "eat, drink, and be merry, for to-morrow you die."

Who said you couldn't serve God and Mammon at once? Whoever it was, he hadn't been very attentive to the Holy Writ. Moreover, he hadn't seen our clergy of to-day. And if we do reach this celestial paradise, what shall we see there? There'll be a lot of harps and singing. And, I suppose, we'll all join in the chorus. It must be some sort of perpetual smoking-concert without "smokes."

But you don't get these free. Oh, no; that would be too good to be true. They hand you a ticket marked "John iii. 16," and tell you you need do no more. But thereby hangs a tale. This free salvation costs in "voluntary" offerings over £7,000,000 per annum in the Church of England alone. What the 13,000 beneficed clergy and the 6,800 curates cost the country he who numbers the hairs on our heads alone knows.

If I may be permitted to make a suggestion to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, he should commence retrenching by abolishing Paradise, and thereby stop the waste of the Lord knows how many millions a year. But, in the absence of this official recognition, we must continue to do our bit by ridiculing this mockery of civilization.

The ancient Greeks had their Elysian Fields, their Islands of the Blest. These weren't so silly as our Paradise, but they were silly enough to evoke the laughter of Lucian, who guffawed so uproariously at the idea of Helen of Troy living with a band of charming young men without eloping with one of them that all the ancients joined in the fun, and the Islands of the Blest became a thing of the past.

If we could only make Christians see Paradise in its true light, they would laugh too, and shame it into disappearance. Rudyard Kipling has a poem, *The Last Chanty*, in which he describes Paradise after the end of the world. It is a serious Christian effort to envisage the eternal bliss of heaven. Let me explain it to you. God wants to "gather up the sea." Then we have a series of objections. The objectors show the motley crowd that inhabits Paradise. There are "the jolly, jolly mariners," "Judas that betrayed Him," "the souls of the slaves that men threw overboard," "the gentlemen-adventurers—Fetter'd wrist to bar all for red iniquity," and, lastly, "the soul of a gray Gothavn 'speckshioner.'"

These gentlemen manage to persuade God to change his opinion.

> Then stoop'd the Lord, and He call'd the good sea up to Him,
> And 'stablish'd His borders unto all eternity,
> That such as have no pleasure
> For to serve the Lord by measure,
> They may enter into galleons and serve Him on the sea.

This is written in all good faith. It is as about as good a job as anyone could make out of such poor material.

Of the other extreme, Hell, Dostoeffsky tells a harrowing tale, which describes the feelings of the majority of people towards that abode of the lost souls where "the sublime mystic of the Galilean hills" has said "there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth."

The father in the great novel, *The Brothers Karamazov*, leads an immoral life. He does not pay his dues to the Church, etc. He is threatened with Hell. The priest tells him that he will be dragged down by hooks and chains, worked by demons. The whole of old Karamazov's theology consists in disputing as to whether or not there is a roof to Hell, for if there is, he cannot be pulled down by the aforesaid hooks, etc.

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This is a plain man's philosophy. He is interested because it affects *himself* physically. There is no love about it. But you and I, reader, needn't worry about either Heaven or Hell, for we shall never reach either.

H. C. MELLOR.

DOGMATISM.

Dogmatism, said Douglas Jerrold, is only puppyism grown to maturity. This sarcastic wit never said a truer thing. We call a young fellow a puppy when he is conceited and impudent, and we call a man dogmatic when he betrays the same qualities in controversy. Yet every Church prides itself on being dogmatic. Rome is dogmatic and Canterbury is dogmatic. Without dogma there is no theology. And what is dogma? An opinion, or a set of opinions, promulgated by somebody for the blind acceptance of somebody else. Arrogance, therefore, is of its very essence. What right has one man to say to another, "This is the truth; I have taken the trouble to decide that point, and all you have to do is to accept what I present you"? And if one man has no such right to impose his belief on another, how can twenty thousand men have such a right to impose their belief on twenty millions? This, however, is precisely what they do, without the least shame or compunction. Before we are able to judge for ourselves, the priests thrust certain dogmas upon us, and compel us to embrace them. Authority takes the place of judgment, dogmatism supplants thought. The young mind is rendered slavish, and, as it grows up, it goes through life cringing to the instruments of its own abasement.—*G. W. Foote, "Flowers of Freethought."*

FOUND OUT.

Come, let us damn him—he has fallen—
He that a week ago
Was listed with the high and mighty
Is mean to-day and low.

We knew he lied and gouged and cheated
To gain his wrongful ends,
But he was rich and we were flattered
To be among his friends.

Come, let us damn him—he is branded—
The law has brought him low—
He was as bad before—we knew it,
But it wasn't proved, you know.

—*S. E. Kiser.*

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Views and Opinions.

Cant About Christ.

"When in doubt, play trumps," is a maxim in whist. The theological analogue to this is, "When in doubt on what to talk about, fall back on Jesus." It is a quite safe card to play to a Christian audience, and even others will be affected by the familiar words. And so long as we only *talk*, without saying anything definite, about "getting back to Jesus," or "living up to the Christ ideal," all sects of Christians will applaud. It is when we inquire what these phrases mean that the trouble begins. As in so many other cases, Christians will agree so long as they refrain from discussing what it is they agree about. They are at peace with each other, just as a lion and a lamb might dwell quietly together in a thick fog—because one cannot see the other. There is harmony in obscurity, and agreement in indefiniteness. But trouble follows enlightenment, and Donnybrook comes with the dawn. Of course, all this talk of Christ is sheer cant. Preachers use it because it is the cant of their profession, and audiences applaud because they have been in the habit of applauding. Outside the Churches politicians and others, with an eye on votes rather than on principles, will say anything and do anything so that they may not offend the prejudices of the people.

* * *

Myth or History?

But all are not consciously dishonest who talk in the way described; and of these it may be said that they disclose a mental twist of a very grave description. When we find people talking of Jesus as though his existence was an historical certainty, and referring to what he said as though his utterances were as unquestionable as a Hansard's report, we are left marvelling at the type of mind with which we have to deal. For to an unbiased mind it is certain that the miraculously born, miracle-working, resurrected Jesus is no more an historical character than is the old woman who lived in a shoe. The uncertainty of the existence of the Gospel Jesus is admitted by many, the uncertainty as to what he said by many more; yet nothing is more common than to find these same people expatiating on what "Our Lord" said, and drawing pictures of the conditions amid which he said it, as though questions as to their genuineness had no existence outside a lunatic asylum. If this procedure so often escapes the direct charge of dishonesty, it is only because its frequency makes it a normal feature of the Christian mind. One may safely say that a Life of Jesus that takes for granted his actual existence is worth neither the trouble of writing nor reading. There is the myth of Jesus; there is no history.

* * *

A False Issue.

We are reminded that it is not Jesus the historical character that is preached, but Jesus the ideal figure. Maybe, although it is observable that while the defence rests upon this ground, it is the system which depends upon Jesus as an historical figure that is being upheld. Christianity, after all, does not rest upon its power to construct an ideal human character, but upon a series of statements concerning an alleged historical character. It must stand or fall with the historical reality of that character. But the ideal is as false as the reality is impossible. The ideal Jesus is not the Jesus of the New Testament. Certain teachings are ignored or modified so that they will harmonize with modern ideals; or the divinity of Jesus is dropped altogether. Not one of them dare take the New Testament figure and hold *that* up for admiration. The absurdity would be too glaring, the extravagance too apparent. Each reads into the New Testament exactly what he wishes to discover, and the authority of Jesus is claimed for the most contradictory of doctrines. Anarchists, Socialists, Conservatives, Free-lovers, and scores of others have all found in the teachings of Jesus what they required. And not the least curious figure of the motley group is the militant Socialist proclaiming as his ideal figure a celibate teaching the blessings of poverty, the comfort of misery, and the glories of non-resistance.

* * *

Working the Oracle.

The method of these Christo-maniacs is simple. If Jesus did not attend to specific evils, as in the case of slavery, credit is due to him for leaving this and attending to the larger issues of life. If it is then pointed out that in forming a broad and comprehensive view of life, Jesus was surpassed by nearly all the great teachers of antiquity, we are told that his greatness is shown by the manner in which he entered into the life of ordinary folk and left philosophical abstractions alone. If we say that in his teachings the function of riches—as in the case of Dives—is absurd, the reply is that he was aiming at the abuse of riches, although there is no hint of that in the story. If we point out that his teachings concerning the State and the individual, or the payment of labour are so vague that they may be accepted by all without affecting the policy of any, the answer is that he was content to lay down broad principles and leave it to time for them to work their effect. If we argue that Jesus as God should have known better than to have treated lunatics as being possessed of devils, the reply is that he was also man, and treated these beliefs from the human point of view. But if we say that his cursing

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the fig-tree for not bearing fruit out of season, the retort is that he was God also and had a right to do as he pleased with his own. If we say the teachings of non-resistance are absurd, we are told that this is merely a warning against encouraging the feeling of revenge. Asked for proof, we are told that any other reading of the text would be absurd. With people who are resolved to find in Jesus all that the wisdom and experience that the ages have to teach, argument is almost waste of time. A wall of prejudice is erected, and there is no prejudice quite so difficult to combat as that which rests on a lengthy course of religious education.

* * *

Christian Corruption.

People who are suffering from this Christo-mania are fond of telling us that Christ's teaching has been corrupted by the Church. Of course it has. What else could the Churches do? What can one do with an impossible doctrine but corrupt it? Corruption here is only another name for modification, and if an absurd teaching is not modified it is rejected. And how could any society live that practised no thought for the morrow, that turned one cheek when the other was smitten, that trusted in faith to move mountains, fasting to cure insanity, or celibacy as the ideal state? What is possible for a number of Eastern Yogis is not possible for ordinary human society. And all over the world Christian teachings have had to be toned down to meet natural human needs. The logic of fact is always in the end stronger than the logic of faith. In self-defence society was bound to interpret the four Gospels so that the interpretation did not seriously threaten its existence. Either that or reject them altogether; and the Church saw to it that they were not rejected in name whatever might be done to them in reality. And, from another point of view, these corruptions are really improvements. It is the same species of corruption that the animal frame has undergone from the simian to the human form. It is corruption from the standpoint of the old, but it is improvement from that of the new. The pity is that this is not more often realized. Pity it is not seen that the true use of the past is the lesson of its experience, not the attempt to continue its life. Pity also that our political leaders will not face the fact that nothing is to be ultimately gained by this pandering to religious fools and knaves, that each generation has its own problems which must be solved in terms of its own knowledge. It is pitiful that so many prefer to sacrifice ultimate good to a passing popularity, and to the worthless applause of the crowd.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

"The Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Man."

A REPLY TO THE "FREETHINKER."

(*Concluded from p. 619.*)

Too much emphasis cannot be laid on the fact that the moral sense, like all other senses, is a product of evolution. Ants and bees live in communities, subject to definite rules and well-understood regulations, with a clearly marked system of rewards and punishments. In other words, ants and bees are moral agents, observing a crude but distinct moral code. Prince Kropotkin, in his valuable work, entitled *Mutual Aid*, furnishes countless illustrations of the truth of that statement. Mr. Matthews gives expression to a wholly unscientific notion when he says that "the fundamental thing about man is that he has a mind," for science knows nothing of an entity called "mind." As Hugh Elliot puts it:—

> The modern doctrine stands in direct opposition to a belief in any of those existences that are vaguely classed as "spiritual." To this category belong not only ghosts, gods, souls, *et hoc genus omne*, for these have long been rejected from the beliefs of most advanced thinkers. The time has now come to include also in the condemned list that further imaginary entity which we call "mind," "consciousness," etc., together with its various sub-species of intellect, will, feeling, etc., in so far as they are supposed to be independent or different from material existences or processes.....The existing Universe and all things therein may be theoretically expressed in terms of matter and energy, undergoing continuous redistribution in accordance with the ordinary laws of physics and chemistry. If all manifestations within our experience can thus be expressed, as has for long been believed by men of science, what need is there for the introduction of any new entity of spiritual character, called mind? It has no part to play; it is impotent in causation. According to Huxley's theory it accompanies certain physical processes as a shadow, without any power, or any reason, or any use. The world, as Huxley and the great majority of physiologists affirm, would be just the same without it (*Modern Science and Materialism*, pp. 143-4).

The fundamental thing about man, therefore, is not that he has a mind, not even that he thinks, but that he is, metaphorically speaking, higher in the scale of existence than the animals. Mental activity can be traced millions of years further back than the first appearance of man upon the planet, and what is true of psychical activity is also true of ethical. No herd or group life is possible without putting into practice some ethical principles. In reality, morals mean nothing but the habits of gregarious animals. Does Mr. Matthews believe that the ants and bees are dependent upon supernatural aid for the degree of success in social organization to which they have attained? But if herding animals get no supernatural assistance, and yet manage to get on fairly well, why should it be thought impossible for man to succeed as a social animal without it? The reverend gentleman seems obsessed with the idea that we cannot prosper socially without "moral power," and it is evident that by "moral power" he understands supernatural power, for he immediately adds:—

> There is no instance in history of mankind where you have a really self-sacrificing morality not founded upon a belief in the supernatural. It is only when men believe that there is more in the world than you can see and touch, that there is the Eternal—it is only when men really believe that, are they, in any large numbers, prepared to sacrifice self to co-operation and subordination for the common interest.

That passage amazes me beyond measure. Has the Dean of King's College forgotten his history? Is he not aware that early Buddhism was pure Atheism, that its moral code was one of the noblest ever formed, and that for two or three centuries, prior to its conversion into a State-religion under King Asoka, it preserved India from the curse of war, provided hospitals for man and beast, and raised the tone of life generally? The Buddha "sacrificed" all to the commonweal, and lived an almost ideally perfect life. When he came to die he was able to assure the friends who were with him that throughout his long career he had relied upon himself alone. Confucius prepared a system of morality which all who know it admit to be one of the best in existence; but that great man urged his countrymen to ignore the spirits and to live as if there were no God. Yet it is the testimony of all who have lived among the Chinese that their morals are not one whit inferior, to say the least, to those of the most Christian country under the sun. No one would deny that Professor Giles, of Cambridge, is a competent judge in this matter, and he declares in more than one of his books on China that morally the Chinese compare favourably with Christian nations. Immediately after the Russo-

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Japanese War, the Editor of the *Hibbert Journal*, in a specially noteworthy article, raised the inquiry whether the moral supremacy of Christendom was not seriously menaced by the virile Pagan nation which had brought Christian Russia to its knees.

Confining our attention for a moment to Christian nations, I venture to ask Mr. Matthews, Have such nations derived any appreciable benefit morally from their belief in God and Christ? Surely, we need but cursorily glance at ecclesiastical history to discover that the morals of the Church have been, in almost every age, a disgrace to humanity. The lives of the clergy were horribly scandalous, monasteries and nunneries were veritable cesspools of moral filth, and the laity were certainly not better than their spiritual guides. I say this on the evidence, not of enemies of the Church, but of cardinals, archbishops, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, both on the Continent and in Great Britain, whose official reports, based on personal inspection, are still in existence. It is by no means pleasant to recall such loathsome facts, and I do it solely because I am convinced that Mr. Matthews' confidence in the supernatural is sadly misplaced.

Mr. Matthews rightly lays immense stress on the idea of brotherhood, and in this I am whole-heartedly with him; but what has the supernatural to do with brotherhood? The reverend gentleman asks: "Why should I regard people as my brothers? Why is a man whose skin is black of the same value as myself?" and here is his own answer:—

> There is only one foundation upon which brotherhood is logical. It is logical if we are all children of the same Father, sharing the same spiritual nature. Then there is no absurdity in asking me to treat a man, whom I may in the first case regard even as distasteful to me, as my brother.

This is the biggest fallacy of the whole address, and none is more common in Christian circles. It is true that the two main planks in the theological platform are the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man, but between those planks, though pressed hard against each other in the composition of the platform, there is no vital relation whatever. It is the merest cant to assert that ardent belief in the Fatherhood of God leads to a vivid realization of the Brotherhood of Man. It simply does not. Eminent Christians from this country, firm advocates of Missions, have visited mission stations beyond the sea, attended Communion services in native churches, and positively declined to partake in company with coloured converts. Mr. Matthews wants "to ask very seriously what guarantee have we, if we abandon the supernatural belief, that this great and essential idea of brotherhood will persist in the world?" I answer that for the persistence of the Christian idea of brotherhood, in the absence of the supernatural belief, we have no guarantee whatever, and because of this I rejoice. The Christian idea of brotherhood is false, because it means only the brotherhood of the saints. Already in New Testament times believers had come to be known as the Brotherhood, outside which lay the wicked world. The brotherhood was composed of the children of God, but the world of the children of the Devil. Do the Christians of to-day treat Secularists as brothers and sisters? Mr. Matthews may do so, for he verily seems to have the root of the matter in him; but he cannot but know that Freethinkers are generally boycotted and persecuted as outsiders. Does capital treat labour in a brotherly spirit? Are not servants generally looked down upon as menials? If brotherhood prevailed would one section of society be excessively, atrociously rich and another shockingly, tragically poor?

With much in the Dean's address I am in fullest sympathy. His social ideal and mine are identical, our only disagreement being as to the means of realizing it. What I maintain is that under Christianity it has not been realized, while Mr. Matthews wishes to give Christianity a new lease of life in the hope that it will bring it to fruition at some future day. My contention is that the Kingdom of God has had more than sufficiently long innings, and has utterly failed to justify its claims or fulfil its promises. I want the kingdom of man to have a fair trial, in the belief that it will succeed where the other has failed. To say that the two kingdoms are but one is to darken counsel by mere words. After all said and done, the kingdom of God is heavenly and concerns itself supremely with man's destiny in eternity, while the kingdom of man is of this world alone. This kingdom is founded on the fact of the natural brotherhood of mankind. The reason why I should treat all men as my brothers is because they *are* my brothers, and all that is required to make the fact real and vital is the right kind of education. If children are but taught and trained to regard and treat one another as brothers and sisters, the time will soon come when we can afford to lift up our voices and cry: "Behold, the Kingdom of Man is at hand."

J. T. Lloyd.

A Festival of Falsehood.

> Solemnity is of the essence of imposture.
>
> —*Lord Shaftesbury.*

> In this world, if you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you may just as well not say it at all, since nobody will trouble themselves about anything which does not trouble them.
>
> —*Bernard Shaw.*

> It is a lie—their priests, their pope,
> Their saints, their —— all they fear or hope
> Are lies and lies. —*Robert Browning.*

On the twenty-fifth day of December in this country fifty thousand parsons will assert that it is "God's birthday," and hundreds of thousands of laymen will pretend to believe that statement. Why God, who is described as eternal, should have a birthday, is a matter for congregations to settle with their pastors and masters. Non Christians regard Christ as a purely mythical personage, like all the other saviours and sun-gods of antiquity, who were generally born miraculously of virgin-mothers, and whose careers, like those of Jesus, were marked with monstrous events from the cradle to the grave. Whether there was a man called Jesus, who lived and preached in Galilee, is a matter of small importance. Christians worship the supernatural figure in the Gospels, and not an obscure carpenter, and have done so for many centuries.

The question presses for solution. Some of the higher critics are aware of the strength of the negative position, and they have not hesitated to assert that Christ was not an historical character. To save their faces—and their positions—they have even argued that it is the Christ ideal, and not the personality, that is the quintessence of the Christian religion.

Outside of the anonymous four Gospels there is no corroboration of the "old, old story." Yet Christ's life is said to have been so crowded with marvels that all historians should have been attracted by so extraordinary a career. Christ was said to have been born of one parent only, and popular prejudice is in favour of two. The importance of his birth was such that a massacre of children was carried out in the hope of getting rid of the prodigy. His after life is crowded with marvels. Dead people squeaked and gibbered in the Judæan streets; blind folk were restored to sight. Water was

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turned into wine. Thousands were fed with a few loaves and fishes. At Christ's execution a three days' darkness overspread the earth. After death he came to life again, and he finally ascended to heaven like an aeroplane. There has never been so astonishing a career, and yet, so far as sober historians are concerned, "the rest is silence."

Nor is this all. "God's birthday" was not kept regularly until many generations after the supposed date of the birth of Christ. In the earlier stages of the custom it was held on varying dates. The precise time of Christ's birth, like that of James de la Pluche, was "wropt in mystery"; but it was not in December, even according to the legends. For shepherds do not watch their flocks by night in that unromantic time of the year. Why, then, do Christians keep "God's birthday" on December 25? The answer plucks the heart out of the Christian superstition.

It was in competition with the feast of Saturnalia, one of the chief Roman festivals, that "God's birthday" was fixed in December. It was to counteract the attractions which these Pagan holidays exercised over the people that the leaders of the Christian Churches sanctioned and incorporated these feasts. The struggle for survival also incorporated other features. In the far-off centuries white-robed Druids cut the sacred mistletoe with a golden sickle, and chanted their hymns to the frosty air. These features were absorbed, and the mistletoe and carol-singing still play their minor, if amusing, part in the celebration of "God's birthday."

With the pharisaical profession of goodwill to men, "God's birthday" is largely pretence and make-believe. There is no "god" nor "devil" there at all except the "starving" clergy, who make millions out of this sham, and who hiss at the "intellectuals" who would free mankind from this superstition. The clergy are not deceived; they are too clever. They would sympathize with the worldly minded candidate at an election meeting who was asked by a fierce-looking Churchwoman in the audience, "Do you believe in the immaculate conception?" "My dear lady," sweetly replied the canny candidate, "I believe in all conceptions that are immaculate."

MIMNERMUS.

Pudding and Pantomime.

CHRISTMAS is a great feast-time. It is the time of year when we all abandon ourselves to eating and drinking; or, in other words, to stuffing ourselves uncomfortably full as a means of enjoyment. And above all things at Christmas-time, our Christian brethren betake themselves to devouring sundry portions of plum-pudding, many of them attaching some importance to the number and variety of pieces they partake as assuring for them so many "happy months" for the succeeding year.

Christmas, as every Freethinker knows by this time, is of Pagan origin. Yuletide was an old Pagan festival; but whether the Pagans, among other enjoyments, went in for devouring plum-pudding, I have never been able to ascertain. Among English folk, whether Christians or nothingarians, Christmas-time is mainly occupied in two ways—eating plum-pudding and witnessing pantomime. How many tons of plum-pudding are "put away" between Christmas and New Year's Day only the recording angel could properly estimate; and even he might be pardoned for making a mistake at such an awfully unbusinesslike season of the year. For plum-pudding I can find no religious origin. People do not seem to have eaten it either in the name of the Father, or of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost; and unless they took it on medical grounds, in *lieu* of physic, I cannot conceive why it was introduced and made to play so important a part in the Christian festival. But the fact remains that it was introduced, and people will go on eating plum-pudding every Christmas until some subtle-minded theologian discovers a verse in the Bible which will demonstrate to every simple-minded, pudding-eating believer in the civilized world that the Virgin Mary was the first to make a pudding, and that she made it on the anniversary of the birth of her precious son, Jesus Christ.

But what of the pantomime? That does seem to have had a religious origin; for I find, on looking over the stories which form the burlesque "opening" of our pantomimes, that they are based, with very few exceptions, upon ancient religious stories, or the folklore of ancient peoples. Let me give a few examples. The story of "Little Red Riding Hood" is an old religious myth, which originated in a study of ancient astrology. In the German story, Red Riding Hood is cut out of the sleeping wolf by a hunter (Clodd, *Childhood of Religions*, p. 120). So also is the story of "Tom Thumb," who was swallowed by a cow, and came out unhurt. And even the story of Jonah, who was swallowed by a sea monster, which ultimately cast him ashore unhurt, is a religious story based upon astrological phenomena. Indeed, they are all legends of the darkness devouring the sun. The story of "The House that Jack Built" is of religious origin. Edward Clodd tells us that there is a poem at the end of the Passover services used by the Jews which some of them regard as a parable of the past and future of the Holy Land. It contains ten verses, each ending with the refrain, "A kid, a kid," and it begins:—

> A kid, a kid, my father bought
> For two pieces of money.

And, after telling him how a cat came and ate the kid, and a dog came and bit the cat, and a staff came and beat the dog, and so on, it concludes thus:—

> Then came the Holy One, blessed is he,
> And killed the Angel of Death
> That killed the butcher
> That slew the ox
> That drank the water
> That quenched the fire
> That burned the staff
> That beat the dog
> That bit the cat
> That ate the kid
> That my father bought
> For two pieces of money.
> A kid, a kid.

Here we have undoubtedly the original story of "The House that Jack Built." But while it is interesting, no doubt, to know the source of the stories, it is much more interesting for us—at all events, when we are children—to see these ancient myths enacted upon the stage; to be taken away from the hard, cold realities of the world, and transported into a perfect fairyland of delight. To see our hero, Jack the Giant Killer, in the flesh, and gaze with fear and wonder at the Great Ogre as he comes out of his castle and, in a terrible voice, repeats the familiar words:—

> Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum,
> I smell the blood of an Englishman
> Let him be alive or dead
> I'll bake his bones to make my bread.

And, then, when we have witnessed the triumph of Jack, and hear the hearty laugh of the clown as he bounds on to the stage, with a merry little twinkle of his eye, and a slap on the face for his perpetual companion, the pantaloon, he exclaims: "Here we are again!" we feel quite happy, and, as children, decidedly affirm that

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life is not a failure. On the contrary, life appears as a grand panorama of change and variety; then, indeed, life is a blessing and a joy. It is, however, when we grow to manhood that we realize that these things are but fairy tales, born in the childhood of the world, and our maturer judgments compel us to reject them in favour of the stern realities of life.

And once we take upon ourselves the task of fighting life's difficulties, of overcoming the obstacles, real or imaginary, that we find in our path, we shall soon learn that, with all its troubles and trials, life is still worth living, and that duty well done brings its own reward in this world whether there's another or not. As the poet sings:—

What is my religion? 'Tis a thing by priest untainted
Pure and wholesome as the dewdrop on the newly-opened rose;
Fairer than the fairest object ever sculptured, sung, or painted.
And it brings a peace far sweeter than that olden creed's repose.
'Tis a thing that does not pander to the madness of fanatics,
But it grasps at life's realities and wrestles with the wrong,
And the heart that lives for truth alone can feel its mute ecstatics,
And betray its joyous raptures in the most enchanting song.[1]

Arthur B. Moss.

Acid Drops.

Christianity away from home is apt to become more ridiculous and more impertinent than ever. Thus, the *North China Daily News* published a leaderette stating that the Archbishop of Canterbury had promised that next year the Lambeth Conference would pass "judgment" on Spiritualism. A correspondent asked the editor did he mean pass judgment or express an opinion, as in the course of his letter he remarked that he was not a Spiritualist but an Atheist? The only reply the editor made to a perfectly civil and relevant enquiry was to quote: "I never argue with young atheists or habitual drunkards," a reply that brought the appropriate retort: "What can you expect from a pig but a grunt?" But the impertinence of the editor would pass belief if one were not acquainted with the kind of half-hearted education and wholly bigoted person who edits an English paper abroad. And one can imagine how a person of that stamp will appear in the eyes of an educated Chinaman. We can quite understand that the editor may have discovered from experience how hopeless it was—for him—to argue with Atheists. But we wonder whether his conviction as to the uselessness of arguing with drunkards is based on careful self-examination? Drunkenness is the only excuse we can see for the editorial impertinence.

Bit by bit the divines are doing away with the Christian religion. In the *Manchester Guardian* for December 10, a column was devoted to the task of convincing the readers that children should be frankly told that many of the tales contained in the Bible are not true. A soldier recently asked: "Why should we be taught as children what we find when we are grown up is untrue?" Curiously enough, the writer of the column just mentioned holds that it is only by admitting and teaching the fallibility of the Bible that "we can hope to restore and retain men's faith in it." So, likewise, according to him, the Christianity of fifty years ago is unbelievable to-day; and if the same rationalizing process is continued for another fifty years, there will be no Christianity left.

The Rev. Dr. Hutton makes, from his point of view, the sad confession that Jesus Christ is not yet known. Why is Christ still unknown? Simply because he does not exist. He is merely a fictitious character, variously conceived by different divines. If Christ really existed he would make himself known to all without the least difficulty.

The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, is preaching an entirely new Gospel, which is being severely criticized by many of those who hear it. What he means by it is his own version of Christianity, which, after all, is but one in a thousand. What Christianity is, apart from these ever-changing and ever-multiplying versions, no one can tell.

Dr. Jowett states that he receives letters from people who are "giving an undue ascendancy to the reasonable." Such people are multiplying everywhere, and the reverend gentleman knows well that reason and faith have never co-existed in the same person, for in proportion as reason prevails, faith visibly declines.

The clergy are still "starving" gracefully. One sufferer, the late Rev. C. N. Edgington, of Regent's Park, left gross estate £70,303. The Bishop of Liverpool announces a gift of £25,000 for the relief of the clergy in Liverpool and Bootle. The Rev. J. Oates, of North Finchley, has been presented with a gift of £873, with £47 and a set of furs for his wife.

Another penurious parson has passed away in the person of Archdeacon Bothalmy, of Bath, who left estate of the value of £48,859. Yet another starving brother, the Rev. J. B. Jameson, of Grayingham, left £30,766.

The will of Miss Rowland Francis Childers, proved November 13, provides that £10 be given for Masses, £5 000 to the Archbishop of Westminster for "Ecclesiastical education, and £1,000 to Father Pryor, of South Kensington, for his own use. And there are some people who talk of religion as being dead!

One of the annual pension items in the Finance Accounts of the United Kingdom is that of Earl Nelson, £5,000. The hero of Trafalgar left no legitimate children, and his titles reverted to his clergyman brother, and afterwards to his descendants. Yet it was the admiral, and not the parson, who won the battles.

Parsons and publicans dined together at Croydon under the auspices of The Strength of Britain Movement. We wonder whether they drank lemon-squash or communion port?

In a note on the anniversary of the battle of Ypres, the *Times* quotes in praise of the dead the line: "What God abandoned these defended." It is not literally true, since it implies that there was a God to defend. But it is true in its lesson that if people had trusted to God they would have been in queer streets. It is always man that does the work, and it is for ever God on whose behalf credit is claimed. Perhaps one day we shall all wake up to the fact that of all the illusions to which man has been subject none has been so disastrous as that of God. It sounds paradoxical, but if there were a Devil bent on the destruction of the race he could have invented no better instrument than that of belief in God.

A writer in *John o' London*, in an article on "What Lloyd George Reads," says that the Prime Minister does not like a book with a sad ending nor of a gloomy character, but he has the passion of the schoolboy for tales of adventure and daring. He is not interested in stories that deal with psychology or analysis of character. That is what we should have expected. Mr. Lloyd George reads as the shop girl or the man in the train reads. Serious works are outside his purview. That will explain his fondness for the chapel, which naturally caters for the emotional character without any particular intellectual depth.

[1] From *Woodland and Shingle, and Other Poems*. By John Rowell Waller.

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The *Daily News* says that the Metropolitan Tabernacle, London, is unique in possessing neither organ nor choir, and adds that Spurgeon had an objection to instrumental music in church. Maybe! The Baptist Boanerges certainly allowed a cornet to be played; and handbell-wringers were permitted.

Criticizing the democratic and scientific pose of the clergy, Mr. Frederic Harrison says: "Men whose studies have been for years limited to the half-savage legends of the Old Testament, to the myths of the Gospel story, to the patristic homilies, to the Tudor authors of Prayer Books and Articles —are not masters of mundane science." Excellently put!

Church cinemas are touring in the Bath and Bristol districts, and the advertisements state that the programmes include drama and comedy. If the clergy will only film Captain Noah's exploits, or the adventures of Jonah, the pictures of the easy-going East should rival in popularity those of the wild and woolly West.

Reviewing a book on Voltaire, a contemporary quoted the great writer's drastic remark concerning the Christian superstition: "I am killing a wild beast and you ask me what I put in its place."

The religion of the Man of Sorrows is not often associated with humour. At a tiny tin tabernacle at Acton a notice was exhibited inviting "all men over seventeen" to a service.

At Mr. Charles Coborn's farewell matinee at the Alhambra Theatre, London, the veteran comedian said that "it was good enough for the founder of Christianity to serve, and it should be good enough for us." Mr. Coborn then sang "Two Lovely Black Eyes." There is humour in the association. The Christian religion has been responsible for more black eyes than any other agency.

The *Glasgow Weekly Herald* reports the Rev. W. H. Campbell as saying that he found the clergy as a whole so ignorant of, or so hostile to, modern educational progress, or so jealous of their own privileges in the parish, that, as a body, they are a definite stumbling-block. It is a pity that Mr. Campbell does not cut himself adrift from so retrogressive a body of men. But we suspect that it is the profession that is responsible for the man rather than the other way about. We have known clergymen who would have been quite decent individuals in some other profession.

We are not without sympathy for the protests of the clergy of the diocese of Southwell against the inquisitorial methods adopted by the bishops before granting money to the "poor clergy." But we question whether the methods are more inquisitorial or more objectionable than those adopted by the clergy themselves in relation to the poor laity. The truth is that the whole system of relief in this country is just about as bad and as demoralizing as it can be. People who are in charge of its distribution appear to fancy themselves as so many littte tin gods, and demand the subservience that all gods expect from their devotees. The charity when given seems designed to perpetuate poverty rather than aim at its removal, or to prevent extreme distress. And, finally, we should say that there is more downright swindling in connection with religious charities than there is in connection with anything else in the country. But the net result of Christian charity has always had the effect of demoralizing both those who gave and those who received. And now some of the clergy are beginning to realize it in their own persons.

They are moving in Belfast, even though the rate be slow. Some of the Christians appear to have reached the point of doubting whether there is a hell. So we gather from the brief report of a debate in the Ulster Hall on the question of whether the Bible teaches eternal torment or not. Both disputants accepted the Bible as the word of God, and both seemed to be back in the early nineteenth century instead of being alive to-day. But imagine a number of grown-up men with whiskers—as the late Dan Leno would have said—debating a question of that character. And both would call themselves civilized individuals!

"As for preachers," said an American, "I've heard the Salvation Army, Moody and Sankey, Torrey and Alexander, and Billy Sunday, and continued in outer darkness. As evangelists, they're not in it with the motor-car makers. I bought a cheap one recently, and it shook hell out of me in less than ten minutes."

Two shirts and a nightcap worn by King Charles the First have been sold for ten guineas. How the clergy will laugh! They have made millions of pounds by exhibiting relics of a man who never lived at all.

Providence is in a rollicky mood. Three bicycles, belonging to worshippers, were stolen from St. Andrew's Church, Uxbridge, during divine service.

According to a daily paper, a letter addressed to the Archereque, Canterbury, London, was delivered to the Canterbury Music Hall. Quite a delightful association of Church and stage.

The clergy are getting quite excited about the popularity of Spiritualism. Evidently they are afraid of the effect of the fashionable cult upon their own people. Father Joseph Macmahon, a New York priest, says that he tried to read the proceedings of the Society of Psychical Research, and found the books full of "nonsense, puerilities, and worse." It may comfort the reverend gentleman to know that lots of people think the same of Roman Catholic books of devotion.

The Vicar of All Saint's Church, Southend, was the preacher at St. Mary's Prittlewell, recently, and denounced Protestantism. The vicar of St. Mary's, who is an Evangelical, replied the following Sunday. The *Tablet*, commenting on the incident, says: "The bewildered congregation can take its choice between the two religions taught with equal authority by ordained ministers of the Church of England."

Few people realize how education in this country is priestridden. In the Estimates for this year no less than £18,000,000 of money was given to Church of England and Roman Catholic schools, while 60,000 teachers and 46,000 managers were subjected to religious tests.

Father Bernard Vaughan says that "to-day's fashions are bizarre, distorted, and ridiculous." The same remark holds true of priests' petticoats.

In the ages of faith Christians sought to save people from hell. Now it is difficult to hear the word mentioned. A Church Army advertisement appeals for a modest £50,000 for huts for troops, excursions to battle zones, motherless children, employment bureaux, hostels, social centres, and so forth. The advertisement also states that "the work has changed but not diminished." So it seems! Presently they will sell hair-restorer for bald Christians, and pretend that they are preaching the religion of Christ.

At Lambeth Court it was stated that a dog had eaten a costume. At Lambeth Palace the dear clergy believe in a whale which swallowed a costume with a prophet inside it.

Here is a gem from the Fulwell Parish Magazine: "Christmas Day—3 p.m. Solemn Evensong and Cards."

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NOTICE.

Commencing with our Issue for January 4—No. 1 of Vol. XL—the "Freethinker" will be enlarged to sixteen pages and the price increased to Threepence per Copy. A full statement of the causes of this change was made in the issue of this paper dated December 21.

Readers will please note that the "Freethinker" is now obtainable through all the wholesale agents in Britain, and may be ordered from any of the railway bookstalls in the country. Any difficulty in obtaining copies should be reported to us, with a full explanation of the circumstances.

To Correspondents.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND.—Per J. Griffiths: W. Griffiths, 10s.; J. Griffiths, 5s.; Mrs. Griffiths, 5s. Total, £1. A. Aspden, 3s. 6d.; Geo. Dixon, 5s.; J. Glassbrook, 5s.; J. O. Connor, £1; J. M. Hill, 5s.; J. W. Arnott, 8s. 6d.

MRS. C. M. RENTON.—Thanks for information. We are not at all surprised to find that the Bishop of Colombo upholds the outrages committed under the plea of martial law which followed the riots of 1915. But what can one expect? Was there ever a bishop who did not support the powers which supported him?

ENDOR.—*The Biology of War* was reviewed in these columns when it first appeared. It is a very good piece of work, although rather expensive. The published price is 21s.

R. SIMPSON.—We should be very pleased to send supplies of Mr. Cohen's *Woman and Christianity* to women's societies at special rates. Glad to think that it would open the eyes of all women to the evils of Christianity if they would only read it. There is much virtue in that "if."

L. SOMERTON LOVE.—Glad to learn that you will soon be home again. We fancy it will only be a new field for you to work in. One can always find material if one looks. You do appear to have been very active where you have been, and we thank you for it. The paper is being sent as requested.

J. F. LITTLER.—No one would go to an organization such as the International Bible Students' Association for accurate information about the Bible. The whole aim of such bodies is to see by what means old doctrines can be made to fit in with new conditions.

J. GRIFFITHS.—Pleased to learn that you have so high an opinion of the paper. We hope to add to its value in the near future.

A. ASPDEN.—Your prompt action was in every way admirable. Hope it will teach the bigots a lesson. Shall be pleased to visit your town when possible.

H. CURNEY.—Sorry to hear the news, but hope there are better times ahead. The discussion ought to prove interesting.

J. M. HILL.—Thanks for season's good wishes.

A. W. SKILLING.—Too late for this issue.

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4, and not to the Editor.

All Cheques and Postal Orders should be crossed "London, City and Midland Bank, Clerkenwell Branch."

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C. 4.

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

Sugar Plums.

This is the last issue of the *Freethinker* of twelve pages. Next week it will be sixteen pages, price 3d. As this is the first number of a new volume, we shall be glad to receive the names and addresses of those to whom our present readers think specimen copies will be acceptable. These will be sent quite free, and it is an excellent way of gaining new subscribers. So soon as circumstances permit, we purpose launching out on a systematic plan of advertising. The boycott must be broken somehow or the other.

The necessity of getting out two numbers of the *Freethinker* in one week prevents our paragraph department being as well supplied as usual. Our readers will, we are sure, excuse this for once. As our next number will be enlarged by four pages, we hope to be able to give more space to paragraphic matter than we have been able to do for some time.

We were not able to get into last week's issue a report of Mr. Cohen's meetings at Liverpool on the 14th. These were quite successful, the hall being crowded in the evening. On Monday evening, previous to his departure for Belfast, Mr. Cohen met some of the members to discuss affairs. The immediate need is a hall that will serve as a regular meeting-place for the Branch, and various plans were discussed in relation to this. So soon as this is accomplished, some of the larger halls will be secured for special lectures. There should be a strong forward movement in Liverpool in the immediate future.

One thing brought out in the course of the conversation with the Liverpool members was the need for local speakers, or for some young men who would give their time to the work. This is a more difficult problem to tackle than appears at first sight, and the Executive of the N. S. S. is not blind to its existence. The matter has been discussed at Executive meetings more than once, and, while no solution has yet been found, we can say that the Executive is prepared to give every assistance that lies within its power to encourage such as feel they would like to devote their abilities—oratorical and other—to Freethought work.

We are asked to call the attention of Freethinkers to the fact that this paper is regularly on sale at 128 Langlands Road, Govan, Glasgow. "Saints" in the district will please note.

Beneath the Bell.

A SMALL tin bell rings mournfully at three;
Then little Katie, Jane, and Florrie West
Are sent with Willie Wills and Harold Lee—
Complete with Bibles—in their Sunday best
To Sabbath-school, where Mr. Mill will tell
Of doubting Thomas, Judas, Christ, and Hell;
Of God's great love, and mankind deep in sin;
Also exactly how and where to win
A splendid seat in paradise when dead.
All this, and much beside, the children hear;
How little souls, hard fettered by life's lead,
May gain God's favour when their time is near,
And penetrate beyond the Pearly Gate,
Where bright-winged angels, jewels, and fairy lights
Are mixed in glory, and God sits in state.
So Mr. Mill describes these pure delights
With sanctimonious gesture and low voice;
He stands, a sombre figure, shaped in black,
And bids the little children's hearts rejoice.
He warns them that they never must look back;
Draws fiery pictures of the burning lake,
Wherein the tortured body writhes in pain.
Says there will be no sweets, nor buns, nor cake,
Unless God washes out each sinful stain.
Such fetid tales and many more are told
Before the final hymn is sung by all.
Then Mr. Mill says, "Come unto the Fold,
Nor harden your hearts once ye have heard the call;
Old Satan hides behind each tiny heart,
And fights with God to claim the better part."
Ah! Mr. Mill. Your lean and darkened face
Shall smile someday when Bibles cease to be,
And men and women live in natural grace,
And honest men teach children *decently*.

ARTHUR F. THORN.

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Robert Cooper.

1819-1868.

THE reader who turns to the *Dictionary of National Biography* and its supplements for information as to the work and life of Robert Cooper will be disappointed. Yet many men infinitely less important have their niches in that temple of fame—or semi-fame. The Freethinker does not worry over these trifles, for he knows that your Agnostic has no sympathy for popular Freethought. However that may be, Cooper was born on December 29, 1819, at Barton-on-Irwell, near Manchester. His father was a Radical, with experience of Peterloo, and young Cooper as a boy listened to discussions of the ideas of Voltaire, Paine, Cobbett, and other independent thinkers. Being a good reader, he was sometimes asked to read aloud from Godwin's *Political Justice*. At the age of twelve he was placed as clerk in a Manchester house, and remained there nine years. At fourteen he was appointed a teacher in the Salford Co-operative Evening Schools, which were run by disciples of Robert Owen. When he was seventeen he opened a debate on "Secularism" before the debating society of the Manchester Athenæum. He had published discussions with parsons on the *Social System* and published his first pamphlet on *Original Sin* before he was twenty. After leaving his clerkship, he became an Owenite Social Missionary. With the break-up of the Socialistic missions, he joined the Freethought Party, and was for some time editor of the *London Investigator*. Cooper's health broke down under strenuous work and an ever-active brain, and he died at the comparatively early age of forty-eight. *The Holy Scriptures Analysed* (1840)—reprinted 1910—is still a useful piece of work.

Cooper was what is called an "orator." This type of thinker—the emotional, rhetorical type—has been pretty common in Freethought. Spoken speeches or lectures do not gain by print; they appear platitudinous and turgid. Cooper uses a dozen words to say what could be better said in six. He may have been a "silver-tongued orator" like Mr. Charles Watts, but he had also Watts' preference for a sentence rounded at any cost.

G. U.

A Royal Invitation.

"UNEASY lies the head that wears a crown." Few can envy the King his job, particularly having regard to his present set of advisers, who, judging by the words they every now and then put into his mouth, appear to be approaching the limit in lunacy. Before these lines see the light, the anniversary of Armistice Day will have come and gone, and "the King's invitation to his people to join in a two minutes silent service in commemoration of our glorious dead at 11 a.m. on the 11th day of the 11th month of the year" will have been observed by some and ignored by others.

The situation is full of irony. The morning papers which published the royal invitation contained in another column an ominous paragraph headed with leaded type: "Germans repulsed at Libau." The people, as a whole, do not seem to realize that our military commitments on the Continent of Europe are still very great. Our professional militarists are insatiable. They must play upon human hate to engineer new stunts, and with a crowd of weak and facile political bureaucrats like putty in their hands, they are able to entangle us in foreign expeditions for which we, as a people, ought to have no more responsibility than the man in the moon. Incidentally, these stunts are causing a considerable expenditure which John Bull, at the moment, is little able to bear.

There should be a vigorous protest against this Armistice Anniversary "Service" as presenting the King in the light of a sentimentalist. The best and most noble way of honouring the memory of the dead is to secure their living dependents from want. Could there be anything more cruelly ironical than this call to a silent service in memory of the dead when we remember that, in very many cases, pensions had actually to be wrung from the ministry? Two pounds of tea to the mother or wife of every dead soldier would have been far more appropriate than two minutes of silence. "The whole thing, of course," say the press flunkeys, "is absolutely voluntary," and then proceed to explain the official orders that are being issued for the observance of the "invitation" in the Navy, Army, and schools!

The diminutive mind of the Primate finds in this "invitation" a "timely message." It is not difficult to see the true source of the "timely message." Sunday, November 9, was appointed by his lordship as a day of preparation for the two minutes on Tuesday, November 11. The "silence" was to be heralded by guns, maroons, and sirens so that "the observance might be as general and *spontaneous* as possible"! But, according to the sapient Archbishop, "the note of thankfulness rings clear above them all." Unfortunately, the Archbishop does not inform us what we have got to be thankful for beyond mentioning the "victory secured to the cause of right and freedom and the brave lives laid down in its achievement." That is astutely vague. If the Germans had won—for they are Christians, too—their religious bosses would have to-day been indulging in exactly the same kind of "guff."

When are we to grow out of our petty sectionalism, our mole-eyed parochialism, our insular snobbery? Few of us have any conception of the vastness and variety of our own Empire, far less of the world as a whole. As has been well said in these columns more than once, the Christian idea is that Liberty is limited to Christians. All else are—or should be—outlaws. If they cannot extirpate the heretic vipers with fire, sword, and the rack, they will do it by means of intangible and subterranean social forces. Yet, in point of fact, even the British Empire itself transcends Christianity. In that Empire, Christians are in a small minority, but a minority that is supreme in confidence, insolence, and assertiveness. The other day a protest was made by a correspondent in one of our weeklies against a film with the title of "A Prince of Bharata and a Daughter of Brahma" being announced in connection with the Hibbert Lectures on "Phases of Theism in Mediæval India" which are being delivered by Dr. Carpenter. This correspondent contends that the exhibition of a film with such a title is a circumstance in which bad taste and the perversion of good feeling contend for first place. "Suppose," he pointedly says, "a film with the title (say), 'The Rich Pharisee and a Daughter of Jesus of Nazareth,' was advertised for exhibition, what an outcry would be raised; how the faithful would want to storm the place. Yet where is the difference?" The writer goes on to point out that the Brahmins are a sect far older and more numerous than the members of the religion established by law in this country, and that, as a law-abiding people living peaceably under British rule and protection, they are entitled, by our boasted canons of fairness, justice, and equality, to be saved from such gross insults.

The point, of course, to be emphasized in this connection is that many British subjects who were not

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Christians bled and died in the Great War; and for the Primate of England to use the anniversary of the Armistice as an advertisement for Christianity is an additional insult to the memory of these men. But that is not all. There is a subtle danger that by such methods the rancours of religion may be introduced into future racial and international disputes. If such methods are to succeed, then good-bye to the League of Nations, good-bye to the hopes of a permanent World Peace. As Artemus Ward said many years ago, "There is no fite like a relijus fite." And he might have added, "Of all religious fighters there are none so pugnacious as Christians."

Little is to be expected from the League of Nations if it is identified in the minds of any people with a religious sect; yet we cannot fail to notice the sedulous efforts of the clergy to affix to it the label of Christianity. Enmities are fostered by the nation which by its laws either actually establishes a particular sect or even merely extends recognition to such sect as the national religion. The Parliament of our country ought to stand in a position of absolute impartiality with reference to all beliefs. It may be that Freethinkers would be well employed in concentrating more on the advocacy of Disestablishment. Clericalism—that is the enemy. But there is so much to be done in releasing minds from conventional fetters, that little room is left for propaganda that is purely political.

We fail to see that any thanks are due to the Christian God for victory in a War that he could have prevented; and man must depend upon himself for the restoration of what this demoralizing conflict has so wantonly and violently destroyed, and for the success of the League of Nations. IGNOTUS.

Simple, Artful, or Degenerate?

TAKEN generally, and speaking from an independent point of view, members of the various Churches, if observed in either a business or private capacity, will be found to be either "Simple," "Artful," or "Degenerate"; their brains have either given way to the inevitable "Faith," or they are using assumed faith for personal gain or lust.

The "Simple"—certainly respected by all those who are not so easily duped—are financially the mainstay of the various Churches; for instance, they lay the foundation stones, subscribe generously to the Church funds, make handsome presents to pastors, priests, and parsons, fill up the collection plates, pay for Masses to be said for every conceivable grievance or calamity, in fact do anything in their way to enhance the genuine desire to eventually reach their heaven. The "Artful" members use their "Faith" to feather their own nests. A tradesman will look pious on Sundays to help on his business with the other members. A burglar finds it gives him an appearance of respectability; another finds it easier to borrow money if he looks religious, or finds he gets on better with the ladies if he prays reverently; but, with all, the "Artful" member is not a very real asset to the Church, except that he advertises and talks of his goodness and religion.

The "Degenerate" can be found in large numbers, in all Churches, and other places where the faithful congregate; his disordered brain soon finds out the weak spots, and he finds also an easy outlook for his illicit desires, for the "Simple" particularly trust him, and he lives his life of lust under such a powerful cloak that it is very rarely he is found out or exposed, unless it is by some far-seeing and right-thinking individual (who probably, at heart, is a Rationalist).

W. H. W.

Writers and Readers.

A NOTE ON VOLTAIRE'S "CANDIDE."[1]

A NEW translation of Voltaire's witty skit on the complacent optimism of his day is a good enough excuse (if, indeed, any be needed) for a few informal remarks on the story, and on philosophical romance in general. Of the merits or demerits of this particular version I shall have something to say below; but even if it be not all one would wish in the matter of style and correctness, the many English admirers of Voltaire who have merely a bowing acquaintance with the French language, or none at all, will welcome this jewel of wit and wisdom in its English dress, and will appreciate it all the more because it is a well printed and prettily bound volume.

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Candide was published in 1759, and, in accordance with Voltaire's custom when he was launching an especially venomous attack on conventional ideas, it did not bear his name. It went through a dozen editions in that year, and was translated into English within a few months of its appearance in Paris. There have been a number of English versions, yet, for some reason or other, they are not accessible except in the British Museum and other large libraries, and the result is that Voltaire's wit and malice have been enjoyed mostly at second-hand. Henry Morley's edition, which was printed, as some of my readers will remember, with Johnson's *Rasselas* (1759), was my first introduction to Voltaire's philosophical fiction. But, unfortunately, it was Bowdlerized for family reading, and its racy flavour disguised by Victorian cant. Still, it was better than nothing, and the eighteenth century version which Morley reprinted represented admirably Voltaire's incomparable ease and elegance of style.

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It is, I suppose, known to everyone that *Candide* was an attempt to counter by ridicule and sarcasm the ethical implication of the Leibnitzian hypothesis of a pre-established harmony. This optimistic attitude of life was used as a veil to shut out from the eyes of men the wretchedness of humanity, the injustice and cruelty which forced themselves on the attention of every thinking man. The rejection of this belief with Voltaire was not a strictly logical process, since he was not less a Theist than Leibnitz; but if he was less consistent in his thinking, he was more humane. His sympathy with suffering was as ardent and sincere as that of Shelley; and, like our English poet, he did not stop at sympathy—he spared neither time, nor money, nor labour in fighting the tyranny of an autocratic State and the hideous cruelty of organized priestcraft. His sympathy with suffering was a fundamental trait in his nature; it went deeper than thought. As early as 1713, many years before *Candide* saw the light, he had written, as Henry Morley notes, a poem "On the Miseries of Our Time" (*Sur les malheurs du temps*), which is proof, if proof were wanted, that the injustice and brutality of the world were for him an age-long torture, alleviated only by the intense joy of combat with evil. He was the finest type of the humanitarian at a time when the love of mankind in general disguised a contempt for Tom, Dick, and Harry. Unlike Rousseau, he had cleared his mind of cant.

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Dr. Pangloss is, in the main, a caricature of optimism; yet he has this in common with the philosophers of the time: his principles were unshaken by the most awful calamities which came to him and to others. Candide is Voltaire's contribution to the eighteenth century types of the "good man." He is ingenuous and intelligent, sympathetic and solid in judgment. He has been brought up by the disreputable old Pangloss to believe that everything happens for the best in this best of all possible worlds. The misadventures, framed, on the model of contemporary romance, to discredit complacent optimism, would be terrifying if they

[1] *Candide, or Optimism.* Translated by Dorset Chambers. London: F. B. Neumayer, 70 Charing Cross Road, W.C.; 1919 (price 6s. net).

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were not related in so light and easy a manner. We can imagine what Swift would have made of them. The horrors of brutal warfare, murder, ravishings, and sudden death; the earthquake at Lisbon; an *auto-da-fe* in the same city; the horrors of slavery; the cruelty and perfidy of the priests in Paraguay; the rottenness of society in Europe, in Paris, in Venice; the picture of the life of a slave in Constantinople —all these things, and a hundred others, are described with a light and sure touch; a touch so sure and deadly that optimism as a working belief was discredited for all time. Nowhere except in Eldorado, a sort of Utopia in South America, did Candide find people untouched by misfortune and sorrow. He might, one would think, have stayed there in that paradise of inactivity and reverie; but Candide, like his creator, could not turn a deaf ear to the agonized cry of mankind under the heel of the tyrant and the priest. He must work out a *modus vivendi* in the world as it is. He finds a certain relief for the intolerable agony of life in doing well the duty that lies nearest to him, in "tending our garden," as he puts it symbolically; for the garden which Voltaire tended most carefully was not the material one at Ferney, but the vast spiritual garden of humanity.

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In an excellent little monograph I came across the other day on the didactic literature of the eighteenth century (*The Good Man of the Eighteenth Century*, by Charles Whittuck, 1901), Candide is associated with *Rasselas* in a chapter on "Anti-Cant." There is a striking similarity between the two works. On this point Mr. Whittuck notes that Boswell writes:—

> Voltaire's *Candide* written to refute the system of optimism, which it has accomplished with brilliant success, is wonderfully similar in its plan and conduct to *Rasselas*, insomuch that I have heard Johnson say, that if they had not been published so closely the one after the other that there was no time for imitation, it would have been in vain to deny that the scheme of that which came latest was taken from the other.

In both of the stories there is the same profound consciousness of life's miseries, both the writers are terribly in earnest, although the prevailing tone of the one is a caustic irony, of the other a melancholy seriousness. The aim of Johnson is, no doubt, to direct the hopes of man to things eternal, by showing the unsatisfactory nature of things temporal. Voltaire, although a believer in a power above us that makes for righteousness, directed men in a far nobler and far humaner way, the way of strenuous untiring work for the good of his fellow-creatures. "To me," says the Princess to Rasselas, "the choice of life is become less important; I hope hereafter to think only on the choice of eternity." The moral problem is not solved, you will see, but removed to a problematical future state. Voltaire solves it relatively by bringing into prominence the social and domestic relations, and so helping man to recover his lost happiness. I commend the two stories to the intelligent reader as the basis of an admirable little study in comparative literature.

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It would be noticed that the peculiarity of the didactic fiction of the eighteenth century is its frank disregard of character. The men and women are mere types, lay figures set up to represent certain ideas. In only one of Voltaire's stories, *The Ingenuous Young Man; or, The Huron*, do we find a semblance of the romantic, emotional approach to human nature. It is impossible to read the bulk of the romances for the sake of the story. They must appear hard and cold after the palpitating warmth, the subtle penetration into motives, of *Tom Jones* and *Gil Blas*. It is only in much later fiction—in the stories, let me say, of Anatole France and Remy de Gourmont—that you get a perfect balance between philosophic ideas and the creative projection of human life. Voltaire was a pamphleteer rather than a novelist, and his tracts in support of more humane ideas in ethics and religion were as effective as they were undisguised.

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The new version of Voltaire's best-known work is, as I have hinted above, not an improvement on the inaccessible eighteenth century translations. It is not impossible now to reproduce something of the ease and elegance of the French style; but it was much easier then. Mr. Chambers is, I fancy, not a student of eighteenth century literature, which, at its best, is correct, shapely, and free from vulgarity and slang. "It was like this" is a fatuous colloquism possible only to Sir Hall Caine. "I knew these girls would do it on us" (p. 64) is an expression you may hear in a saloon bar; it is not Voltaire, and, I hope, not English. Nor is this good prose: "Candide ran him through and through, and laid him out beside the Jew." *Cabaret* (inn) is always left in the French, although it is not printed in italics. It is, of course, not an English word, and would puzzle a reader who has no French. There are also a few slips which a little care would have obviated, "mess" (p. 30) should be *mass*: "one" (p. 48) should be *four*; "host's" (p. 70) should be *guest's*. These do not amount to much, but, on the other hand, the mistakes which are due to a somewhat imperfect knowledge of French are more serious. On p. 20 the phrase used by the Batavian sailor: "I've just missed drowning four times" is not in the text, which says: "four times I have trampled on the crucifix." It would seem that the Japanese required a Christian sailor, before he was allowed to land, to abjure his belief by trampling on the symbol of his religion. A "dark" man (p. 21) should be a man *dressed in black*. The passage on p. 23 about the two Portuguese "who had stolen the fat of a chicken by eating it" is incomprehensible, to me at least. It would seem that they were two "New Christians," or Jews, who had renounced their faith. The Familiars of the Inquisition were instructed to watch these converted Jews to detect, if they had reverted to Judaism, by noticing whether they kept the Judaic dietary laws. At the inn the Jews were served with a larded fowl, and if they left the bacon they were haled before the Holy Office. The phrase should be "who, in eating a fowl, had rejected the bacon." Voltaire's phrase: "sur le flanc gauche" is in the left *groin*, not the left "buttock." On p. 39, the word "gorge," *i.e.*, bust or bosom, is translated "throat." With these exceptions the version is a commendable one, and it will certainly serve to give the English reader an idea of what Voltaire is like at his wittiest. As to the licentiousness, which the translator seems to detect in Voltaire, I find it only the frankness of speech current at the time. I could easily find worse things in Wycherley, Sterne, and Swift.

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By the way, the student of literature who has French will thank me for calling his attention to a scholarly edition of *Candide*, by M. Andre Morize, in "Textes Francais Modernes," Hachette & Co., 1913.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

INSPIRATION.

Behind all these theories of inspiration stands the fatal objection of Thomas Paine, that inspiration, to be real, must be personal. A man may be sure that God speaks to him, but how can he be sure that God has spoken to another man? He may think it possible or probable, but he can never be certain. What is revelation at first-hand, said Paine, is only hearsay at second-hand. Real inspiration, therefore, eventuates in mysticism. The inner light shines, the inner voice speaks; God holds personal communication with the individual soul. Each believer carries what the author of *Hudibras* calls "the dark lanthorn of the spirit," which "none see but those who bear it." And the very multiplicity and diversity of the oracle's deliverances are a proof that in all of them man is speaking to himself. He questions his gods, and hears only the echo of his own voice.

—*G. W. Foote*, "*The Book of God*."

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